

THE VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY
ON
POLICY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA:
ISSUES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Final Statement, Keynote Address, and Background Papers

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Sponsored by
Institute of Government
University of Virginia
and
Virginia Cooperative Extension Service
VPI & SU and Virginia State University
June 1984

This Publication Funded in Part
by a Grant from the
Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy

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FOREWORD

The Institute of Government is pleased to publish this collection of papers from The VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY ON POLICY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA: ISSUES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH, which met at Wintergreen, Virginia, from June 28-30, 1984.

The Virginia Assembly is modeled after the American Assembly, established by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1950 while he was president of Columbia University. Each year since 1982 the Virginia Assembly has invited selected opinion leaders from many fields to meet together and discuss some issue of public policy in an objective and nonpartisan way. The 1982 Virginia Assembly discussed land use, and the topic for the 1983 Assembly was adult corrections within the Virginia criminal justice system.

The 1984 Virginia Assembly brought together 104 eminent citizens from across the Commonwealth. Participants were from a cross-section of groups with a special interest in education. They included representatives from public, private, and parochial schools, state and local governments, businesses, civic groups, and professional organizations.

The Assembly's aim was to give this diverse group an opportunity to address the most important issues facing the Commonwealth in elementary and secondary education. A major goal of the Assembly was to identify areas of agreement among the participants--to discover the common interests and concerns of individuals drawn from groups that often have been at odds.

For two days the Assembly's participants discussed the challenges facing Virginia's elementary and secondary educational system and made recommendations to meet those challenges. On the third day, the group reviewed and refined the draft of a statement containing these recommendations. This Final Statement of the Assembly, which is the first paper in this volume, contains the findings and recommendations the Assembly's participants wanted to bring to the attention of their fellow citizens.

The Final Statement is followed by the keynote address at the Assembly, "The Excitement of Success," by Robert J. Binswanger. Mr. Binswanger is currently the Headmaster of the Boston Latin Academy, which is a part of the Boston Public Schools. Also included in this volume are seven background papers that were written by Virginia scholars from the humanities and other disciplines especially for the Assembly. These papers present seven individual views about some of the important issues and problems facing elementary and secondary education today.

To follow up the statewide meeting held at Wintergreen, eighteen regional meetings are being held across the state. These regional

assemblies began in Lebanon on September 12 and will end in Wakefield on December 13. These regional meetings provide additional opportunities for Virginians to meet and discuss the important educational issues facing the Commonwealth.

The Virginia Assembly is a nonpartisan educational activity organized and sponsored by the Institute of Government, University of Virginia, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service of Virginia Tech and Virginia State universities. The 1984 Assembly was supported in part by a grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy and by corporate donors. Neither the Assembly's sponsors nor its financial supporters have taken any stand on the views expressed in the Assembly's final statement.

This volume represents the contributions of numerous people. First of all, special appreciation goes to the thirty members of our statewide advisory committee for the 1984 Virginia Assembly. These committee members (identified in Appendix B) were quite helpful both in identifying possible topics for the papers presented here and in recommending scholars who might write them. Special thanks go, also, to the authors of the papers, as well as to the Assembly's participants, whose efforts resulted in the Final Statement. (A complete roster of participants is in Appendix A.)

Others who deserve special recognition are the volume's editors, J. Paxton Marshall, extension specialist with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service at Virginia Tech, and Sandra H. Wiley, research associate at the Institute. Ann C. Gaynor of the Institute staff skillfully typed most of the volume, and the University of Virginia Printing Office produced the volume. Finally, we are indebted to the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy for including in its grant to the Virginia Assembly financial support to print this volume.

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Charlottesville
October 15, 1984

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FINAL STATEMENT OF THE
THE 1984 VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY ON
POLICY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA:
ISSUES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Assembly on Policy for Elementary and Secondary Education in Virginia: Issues for the Commonwealth met at Wintergreen, Virginia from June 28-30, 1984. At the close of the Assembly's discussion, the participants reviewed as a group the following statement. This statement represents the points on which the participants reached widespread agreement; however, no one was asked to sign it. Not every participant subscribed to every recommendation in this statement. Many proposed other recommendations.

Education is the cornerstone upon which Virginia's future rests. The central importance of education as a state government responsibility is affirmed in the 1971 Virginia Constitution, which states:

The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained.

Acting on this commitment makes primary and secondary education the major undertaking of state and local governments in Virginia. In 1982-83, Virginia's state and local governments spent \$2.7 billion, on K-12 education, more than for any other policy area. More than 966,000 students were enrolled in 139 school divisions, employing more than 64,000 teachers and other instructional personnel. Virginia's private elementary and secondary schools add an important element of diversity to the educational opportunities available within the Commonwealth.

Virginia's people have expressed their support for education. A recent public opinion poll of the state's adult citizens found that more than nine out of every ten surveyed, regardless of social background or place of residence, believe that Virginia should be a national leader in education.¹ At the same time, almost all of those questioned (92.3

¹ D. M. Johnson, J. S. Williams, and S. A. Honnold, The Future of Virginia Through the Eyes of Its Citizens: A Report on a Statewide Survey to the Governor's Commission on Virginia's Future (Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University, Survey Research Laboratory, Mar. 15, 1984).

percent) think some change is needed in public education, and they are willing to commit the resources to do the job. More than eight out of ten questioned agreed that the state "should improve education offered by grade and high schools even if it means raising taxes."

Virginia has taken many steps to address the educational needs of its youth. Despite the tendency to fault our schools, progress has been made in the Commonwealth, and it should be recognized. Virginia's public elementary and secondary schools have met head-on some difficult problems, such as improving basic learning skills. The result has been an improvement in the quality and quantity of education available to our citizens. Beyond this, greater equality of access to education has been provided. These improvements have been achieved despite the turmoil surrounding the schools during massive resistance and its aftermath.

But Virginia must not become complacent in addressing the educational needs of its people. Though we have made progress, the commitment made in the 1971 Constitution is unfulfilled. On most measures of educational quality (such as test scores, proportions of students continuing their educations after high school, and dropout rates), Virginia schools rank at about the middle in nationwide comparisons, slightly above their position in 1960. Such a ranking hardly evidences a "system of high quality." In addition, it masks the variations in quality among school divisions. Whatever measures are used, the differences in performance across the Commonwealth are striking.

The state's financial effort in education is not consistent with its constitutional imperative. Virginia is among the upper half of the states in its ability to pay for education, yet it ranks among the bottom third in the amount it spends. Within the state the disparity in expenditures among school divisions is great. In the 1982-83 school year, for example, the total expenditures per student ranged from \$1,658 for the lowest-ranking school division to \$4,741 for the highest-ranking division.²

Virginia's present programs and policies will be pressed to meet the state's changing educational needs. Today's students and those that follow will require a broader array of skills to participate fully in the world in which they will live. New educational technologies; changes in students' home environments; fluctuating enrollments; inequalities arising from race, class, and geography; the prospect of declining public support as the proportion of adults with school-aged children diminishes--all are among the challenges that schools will face as they approach the year 2000.

² Virginia Department of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annual Report 1982-1983 (Richmond, March 1984), Table 14, pp. 105-6.

The participants at the Virginia Assembly on Future Policy for Elementary and Secondary Education in Virginia identified and discussed many problems related to education. Realizing that they could not deal with all educational issues, the participants devoted special attention to the following six areas of educational policy and practice. These areas are not listed in order of priority; all are important and of equal concern.

- Mission
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Teacher Quality, Performance, and Professionalism
- Equity and Excellence
- The School and the Community
- Finance

This statement presents the Assembly's recommendations in each of these areas.

Recommendations

Mission

Virginia's public schools operate within a web of numerous, often conflicting, public expectations. Many missions have been thrust upon the schools, missions that extend far beyond the minimum expectation that schools develop basic learning skills.

It is crucial that educators, public officials, and citizens at-large agree upon and understand the mission of public schools and what is expected of them, so that the performance of public education can be compared realistically to these expectations.

This Virginia Assembly therefore
recommends that:

- The State Board of Education and local school boards should ensure that citizen groups are involved in clarifying the mission and priorities for elementary and secondary education, as specified in the Standards of Quality.
- The State Board of Education should ensure that each local school division monitor regularly the performance of elementary and secondary education and measure that performance against the established

mission and priorities, as required by the Standards of Quality.

- A statewide commission should explore the appropriateness of restructuring education, both within the overall state system and within school divisions and schools. The commission's study should evaluate whether education can be strengthened through the adoption of new institutional arrangements.

Curriculum and Instruction

In terms of what and how we teach, a concerted effort must be made to make sure that our curricula, materials, and instructional approaches are the best that is available.

This Virginia Assembly therefore recommends that:

- All curriculum materials should be reviewed to see (a) that they reflect agreed-upon goals, objectives, and priorities of the school division, (b) that they are accurate, and (c) that they are sound from the standpoint of current theory in cognitive and developmental psychology.
- All local school divisions should integrate technology appropriately into school curricula.
- All local school divisions should implement new instructional techniques that draw on research findings pertaining to educational organization, such as differentiated staffing and mastery learning.
- Curricula should reflect a holistic approach to education; emphasis should be placed on educating the whole person, and on achieving excellence in all subject areas. Subject areas such as art, music, health, and physical education are important to basic education and should not be compromised. The development of a curriculum based on a common core of knowledge should be considered. Vocational education should be valued, and excellent, up-to-date programs made available to all students.

- Principals should be restored to positions of academic and instructional leadership. Other school administrators should be trained in management techniques and should manage the school system's resources according to sound management practices.

Teacher Quality, Performance, and Professionalism

The Assembly recognizes the key role of the teacher in education. Meeting the challenge to improve the performance of teachers is crucial to achieving Virginia's goals in elementary and secondary education. The Commonwealth needs to focus on improving the quality of teaching in the state by enhancing recruitment, promoting professionalism, and rewarding outstanding performance.³

This Virginia Assembly therefore recommends that:

- The State Board of Education, the State Council of Higher Education, and local school divisions should lead an effort to recruit academically talented persons to be teachers.
- State teachers' scholarships should be reestablished and funded, with grants and loans as supplementary recruitment aids.
- Entrance and exit requirements for teacher training programs at colleges and universities should be established or maintained at a level consistent with that of other demanding professional programs.
- Local school divisions should improve the professional stature of elementary and secondary school teachers by:
 - (a) setting goals for each school through a joint effort by teachers, administrators, students, and parents;

³ Participants discussed how tenure currently is awarded to teachers. While the Assembly was almost evenly split on the issue and no consensus could be reached, the continuing contract status of teachers was a matter of grave concern to many Assembly participants, who felt that this policy merits reexamination.

(b) making new technological tools available to teachers for instructional duties such as planning and grading, while eliminating clerical and other noninstructional duties for teachers through the use of volunteers and other assistants;

(c) identifying and rewarding superior performance and dismissing poor performers;

(d) helping teachers further their own knowledge of their subject areas by making available continuing professional development programs, designed with the aid of teachers; and

(e) making eleven-month contracts, with clearly defined duties, available to teachers.

Equity and Excellence

Our educational system serves students with often widely varying needs and capacities. Our challenge is to devise an educational system where all children have access to excellent teaching and adequate resources and where students may obtain a sound education related to their individual needs and capabilities. While emphasis on the quality of education must be maintained, both equity and excellence must be our goals.

This Virginia Assembly therefore recommends that:

- Local school divisions should ensure that all children have excellent educational opportunities by:
 - (a) implementing instruction planned to meet each individual student's needs and
 - (b) controlling and adjusting teacher/student ratios to allow more individualized instruction.
- The State Board of Education should establish comprehensive statewide examinations that will measure student achievement at a higher level than that demonstrated by the existing high school diplomas.⁴

⁴ A new, state-level Commonwealth diploma would be awarded to those students who qualify on these comprehensive examinations.

Insofar as possible, these exams should be essay achievement exams that clearly measure the attainment of knowledge by our students.

- Local school divisions and the state should concentrate on developing innovative methods to evaluate the achievement of students, rather than relying on standardized test scores.
- An educational data bank should be established to analyze and compare information from other states for use in improving education in the Commonwealth.

The Schools and the Community

To improve schools and upgrade the public's image of elementary and secondary education will require the commitment of educators, students, and the local community. The community and its schools must show that they care about one another by finding ways to work together.

The community has valuable resources in its citizens, businesses, religious groups, and civic organizations. When effectively allied with the schools, these resources can help the schools produce top-quality graduates who can become productive, contributing citizens. Conversely, the schools themselves--the students, the teachers, the administrators, and even the school buildings--are major community assets. It is in everyone's vested interest for the schools and the community to cooperate in educating our youth.

This Virginia Assembly therefore
recommends that:

- Schools and community groups, including businesses and colleges and universities, should develop active partnerships to share resources and foster mutual support.
- Schools should encourage wider and more effective citizen involvement, such as PTA and volunteer programs, in school activities and in educational decision making.
- The Commonwealth and its localities should develop a statewide media campaign to upgrade the public image of education and to call attention to the schools' accomplishments.

Finance

This Assembly recognizes that education is one of many large demands made upon state revenues. But the disparity among school divisions that has resulted from relying on the local real property tax base indicates that a number of Virginia's pupils receive inadequate educations. This condition must be ameliorated if the state is to assure its citizens the opportunity for equitable and excellent education.

This Assembly believes that future demands upon public elementary and secondary education warrant basic adjustments in policy to provide financing for elementary and secondary education.

This Virginia Assembly therefore
recommends that:

- The General Assembly should fund its full share of all mandates included in the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and fully fund every other mandate.⁵
- The General Assembly should re-examine the present basic school aid formula and explore alternative formulas that better meet the state's needs.
- The state should address the need to provide, in a manner that ensures equity among taxpayers, additional state revenues for elementary and secondary education. To that end, the General Assembly should increase revenues for elementary and secondary education by:
 - (a) increasing the sales tax to increase funding specifically for education; and
 - (b) providing local governments with additional revenue sources.
- The state should work with local and federal governments to narrow the disparities in educational funding and the quality of opportunity for student achievement among the Commonwealth's school divisions.

⁵ For 1982-83, the total established SOQ cost per pupil was \$1,320, while the total actual cost per pupil was \$1,644 (figures from the State Department of Education).

THE EXCITEMENT OF SUCCESS

By Robert B. Binswanger

Mr. Binswanger is Headmaster of the Boston Latin Academy of the Boston Public Schools. This paper is the keynote address that Mr. Binswanger gave to the 1984 Virginia Assembly on Elementary and Secondary Education.

I consider it an honor as well as a privilege to participate in the 1984 Virginia Assembly, an activity characterized as a meeting that "tackles tough problems." There are no tougher problems, nor more important ones, to the future of our nation, than the task--nee, duty--of educating our citizens.

As a New Englander, I have participated in many town meetings, a democratic process not unlike that practiced by this Assembly. I compliment you on a process that engages citizens from diverse backgrounds and different constituencies. It is noteworthy, too, that the prestigious and scholarly Institute of Government works in tandem with the Extension Service, a solid national treasure for its longtime record of service and involvement of people in the process of decision making. For too many years we have had numerous critics watching and waiting from the safety of the shore, frequently lamenting the lack of educational waves. We are past the time when one thinks, "Should I test the water? Should I get my feet wet? Should I wade in?" The Cooperative Extension Service traditionally has advocated "immersion." The Institute of Government has already proved it can tread water. Its success is the belief in total immersion. So prepare to get wet. The water is fine. And those of you present this evening already have declared a common purpose--a sincere concern that education deserves the full and total attention of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Given such a distinguished audience, I have wondered (as you must), how did the Assembly come up with such a speaker? What has happened to Professor Norton's faultless powers of judgment? Is the Assembly in such low esteem that no national figure would dare to attend? Is the education issue passé, or is this some relative of someone at the university who is owed a favor? I can attest that none of the above get checked. I trust my choice is due to the fact that I am one of the countless teachers, true believers in the learning contract, who remain faceless and nameless, but who number tens of thousands, working the so-called vineyards. We are happy to have the opportunity to work directly with youth, and in awe of the responsibility; sometimes frightened at the start of each school year

that we have not fully mastered our subject area, yet grateful for the trust placed in us by parents and families who transfer to us the stewardship of their sons and daughters in hopes that they might fulfill their individual potential. We are ever mindful of the burdens of low pay, arcane regulations and ordinances, crushing paperwork, and low public esteem. But we are increasingly committed to the concept that the more citizens who become involved, participate, and get immersed in the discussion and understanding of the schooling process, the sooner American education will be strengthened both quantitatively and qualitatively.

I carry no titles, am bereft of honors. What you see is what you get, other than an association with Virginia education in three respects: first, work a decade ago with one of your major city school districts on long-range desegregation planning; second, service as a trustee of a truly fine and inspiring Hampton Institute; and third, parent of sons who attended five different Virginia public schools covering elementary, junior, and senior high school. Thus, I can qualify, respectively, as a confuser, diffuser, and plain old user of education in Virginia.

I have no formal address. I disapprove of sermons from the mount; we have already had one that is hard to surpass. You are above the need for a charge of task or mission. And I have been desperately trying to figure out a relationship between land use and prison reform, which is not difficult--but what is the correlation with school reform and policy formulation? Thus, I would prefer, with your permission, to focus on three comments, each quite simple in direction and purpose. My first comment is about access and opportunity.

I am the principal of an inner-city high school. We are one of seventeen high schools serving Boston. The school population is 1,338 assigned students, 51 percent minority, and a staff of 78, of whom 23 percent are minority. I cite the minority figures since we operate under a court-ordered desegregation plan that has controlled school policy for ten years. The school is located in what could be kindly defined as a seedy neighborhood. Our immediate neighbors are a taxi company that has its vehicles triple-parked in the street; a hospital laundry supply company operating twenty-four hours or three shifts a day, with trailer trucks entering and leaving regularly; and an auto repair/gas station.

The facility we occupy was built as a garage by the postal service: thick concrete floors, few windows, and heavy

construction. We have no shower facilities, lockers, or gymnasium. Our students have never met as a group since we have no auditorium. We have no grounds, no parking spaces or places. Until November we had no bells, buzzers, or clocks, and only recently have they installed an intercom system. We have one bathroom for boys and one for girls on each of the two classroom floors, each floor serving approximately 700 children. Until October 24 we had no chemistry laboratory, although we are a college-preparatory school. In fact, we offered no hands-on science instruction; all was done, as in the Hoosier Schoolmaster, by instructor demonstration on raised platforms in biology, chemistry, and physics.

We have no air conditioning nor blower system, but we have twelve interior rooms that are impossibly hot in fall and spring. We have nine rooms with permanent roof leaks, dripping water on desks and pupils on a delayed basis, so that water appears generally two or three days after a rainfall. We have introduced an instrumental music program this year, taught in between locker rows in the basement. We have no adequate library for lack of shelving. We have forty-two rooms, forty-one of which are used seven periods a day. We have a guidance office without any electrical outlets, mechanical equipment, or secretarial support services. We have an elevator to serve the custodial needs and those with injuries or physical handicaps; its down time was thirty-three school days. We have no distinctive markings that we are a school. Thus, traffic is a hazard to the safety and welfare of students at 7:20 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. each school day. Until recently, we had fourteen classrooms without doors, and another five with doors but no doorknobs. Upon reflection, it brings to mind the adage, "Our doors are always open, it's just our minds that are closed."

By union contract, teachers are assigned to the building by seniority, and there is no interview or selection process whatsoever by administration. Because of Proposition 2-1/2, an act to curtail government spending, perhaps as many as fifteen or twenty teachers receive layoff notices each year in May and then wait until mid-August to receive a notice that the layoff has been cancelled and they can return to their jobs. Such tenuity impacts staff. These are ten- and twelve-year veteran teachers.

You have the picture. I have left out many details, but you understand the scene. We are a school drawing students from every neighborhood in the city. Students enter by taking a citywide examination, arriving in the seventh grade, although seventy-five new students also enter at the ninth grade. We offer a classical

curriculum: not too many frills, few electives, and a fairly traditional schedule. We require six years of English and Latin; five years of math; four years of science and history; three years of either Spanish, French, or German; and, this year, instrumental music, computer science, and typing. Our minimal homework load is three hours a night. Our student population breaks down to roughly 11 percent oriental, 5 percent hispanic, 37 percent black, and the remainder white. The socioeconomic statistics indicate a primarily blue-collar community, many single-family homes, and approximately 26 percent qualifying for free lunches.

In the National Latin Exam, we won over one hundred awards, including six gold medals and twenty-three magna cum laude citations. Students taking the AP (advanced placement) examination scored quite high. We had three of six citywide spelling championships. In modern languages, we have three students in Padua this summer, fifteen in Cologne, two in Paris, one in Brittany, two in Spain, and two in the People's Republic of China--all on scholarship. We have had success in AP classes in history, Latin, and French, and good results in achievement tests in Latin and English.

I wish to qualify the student profile. We have problems of drug use, teen alcoholism, pregnancy, child abuse, incest, and fighting--plus dealing with a scourge of graffiti. Our pupils are not an academic elite. We offer remedial help to 350 students: 20 percent of our student body will have to attend high school, and too many students will have to repeat the year's work. Our test scores are not uniformly high.

I can take no credit in the fact that 95 percent of our senior class will attend four-year colleges and universities. We score 27 points above the national median for math and 33 points above for verbal on the SATs. We have a 94 percent retention rate in terms of our student body. Seventy percent of this year's senior class held jobs, mainly to support family or for future college expenses. I note with pride that seniors earned through their academic achievements over \$552,000 in direct scholarship grants--and I am not counting loans, BEOGs, or other assistance packages.

The lesson is a simple one: Students anywhere can learn, no matter how adverse the conditions or demanding the program, and no matter what outside influences weigh on their lives. We are immersed in education. Students, parents, family, teachers, custodial staff, and volunteers are working together for a common

cause. That is important: We are working together, for we hold common concerns. We are immersed. Few are floating. All are soaking wet. Frequently, we are up to our eyeballs and have even been accused of being over our heads. How do I explain the Latin Academy? To begin with, it surely is not the principal. It is mainly a question of access and opportunity. The parents and families want excellence. They are willing to support the demands of a curriculum that they do not fully understand, because they know the result will be positive for their sons or daughters. For elementary and secondary education in Virginia, you cannot get far in your discussions, I argue, if you do not believe that all students can learn and, the corollary, that learning opportunities are important and ought to be available to all students.

As to my second comment: Having offered that premise for your thought and consideration, allow me to turn to the tough problems. In researching materials for this occasion, I concluded that it would be anticipated that the speaker would not only identify the key problems, but also offer the definitive solutions to each. Thus, I have focused on a few critical issues. You might challenge the criteria used to determine criticality, but the issues might include: access, equity, teacher certification, technology in the classroom, discipline, economic investment, vocational education, fine arts, teacher competency testing, the role of physical education and competitive sports, gifted and talented, merit pay, adult learning, special education, articulation with higher education, parental involvement, student rights and responsibilities, tyranny of testing, flexible scheduling, extended day/extended year, carnegie units, performance evaluation, liaison with business and commerce, funding, allocation of resources, cooperation between public, private, and parochial sectors of education, core curriculum, textbooks, citizenship training, early childhood education, home and school organization, promotion policy, graduation standards, safety, health education, statewide examinations.

Now, that is the most critical list. Before I go on to the "almost as critical" list, I probably should provide you with what I promised--the definitive response to each problem. That brings me to my second point. Recall, the first is that any student can be a learner. The second is that the problems of education are as monumental and complex and varied as you, Assembly members, wish to make them. There is no end to the lists. And, speaking as an actor on this stage for over thirty years, I have yet to find a new idea, but just recurring issues wrapped in new titles or cloaked in new jargon. Our educational issues, the basic ones,

are the same ones we have not dealt with because as a society we have not worked together, but just talked past one another. It is vital that we not only meet and discuss our divergent viewpoints, but that we go one step further. We agree that we cannot deal effectively with every issue. The age-old crisis that I have always faced is that I have never been able to match those people with the problems against those persons with the answers. This is what the Assembly is all about.

My third and final simple comment is difficult to address since the Assembly makeup is so diverse. It is true that you share common objectives and gather for a common cause. But I prefer to recognize the fact that you bring differing agendas to the deliberations, so I would like to try an experiment. I would like to identify some of the different representative groupings and speak to you in private. That is the hard part. There is not time to break up into small groups; so I ask that when I speak directly to one group--say, those from higher education--the rest of you do something else. But please don't listen, as my comments are personal, intimate, and secret.

For example: Three comments to share with my former colleagues in higher education--a misnomer of sorts, for the terminology increases the division between levels of education and is an intimidating term. Number one: Believe it or not, whether you are a dean, professor, or vice-president, we are all in the same business, the business of learning. And you will aid and abet the Assembly if you reach out and assure that we begin to have a true articulation with all those who teach. But higher educators will have to make the first and boldest moves.

Number two: In reaching out, you have will to counter the history of higher education's interest in school issues: when there is money, we respond. It has been an essentially selfish position, one that has been used to hire more professors, develop more programs, and attract more students, all in a kind of regal attitude, reflected by coursework and meetings and activities on campus, not on site. Take remediation, a disease that now affects college programs. The efforts should not be to create a new pyramid that is costly, inappropriate, and unnecessary. The issue is how you will provide the actual resources to allow Virginia's school children to learn the basics so they won't need remediation.

Number three, and truly secret: Higher education participation means all of you, not just schools and colleges of education. As insiders, we recognize that educationists are often held in the lowest of repute on campus and considered second-rate

academicians. That is picked up by all the college students. And it is passed on in the schoolrooms. We need cross-fertilization, interdisciplinary committees, and a commitment from arts and sciences to get into the waters of schooling.

Next, I would like to speak intimately with those who represent business, commerce, and industry. It is good you are here. Number one: Let's admit that it is in your self-interest. Nothing wrong with that. But the Assembly needs input that is not narrow and tied to your industry or line of work. On the contrary, business needs to participate by viewing school issues in the broadest context: How will improved standards and better schooling support and enhance the national economy?

Number two: Let us place in the open the fact that mini-gifts and awards to schools and educators are not a true commitment. For years, schools have had to be the gracious and grateful recipients of antiquated equipment and supplies, usually for a tax write-off and motivated by extending a corporate image. If the intentions of the Assembly are to be met, big business has to start talking about big bucks, even about taxes; and that requires not only the active support and encouragement of you, but of all the executive ranks, the middle, managers, and the stockholders . . . who, quite nicely, tend to be parents or grandparents of students.

Number three: A few years ago two business school professors wrote a popular book arguing that, as economists, we offered too much education to Americans, that we needed less, and that what we needed more of was vocational training. You know about vocational training: that is the subject we all agree needs to be supported, and the type of schooling always for someone else's family. We have made vocational education second rate and second class. It is always viewed as good for someone else's child. That way, our child's chances for college are improved. In this Assembly, we need business and industry support of vocational education as an equal partner; but we also need your advocacy for the humanities and the arts and sciences.

To the elected officials, in an election year, we have your colleagues engaged in a preponderance of commissions, studies, and reports, oftentimes supported as an act of obfuscation to avoid action and/or hard decision making. In the early 1970s, I participated in five major national efforts to define and aid secondary education. In a three-year period, there were twelve reports. You don't remember them, but they rest on shelves somewhere, as there was no intention or commitment to action. Ten

years later, the studies and reports that began with The Paidea Proposal and A Nation at Risk have just ended with Sizer's ode to Horace--twenty-one reports in all, but these have captured the politician's eye. The Assembly wants you to give more than an eye or an ear or lip service. Schooling in the Commonwealth needs positive action and aggressive advocacy if change is to be established.

To the parents--and most everyone here falls into that category--the Assembly has to have your understanding that the partnership is a two-way street. You need to be involved and supportive; you also need to be critical and speak out when the issue or item demands it. I have never understood how parents can feel so confident in challenging early childhood teachers because their child has not learned to read or write (two of the most difficult learning skills, and ones that take real expertise and professional talent), yet start to spend less time in school as the student progresses up the ladder, to be almost invisible by the senior year, when the parents ought to be challenging the schools with regard to program content, teaching, competency, and adequacy of support services like guidance and counseling. If the parents want to make a significant contribution, then urge your children to consider teaching as a career. We need the best and the brightest. We need those who want to give of themselves. We need masters of subject matter. We need inspiration, vitality, and fresh approaches. We need to have you suggest such career choices, not negate them.

Now, I would like to steal a moment of the school administrators' time. The rest of you tune out because I am about to talk about . . . Money. This may be heresy, but if you really want to aid the Assembly in its reach for consensus, it is time to start arguing that money is not the primary answer. Oh, rest assured it is needed. We cannot meet the new initiatives without it. But we have a doubting public out there, who do not understand what we do with our time. You know--the short days, long holidays, endless summers. Our task, yours, is to start explaining what and how educators function.

I am convinced the public will support new initiatives once it is convinced that we actually do work a full day for less than a full day's pay; that we do know our business, teaching; and that we are ready to assess and evaluate the performance of all personnel, including ourselves. We can and do stretch a dollar further than anyone. We must make-do in order to assure the competing constituent groups, all who want a piece of the same dollar, that schooling is a first priority for this nation.

Understand, that means adopting a format: one that allows others to see that we do make mistakes, are capable of errors, have experienced false starts, but that shows we are open, warts and all. Then the Assembly members, and the greater audience, will more likely move forward with monetary support.

I know I have not identified all the representation here. But in the interests of time and peace, I would like to interact with one more group, last but not least, the teachers. On behalf of what the Assembly is trying to accomplish, it is time we faced the mirror and recognized that we are a defensive body, generally opposed to new ideas, fearful of change, and rigid in our support of the status quo. Candidly, no one likes change, but change is our business . . . just look at our clients. Like A T & T, it is time that we reached out and touched someone, and stopped fighting the tide that says the majority of Americans desire to see some form of merit pay, some manner of competency testing, some statewide evaluation of student performance--to mention but a few shibboleths that need shattering. One other point, ladies and gentlemen of the teacher fraternity: What do you tell your son or daughter when they ask you about their futures, and what they may want to be when they grow up? Does anyone recommend that they enter teaching? We are in a craft that has always taken justifiable pride in our dedication to task. We need to help the Assembly in its goals by reminding ourselves, not the Assembly, that it is time to restore that pride in Virginia's schools and time to renew our commitment to the classroom. I am reminded of a musical a few years back entitled "1776." The plot focused on the summer days of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, when the representatives wrestled with wording and order and issues. The two main characters were Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. At one point of high frustration in search of agreement, Adams turned out to the audience and plaintively asked: "Is anyone there? Does anybody care?"

Well, folks, that is my address.

As I stated earlier, I am awed by your task and privileged to be present for the deliberations. Mine is a kind of plea, from one who has sat in about every seat represented by the Assembly participants. First, despite the spectrum of problems, keep reminding yourselves of the importance of access and opportunity. Everyone is a learner. Anything less shortchanges the democratic process.

Second, don't scatter the resources, which are not only limited but scarce. Don't make this a one-shot activity and try

to get every item on the agenda into the statements. In terms of education, a little dab spread across the range of ideas will not be of much value to any individual idea. View this as a long-range plan, with immediate, mid, and distant goals, and keep the topic alive year after year. Schooling changes; so must its policies.

Third, accept the fact that you have your own agenda, but work to broaden that vision. I know I spoke to you in private, but perhaps others overheard the comments. None of them are revolutionary. All are sincere. The Assembly needs to work towards consensus, but not at the point of mediocrity, nor to settle for the lowest common denominator. Thus, hopefully, your aim will be a clear and concise statement, one that is readable by anyone and understandable by all.

You have been a kind and attentive audience. I have always been intrigued with educational policy formulation. So often it has turned out to be an end in itself. The pressures of time, the urgency of issues, the importance of closure, and the mass of ideas sometimes force policy formulators to forget the student. We are talking about a most fragile process, one that is awesome in its responsibility. For all our knowledge and wisdom, we don't know much about the brain or about how people learn--only that it is frequently unfathomable, unpredictable, and unexpected. Keep that in mind. As you immerse yourself in the business of this Assembly, keep reminding yourself of the fragility of the learning process. If you do so, the students of the Commonwealth of Virginia will be well served.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION TO THE YEAR 2000:
ISSUES AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

by

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College graduates of the year 2000 are
kindergarten children this year.

The year 1983 has become known in educational circles as the "Year of the Report." Spearheaded by A Nation at Risk, the report of the Commission on Excellence in Education, and augmented by over twenty other national and regional reports, a national debate has been launched regarding the present and future of education in the United States.

Certainly the debate has flourished within Virginia. Senator Paul Tribble held a state-wide forum in response to A Nation at Risk, Governor Charles Robb called a Commonwealth Conference on Education. A plethora of meetings, workshops, and discussions were held throughout the state. As the debate continues, future sections will be suggested. This News Letter highlights several of the major educational issues facing the Commonwealth and suggests a range of policy options that may be considered in the future. The list of issues is, of necessity, selective, as is the range of policy options. As examples, the items included are intended to provide the reader a range of alternatives beyond those currently held with high currency in the public debate.

First, though, this discussion will review briefly, the present context in which these issues should be examined and against which policy options will need ultimately to be measured.

Context for Analysis of Current Issues

Among the many trends occurring in our changing Commonwealth, the following seem particularly germane to education.¹

¹ Statistical data are from the following sources: Virginia Department of Education, Facing Up-17: Statistical Data on Virginia's Public Schools (Richmond, 1983); C. E. Feistritz, ed. The American Teacher (Washington, D.C.: Feistritz Publications, 1983); C. E.

Fewer children are now enrolled in school than in years past, and the number will continue to decline over the next several years.

- From 1972 to 1982, the number of school-aged children in Virginia declined 4.9%. In 1982, 19.5% of the state's population consisted of school-aged children.
- Between 1980-81 and 1992-93, the number of Virginia high school graduates may decrease by up to 26%, before beginning to build toward the end of the century.

The state's population is getting older.

- Between 1970 and 1980, Virginia's population age 65 and older grew by 38.5% (as compared to 14.9% for the entire state population). Only 11 states exceeded Virginia in this percentage of growth of the older population.
- Virginia currently ranks 23rd among the 50 states in the percent of its population 65 or older. (Feistritzer, 1982b)

Virginia has a multi-racial population.

- Minorities make up 18.9% of the state's population (as of 1980), and 27.5% of the total students enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12). Of those minority students, 25.5% are black, 1.4% Asian or Pacific Islander, .5% Hispanic, and .1% American Indian or Eskimo.
- 19.1% of Virginia's teachers are minorities.

A significant number of school-aged youth attend non-public education.

Of Virginia's total elementary/secondary school enrollment, 6.9% are in non-public schools.

Feistritzer, ed., The Condition of Teaching: A State by State Analysis (Princeton, N.J.: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1983); Education Week, Mar. 21, 1984; and Virginia Education Association, Virginia's Educational Disparities (Richmond, 1983).

Significant disparities exist among localities in success of the local educational program.

- Statewide average scores on the Virginia State Assessment Program (tests of achievement in reading, language arts and math given in grades 4, 8 and 11), are equivalent to or slightly above the national average. Scores in individual school divisions, however, vary from the 28th-33rd percentile to the 70th-77th percentile.
- Virginia's statewide average graduation rate (the percent of students who enter ninth grade class and graduate four years later), was 75% in 1982; The rate for individual school divisions varied from 54.4% to 100%.
- The statewide average dropout rate for students in 1982 was 4.9%; divisional variance ranged from 1.6% to 14.2%.
- Of the students who graduated from high school in the class of 1982, 60% statewide continued their education in some form of post-secondary vocational or apprenticeship training. Among individual divisions, the number continuing ranged from 81% (with 57% of that number attending four-year colleges), to 23% (with 13.6% attending four-year colleges).

The ability to pay for education (based on values of 1981 real estate and public service corporation property in a locality), varies significantly from school division to school division across the Commonwealth.

- A ten-fold difference in ability to support education can be found from the lowest-ranking to the highest-ranking school division.
- A threefold differential exists from the lowest-ranking to highest-ranking division in total dollars invested in the education of each child--from \$1,584 for the lowest school division to \$4,370 for the highest.

Education is a labor-intensive enterprise; consequently, most significant expenditures are teacher salaries.

- School costs increased approximately 10% over the past year.
- Virginia ranked 31st among the states among the 50 states in average teacher salaries in 1982-83 (\$18,707 in Virginia against a national average of \$20,531) .

The sources of revenue and capacity to fund education are shifting.

- Virginia's percentages of elementary and secondary school revenue receipts by source have been as follows:

	Federal	State	Local/Other
<u>Virginia:</u>			
1972-73	10.4%	34.5%	55.0%
1982-83	6.0%	41.6%	51.8%
<u>National</u>			
<u>Average:</u>			
1982-83	7.4%	50.3%	42.3%

Virginians generally have a positive view of their public schools, according to a recent statewide survey.²

- Slightly over two-third's of a state-wide random sample rated the quality of public schools as excellent or good. However, perceptions varied significantly among social groups and places of residence.
- Almost all Virginian's (92.3% of the sample) think some change is necessary in public education.
- More than nine out of every ten surveyed, regardless of social group or place of residence, believe that Virginia should become a national leader in the field of education.

² D. M. Johnson, J. S. Williams, and S. A. Honnold, The Future of Virginia Through the Eyes of Its Citizens: A Report on a Statewide Survey to the Governor's Commission on Virginia's Future (Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University, Survey Research Laboratory, Mar. 15, 1984).

Virginians appear willing to pay for educational improvement.

- More than nine out of ten surveyed in the statewide sample agree that the state "should improve education offered by grade schools and high schools even if it means raising taxes."

Several observations appear warranted. First, while Virginia supports a sound, responsive system of elementary and secondary education, a wide variation exists among the state's individual school divisions. In all areas reviewed--performance, ability to pay, financial support, and public perceptions--pockets of excellence and mediocrity were found.

Second, the most consistent factor statewide is the public's desire for quality education. All Virginians apparently share a common belief in the value of education and the desire for Virginia to be known for the quality of its educational programs.

Third, Virginia elementary and secondary education will need to respond to recent demographic shifts. Through the balance of this decade, the state will have fewer secondary students, while elementary enrollments will again grow. Two-thirds of the state's population now lives in urban areas. Curriculum, school construction and personnel needs will be different under these new conditions.

Fourth, the portion of the state's economic resources that is supporting education has neither kept pace with inflation, nor expanded to meet the needs of elementary and secondary education. Of major concern are Virginia teachers' salaries which have increased 87.2% over the decade 1971-72 to 1981-82, as compared with 107.4% increase for other governmental workers statewide.

Current Issues

It is within this context that we now examine some of the current issues facing elementary and secondary education in the Commonwealth. The problems and opportunities addressed are critical to the future of education in the Commonwealth.

What Are the Goals of Education? What Do We Expect From Our Schools?

These questions are central to the current debate on education. Only when we can agree on goals and expectations for the schools can

we move ahead to answer questions of means and evaluation, style and substance.

Throughout the history of the Commonwealth, the goals for public education have been many. Early goals for elementary and secondary education were primarily academic and vocational, and school populations were limited to the academically able. During the late 1960s and through the mid-1970s, our country's social agendas placed undue pressures on both schools and the school curriculum. Richard Brandt (former dean of the School of Education at the University of Virginia) summarizes these changes as follows:

The public schools have been given . . . a vastly more complex set of functions than they had fifty years ago. . . . They now must deal with children who cannot or do not want to learn, youngsters with such impoverished and undernourished backgrounds that huge deficiencies must be made up before learning is possible, and now mildly and severely handicapped children, some of whom have never been in school before and others of whom have previously been excluded from regular school life by being placed only in special classes and restricted environments.³

Under these conditions, educational goals and objectives have become greatly enlarged.

In one recent study A Place Called School, John Goodlad argues that public education has four sets of goals: academic; vocational; social, civic and cultural; and personal goals. While most people agree that schools should pursue academic goals (e.g., the mastery of basic skills and intellectual development), other goals are less universally held. Should the schools pursue career-vocational goals for all children? Furthermore, in a society such as ours, should schools seek to develop interpersonal understandings, citizenship participation, enculturation (e.g., the study of traditions and values), or moral and ethical character? Finally, what about personal goals such as emotional and physical well-being, creativity and aesthetic expression and self-understanding? Are these worthy goals of the educational system?

Goodlad argues that while many different stakeholders place different values on each of these goals, until the goals for our

³ Richard M. Brandt, Public Education Under Scrutiny (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981), p. 61.

schools are clearly articulated and understood, improvement of public education will be difficult at best. He writes "Let the states send a strong message of guidance, challenge and hope for education and accompany it with clearly articulated expectations for education in the schools."⁴

But what about private education? What do we expect from it? Private schools don't have to respond to a pluralistic society of multiple stakeholders; they are free to introduce different values into the formulation of educational goals. Religious values, theological dogma, social learning, and narrowly defined goals are all possible within the scope of private education. Yet, can the goals for private education be that different from those for public education? Can private schools that are so different from public schools survive and flourish?

To Whom Do the Schools Really Belong?

Closely related to the issue of goals is the issue of ownership--not in the legal sense, but in the psychological sense. Whom should schools be designed to serve? Who are the most important stakeholders in the educational process? What can be done to involve critical stakeholders in the life of schools? A multitude of constituencies have a stake in the outcomes of the educational enterprise. Students, teachers, parents and the local community are all central to the success of the schools; legislators, business leaders and civic officials also have a stake in the schools. How do we involve them all? When conflicting interests arise, how shall they be resolved?

At one level, this issue speaks to the development of our young people, and what we hold for children and youth in our society. Does the institution that is designed to serve our students, in fact, respond to their needs? Should it? Many of the recent reports including Ernest Boyers' High School and John Goodlad's A Place Called School question whether our secondary schools are at all attuned to the adolescents of today. Both argue that secondary education should be significantly restructured.

In a similar vein, growing teacher militancy and concern suggest that careful study and attention need to be given to the schools as workplaces. Teacher dropout, absenteeism, apathy, and other symptoms

⁴ John Goodlad, A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), p. 60.

of occupational stress suggest that schools are not "owned" by teachers. Schools as workplaces are not conducive to the needs of the adults who occupy them. The quality of work life (QWL) is a concept as appropriate to schools as to the private sector. Yet if we do not view schools as being "owned by teachers," we cannot consider applying this concept to the redesign of schools.

Parents are critical stakeholders, concerned about the quality of education in our schools. Even so, apparent parental lack of interest is frequently cited as a common problem in school-home relations. What is the proper role and relationship between parents and schools?

That question leads us to the relationship between the schools and the greater community and society that they serve. Community leaders, legislators, and corporate executives all express interest in the quality of the schools. Business leaders frequently cite quality of schools as a major reason for relocating plants and other facilities. School budgets frequently are the largest single item in a locality's budget--and a prime target for tax-conscious local leaders. The tension between the belief that schools should be responsive to the present social order and the idea that schools should serve to build a new social order is as old as Socrates, or as recent as the reports of 1983.

What Should Happen to Teaching as a Career?

The recent debate has reaffirmed the proposition that a teacher can make a difference. Yet teaching is no longer viewed as a desirable career, because of salary concerns, a deteriorating work environment, and increased work/career options for women, among other reasons. A decade's inattention to teaching means that those students now entering teacher education programs frequently come from the lower quarters of the academic spectrum. Further, Virginia's proposal to require all beginning teachers to obtain minimum scores on a standardized teachers' test is projected to have a differential impact on minorities.

At issue is what kind of teaching corps we want. Do we desire a teaching corps that has a significant number of black teachers to serve as role models and spokespersons for our black youth? Viewed from a career perspective, attention must be given to the further professionalization of the teaching corps. But how shall we view teaching as a career? Shall we continue to think of teaching as strictly a woman's occupation (still too often characterized by part-time status and low wages)? Or shall we view teaching as a fulfilling career that someone can aspire to and spend a full working

life pursuing? An alternative is to continue to view teaching as an interim career for young people, many of whom will move on to other careers in the private sector and other aspects of human services.

How Can We Train Better Teachers?

What should constitute the curriculum for programs to train beginning teachers? Most agree that teachers should have a strong general educational background, sound preparation in their academic discipline, and enough professional and clinical training to organize and deliver effective instruction when they enter the classroom. At issue is the time to be devoted to each component, the balance among these components, the mode of preparation, and the organization and sequence of the curriculum. Should all teachers complete a traditional liberal arts degree with an academic major? Should professional education be completed during the first year of teaching, rather than while in college? Should teacher education programs be more selective in their admissions of students and more demanding of their graduates? Should the state provide incentives through scholarships and fellowships for those interested in a career in teaching? How to build the teaching corps for the year 2000 is a critically important question.

What Might the Schools of the Year 2000 Look Like?

Schools are incredibly resilient institutions, resistant to change in both structure and form. While desks have become more movable and textbooks more prevalent, the schools of 1984 look remarkably like the schools of 1894. The model of one teacher and twenty-five students pervades the educational enterprise.

What do we want our schools to look like by the year 2000? Would we consider schools with interactive television and home computers, where education becomes, in fact, a cottage industry with children attending school at home? Should we consider restructuring the school day and year so that not all students are in school at the same time? Should we design schools where students could move through grades at a different pace, and where students could start schools at different ages, depending on readiness? Should we increase the boundaries between school and work, or lessen them through on-the-job training, expanded apprenticeships, and other cooperative arrangements between business and education? Are we willing to apply to the design of our schools the knowledge already available concerning child development and learning theory? Are we ready to view schools as places that value learning above the storage of young people?

Can We Afford the Educational System We Desire?

Current estimates by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) are that a shift to a longer school day would increase school budgets by 14.3%. The AASA also estimates that implementing all the recommendations in A Nation at Risk would increase school budgets an average of 27 percent. Such increases cannot be achieved without new revenues and higher taxes. Is the Commonwealth able to make the financial commitments that such significant improvements will require?

Yet education is one of the best investments that society can make. Nationwide in 1980, we spent \$8,600 to keep one prisoner in jail for one year and \$11,500 to keep one child in a detention home for a year--but only \$1,600 per year, per child, on K-12 education.⁵ Clearly a better educated citizenry is the best investment a state can make.

How Can We Provide Full Educational Opportunity to Populations Currently Underserved?

To provide full educational opportunity to all segments of our population, we must modify our funding patterns. The reduced federal role in education has shifted equity concerns to the state and localities. Current statewide funding patterns do not address the problems caused by differential educational costs and the varying capacities of localities to pay. At issue is not only the question of where to obtain the dollars previously supplied by federal programs, but also how to use such dollars to serve needed populations.

The problem of full educational opportunity is more than just a funding issue, however. Programs need to be designed and conducted that will give sound educational experiences to all children. The disproportionate numbers of minority and rural youth who perform poorly or drop out prior to graduation would suggest that equal educational opportunity is not yet a reality.

Who Speaks for or Leads Education?

Of late, education has been criticized for its lack of leadership. Where should the leadership for elementary and secondary education come

⁵ "Next Time Someone Says Schools Stink, Quote the Sweet Facts," 167 American School Board Journal 20-21 (1980).

from? Should it come from state boards of education, superintendents, state political leaders, local school boards, or interested parents? How can talented teachers be empowered to speak for education across the Commonwealth? If the organized teaching profession is not speaking for teachers, who will?

Policy Alternatives

The debate over the present and future of education has provoked action. With strong leadership and virtually bipartisan support, the 1984 General Assembly passed the largest education budget in the Commonwealth's history. The State Board of Education has adopted new school accreditation requirements that include increased graduation requirements. Recent revisions to the State Teacher Certification Code, coupled with testing of and assistance for beginning teachers, suggest improvement in the quality of teachers.

Many other policies could be adopted statewide that might strengthen education across the Commonwealth. As is often the case, some of these policies might conflict with one another. Furthermore, it is well to consider the motive of public policy. As one scholar notes:

Public policy is a crude instrument for securing social ideals. . . . It deals with the common good, not with any good in particular or any neighbors or even with the good of us both together. Policy deals always with what is good in general, on the whole, and for the most part.⁶

The following potential policy alternatives should be viewed as more illustrative than exhaustive.

Elected Local Boards of Education

Virginia characteristically has kept the local school policy boards separate from local government. The method of appointing local school board members varies throughout the Commonwealth. School boards are selected either by members of local governing bodies,

⁶ T. F. Green, "Excellence, Equity, and Equality" in L. S. Shulman and G. Sykes, eds. Handbook of Teaching and Policy (New York: Longman, Inc., 1983), p. 322.

individually or collectively, or by a committee appointed by the local circuit court judge. None provide for the board to be elected directly and thus be directly accountable to the citizenry or parents. Furthermore, local school boards do not have full fiduciary authority.

One could argue that elected school boards would be more responsive to the needs of local communities in developing policies. Given local fiduciary authority, boards would have direct control over the educational programs in their locality. Counter arguments suggest that under such conditions, the school board would become increasingly subject to political processes. Nevertheless, the ability directly to elect officials is one of the fundamental dimensions of our democratic system.

Relationship of Federal, State, and Local Funding and Priorities

The proportion of contributions to school revenues from these three governmental levels has shifted dramatically over the past several years. The federal government traditionally showed a strong concern for equity issues, with financial incentives offered through federally funded special programs for the economically disadvantaged, racial minorities, and the handicapped, for example. Since federal revenues have declined, however, these concerns now fall on state and local authorities.

Thus far, special programs that address these equity issues have not been picked up by the state and the localities. Of consideration is Virginia's equalization formula. Should it be redesigned to respond to the differential capacity of localities to pay for educational services, or to respond to the needs of different localities to provide equal educational opportunity, or both? Also worthy of review and analysis is whether the formula can respond adequately to the needs of urban school divisions with large minority enrollments.

Tuition Tax Credit or Voucher Plans

Tuition tax credits and vouchers are alternative educational funding strategies designed to put financial resources in the hands of individual families and to allow choice among educational opportunities. Tuition tax credits let parents of children who attend private or parochial schools deduct a certain amount from their state taxes. A recent ruling by the Minnesota Supreme Court suggests that under certain circumstances this method might be constitutional.

A voucher plan, tried several years ago in Alum Rock, California and found modestly successful, gives parents a voucher that is equivalent to the cost of educating a child. The parents then may select their child's school, public or private, and pay for the cost of education through the voucher. The school sends the voucher to the state, which reimburses the school in the amount of the voucher. Those in favor of a voucher plan argue that it would make school systems competitive and encourage choice, both within a school division and among public and private schools.

A Statewide Salary Schedule for Teachers

Teachers' salary levels currently are a matter of local policy, and thus salaries vary significantly among school divisions. The more affluent school divisions can pay higher salaries and presumably attract a better teaching force. Over the past few years, increases in the state's contributions to salaries have not been matched by local increases.

A way to equalize teachers salaries across localities would be to adopt a minimum statewide salary schedule. Under such an arrangement, the state would set and fund minimum salaries statewide, and individual localities could supplement their own teachers' salaries beyond the state minimum if they desired. Not only would this policy guarantee a minimum salary statewide, but also the state could increase that minimum on a regular biennial basis.

Career Ladder/Merit Pay Plans

These two policy initiatives, which offer alternatives to the present pay schedules for teachers, have become both extremely popular and extremely controversial. Current schedules recognize years of experience and different levels of education, but salaries are unrelated to job function or performance. A teacher's job functions and responsibilities remain constant over the entire teaching career. Promotion typically takes the teacher out of the classroom, away from teaching.

The purpose of career ladder plans is to change both the sociology of the teaching career and its reward structure. A career ladder sets up a series of progressive steps, each of which has increased responsibilities and different functions. Possible steps might include probationary teacher, tenured teacher, lead teacher, and master teacher. Individual teachers may move through this career pattern, assuming at each step greater responsibilities for the instructional

program, and they are compensated accordingly. Advantages of such plans include career incentives, a basis for increasing compensation, and leadership opportunities among the teaching ranks.

A related strategy is a merit pay, or pay-for-performance, plan. Under this plan, teachers who achieve a pre-agreed upon level of excellence receive compensation beyond the standard pay level. Merit plans are based on the pay system found in business and industry. Some versions allow only a limited number of teachers in a given division to participate, while others permit all teachers to take part. A major issue surrounding merit plans is what factors should be used to determine the quality of a teacher's performance. To date, successful merit plans have a limited track record. Opponents argue that they detract from the need for higher salaries for all teachers, and they express concern about the fairness with which merit can be assigned.

Extended Teacher Preparation Programs

Currently, Virginia requires a bachelor's degree for a beginning teacher. Increased training is encouraged through certificate renewal requirements (six semester hours every five years) and a higher salary for a master's degree. Statewide, 34 percent of the educational force (including principals, superintendents, supervisors, and teachers) hold a master's degree, with the variance among divisions ranging from a high of 51.3 percent to a low of 12.2 percent.

Given our expanded knowledge base and the increased expectations that we have for teachers, an appropriate policy might be to require a five-year preparation program for the beginning teacher. The program would be viewed more as a professional one, akin to law and medicine. The curriculum would provide for an enriched general education component and the equivalent of a major in the academic discipline, as well as substantial grounding in the social and behavioral sciences and the clinical practice of teaching. The program also might include an intensive internship. This more extensive preparation would eliminate the need for a beginning teacher assistance program. Arguments against a five-year plan focus on how an additional year of education would only increase the present difficulties of recruiting teacher candidates for a career with modest pay.

Autonomous Professional Practices Board

One of the hallmarks of a profession is independent governance by its members. Such is the case with medicine, dentistry, law, and other

professions--but not with teaching. The teaching profession is governed by the State Board of Education, advised by a Teacher Education Advisory Committee composed of teachers, university educators, and citizens.

Professional governance issues such as who should enter the teaching profession and what the appropriate qualifications should be could be the responsibility of an autonomous professional practices board. The board, comprised solely of teachers, would be independent of other educational governance bodies. As such, it would bring teaching into the ranks of other professions.

Statewide (Regents) Examination

Virginia requires all high school students successfully to complete a minimum competency examination as a prerequisite for a high school diploma. This examination is designed to test what are believed to be minimal competencies for a high school graduate regardless of the curriculum. In an attempt to strengthen academic programs, the state recently has changed its credit requirements for a high school diploma, creating both a 20-credit general diploma and a 22-credit academic diploma.

An additional strategy to strengthen high school academic programs would be a statewide "regents" examination. Such a testing program, with minimum passing grades for each of the required subject areas, could contribute to raising standards. The program also would help to standardize the curriculum across the localities. If passing a "regents" examination was tied to admission to state-supported colleges or universities, students would have even greater incentives to improve their academic performance. However, the examination would have a negative impact on students with poor basic skills. Furthermore, "regents" exams highlight academic coursework at the expense of vocational/career oriented programs.

Restructuring Secondary Education

Several national reports argue for major structural and curricular changes in secondary education, to counter its present ability to respond to the intellectual, vocational, and personal/social needs of today's adolescents. Combining the senior year with the first year of college, or the eighth with the ninth grades, are possible alternatives. Others are time for public service activities, movement in and out of school, and the opportunities for learning personal

responsibility as well as academics. Alvin Toffler, looking beyond the immediate, argues,

. . . Diversify. Individualize. Decentralize. Smaller, more local schools. More education in the home (by television, computers, etc.). More parental involvement. More creativity, less rote (it's the rote jobs that are disappearing the fastest).⁷

Other alternatives to conventional secondary education include magnet schools within a division or region. Virginia recently has announced a plan to fund regional centers for gifted math and science students and a statewide school for the performing arts. Other magnet centers could be established around other curricular emphases.

Conclusion

Many other policy options could be examined, ranging from collective bargaining for public employees to merit based scholarship programs to encourage talented youth to pursue engineering or high-tech studies. The current public debate has again brought education center stage, and we currently have more options and greater opportunities than ever before to improve education for the next generation. We will do well to remember that the kindergarten student of 1983 will be the college graduate of the year 2000.

⁷ Quoted by H. G. Shane in a review of Toffler's Previews and Premises (1983) in 65 Phi Delta Kappan 572 (1984).

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION:
ECONOMICS AND VALUE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

by Richard G. Salmon

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Central Thesis: A crucial policy issue continuously confronts the public at both the national level and the various state and local governmental levels. The three governmental levels have to make annual fiscal decisions that affect the financial health of public education and the consequential economic well-being of their respective publics. Unfortunately, recent trends in the financing of public education, particularly elementary and secondary education, suggest that most states, including Virginia, have underinvested in their systems of public education.

The History of Public School Financing: A National Perspective

Considerable evidence is available to indicate that the true wealth of a nation may be measured by the quality of its workforce. To develop this human capital, respected economists recognize the need to invest in education, in order to build and maintain a robust economy. Economic inquiry begun in the 1960s has provided evidence that investment in education contributes significantly to the economic well-being of both the individual and the nation.

Intertwined with the economic rationale for investing adequately in education is the concept of universal education. Most historians agree that the concept of universal education developed in the United States during the nineteenth century, with our adoption of mass education at the primary school level (extended in the first half of the present century to the secondary level).

The embryonic idea for universal education, however, justifiably can be traced back to the seventeenth century and the New England Puritans. These early settlers made significant contributions to the founding of free public schools in America. The passage of the Massachusetts laws of 1634 and 1638 established the principle of commonly taxing all property for town and colony benefits. Subsequently, the enactment of the Massachusetts laws of 1642 and 1647 provided the foundation for both compulsory school attendance for all children and the compulsory town maintenance of schools. These Massachusetts laws included an unstated but important principle: The state has the right, power, and responsibility to ensure that universal education is being provided its citizens.

Later, when the United States Constitution was ratified, the absence of a stated federal role in education, coupled with the Tenth Amendment, reserved to the states the basic responsibility for education. Nevertheless, the federal government established its fiscal presence as early as the eighteenth century, with passage of the Land Ordinances of 1785 and 1787.

Despite the long history of tax-supported schools in the United States, the example set by Massachusetts and other New England states initially was not embraced throughout the remaining colonies. Each colony, and later each state, had to face the problem of whether or how its schools were to be organized and financed. Many southern states, including Virginia, were particularly reluctant to adopt the concept of universal education. By 1830, however, thinking men recognized that our democratic form of government was dependent upon an educated citizenry, and that the education system should be supported through direct taxation of property.

During the common school movement of the nineteenth century, several state governments began to assume greater responsibility for financing public schools. Even so, the primary fiscal responsibility remained with local governments. In 1890, state funds, including a negligible amount of federal funds, accounted for 24 percent of total public school revenues. During the early years of the twentieth century, total state revenues for local public schools continued to increase. At the same time, a burgeoning population and an increasing public demand for universal education resulted in a percentage decline in state revenues for public elementary and secondary education. By 1949-50, the state governments were furnishing approximately 40 percent of the total revenues, the federal government 3 percent, and local governments the remaining 57 percent.¹

This pattern remained static until the the 1960s when the Johnson administration channeled large increases in federal aid to the public schools. In 1969-70 the percentage of total public school revenues provided by the federal government rose to 8 percent, the percentage provided by state governments remained at approximately 40 percent, and the local percentage dropped to 53 percent. During the 1970s the percentage provided by the federal government rose to nearly 10 percent. Since that time, the trend has been for state governments to provide an increasing percentage of the total revenues for public schools. In 1978-79 the state governments, for the first time,

¹ See bibliographical note at the end of this paper for information on the sources for the statistical data used throughout this paper.

contributed the largest share of the revenues for public elementary and secondary education. By 1982-83, approximately 50 percent of total public school revenues was being provided by state governments, 42 percent from local governments, and the remaining 7 percent from the federal government.

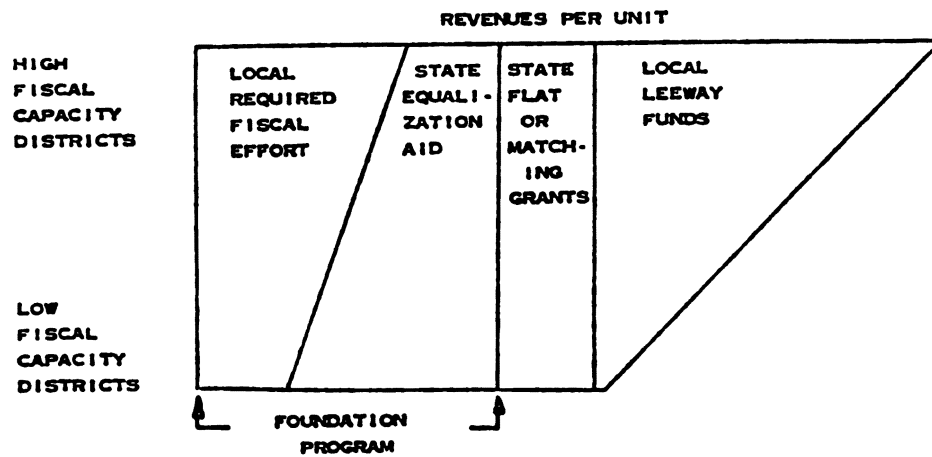
As state governments assumed greater responsibility for financing public elementary and secondary education, they began to use various systems to transfer revenues to local school districts. Initially, most state governments elected to use either a flat grant or matching grant. The flat grant is a simple procedure whereby a fixed amount of money is multiplied by the number of units reported by each of the local school districts to calculate the total of each district's grant award. The matching grant, in contrast, requires the school districts to raise a certain amount of local tax money per unit in order to qualify for the state contributions. During the early years, the units commonly used for these grants were based upon the number of school-aged children in a school district; but they later evolved into more sophisticated pupil-accounting measures, including average daily attendance, average daily membership, and other devices.

While the flat grant and matching grant were both popular and simple to administer, they failed to provide comparable or standard systems of public education among the local school districts within a given state. To counter this problem, an alternative system was introduced in 1930 called the "Foundation Program" grant or the Strayer-Haig program (named after its originators). In essence, the Strayer-Haig program is a fiscal equalization formula that allocates state revenues on a per unit basis in an inverse relationship to a school district's own fiscal capacity. The program achieved considerable popularity, and by 1970 approximately 70 percent of the states, including Virginia, had implemented variations of the Foundation Program.

Figure 1 diagrams a typical state system of public school finance. A mix of required local revenues and state equalization aid forms the foundation, or state-guaranteed aid, program. Additional state fiscal assistance is provided through a series of flat or matching grants, usually for the purpose of fulfilling certain state objectives. These programs, called categorical aid programs, commonly are used to provide state aid in areas such as exceptional education, vocational education, compensatory education, and school transportation. (Not all states have categorical programs established separate from the state equalization aid, however.) Finally, additional local revenues called local leeway funds provide the rest of the school finances, except for federal funds. Federal funds are apportioned through a variety of grant programs, with some funds going

directly to the local school districts and others flowing through the state governments.

FIGURE 1 A STATE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE



NOTE THE ABOVE EXAMPLE OF A STATE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE IS NOT INTENDED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF ANY SPECIFIC STATE.

Equalization programs such as the Strayer-Haig program have resulted in more standard state systems of public elementary and secondary education. Most school finance authorities would agree, however, that few, if any, states have systems of public elementary and secondary education that meet completely the criteria of fiscal equalization. It is not uncommon for the variance in per pupil expenditures among a state's school districts to vary by as much as a ratio of 2:1. Most of this variance in per pupil expenditures can be explained by the difference in fiscal capacity from one local school district to another.

The Evolution of Public School Financing in Virginia

As mentioned earlier, Virginia (like other southern colonies) was slow to adopt the concept of universal education, perhaps heeding the advice of Governor Berkeley, who in 1671 said,

I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world; and printing has divulged them from libels against the best government; God keep us from both.²

During the colonial years in Virginia, schooling was limited to private primary schools and tutors employed by wealthy planters and merchants; private secondary grammar schools and academies; and the College of William and Mary (then a private institution).

The original Virginia Constitution, ratified in 1776, failed to include a provision for education. In 1779 Thomas Jefferson introduced a bill that would have created schools in each county to educate, at public expense, the ablest free children, from elementary school through college; but that bill failed to pass. Seventeen years later, a similar bill was passed, but it left the initiative to the county courts, which remained unreceptive to the idea of public schools. Consequently not a single public elementary school was established under this local-option law.

In 1810 the Literary Fund, still in existence today, was formed to provide a system of schools for "poor white children"; these were considered charity institutions. Funds came from the proceeds of confiscations, escheats, forfeitures, fines, and the sale of glebe lands belonging to the former colonial church.

Following the Civil War, the General Assembly in 1870 ratified a new Virginia constitution with an education provision, mandated by the federal government. Even though the new constitution provided a state system of public schools, many Virginia leaders were vigorously opposed to the concept of universal education. However, a public system of schools gradually did gain acceptance with the citizens of Virginia; and immediately after the ratification of the 1902 Constitution, localities began enforcing standards for employment of teachers as specified by the State Department of Education.

² Virginius Dabney, Virginia, The New Dominion (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972), p. 56.

From 1930 through 1950 Virginia saw a gradual shift away from local fiscal support and a corresponding greater reliance upon the state government. The percent of revenues provided by the Commonwealth's local governments dropped from 74 percent in 1929-30 to 67 percent in 1949-50, while the corresponding state percentages went from 26 percent to 33 percent during the same period. Even with this shift, Virginia was relying more on its local governments to fund education than were the states as a whole, for which local governments in 1949-50 provided only 57 percent of the total revenues for education.

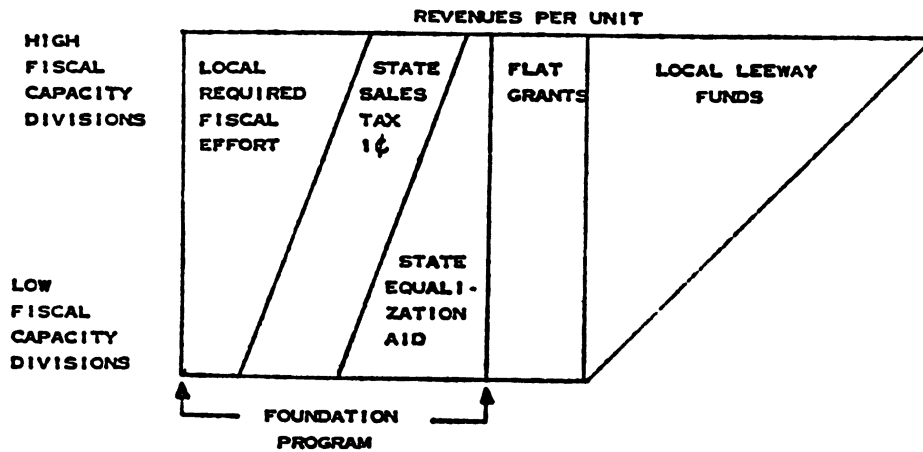
For the past thirty-three years these percentages of fiscal support by the state and local governments in Virginia have remained remarkably constant. In 1982-83, approximately 32 percent of the funding for public elementary and secondary schools was provided by the state, 61 percent by the local governments, and the remaining 7 percent by the federal government. Unlike most states, Virginia continues to rely primarily upon its local governments to provide the necessary fiscal resources to operate its public schools. Partly because of the wide variations in fiscal capacity among the local school districts, this practice of relying primarily upon local resources to fund the public elementary and secondary schools has resulted in considerable variance in the quality of educational services provided throughout Virginia.

Virginia began in 1931-32 to take into account the fiscal capacities of the school districts in distributing state aid. Two years later a fund was established solely for the purpose of assisting those school districts with low fiscal capacity. In later years, attempts to provide a higher level of fiscal equalization among the state's school districts evolved into a typical Strayer-Haig program. While minor changes in Virginia's system for distributing state aid to its local school districts occur nearly every session of the General Assembly, major changes are less frequent, the most recent occurring in 1974-75 after the ratification of the 1971 Constitution.

Virginia's current public school finance program consists of a fiscal equalization program entitled Basic State Aid and a series of categorical flat grants. The fiscal equalization program is a modified Strayer-Haig formula that contains a sophisticated measure of the fiscal capacities of the school districts. This fiscal capacity measure (referred to as the Local Composite Index) includes fiscal capacity indicators of true valuation of property, personal income, and sales tax receipts.

Figure 2 displays the current Virginia public school finance program in Virginia.

FIGURE 2 THE VIRGINIA MODEL OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE



The foundation, or state-guaranteed aid, program is a mix of required local revenues, one cent of the state sales tax, and state equalization aid. The state provides additional fiscal assistance through a series of categorical flat grants. Optional local leeway funds make up the remainder of the school finance system, excluding federal aid,

This fiscal equalization program was designed to provide a system whereby the quality of educational services would be comparable in all districts throughout the state. Unfortunately, one recent study indicates that during the last decade, Virginia has moved further away from fiscal equalization.

The Quality and Economic Health of Public Education Today

The perceived quality of public elementary and secondary education has not fared well in recent years. According to a 1983 Gallup Poll rating of the public schools, the public's perception of

the quality of our public schools has shown a continued downward trend since 1974:

In 1974, 48% gave local public schools a rating of A or B. This year, the comparable figure is 31%. . . . More significant, perhaps, is the rating given their local public schools by parents with children attending public schools. In 1974, 64% of the parents gave the schools their children attended an A or B rating. This year, the comparable figure is 42%.³

What about the economic health of our nation's public elementary and secondary schools? Total expenditures for the schools rose, in current dollars, from \$48.0 billion in 1971 to \$116.9 billion in 1982. But these total expenditures accounted for only 3.8 percent of the GNP during 1982, in contrast to 4.5 percent of the GNP for 1972. Per pupil expenditures in current dollars rose from \$1,099 in 1972-73 to \$2,917 for 1982-83; when per pupil expenditures are adjusted for inflation (based upon use of the Consumer Price Index), the increase over the ten-year period was only 16 percent. When the additional federal and state mandates for increased educational services are coupled with the decline in numbers of pupils attending public schools, the slight increase in real per pupil expenditures becomes insignificant.

Similarly, the mean salary paid the nation's classroom teachers rose from \$10,176 in 1972-73 to \$20,531 in 1982-83. But when the salaries of teachers were adjusted for inflation, classroom teachers experienced a loss of over 12 percent in purchasing power. The fiscal effort made for public elementary and secondary education, as measured by determining the percentage of personal income used to generate total state and local revenues for education, also has declined in recent years. According to data from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the fiscal effort made to fund local public schools has declined a total of 17.6 percent from 1972-73 to 1982-83.

Virginia's Expenditures for Public Education

The economic health of Virginia's public elementary and secondary education system, like that of many states, has not fared well in

³ George H. Gallup, "The 15th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, September 1983.

recent years. On a national basis, Virginia has approximately average fiscal capacity, as measured by personal income per capita, to support governmental services. However, none of the five states contiguous to Virginia enjoyed a higher per capita personal income in 1983. With regard to fiscal effort, or the level of taxpayer exertion made to finance a governmental service, Virginia has made a very modest fiscal effort to finance public elementary and secondary education.

A variety of methods can be used to evaluate this fiscal effort. A common method is to determine the current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education as a percent of personal income; Table 1 shows these percentages for Virginia and its contiguous states for recent selected years. Measured in this way, Virginia has shown a general decline in fiscal effort to fund its public schools.

Table 1. Current Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education as Percent of Personal Income, Virginia and Contiguous States, Selected Years, 1976-77 to 1981-82

State	School Years		
	1976-77	1978-79	1981-82
Kentucky	4.0	4.1	4.2
Maryland	4.5	4.8	4.3
North Carolina	4.4	4.6	4.8
Tennessee	4.2	4.2	3.9
VIRGINIA	4.4	4.1	4.0
West Virginia	4.4	4.8	5.1
United States	4.7	4.6	4.2

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, various years); National Education Association, Rankings of the States, 1983 (Washington, D.C., 1983).

A similar method often used to evaluate fiscal effort, mentioned earlier, is to determine the percentage of personal income used to generate state and local revenues for public elementary and secondary education. This method excludes federal aid and is a more precise indicator of the fiscal effort made by the various states. By this

measure, the fiscal effort made by Virginia to fund public elementary and secondary education also has declined by 11 percent from 1972-73 to 1982-83.

Another indication of Virginia's modest fiscal effort is that 1981 state-local tax collections yielded only \$946 per capita, compared with the national per capita average of \$1,077. Particularly underused was the property tax, which in fiscal year 1981 accounted for only 28.1 percent of Virginia's total state-local taxes compared with the national average of 44.0 percent. Also underused in Virginia was the general sales tax, while the state income tax was slightly overused when compared with the national average.

Virginia's education expenditures per pupil in average daily membership have increased over the past several years, following a similar national trend. From 1972-73 to 1982-83, the state's per pupil expenditures in current dollars increased over 300 percent (see Table 2). When these per pupil expenditures are adjusted for inflation, the increase, while more modest, still exceeded 36 percent over the ten-year period. Unfortunately, though, the increase in per pupil expenditures has been inflated artificially due to the decline in the numbers of pupils attending public elementary and secondary schools. Federal and state mandates for additional educational services, including special education programs, have reduced the level of funding as measured by per pupil expenditures.

Table 2. Virginia Expenditures Per Pupil in Average Daily Membership, Selected Years, 1972-73 to 1982-83

Year	Current Dollars	Adjusted to 1982-83 dollars
1972-73	\$ 823	\$ 1,876
1974-75	1,029	1,935
1976-77	1,242	2,062
1978-79	1,524	2,149
1980-81	2,110	2,363
1982-83	2,561	2,561

Sources: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Superintendent's Annual Report (Richmond, Virginia: State Department of Education, various years); National Education Association, Estimates of School Statistics, 1982-83 (Washington, D.C., 1983).

The mean salary paid classroom teachers in Virginia has increased during recent years, as it has in most other states, but the salary increases have failed to keep pace with inflation. Table 3 shows mean salaries paid Virginia classroom teachers in current and adjusted dollars for selected years 1972-73 to 1982-83. From 1972-73 to 1982-83 the mean salaries, in current dollars, increased nearly 95 percent. However, when the mean salaries are adjusted for inflation, Virginia teachers have experienced a loss of approximately 15 percent in purchasing power over the ten-year period.

The mean salary paid Virginia classroom teachers in 1982-83 was nearly \$2,000 less than the national mean salary that same year. Among the states contiguous to Virginia, Virginia's mean salary for teachers in 1982-83 was exceeded only by that of Maryland. However, the relatively favorable rank is a recent occurrence; as recently as 1981-82 the mean salaries of Kentucky, Maryland, and West Virginia all exceeded the mean salary paid in Virginia.

Table 3. Mean Salaries for Virginia Classroom Teachers,
Selected Years, 1972-73 to 1982-83

Year	Current Dollars	Adjusted to 1982-83 dollars
1972-73	\$ 9,513	\$ 21,690
1974-75	10,671	20,061
1976-77	12,063	20,024
1978-79	13,288	18,736
1980-81	15,553	17,419
1982-83	18,535	18,535

Sources: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Superintendent's Annual Report (Richmond, Virginia: State Department of Education, various years); National Education Association, Estimates of School Statistics, 1982-83 (Washington, D.C., 1983).

The Value of Public Elementary and Secondary Education

Implicit in the concept of universal education that is embraced by the United States are certain values or benefits. Numerous scholars and statesmen, including Thomas Jefferson, have observed that an educated citizenry is essential for the maintenance of a democratic society. Regardless of the political structure and ideology of the

state, the need to invest in an adequate system of education has been widely recognized.

Economic theory that has developed primarily over the last twenty-five years suggests that the amount and quality of a country's investment in education has direct implications for the economic health of the state or nation. This concept of investment in education, pioneered by Theodore Schultz, commonly is referred to as the development of human capital.⁴

Following Schultz's lead, several economists, using different methodologies, have tried to quantify the effects or contributions that an investment in human capital has upon a nation's economy. Most have agreed that an adequate investment in human capital results in substantial benefits.

Commonly, the benefits of human capital investment are considered as either private benefits or social benefits. Private benefits accrue directly to the individual, while social benefits accrue to the total society. Table 4 lists some private and social benefits commonly attributed to an investment in education.

While most citizens understand the private benefits of human capital investment, such as increased income, higher standard of living, and job satisfaction, the magnitude of social benefits are less understood. But the degree of investment in human capital has a definite effect upon the general environment in which industrial production takes place for example. Employers develop a financial interest in their employees, and the employers are more likely to provide additional training or educational benefits for those employees who already have made substantial educational investments. The greater the educational investments the individual has made, the less likely the individual will be unemployed. Further, the less educated employees are more susceptible to fluctuations of the economy, and they are less able to exercise options for pursuit of new or different occupations.

Just as benefits are realized from an investment in human capital, so an underinvestment in education can result in undesirable societal costs. The likelihood of unemployment is greater: One national study found that students who fail to finish high school suffer four times the unemployment rate of high school graduates. Unemployment results

⁴ See Theodore W. Schultz, Investment in Human Capital (New York: Free Press, 1971).

Table 4. Private and Societal Benefits of Education

<u>Private (Individual) Benefits</u>	<u>Social Benefits</u>
<u>Direct Benefits</u>	<u>Direct Benefits</u>
Monetary Net increase in earnings after taxes Additional fringe benefits	Increase in taxes paid by the educated as a result of education
Nonmonetary Increased satisfaction derived from exposure to new knowledge and cultural opportunities for both students and parents	
<u>Indirect Benefits</u>	<u>Indirect Benefits</u>
Monetary Work options available at each educational level Increased consumption of goods and services due to extra income	Increases in other income a) due to increasing productivity of future generations as children become better educated (integration effect) b) due to previously unemployed workers taking jobs vacated by program participants (Vacuum effect)--indirect income effect c) due to reduced tax burden (tax effects) d) due to incremental productivity and earnings of workers (indirect income effect)
Nonmonetary Intergenerational effect between parent and child Job satisfaction	Availability to employer of well-trained and skilled labor force Improved living conditions of neighbors.

Source: Contained in Roe L. Johns, Edgar L. Morphet, and Kern Alexander, The Economics and Financing of Education, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983).

in not only individual unhappiness, but also additional societal expenditures for welfare, health care, and related items.

An inadequate investment in human capital through education also increases governmental expenditures for crime prevention, fire protection, public health, and medical care. For example, various studies have shown that prisoners have lower educational attainment than the average person, and that illiteracy among criminals is much higher than the total population.

In Virginia, the costs for supporting one inmate in a state correctional facility exceeded \$12,000 in 1980, or approximately 5.5 times the per pupil expenditure for providing public elementary and secondary educational services to a Virginia student. Estimates are that Virginia in fiscal year 1984 will spend over \$240 million for operation of its statewide correctional system.

Or consider the welfare program for Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), designed to assist families in which children are deprived of parental and financial support due to death, disability, divorce, desertion, or incarceration. Approximately 165,000 recipients participated in Virginia's ADC program in fiscal year 1983, and the program is expected to cost over \$230 million in the current fiscal year. The Virginia Medicaid program, designed to provide health care for the poor and needy, provided services to nearly 400,000 enrollees in 1980-82 biennium. Estimates are that over \$500 million will be spent for the Medicaid program in fiscal year 1984.

The value of an education is unquestioned. Besides being necessary to maintain a democratic society, education can provide the individuals with a higher standard of living, greater job security, and more alternatives throughout life. An investment in education generates greater revenues for the state and reduces the undesirable expenditures required for welfare, unemployment-related programs, health care, crime prevention, and fire protection. This development of human capital provides society with greater productivity and a more robust and vibrant economy.

Conclusion

The potential value of an adequate investment in public elementary and secondary education has been overlooked by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The state's policy of relying primarily on local taxable resources to fund Virginia's public elementary and secondary schools has resulted in a system characterized by a wide

variation in the quality of educational services among the local school divisions.

Per pupil expenditures among the state's 140 school divisions vary by as much as a 2:1 ratio or more. This wide variation in per pupil expenditures among the local school districts indicates that a number of Virginia's pupils are not receiving adequate education services.

Much of the variance in per pupil expenditures can be explained by variations in the fiscal capacities of the localities. School divisions with a high fiscal capacity are able to take advantage of their abilities to generate considerable revenues for their schools; those divisions with a low fiscal capacity, in contrast, cannot generate adequate revenues without an extraordinary fiscal effort. Compounding the problem that the low fiscal-capacity divisions have because of inadequate taxable resources is the common absence of community aspiration or demands for an adequate investment in education. The high fiscal-capacity school divisions usually have a high percentage of parents and citizens who have high educational expectations and demand a substantial investment in education. The low fiscal-capacity school divisions have neither the citizen demand nor the fiscal capacity to fund adequately their systems of public schools.

History has shown that whenever substantial increases in human capital investments are made, leadership has been exercised at the national or state levels. While the citizens of some local school divisions will demand and receive adequate educational services, it has proved uncommon for significant increases in educational funding to be generated entirely from local resources. Both the challenge and the responsibility for recognizing the value of an adequate investment in education rest with the policymakers at the state level.

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THE UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

By Martha E. Dawson

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The major public policy issue in education today is whether the power brokers in our society are willing to make the commitment to education that is needed to improve the quality of educational programs for all of our nation's children. Recent reports of the failure of the nation's schools lead us to question whether there is universal commitment to effective public education.

Public education in Virginia has become everybody's business. But when everybody gets involved with public policy, you are likely to find that no one person or group is held accountable. However, all of those who, by virtue of their position or training, make and implement policies for public education must be about the business of seeking educational changes. Those with power must use their influence to make a difference in schooling. While a number of influential power brokers are shaping the direction of education today, often these groups do not assume an accountability role.

Who are these educational power brokers? As defined in this paper, they are the persons who have the position, authority, training, and resources to direct, influence, and impact upon the lives of others. In the area of public education, the hierarchy of power brokers includes the federal government, governors, state legislators, state boards of education, local school boards, educational associations, superintendents, principals, teachers, counselors, parents, and community groups.

The Federal Government as a Major Power Broker

While public education in the United States is under the authority of the state, the federal government traditionally has supported state and local educational boards in areas of national concern. If the nation is indeed at risk--and we are now graduating masses of young people who will be unable to function in an information society--the federal government must consider seriously the recommendations from the federal Commission on Excellence in Education and enact strong legislation that supports local school districts in finding solutions to problems facing our educational system.

The Chief Executive Office, A Powerful Leader in School Reform

Virginia's future as a leader in the fiercely competitive information society is in the hands of the boys and girls who leave our schools with the prerequisite values, skills, and attitudes that are essential for the state and nation. Likewise, our future as a people will be adversely affected by those who drop out or those who leave with a "mock diploma."

The governor has the whole state in his hands. Thus, quality education must be foremost on the list of administrative priorities. Fortunately, the governor of Virginia has taken a leadership role in response to state and national reports on quality education. As a chief power broker, his role sets the stage for the implementation of significant educational policies.

The governor of Virginia might well use his power in additional ways, however. First, he could take a leading role in building a positive image of the teacher. Public school teachers have not been accorded a place of importance in the political pecking order within either this state or the nation. The governor would do well to take the leadership in using this untapped resource on policy-making committees and commissions.

Second, the governor needs to play a strong advocacy role in improving public education. Some concern needs to be demonstrated over Virginia's school drop-outs and push-outs, and their loss as revenue-generating resources for the state. The loss of fiscal resources in the state is related to the percentage of school-aged youngsters who fail to graduate--youngsters whose opportunities for gainful employment thus are limited. Data on the graduation and drop-out rates of Virginia's youth between the ninth and twelfth grades, as reported in Facing Up 17--Statistical Data on Virginia's Public Schools (published by the Virginia Department of Education), should become the basis for a statewide study mandated by the governor.

Legislators as School Power Brokers

A known fact about any organization is that the person in the organization who controls funds also makes and implements policies. The legislative power of the budget places Virginia's legislators in a most influential position to effect change in the Commonwealth's schools. Legislators in Virginia need to work with the governor to develop an educational manifesto for Virginia. This document, which should speak to school boards, superintendents, and principals, should require the implementation of programs that will be evaluated on the

basis of measured performance of pupils. Fiscal rewards should be granted to those districts that can document the fact that their students are having successful educational experiences.

Political power brokers such as governors and legislators have a moral obligation to recognize the problems in our schools. As Terrel Bell, U.S. Secretary of Education, has stated, "Education is to state governments as national defense is to the federal government. Therefore, most of the effect for lasting improvement in education will have to come from state and local officials."

The Power of State Boards of Education and Chief State Officers to Change Schooling

When it comes to elementary and secondary education, 1983 might well be identified as the "Year of Educational Explosion." The report by the National Commission on Excellence, A Nation at Risk, hit the educational establishment in much the same manner as a dormant volcano that suddenly erupts. This report was not the only one to cause shock waves; it was followed by other documents on the quality of schools in the United States that caused major tremors on the national scene.

The recommendations from the diverse reports generated during 1983 might well be considered "educational megatrends." Author John Naisbitt has said that the megatrends he has identified for the society-at-large will transform our lives in the information society. So, too, will the educational megatrends transform the educational establishment, especially elementary and secondary schools.

These megatrends should be especially significant to state boards of education because, for the most part, the recommendations will lead to policy changes. However, Virginia state board members will certainly need to be aware of the fact that the majority of the reports appear to be a part of what this writer has dubbed a "more syndrome." The educational megatrends indicate that in order to have effective schools, there is a need for:

- more time in school prior to graduation
- more time in the school day
- more time in the school year
- more vigorous testing
- more money for master teachers

- more emphasis on subject matter content, especially mathematics and science
- more accountability for teachers and administrators
- more homework
- more time on educational tasks
- more law and order in the school environment

It behooves power brokers such as the State Board of Education to provide a sense of direction that will guide the elementary and secondary schools in Virginia on a steady course after the thunder of this year's educational explosion has passed.

Such power brokers need to include an evaluation requirement in all new proposals for the schools. We need to design longitudinal studies for every new school proposal. State board members, in recommending changes, should move with deliberate speed in seeking answers to such questions as:

1. Will a longer school day mean an extension of the same repetitive education?
or
Will more time mean greater opportunities for pupils to develop critical, quantitative, and analytical skills?
2. Will a longer school year just extend rote instruction, teacher-dominated lectures, and filling in the blanks?
or
Will more time mean greater opportunities for developing individual initiative for learning and personal development, an appreciation of self and others, creative abilities, and essential moral and spiritual values?
3. Will more time on task mean more dependence on textbooks?
or
Will more time on task allow more time for discovery, independence, and responsibility for one's own learning?

4. Will more years in school be an extension of the same curriculum?

or

Will more years in school provide an opportunity for all students, regardless of background or color, to leave secondary schools with the prerequisite skills for further study or entry into the job market?

These questions are but a sampling of the issues that power brokers at the state level need to address if they are to provide the critical leadership needed in the schools of the Commonwealth. Much unfinished business remains to be done in Richmond.

Power in Local School Boards

The most obvious power brokers close to elementary and secondary schools are the local school boards. The school board controls schools through setting teachers' salaries, establishing school attendance districts, implementing federal and state regulations, and selecting superintendents, principals, and other administrators. What occurs or fails to occur in our schools is related directly to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of local school boards.

Local school boards in Virginia need to become well informed on the problems faced by each school district. It is imperative that school boards:

- establish a realistic budget that addresses the needs of diverse classroom groups;
- establish educational programs that fulfill current needs and provide a foundation for future learning;
- develop procedures for assessing the effectiveness of administrators, counselors, and teachers in promoting academic growth of diverse student groups; and
- demonstrate the courage to establish differential salary scales for teachers. Success as measured by student performance is a reasonable criterion for merit.

Unless local school boards understand their role as guardians of academic quality, we cannot expect boys and girls attending our public schools to receive the kind of education needed either for the balance

of this century or for movement into the twenty-first century. Local school board members are in a strategic position to improve and maintain quality in the school. The expectations of school board members, like teachers' expectations, have a "pygmalion effect" on the quality of the instructional program.

Local Government Officials and the Power of the Budget

Where a strong local government exists, there is likely to be a quality educational program. Local government officials influence elementary and secondary education by the priority they give to education in the operational budgets of the city or county (or, in a few instances, the town). These power brokers must recognize that new residents are attracted to areas where there is a high literacy level among the population and where schools are known for quality programs. In addition, industries relocate in areas where they find persons with the technical skills needed to compete with domestic and foreign markets.

Before we put all the blame for educational shortcomings in local schools on teachers and pupils, citizens of Virginia need to determine if local government leaders are committed to a quality educational program. Teachers, parents, and citizens-at-large need to elect to office those persons who are aware of the importance of good schools and are willing to provide the necessary leadership and to direct funds into public education.

Without the commitment of these local power brokers, the proposals for educational change being generated by diverse members of the educational establishment will be little more than empty rhetoric.

The School Superintendent as a Local Power Broker

The one single person who has the greatest responsibility for the quality of education within a school district is the school superintendent. This individual and his or her administrative team are responsible for selecting competent personnel. If there is rising mediocrity in our schools, as has been reported in such publications as A Nation at Risk, A Place Called School, and High School, then the chief executive office for the schools must be held accountable.

We might begin in Virginia to assist our superintendents by requiring that they, like classroom teachers, participate at regular intervals in professional renewal programs. Members of the State Board of Education and state legislators who are now demanding that

classroom teachers be upgraded should likewise direct attention to superintendents, supervisors, and principals.

The superintendent is a critical power broker, and persons in this position need to be not only good managers and administrators, but also strong educators. If the latter quality is missing, this important power broker is unwittingly in a position where he or she is unable to provide the leadership essential for effective schools.

Higher Education Institutions

Sometimes university professors seem to forget that the foundation for advanced study is laid in the elementary school and expanded through secondary education. Those of us in institutions of higher education often tend to assume that there is a significant difference between the high school senior who graduates in June and the college freshman who enrolls in 110 English, mathematics, French, science, music, physical education, or other courses in August of the same year.

Because we fail to recognize that education of college youth is part of a continuum from kindergarten or first grade, we fail to recognize that universities are a part of elementary and secondary school problems. These problems, however, are not limited to ineffective schools of education but often to the college-at-large, since only a small percentage of the educational preparation of teachers is in departments of education.

If we are serious about improving the quality of elementary and secondary schools, we must recognize the higher education institution as a power broker that supplies elementary and secondary schools with its "products." Any supplier of goods must be held accountable for the quality of its products. Higher education institutions need to initiate programs in which they become part of the solution of elementary and secondary school problems.

Professional Teachers' Associations

With the barrage of criticism that has been hurled at teachers and schools, persons in the profession are likely to feel that they are victimized by all of the power brokers discussed thus far. Such is not true. The professional teachers organizations continue to place a tremendous amount of pressure on school districts. They also are strong lobbyists at state and national levels.

While these groups do campaign for quality education and teacher benefits, at the same time they also must share some blame for the decline in the quality of elementary and secondary schools. In the clamor for the rights of teachers, the rights of children to be benefactors of effective schooling are often overlooked. Educators, above all others, know how complex teaching and learning is. Yet some professional organizations continue to negotiate for benefits that would limit the amount of time a teacher would give to the actual teaching and learning process.

Teachers in Virginia need to recognize their power and use their professional organizations to resolve the educational deficiencies evidenced by standardized achievement test scores and levels of competence, not only of enrolled students, but of those who graduate as well. Good teachers are constantly in the business of making judgments and evaluating pupil performance. It is time now that, through their professional organizations, Virginia's educators assume leadership for the development of merit plans that recognize and support master teachers.

The Role of Parents and Community Groups

Parents are the first and the most influential teachers of their children. Thus, they often feel the need to become assertive about the the formal education of their offspring. Groups such as parent-teacher organizations and community school councils are power brokers who have a role to play in the educational establishment. However, the manner in which that power is used in the learning process merits continuous review.

As we direct our attention to the unfinished business of elementary and secondary education, it seems appropriate that some careful guidelines be developed at the level of the State Board of Education about the role that community groups should play in the continuing thrust for quality education in Virginia. There is need for caution here, however; educators must not allow parents and community groups to dictate the curriculum or tell teachers what and how to teach. Professionals in any discipline have the right to use their best professional judgment in diagnosing problems and prescribing possible solutions.

Action Agenda for Quality Education in Virginia

Change in the educational system at state and local levels will only result from the commitment of all those previously identified as

"power brokers." If the youth of the Commonwealth of Virginia are to gain the personal values and academic competencies essential for survival in an information society, we will need to combine our commitment to excellence in the classroom with standards of adult accountability.

In order that we might move forward with the unfinished business of educating Virginia's youth, several proposals are presented here as a part of an ACTION AGENDA. This Action Agenda is directed toward pre-college institutions. However, colleges and universities also must provide the appropriate leadership to help elementary and secondary schools implement the proposed agenda.

Proposal 1: Establish State and Local Bipartisan Commissions

If Virginia schools are to be improved, power brokers at the state and local levels must take control. The general decline in the quality of education demands a bipartisan coalition of citizens who are willing to take the responsibility for both past failures and needed changes in Virginia. These groups, appointed by the governor, the State Board of Education, or local governing bodies, could be given the task of constantly monitoring the quality of educational programs being offered throughout the state. These groups could reveal evidence of weaknesses as well as observable improvements in the educational environment of the schools.

Proposal 2: Establish a Computer-Based Student/Teacher Tracking System

A blue-ribbon commission should be appointed through the State Board of Education to develop a computer program that would be used to identify the achievement level of students as they move from teacher to teacher. This student/teacher tracking system would provide a mechanism for keeping longitudinal records of successful educators. It also would identify those teachers who are ineffective in their teaching practices.

Proposal 3: Extend the School Year for Teachers

Teachers should be offered an opportunity for employment for nine, ten, or eleven months. Teachers employed for nine months would begin and end the school year as they do currently. Teachers offered ten- or eleven-month contracts would pursue further study or engage in special teaching improvement programs.

Proposal 4: Extend the School Day for Teachers

Teachers should be expected to remain at school for eight hours each day. Schedules for students would remain as currently enforced. Teachers' additional time at school should be given to activities related to instructional effectiveness and not to fund-raising or other extra-curricular activities.

Proposal 5: Establish an Incentive Pay Scale for Teachers

Teachers who demonstrate proficiency in improving the academic skills of those students who are the least served by society should be awarded special salary incentives.

Proposal 6: Make Principals Accountable for Educational Progress of Their Pupils

Special task forces should be established in each school district to visit schools for the purpose of reviewing the leadership styles of the principals and the learning environments of their schools. In addition, a business management model should be used to assess the principals' roles in assisting teachers as they carry out their instructional duties. Principals in schools where children make progress should be rewarded. Those who operate schools where a large percentage of pupils continually fail to meet Virginia's Standards of Learning Objectives should be removed from the position of principal.

Proposal 7: Establish a Transitional School Model for Those Who Continue to Demonstrate Antisocial Behavior in Conventional Schools

To establish this transitional school model, a bipartisan state committee should be appointed, composed of individuals who have knowledge and experience in working with children and adolescents. This group could include pediatricians, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, criminologists, judges, legislators, educators at all levels and in all areas (both teachers and administrators), guidance counselors, and parents of both successful pupils and troubled youths. The committee should consist of a healthy balance of individuals who are familiar with the special problems of minorities and the poor, since the number of children from such homes who exhibit behavior problems in conventional schools is disproportionately higher than among their more advantaged peers.

Students in transitional schools would be required to master skills essential for transition from high school to college or into the world or work. Such schools should have linkages with community support agencies.

Proposal 8: Establish Parenting and Continuing Education Programs for Teenaged Parents

Funds should be made available from local, state, and federal resources to develop a comprehensive educational program for teenaged mothers and fathers. The special program should have components of parenting, academics, occupational skills, and an emphasis on developing positive attitudes and values. In cases where such individuals are the recipients of public assistance (welfare), the training programs should be mandatory and continuous until such individuals have demonstrated the ability to be self-supporting, as well as to be capable of responsible parenthood.

Proposal 9: Establish Neighborhood School Watch Programs

When crime increases in our neighborhoods, citizens, with the assistance of law enforcement officers, establish neighborhood crime watch programs. With a little creative imagination, we could gather the support of church groups, community organizations, parents, educators, and industries to establish local school watch programs.

School watch programs should be targeted toward specific elementary, junior high (middle), and secondary schools. Each unit should focus on the special needs of the pupils, teachers, and administrators of the schools. Citizens in the community would work with school officials in monitoring the school grounds to minimize disruptions, as well as in offering assistance after school by serving as tutors or study hall monitors.

Proposal 10: Reassess the Role of School Counselors

Often in evaluating the quality of schooling, persons who are not involved in day-to-day classroom activities are not held accountable for the success or failure of students. But we need to look at the progress of students as the shared responsibility of the total professional staff. In this regard, we must critically review the training and operational practices of our school counselors.

Guidance counselors in Virginia's schools should be required to broaden their scope of operations. To implement this proposal, all guidance counselors should:

- serve as home-school facilitators;
- implement a continuous diagnostic and prescriptive service program so that children, especially racial minorities and the poor, are not assigned to "holding tracks" throughout elementary and secondary schools;
- serve as resource persons to parents, teacher, and children in making contact with appropriate school and community agencies, as needed;
- assist those who leave school prior to graduation in finding alternative routes to gain access to the job market;
- maintain viable academic and creative talent search programs, bringing to the attention of teachers and administrators those pupils whose talents need nurturing;
- work with social agencies, parents, and others to resolve school and home problems that are likely to impact negatively on academic progress; and
- implement viable career guidance programs for middle-school and secondary-school pupils.

The Importance of Parental Involvement and Responsibility

Educators and government officials who are generating plans for improving the schools must design strategies that will enlist the cooperation of parents in solutions to our educational problems. In planning an agenda for parental involvement, it is imperative that we recognize the range of differences among parents. Often parents who appear apathetic about what is happening to their children in school in fact are deeply concerned, but they feel a sense of helplessness. Educators need to recognize the differences among parents and plan strategies to work with each type.

Type A Parents: Parents in this category are usually professionals and highly motivated individuals.

They have the potential for assuming an active role of helper or aide in some school activities. However, they often direct the educational destiny of their own children in spite of the school. Parents in this group must be encouraged to work with the school guidance counselor, but not to take over the professional role of educators.

Type B Parents: This group includes parents who are extremely interested in the educational enterprise. They are often willing to assume the role of helper or aide in some school activities. Many working parents are included in this group.

Type C Parents: Parents in this category may have the potential and training to join forces with teachers to provide effective educational programs, but they need direction. Type C parents are often those who engage in "do-it-yourself" approaches, attempting alternative at home to supplement school activities, some of which are counterproductive.

Type D Parents: Type D parents are representative of the large segment of the school population. They are interested in the welfare of their children, but they may not bother to become active in the schools or demonstrate this interest in their children's program.

Type E Parents: In some schools we are likely to find some parents who may lack literacy skills. They might be confused and unable to assist in the educational process, even though they wish the best for their children. This group will often need adult education and training in parenting.

Type F Parents: Unfortunately, one finds a segment of parents who have negative feelings about school. They may possibly have been victims of failures. A subgroup of this category includes abusive parents and negligent parents. Schools are sometimes at odds with

these parents and find it necessary to seek assistance from other agencies in the best interest of the children.

These classifications are not finite, for one might find overlapping traits among parents. However, in calling for action to improve schools, those parents who can assume the ideal role of copilots must be used to help guide Virginia's youth into the "sea of knowledge." Other parents will need special help if they are to assume their responsibilities, first as parents, and then as assistants in the educational process.

Summary

The current state of affairs in public education appears to be a microcosm of the problems inherent in our wider society. While we are currently addressing curriculum problems, teacher competency, and the academic achievement of our students, we need to recognize that our educational dilemma has other dimensions, such as poverty, crime, unemployment, and rural unrest.

All power brokers must be held accountable for the maximum growth and development of the children, our most valuable commodity. In accepting this awesome responsibility, collectively, we must finish the "unfinished" agenda and **MAKE EDUCATION OUR MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS.**

PROFESSIONALISM IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

By Alan E. Fuchs

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Introduction: The Problem

Recent studies of American primary and secondary education have pointed to the present condition of the teaching profession as one of the most significant explanations for the apparent decline in the quality of our public schools.¹ Since the evidence for the diminished status of teaching as a profession and for the decline in the average quality of the members of the profession is overwhelming, one is forced to agree (unless one wants to assert, as I most assuredly do not, that the excellence of a society's system of education is not largely dependent upon the quality of its teachers).² But what is responsible for this alarming state of affairs?

¹ I have limited my discussion to the status of public school teachers since they were the ones predominantly discussed in my sources, and since I am personally familiar only with the public school environment. I believe, however, that many of my observations would apply as well to teachers in private schools.

² Emily Feistritzer, for example, summarizes her statistical survey of the qualifications of current teachers with this pessimistic observation: "Not only are far fewer persons choosing teaching as a career, but the caliber of those entering the teaching profession is low and continuing to decline significantly." (C. Emily Feistritzer, The Condition of Teaching [Princeton, New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1983], p. 88).

I assume throughout this paper that it is well known that many, if not most, of the dedicated individuals who teach are excellent educators who are justifiably proud of their professional accomplishments. When I follow the numerous recent studies of American education in claiming that there has been a drop in the qualitative level of contemporary teachers, I am of course referring to statistical generalizations--the various measures of the average qualifications, apparent abilities, and work attitudes of those entering and remaining in the profession.

Many commentators have pointed to the relatively poor salaries paid to teachers, especially when compared with other occupations that require similar levels of educational preparation and that similarly affect the economic and cultural well-being of society. Others point to our ambivalent attitude toward the teaching profession, noting that while people claim to respect teachers and their calling, our actions and practices actually reveal less regard for educators than for many other supposedly less prestigious occupations. (Whether this lack of prestige is a cause or consequence of the low salaries paid to teachers is a question not herein explored.) Still others have cited as the prime culprit the liberation of women from their traditionally assigned occupations. When teaching was but one of the few careers open to unusually well-educated and talented females, highly qualified women naturally filled its ranks. However, now that business, medicine, and the law compete with one another and with countless other prestigious and well compensated fields for the same talented women, the average quality of those who still choose to teach obviously will have declined.³

This paper will discuss another possible diagnosis of the ills currently infecting the teaching profession. My concern is with a factor that has received remarkably little direct attention, even amidst the innumerable recent studies of the American educational scene. I refer to the decline of teaching as a "profession."

While everyone continues to speak loosely of the teaching "profession"--I have already done so myself in this paper--and while teachers are of course trained in "professional" schools and belong to "professional" associations, classroom educators simply do not enjoy the essential rights and responsibilities that constitute membership in a profession in the full sense. A clear specification of the essential features of true professional status and a consequent realization of the conditions that would enable teachers to enjoy them would, I believe, go a long way toward giving educators the respect (and soon thereafter the financial and other rewards) that society so willingly grants to the other professions. This in turn would lead, I am sure, to a dramatic upswing in the motivation and abilities of those joining and remaining in this newly elite guild. Were teaching

³ This explanation may be a manifestation of an underlying problem, rather than its cause. Why, we may ask, have so many of the most talented women so eagerly left teaching as soon as they were free to do so, and why haven't equally talented males rushed in to fill the resulting vacancies now that teaching and the other professions are purportedly no longer sexually segregated occupations?

recognized as an equal member of the circle of full-fledged professions and were its members regarded and treated as true professionals, one would soon see the "best and the brightest" of our society, male and female alike, competing to join its ranks. Surely, teaching's intrinsic rewards, well known to all these who have ever practiced it under reasonably favorable conditions, can equal those of any career.

The Concept of a Profession

What makes an occupation into a profession, and when does a mere worker become a "professional"? Why is a self-proclaimed profession (such as teaching or nursing) any less a profession than those fields (such as medicine, law, and the clergy) that indisputably have that status? In answering these and other closely related questions, we are not concerned here with the sense of the term "professional" that designates anyone who performs or works for remuneration. Irrespective of how much they earn or how well they perform their jobs, artists, "professional" tennis-players, merchandizers, and plumbers are not professionals in the sense under discussion, while doctors, lawyers, architects, and certified public accountants clearly are. We seek to analyze, rather, the notion that is quintessentially understood to refer to the traditional "learned professions": law, medicine, the ministry, and (to some theorists) university teaching. An understanding of what is common to these unchallenged instances of professions may give us the means to determine the status of disputable cases such as elementary and secondary education.

Let us therefore turn to the notion of a "learned profession" and see if we can formulate its defining criteria. What is it that distinguishes a profession in this sense from any other mere occupation? Fortunately for our purposes, the recent concern of several professions with their codes of "professional responsibility" have led them, along with interested philosophers, to study this question in depth. Sociologists, fascinated by the phenomenon of the traditional professions and the recent attempts by other newer occupations to attain a similarly elevated social status, also have made valuable contributions to our understanding of the concept.⁴ The results of these and my own studies are summarized in the next section.

⁴ The following analysis has relied most directly on the discussions of two philosophers, Richard Wasserstrom and Michael Bayles, who are probably the most respected experts in the burgeoning area of professional responsibility; See Richard Wasserstrom, "Lawyers as

Before proceeding, however, we must note one methodological point. The concept of a "profession" (and therefore the attendant one of a "professional") is obviously not a precisely defined one, like that of a mathematical "square" or "triangle." "Profession," like many other important concepts in our language (especially in its more normative or evaluative uses), is a somewhat vague notion; it admits of marginal borderline cases as well as the clearly central or paradigm ones. It is therefore impossible to supply a list of qualities for "profession" that would define the necessary and sufficient conditions for its correct usage--in other words, to provide a list of criteria by which an occupation could be classified as a profession if and only if it met each and every one of them.

Nonetheless, we may still explicate certain key factors that are apparently essential to the notion, such that an occupation will be regarded as a profession if and only if or to the degree that it partakes of these definitional properties.⁵ Thus, when an occupation

Professionals: Some Moral Issues," Human Rights VI (1975), pp. 1-24; and Michael O. Bayles, Professional Ethics (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1981) Chapter 1. Their analysis is amply supported, however, by other studies, including those of actual practitioners of the respective professions. See, for example, Geoffrey C. Hazard, Ethics in the Practice of Law (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). My major sociological sources included: J. A. Jackson, Professions and Professionalization (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1970), Chapters 1 and 5; Wilbert E. Moore, The Professions: Roles and Rules (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970); Evert C. Hughes, "Professions," in Kenneth S. Lynn, ed., The Professions in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 1-14; and Amatai Etzioni, ed., The Semi-Professions and Their Organization (New York: The Free Press, 1969).

⁵ Another example of this procedure is in parts of the civil law. There, too, we attempt to provide definitional criteria to clarify inherently vague notions such as "responsible" or "reasonable," so that we can better understand borderline cases. Lawyers and judges, when faced with a difficult case of apparent negligence, will have to determine, in part, if the defendant took "reasonable" care. The lawyer will therefore attempt to abstract defining or characteristic tests from cases of unquestionably reasonable conduct, which he or she then will use to decide whether or to what extent the defendant can be considered to have met these tests and therefore whether or to what extent he is guilty or innocent of failing to have taken "reasonable" care in his conduct.

has all or almost all of the enumerated qualities, it will be regarded indisputably as a full-fledged profession; those occupations that totally or almost totally lack the essential features will be clearly excluded.⁶ The most interesting cases, however, may turn out to be those in the middle, those occupations that have some, but by no means all, of the definitional properties--those borderline cases that leading sociologist Amatai Etzioni has called the "semi-professions."

Definitional Criteria of a Profession

1. Esoteric Knowledge. The first and perhaps most important requirement for a profession is that its members possess a specialized body of relatively esoteric knowledge. The professional knows the mysteries of a subject matter that is literally inaccessible even to well-educated and intelligent lay people. Even when we do know something about a particular field, the professional's insight and ability is of an altogether different order. So although all of us know something about the laws that govern us, the workings of our bodies, and the basic facts of science, we turn to lawyers, doctors, and engineers because of the certified superiority of their knowledge of these areas and for their recognized ability to apply this knowledge in useful ways.

Moreover, the specialized insights that true professionals possess are decidedly intellectual, or at least theoretical. The master artist or craftsman has a practical knowledge of his materials and how to use them that transcends the general public's knowledge at least as much as the accountant's knowledge of tax laws exceeds that of the ordinarily well-informed citizen. But since the former's skill is primarily one of manual dexterity, it is not regarded as a genuine professional ability. Even when a professional's characteristic work does involve manual skills to a high degree, as in the case of surgeons and dentists, the skill involved is regarded as secondary to the underlying theoretical knowledge that guides the dexterous hands of the skilled practitioner.

⁶ A completely rigorous analysis of the concept of a profession also would have to note that each of the definitional factors will itself be present in specific cases in varying degrees. Thus, for example, the requirement of specialized education is obviously satisfied to a higher degree by a brain surgeon than by a lawyer in general practice, who, in turn, has this quality to a greater extent than an accountant, and so on.

The claim that the professional's knowledge is shared only by duly certified members of the profession is an even more important factor than its intellectual quality. This presumption of a privileged body of knowledge is what apparently supports the further belief--held by the profession and the public alike--that the professional and the professional alone knows best how to handle a client's affairs or minister to his body or soul. Indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary reveals that it is this "profession" of a unique knowledge of certain matters of vital concern that forms the etymological root of our modern word "profession."

2. Specialized Education. Partially because of the above-mentioned requirement of special knowledge, the professions characteristically demand a significant degree of specialized education, usually at a level beyond that of the college bachelor's degree. Most professions have organized special graduate schools or other advanced programs to prepare individuals specifically to meet this specialized educational requirement. Even when these schools are parts of large public or private universities, as is almost always the case, their curricula are determined either by professional organizations or by current professionals who also serve on the faculties of these schools. The accreditation standards applied by the American Medical Association to medical schools and by the American Bar Association to law schools conspicuously demonstrate their effective control over the educational processes that ultimately transform the aspiring student into a neophyte professional, though other professional organizations exert similar influences as well. Since, as argued above, both the members of a profession and the general public believe that only certified professionals have access to the esoteric body of knowledge that is the special purview of the particular profession, it stands to reason that determining what should be taught to future members of that guild is and should be left in the hands of its already initiated and therefore presumably competent members.

3. Monopoly of Practice. Another closely related feature of a full-fledged profession is that it maintains a monopoly on the provision of its distinctive services. Since the society-at-large has accepted the profession's claim that only its members are competent to advise people on the vital matters within its purview, the public usually has been willing to allow the profession to exclude any nonmembers from the practice of its distinctive metier. Doctors, for example, have been allowed to restrict the obstetric practice of nurse-midwives, and lawyers have kept real estate agents and bankers from completing even the most routine real estate contracts.

While it is true that many nonprofessional occupations require some state or locally administered license before one can legally engage in them (e.g., taxicab driving, barbering, bartending, and many types of retailing), it is only the true profession that maintains control over the criteria that the state uses to grant or withhold these licenses. Some professional organizations even play the decisive role in selecting the particular individuals who will be initiated into the charmed circle of the profession and thereby permitted to pursue careers in that field.

4. Service. The unique importance of the knowledge possessed by genuine professionals and the service that they thereby offer to the public is a key factor setting them apart from other workers. The traditional professions of medicine, law, and the ministry, as well as the newer ones of architecture, accounting, and engineering, all deal with matters that are of fundamental if not vital interest: our lives, health, liberty, wealth, safety, and even the condition of our immortal souls. The enormous prestige that society willingly offers to the members of these professions is seemingly attributable to the obvious importance of the services rendered. The expert tennis player and the gourmet chef consequently are denied similar status because of the peripheral value of their services, even though the market demand for their skills may ensure them salaries that are comparable to those of a true professional.

The importance of a profession's service role is further reflected in the traditional notion that a professional's primary function is to aid his or her client and only incidentally to receive any personal benefit. For example, the professional typically is expected to offer services (at least sometimes) even to a client who cannot pay for them. The profession furthermore ensures, by means of its code of professional responsibility, that each one of its members will selflessly promote the best interests of the public.

This set of rules and exhortations articulates the service ideals of the profession as a whole, and it identifies the responsibilities of each practitioner who is required to implement them. Note, however, that it is the profession itself that draws up and administers this code. A full-fledged profession is a service-oriented organization, but it always determines for itself how it shall provide its benefits to society.⁷

⁷ Strictly speaking, some professions' standards of conduct may be enacted and enforced through an apparently public body. For example,

5. Autonomy. We already have noted the autonomous control that a profession characteristically exercises over both the content of the educational requirements and the ethical standards expected of all its members. By these means, and by other even more direct methods as well (such as the character committees and the proficiency examinations of the Bar), the professions control who may join and practice in their respective areas.

But even these extraordinary degrees of self-regulation do not exhaust the autonomy of the professions and the professional. Indeed, they do not touch what is perhaps its most important manifestation: the almost complete discretion that professionals enjoy with regard to the manner in which they conduct their practices and deal with their clients. A doctor has almost complete freedom in choosing an appropriate treatment for his or her patient; the minister alone decides how best to counsel his or her parishioner; and the lawyer has free reign regarding his or her client's representation. Granted, every professional must conform to the generally recognized standards of minimally acceptable professional conduct; but within those broad guidelines, he or she has virtual *carte blanche*.

Even the enforcement of the acceptable limits of this individual autonomy only points to the self-regulatory autonomy of the profession as a whole. A doctor can be sued for malpractice (or lose his license to practice) only if found guilty of violating standards set by fellow doctors--not by the general public that the medical profession serves. Likewise, an attorney will be disbarred from the practice of the law (assuming no criminal offense has been committed) only if convicted of violating the code designed and administered by fellow members of the bar. Again, the general public has almost no say in these matters, though it is the public's interests that allegedly justify the special rights and privileges given to the profession.

The autonomy of a learned profession, both in its control over the general conditions under which it functions in society and in the discretion that individual members have in their professional activities, is one of its most striking features. This autonomy seems to demand an explanation. Why do we permit the professions such stringent autonomous control over who may enter their ranks when we generally extol and defend the liberty of everyone to pursue the

a state's highest court usually will adopt and administer the code of ethics for that state's bar. As a matter of fact, however, the individual courts have tended to adopt the model rules of professional conduct adopted by the American Bar Association, and the judges themselves are invariably members of the bar.

occupation of his or her own choice? And why do we allow professionals to practice basically as they see fit, policed only by the codes of their own professional organizations, given our numerous legal regulations for the protection of the general public against the harms that they may suffer from those who ply other trades?

William J. Goode attempts to justify this professional autonomy on the grounds that society must place its complete trust in the judgment of its professionals.⁸ Since the professions deal with matters of vital importance, and since all of us presumably lack the knowledge--exclusively possessed by the professionals--to know what is in our best interest in these matters, we have to rely completely not only on our hired counselors' theoretical and practical competence, but also on their ethical integrity as well. Society therefore grants a monopoly of practice to the professions with the implicit agreement that they, in turn, will allow into their ranks only those who are demonstrably well qualified and that they will ensure that all members adhere to their exacting standards. Even more importantly, the professions certify to the public, in their codes of professional responsibility, that we can trust their members with our most intimate secrets, information that is often essential to professionals to best serve our interests, knowing that they are pledged to keep any potentially embarrassing or otherwise harmful knowledge in strict confidence and to use it exclusively for our benefit and never for their own. As Everett C. Hughes aptly noted, when the public deals with professionals it replaces the maxim of the marketplace, caveat emptor ("let the buyer beware"), with credat emptor ("let the buyer trust").⁹

6. Job Stratification. While the multi-faceted autonomy of the professions is perhaps the most significant factor following from its exclusive dominion over a valuable body of knowledge, another important feature also derives from this widely accepted claim. Since professionals are valued for their unique abilities, it would be irrational to employ them in labor that could be performed by those less talented or well trained. The physician therefore only performs the actual examination, diagnosis, and, if necessary, surgical treatment of the patient. Less theoretically demanding treatments, such as pre-examination preparations, physical therapy, the dressing

⁸ William J. Goode, "The Theoretical Limits of Professionalization," in Etzioni, ed., The Semi-Professions, pp. 291-297.

⁹ Hughes, "Professions," p. 3.

of wounds, and the administration of medicines and injections, are delegated to nurses. Even within the nursing corps, moreover, there is a stratification of duties that reflects levels of training and expertise. Those chores demanding less theoretical knowledge and training are reserved for the "practical nurses," while those requiring even less in the way of special expertise are assigned to orderlies and untrained hospital volunteers. A large law office similarly apportioned work according to the practitioner's professional status. Thus, a senior partner might direct the representation of a major client and suggest the theoretical basis for the firm's recommended defense or negotiating position, leaving for less experienced associates the more routine jobs of researching the legal precedents and possibly writing the actual legal briefs. These junior attorneys, in turn, will leave any less technical work, such as the completion of routine legal forms, to paralegal technicians, while comparatively untrained secretaries will type, duplicate, and mail any required paperwork.

For each of the typical learned professions, recognition of one's status as a professional not only entails the highest prestige and remuneration but also brings one work that demands and exercises one's special expertise. Of course, this stratification of labor also entails an attendant freedom from routine or even mechanical "drudge" work--labor that could be done, as it is said, by "anyone." To engage in any such work, given the foregoing analysis, would constitute a direct affront to one's status as a professional.

7. The Profession as a Calling. The true professional is seen as practicing a calling, as opposed to merely working at a job. One says that a professional is a doctor or a lawyer, rather than that he or she works as a doctor or lawyer or that medicine or law is what he or she "does for a living." Professionals almost always work full-time, and then some, particularly at the early stages of their careers when they are expected to provide almost continuous service to their hospitals or (to a somewhat lesser degree) their law firms. Moreover, one tends to be a doctor or lawyer for one's entire life. Professionals change their occupations much less frequently than do other workers; it is rare indeed to learn of doctors, lawyers, ministers, or professors who voluntarily abandon their professions after several years of practice in order to pursue some other trade. A profession is so much a part of the professional's life that its abandonment would amount to a fundamental redefinition of personal identity, a step that few do or should take lightly.¹⁰

¹⁰ Some may object that the foregoing analysis, which has taken the traditional "learned professions" of medicine, law, and the ministry as

Teaching as a Profession

We may now return to the fundamental question raised in the first section of this paper: does school teaching constitute a true profession? Or, to restate the question in terms of the analysis

paradigmatic, is biased unduly by its consideration of the consulting or "person" professions. These occupations typically involve solo practitioners giving advice to individual clients on a fee-for-services basis. The analysis therefore ignores many contemporary fields such as architecture, accounting, engineering, and university teaching, that are generally regarded as professions, although almost all of their practitioners are salaried employees of large organizations. Members of these professions, moreover, tend to serve the organizations that employ them, and any benefit to the public or to specific individuals is incidental.

I do not think, however, that any of the factors noted above are necessarily wedded to the individual practitioner-individual client model. First of all, the main factors that I have claimed as definitional of the professional--esoteric knowledge, special training, provision of an important service, professional self-rule, stratification of labor (and consequent freedom from "drudge" work), and autonomous control over the specific conduct of one's own work--all exist to a significant degree even when the professional has a corporation or other large organization as an employer and even as a client. Only the last factor, the complete control over the conduct of one's own work, is threatened in such institutional settings to any large degree; and when such autonomy is denied, the constrained practitioners do tend to lose their status as full-fledged professionals.

Secondly, even the ideal-typical professions of law and medicine increasingly are practiced within organizational, if not bureaucratic, settings. Most lawyers now practice in firms, some of the largest of which are also among the most prestigious. Moreover, the clients of these large firms are themselves often companies or corporations of considerable size. Many doctors now work in group practices, often on a salaried basis; pathologists, anesthesiologists, and radiologists are really employed by hospitals, though they maintain the appearance of billing and being paid by the individual patients whom they may never have personally met. Nonetheless, no one would dispute the professional status of these lawyers and physicians. On the contrary, they actually stand nearer the top of the legal and medical status ladders than the general practitioners who deal directly and intimately with their individual patients and clients.

proposed in Section II, to what extent does teaching satisfy the criteria of professionalism that can be abstracted from paradigmatic professions such as medicine and the law? A definitive answer would require an in-depth sociological study far exceeding the limits of this paper. Nonetheless, we can venture a preliminary reply based on some brief observations on the teaching profession as it functions today.¹¹

In some respects teaching scores exceedingly well when measured by the criteria of professionalism enumerated above. This is most obvious in the dimension of professional service. With the possible exception of medicine, what occupation devotes itself to a more important societal value than the education of its citizenry? A quality education is an indisputable prerequisite for almost any other human good, and a country that neglects the education of its future citizens is literally "a nation at risk." One can well imagine societies enjoying moderate well-being without lawyers, accountants, or architects, but not without teachers. Moreover, the effective work of primary and secondary teachers is presupposed by almost all of the other professions--imagine trying to educate doctors and lawyers who had not mastered the three Rs, not to mention history, science, and literature. Therefore, any value that society accrues from the other professions is dependent upon and therefore beholden to a successful teaching profession.

When we turn to some of the other definitional features of professionalism, however, teaching fares less well. In many ways, the requirement of an esoteric body of knowledge is the most fundamental criterion, for we have seen how many of the other factors, such as autonomy and job stratification, are derived from it. But teachers have not fully convinced society that there is an esoteric body of either theoretical or technical knowledge that they and they alone possess. Since we are all quite familiar with the subject matter taught in the schools--everyone who is in a position to influence matters of policy presumably has attended and graduated from high school--we tend to feel equal to teachers in this regard, rather than standing in awe of their esoteric wisdom. We might admit that some secondary school teachers of some advanced level courses do require a knowledge of their academic subjects that exceeds the comprehension of

¹¹ This section relies on extensive personal reports from public school teachers in Virginia, whose experiences confirm the reports recently published in studies such as Ernest L. Boyer, High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) and Theodore R.Sizer, Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1984).

even an unusually well-educated citizen. But by and large, the curriculum of the public schools is not perceived as an esoteric mystery revealed only to a select few, and to them only, after protracted and exceedingly difficult graduate study.

Educators do profess, of course, to mastery of a body of specialized knowledge beyond that of the subject matter which they teach--namely, the art and science of teaching. Though all educated adults can read, write, and perform elementary mathematical calculations, only professional educators, they claim, can effectively teach these skills to the young. And though a fair number of us can enjoy a Fitzgerald novel, speak a passable French, and even solve a physics problem using the infinitesimal calculus, it requires a knowledge of the theory and techniques of teaching in order to communicate these abilities to unmotivated and sometimes unruly adolescents. It is this specialized knowledge that educators claim as their exclusive domain and that therefore constitutes the fundamental curriculum of the "professional" schools that train and either directly or indirectly certify students as competent teachers.

But since the public's perception of the educational profession is at question here, two observations are in order. First, insofar as professional teachers insist on a sharp distinction between the mastery of their academic subject fields and their competence as measured by some special methodological skills, they are distinguishing themselves from the other well-entrenched professions. For better or worse, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and architects, for example, achieve preeminence in their respective fields in virtue of their exceptional mastery of the special body of valued knowledge that their profession uniquely dispenses. "Great" doctors and lawyers (Dr. Kildare and Perry Mason to the contrary) are not those who have the finest bedside manner or the warmest personal styles, but rather those who are the recognized "experts" in the increasingly esoteric and specialized areas of medicine and law. Even in the field of university teaching, the profession closest to that of our present study, faculty are evaluated and their professional status measured almost entirely by their scholarly contributions, and rarely, if at all, by their teaching abilities; at least this is the case at the most prestigious institutions.

A second point is that educators must acknowledge that the public is skeptical of their claims to have developed a scientific or even a practical body of educational theory. There are several signs of these doubts. For one thing, many parents feel that they could do as good a job of educating their children as the most highly trained "professional" teachers, a claim they would never make with regard to their medical or legal well-being. Their doubts concerning the value

of special training in education are manifested in their confidence that they could do the job without any of it. The skepticism of the general academic community is reflected in the fact that schools of education usually enjoy far less respect within the university than the comparable professional schools of medicine, law, and engineering. Finally, several state governments including Virginia have recently been considering and even enacting legislation--often following the advice of the various educational study commissions--that would permit teaching certification of individuals who have strong academic subject-matter backgrounds but who lack the traditional "professional" education courses, an obvious rejection of the claim that the latter are indispensable prerequisites for competent, let alone excellent, teaching.¹²

As suggested above, the full-fledged professions exercise autonomy in at least three important ways: (1) they determine the educational and competency standards for admission to the profession; (2) they formulate and administer codes of professional responsibility; and (3) their individual members exercise considerable discretion in the conduct of their professional activities. Although teachers enjoy some such autonomy, they do so to a degree significantly below that of almost any other professional or even semi-professional occupation. Individual autonomy is, I believe, the most influential factor with regard to determining one's professional status, but the other two have some influence, and they should be noted at least in passing.

Teachers are currently certified by the individual states, usually by their departments or boards of education. Although the exact process varies from state to state, the overwhelming majority grant certification simply on the basis of the applicant's having graduated from an accredited school and having completed (sometimes with a specified, but never very high, average grade) a list of required academic and professional courses. This procedure contrasts in an important way with the comparable process in, for example, the law. Whereas teacher certification is determined by a group that only marginally includes teachers, law school curricula and individual decisions on admission to the bar are made almost entirely by lawyers. Moreover, whereas the lawyer's professional associations have sought to test the qualifications of each individual candidate for admission to the bar, irrespective of his educational background, the major national teacher organizations have resisted the growing

¹² I want to emphasize that I am not endorsing these observations, only reporting that they are widely and influentially believed to be true.

pressure for stringent and selective examinations for individual teachers.

Similarly, once an individual is certified to teach (or practice law), the process of gaining employment differs. Typically, a new teacher will be hired by a school division's administrative staff, perhaps in consultation with another administrator, the individual school principal. Only rarely are the applicant's potential peers, the teachers in the particular school, involved significantly in the recruitment and hiring process. The procedure is quite different in a typical law firm (or architectural practice, accounting firm, college academic department). There, the professional peers of the person being recruited play the decisive, if not exclusive, role in deciding who shall or shall not join their professional circle--for, they might say, who but a professional peer would be competent to make such a decision?

Turning to the issue of individual autonomy, the disparity between teaching and the other professions is even greater. Although classroom teachers are expected to prepare their own lessons, and they have some discretion as to how and what to teach, severe limits exist as well. Most teachers, including those with advanced graduate degrees and many years of professional experience, are required to submit their lesson plans to administrative superiors for review and approval. Textbooks and other curriculum materials are usually selected by joint committees of administrators, parents, and teachers, and these groups may overrule the professional advice of their teaching members. And while the teacher usually reigns supreme within the classroom, it is by no means his or her castle. School administrators, visitors, and even students bearing messages are allowed to interrupt the most intensive and carefully crafted lessons with matters of trivial concern. Often the intrusion is not even dignified with a personal appearance but appears in the form a big-brotherly voice booming from the always-present public address loudspeaker. (Try to imagine similar intrusions occurring in the offices, studies, or classrooms of lawyers, ministers, or university professors!)

In discussing the criterion of job stratification, I have argued that it is really just a manifestation of the other elements of true professionalism, in particular the idea that professionals are distinguished by their specialized body of knowledge and the requirement that a professionals are granted autonomy to determine the basic conditions and content of their work. Requiring true professionals to engage in menial tasks, jobs that could be performed as well or better by those without their distinctive abilities, is therefore seen as a direct denial of the underlying bases of their

professional status. It is therefore rightly taken as an affront to their dignity as professionals.

Teachers, however, frequently are required to perform countless chores that constitute just such an affront to their professionalism. Trained and experienced teachers, presumably employed by virtue of their exceptional ability to communicate knowledge, are required to stand guard as school busses load and unload their passengers or to patrol halls and cafeterias during their all-too-brief respites from the performance of their stressful classroom duties. So-called "planning" periods are usually spent in large offices shared with ten or more colleagues and are often taken up with the completion of the clerical work that some teachers estimate as consuming up to 20 percent of their time.

True planning of classes, reading and study to develop one's professional expertise, and supervision of extracurricular activities, not to mention the countless hours spent grading assignments, all take place after one's normal working hours. But since these essential tasks are performed outside of the publicly observed five- or six-hour "school day," the public regards teaching as a part-time profession, which, as already observed, is in some sense a contradiction in terms. (This same public, however, rarely measures the surgeon's professional activity by the time he or she actually spends in the operating room, nor the lawyer's by his or her time in court.) Similarly, the dedicated teacher who attempts to prepare original teaching materials--handouts, assignments, examinations, and the like--usually must personally type and duplicate them. Public school teachers are rarely given the secretarial assistance that is offered as a matter of course to every other professional worker. (Can one imagine even the least experienced attorney in a law firm, for example, who, having worked late into the night preparing a legal brief, is required to come to work especially early in order to type and duplicate it?) And this list of menial chores can, I am sure, be expanded by any experienced teacher.

Recommendations

Several conclusions follow, I believe, from even this cursory examination of the status of our nation's teachers. Primary and secondary school educators today constitute a semi-profession. When compared to the norms of professionalism, they score quite well on some scales, but more poorly on others. Since the argument of this paper is that the quality of American teachers will improve only if the occupation of teaching regains its standing as a professional calling, what can be done to bring about that end? Higher salaries,

smaller classes, stronger parental support, and many other material and attitudinal improvements obviously would improve the educational environment. But they alone would not do much to return teaching to its standing and prestige as an honored profession. Indeed, I doubt very much that our society will provide much more in the way of such support before teachers become recognized and respected as full-fledged professionals. I therefore propose two practical recommendations for the attainment of that goal, one for educational administrators and the other for teachers.

1. Educational administrators at all levels should treat teachers as professionals. Teachers should be more involved in and increasingly given the authority to make decisions that affect their working environment, the determination of the school's curriculum, the selection of the content of the courses they teach, and the recruitment and eventually the evaluation of their colleagues. Administrators should resist treating teachers as "employees" under their managerial supervision and control, but rather encourage a more collegial sharing of responsibility and authority. Small measures, such as avoiding unnecessary interruptions of classes, providing secretarial and other support services to teachers, and diversion of clerical duties to clerical personnel, though comparatively uncostly, would promote an attitude of professionalism on the part of the faculty, while clearly providing these teachers with more time and energy for carrying out their educational missions.

2. Teachers must act as professionals. As professional educators, teachers first of all must be willing to take on the added responsibilities and obligations suggested above, and they must demand that administrators respect their professional rights as far as feasible. And teachers, especially as they organize themselves in so-called professional associations, also must resist thinking of themselves as employees who face school administrators in an adversarial role. Insofar as they fail to do so, their associations will be regarded by the public as mere trade unions whose major interest is the promotion of the economic well-being and job-security of each of its members, irrespective of his or her merit. Genuine professional associations, on the other hand, play a conspicuous role in setting, and if possible raising, the minimum levels of acceptable performance within their fields. Professional associations are, at least in theory, self-policing, and they are willing to remove the credentials of manifestly incompetent practitioners, the better to reserve the prestige of the profession as a whole. Moreover, even while they actively seek to raise the minimum, and therefore the average, caliber of all of their members, the true professions

recognize that qualitative differences exist among their practitioners, and that competent professionals are qualified to evaluate one another's performance.

In conclusion, I would like to observe that both of my proposals support the happily advancing notion of a "career-ladder" for teachers. "Master" teachers, selected by competent administrators in consultation with their teaching faculty, would be the ideal individuals to take on some of the professional duties noted in my first recommendation. These teachers could work (possibly along with administrative colleagues) on curriculum development, course improvement, and the recruitment, evaluation, and professional development of their fellow teachers. Their advancement to positions of recognized authority and status, while retaining their identity as teachers, would constitute a major step towards an increased sense of professionalism throughout the faculty.

I urge state and local public and school officials to champion this much needed innovation. Moreover, I would urge the major organizations of teachers to take the lead in support of this idea, as well as similar proposals that would significantly raise the standards for entry into and retention within the profession, rather than their present short-sighted resistance to them. Surely teachers' organizations should have learned from the American Medical Association, the American Bar Association, and the other major professional associations that a proclaimed pursuit of the public interest by means of preserving the integrity of professional standards is not incompatible with advancing the material well-being of their members!

THE PLACE OF PRIMARY PREVENTION IN THE SCHOOLS:
A MANDATE FOR EDUCATION

By Arnold L. Stolberg and Martin Bloom

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Family life, schools, and the larger sociocultural environment are among the major influences on our children as they prepare to meet the future as happy and competent citizens of a complex society. Moreover, these social systems are closely interrelated: what happens in the family or at the workplace affects the child at the school, for example, and vice versa. Therefore, for our children to attain the most effective education, the educational program needs to recognize this systematic interrelationship and to deal with psychosocial factors as an integral component of the public school curriculum.

Dealing with all of these factors is the aim of primary prevention--a set of activities that promotes the potential of people while preventing predictable risks that befall them. When integrated into the public school curriculum, primary prevention/promotion programs can help our educational process yield not merely intellectually prepared young citizens, but also persons who are psychologically and socially prepared to participate effectively in the larger society.

The Problem and the Potential

Children fail in school for many reasons, not just because of a lack of academic skills or ability. Problems in the home follow the children to school. Parental divorce, for example, has been shown to have both immediate and longterm deleterious effects on many children's school performance. Current estimates are that by the year 2000, over 50 percent of all children will have experienced parental divorce before reaching the age of majority.

Other real social problems face today's elementary and junior high school children, problems that many of us adults did not have to solve until our college years or later. Changing sexual codes and the availability of drugs and alcohol affect many children's general adjustment and school performance. Increasing economic pressures on the family push mothers into the workforce, oftentimes leaving children with less parental availability and supervision.

Thus, we can anticipate massive negative and positive influences on children's academic performance. We must understand the nature of those circumstances that are external to the schools because these events will bear heavily on the problems and potentials of school-aged youth.

When "individual problems" do emerge, such as occur in the context of divorcing families or unwanted teenage pregnancy, educators have to find ways to deal with these difficulties. Traditional solutions that the schools have employed suffer from several limitations. First, they are available only to "problem children." Those students who are at-risk for future problems generally are not eligible to participate. Requiring children to wait until problems are severe enough to benefit from traditional intervention will, at the least, interfere with normal academic progress. In some cases, more long-standing problems that are secondary to the initial difficulties may arise. For example, both peer rejection and academic failure can be experienced by a child who has a problem with hyperactivity. These secondary problems reportedly result from chronic failures due to the initial problem. Second, clinical experience has shown that more severe problems require more substantial and more expensive interventions and are more difficult to remediate.

Clear evidence exists that certain rates of illness or disability will occur in high-risk populations; what is problematic is not knowing to which specific individuals these problems will occur. This makes it certain that in trying to forestall the problems for everyone who is at-risk, we will inevitably give aid to those who would not have fallen victim to this problem anyway.

Detractors of prevention call this wasteful. In fact, a more nearly adequate understanding of primary prevention recognizes that such services not only prevent predictable problems, but also promote the fuller range of people's potentials. Thus, a primary prevention program aids all its participants in one or more ways. This controversy requires us to examine more closely the definitions of primary prevention and promotion.

Defining Prevention and Promotion

Primary prevention involves a range of activities that identify significant psychosocial phenomena in populations at-risk, so actions can be taken to forestall the predictable problems, protect the existing state of health and effective functioning, and promote not-yet realized human and social potentials. Figure 1 is a diagram of the range of activities and targets involved.

As Figure 1 shows, prevention efforts have several targets: the individual, the relevant social groups, and the physical environment. Also, as our definition indicates, primary prevention takes several different forms: prevention, protection, and promotion. Any primary prevention program must consider each part of the model shown in Figure 1, whether or not a specific programs requires each part, or cell, to be activated.

Figure 1
A General Model of Primary Prevention

Type of Helping	Target		
	The Individual	Social Systems	Physical Environment
Promotion of Potentials	A Add to Strengths and Skills	B Add to Supports	C Add Supports and Resources
Protection of Existing Strengths	D Maintain Skills and Strengths	E Maintain Supports	F Maintain Supports and Resources
Prevention of Predictable Problems	G Reduce Weaknesses and Limitations	H Reduce Social Stresses and Barriers	I Reduce Physical Stresses and Barriers

Let us look at examples of our general model applied to the educational situation. Activities that promote an individual's potential strengths and skills (cell A) are those such as infant stimulation programs to promote intellectual, motor, language, and social development skills or physical education programs, which teach lifetime exercise skills to benefit persons of all ages. Basic maintenance of a school's physical plant makes the school building a relatively safe physical environment in which students can learn (cell F). Other physical environments that might interfere with learning and even be physically harmful to students--such as classrooms close to busy highways that distribute airborne lead--are amenable to preventive actions that can reduce the physical stresses (cell I).

Activities more narrowly focused on prevention also can be identified. Predictable problems that stem from a student's falling behind on a reading level or being held back a grade can be dealt with preventively by special tutoring and support from individual teachers (cell G). Children who live in depressed areas confront collective problems in their education that require still other preventive actions, such as intensive programming and support groups that attempt to compensate for the difficult socioeconomic contexts in which these children try to learn (cell H).

A Different Solution to a Current Problem

To demonstrate the possible effect of preventive programs, let us introduce you to three young Virginians, Patty, Frank, and Tina.

PATTY is a cute four-year-old preschooler. She is an only child and has few playmates. She will enter kindergarten next year and will be expected to know how to share with other children and how to perform some basic reading, math, and other academic skills. Her grandparents delight in sending her educational toys.

FRANK is a happy fifth-grade student. He has several close boyfriends. He doesn't particularly like doing his daily homework. He is expected to be progressing toward computer literacy. The pace and complexity of the material presented in his classes is increasing rapidly so that the school can prepare Frank for sixth-grade work. Both of Frank's parents hold fulltime jobs and are very interested in their careers. As a result, Frank is expected to monitor himself after school each day until dinner time, and sometimes later.

TINA is an attractive and successful tenth grader. She is a cheerleader for the football team. She is taking algebra, honors biology, and second-year French. Keeping her B+ average may be difficult. Several difficult decisions facing her will make this goal even harder to achieve. Figuring prominently in these decisions are drugs, sex, and career directions. Her parents' imminent divorce will make this year an even more difficult one.

These children are much like our own. They are normal, healthy, and active. They attend, or will attend, some of the best public schools in the Commonwealth. Their parents have great expectations for them. Like our children, these three young people will face normal developmental events and some difficult problems. These circumstances may interfere with their academic progress.

Consider the possible negative directions the academic future of these children might take, given the demands facing them.

PATTY's lack of social experience may make kindergarten difficult for her. She has had little experience sharing with other children. The increased emphasis and time devoted to the development of academic skills may be done at the cost of developing Patty's social skills. Without some training and practice, Patty may have some trouble getting along with her peers. Social isolation and a resultant dislike for the social aspects of school may spread to a general dislike for all parts of the school experience (e.g., school phobia).

FRANK may face a decrease in parental attention and control since both of his parents work. Failure to complete homework is a problem resulting from a lack of impulse controls and frequently is associated with insufficient parent involvement. This situation may result in serious academic problems for Frank. Homework is becoming extremely important as the pace and complexity of his work increase. Frank's academic performance may begin to fall behind the school's expectations of him.

The divorce of TINA's parents will make a difficult adolescent year even more demanding. Many children of divorce act out against the rules of their parents. This is a sign of the anger and rejection they feel after divorce. Even many children who were well adjusted before a divorce begin to break parental rules. In addition, many parents become less physically and emotionally available to

their children as the demands of their altered marital status are confronted. Tina will need continued parental involvement while she makes the important decisions facing her and while she completes her honors coursework.

These children and young adults likely will need some assistance in meeting the demands ahead of them. But many traditional programs are oriented to those individuals who already have problems that interfere with personal and academic performance. Neither Patty, Frank, nor Tina are experiencing such problems at this time. Requiring them to wait until their problems are severe enough to demand outside attention will, at the least, delay progress toward their academic goals. If Patty experiences social alienation and rejection in her class, she will have to overcome its affects before she can reenter her peer group. If Frank gets behind academically, he will have to master work that he has failed before he can return to the pace required of him. Tina faces similar possible delays.

Primary prevention programs offer a different and potentially more efficient approach. These programs attend to the strengths of students, rather than to their weaknesses. Problems will be avoided, and the children will never be in a situation in which they will have to "catch up." Instead, they will be working ahead, closer to where their potentials lie. Primary prevention programs often are efficient in terms of the amount of resources required; they frequently can be run by existing school personnel during the normal school day.

Let's consider some primary prevention programs that are currently available to Patty, Frank, and Tina. A school entry program designed for children like Patty has demonstrated improved performance in the elementary grades. In separate programs, Spivak and Shure, social scientists at the Hahnemann Medical Center in Philadelphia, and Ellis Gesten at the University of South Florida showed that children's school adjustment could be promoted by teaching specific skills before they entered school. In both cases, programs were designed for groups of preschool children. Social skills, communication skills, and basic study and school skills were taught. The participants in these programs were normal children who had not had any adjustment or intellectual performance problems. Evaluation data showed that children who participated in the preschool preparation programs performed better in the early school grades than did those children who had not received the early training.

Frank the fifth grader might benefit from programs that will help him to make careful decisions about school problems. Frank may choose to play with his friends rather than working on his homework assignments. His parents' absence from the home means reduced

monitoring of Frank's acceptance of his academic responsibilities. Frank also needs to learn how to study more effectively. He starts his homework late in the evening and frequently spends many more hours than his peers trying to complete his assignments. He gets much less work done.

A program teaching problem-solving skills to children has been developed and evaluated by Professor Philip Kendall at the University of Minnesota. (Professor Kendall earned his doctorate at Virginia Commonwealth University.) Children in this program are taught to ask themselves a series of questions about the problems they face. They are encouraged to evaluate each response in terms of the accuracy of the response as well as the consequences of choosing that particular answer.

For example, a child faced with the choice of playing with his friend or beginning to study for an exam would be first instructed to ask, "What is the problem?" To this he would respond, "It is five o'clock, the time I agreed to begin my homework, but I don't want to quit playing." He would then identify his choices. "I can play for a little longer, or I can study my math, or I can study my geography, or I can watch tv and study later."

The consequences of each response are then considered. "If I play longer or watch tv, I won't have enough time to study for my test and to get my written assignments done. But I'll have a good time. If I study math first, I'll get my written work done and will get an 'A' for homework, but I might be too tired to do a good job studying for the test. If I study for the geography test first, I'll be alert and will learn more."

The child then makes a choice. He will, it is hoped, decide to postpone his play and to study the geography first, the math second, and then reward himself with tv or play after all work has been completed. This problem-solving or self-statements program has been shown to be successful with both normal and impulsive children.

Help is also available to Tina for many of her pressing problems. Programs have been designed to help students with decision making and assertiveness in the areas of drug use, smoking, and sexual activity. Several programs funded by the National Institute of Mental Health have as their goal preventing academic failure and emotional turmoil in children of divorce. One such program is the Divorce Adjustment Project (DAP), developed by the first author of this paper. The DAP has been implemented in these Virginia counties: Chesterfield, Henrico, Powhatan, Fairfax, and James City. The project's aim is to help children learn appropriate ways to deal with the demands of

divorce The goal is to prevent the academic failure and behavioral acting-out that is common to some children of divorce.

In the DAP children and parents participate in separate, twelve-session programs. These are run in the school, during the school day, by existing school personnel. The children are taught skills in anger control, problem solving, communication, and relaxation. Similar skills are taught to the custodial parents. Evaluation data suggest that the children participating in the project perform better in school, display fewer behavior problems in school, and have better self-concepts than nonparticipating peers from homes in which divorce also had occurred.

Primary Prevention and the Schools

The educational system has its own concerns with providing sequential instruction for large numbers of children over a dozen years of life. Is it not, then, a burden to ask schools to be concerned with primary prevention on top of everything else?

One point is important: we do not expect major revisions to be made in educational policy and implementation simply so that primary prevention programs can be more visible in the educational system. On the contrary, we recognize that a lot of what is conventionally done in the schools has primary prevention influences (as we illustrated earlier in the examples for our general primary prevention model). What we are proposing is a clearer recognition and organization of the prevention/ promotion activities that already exist, supplemented by new programs as research shows their need and effectiveness.

You may ask why primary prevention programs must be run in the schools. Can they not be run elsewhere, with the educational system still reaping the benefits? Simply stated, prevention programs often are run most effectively in the school setting. As with health care prevention and promotion programs, such as polio vaccinations, primary prevention programs are intended to be offered to large groups of people who might benefit from participation. Schools offer such a vehicle. Schools were important contributors to the success of the polio inoculation programs because the immunizations could be given to large numbers of persons at the same time. Schools are a part of almost every child's life. Children and families live around the schools, and they are accustomed to receiving information distributed by the school. Teachers and principals are familiar and trusted members of the community. Almost every child who will consider smoking, who will face human sexuality choices, and who will consider

career development will attend a school. No other setting offers this common tie.

To illustrate the appropriateness of prevention programs in the schools, we can point to parallels between existing educational and primary prevention programs. First, both programs have the same primary goal: to shape children to meet the tasks facing them in their future and to help them perform at the level of their potential. Academic success and subsequent mental health adjustment are the goals of programs that train children in study skills. Preventing academic failure is the goal of prevention programs for children of divorce. Promoting academic readiness is the goal of school entry programs for the nursery-age child.

A second common trait of preventionists and educators is an emphasis on teaching. Smoking prevention programs teach children about the health hazards involved in smoking, as well as how to say "no" to peer influences to smoke. School entrance programs for preschoolers try to enhance children's early school adjustment by teaching skills in peer play, study, and communication. The basic skills that the prevention strategies teach are these: causal thinking, clear communication (i.e., listening to and understanding others), repeated practice of material learned, and general problem solving. All of these skills also promote general academic mastery and success.

The prevention/promotion movement makes practical contributions to the educational system. These contributions include reduced cost, ease of delivering the programs, better outcomes for the students than with traditional interventions, and generalization of skills to academic problems. These "before-problems-arise" programs also may be more cost efficient than problem-remediation programs. For example, the Divorce Adjustment Project cost about \$200,000 to develop, implement, and evaluate. Over 150 children participated in the evaluation of the program. Children from schools all over the state have taken part in groups run by the more than 150 school personnel trained by the project's staff. Current individual interventions for children with problems cannot match this ratio of cost to the number of participants. Further, additional groups can be run by these trained leaders with no additional development and training costs.

The amount of intervention required in prevention programs is generally small because the entire focus is on enhanced functioning. For example, teaching children assertiveness skills and educating them about the problems associated with drug abuse requires less intervention than does a program designed for a child who already has become heavily involved with drugs and alcohol. In the latter case,

drug dependency must be reduced; affiliating with different social groups must occur; and academic problems and deficiencies must be corrected.

The basic skills taught in prevention/promotion programs can be generalized to apply to the classroom and to other life problems. For example, causal thinking helps a child not only to anticipate the consequences of not studying but also to understand the relationships between a series of chemical events. Communication skills help not only to develop interpersonal relationships and resolve conflicts; they also are necessary for explaining and understanding academic material.

Problems Facing Primary Prevention

In some ways, primary prevention programs for at-risk educational targets are similar to their counterparts in medicine. For example, patients who are considered to be at-risk for heart disease because of diet, lifestyle, and heredity are taught how to lower their risk for future heart attacks. Similarly, children who are at-risk for academic and psychological problems because of their parents' recent divorce are taught procedures that will help them master divorce-related demands and lower their risk for targeted problems.

Prevention and promotion in education do not have the power constituency that medicine has. The major problem facing preventionists is getting the educational system to accept this new problem-solving strategy. It is difficult to convince decision-makers that special programs are needed when related problems are not present. Parents are easily convinced of the need for sex education only after their child has gotten into trouble. In the case of the Divorce Adjustment Project, preventing divorce-related problems was accepted as a responsibility of the schools only after it was determined that this family problem was interfering with many children's school performance.

New programs place additional financial burdens on already stressed schools and interfere with their acceptance. Fiscal demands need not pose substantial barriers, however. Resources and personnel currently available to the schools generally are adequate for the effective implementation of some of these programs. Many prevention programs like the Divorce Adjustment Project are designed specifically to be run by existing school personnel during the regular school day. The DAP's program procedures are presented in a format similar to that found in school curriculums. And time during the school day was easily identified because faculty, administrators, and parents felt

that the time spent on the program would be less than the time lost in the classroom due to behavior problems and academic failure.

The expense of developing new primary prevention programs can be shared by several systems, thus reducing the cost to each without minimizing the benefits. The Divorce Adjustment Project, for example, was a collaborative effort between several school and mental health systems, Virginia Commonwealth University, and the federal government. The cost to the participating schools was very low. Further, program procedures were described in such a way that the DAP could be exported to other systems with minimal costs. There are some costs, however, that the state and local governments must accept. These will certainly slow down the development of additional programming.

Finally, we must be careful not to overstate prevention's appropriateness. Prevention/promotion strategies may not be an effective approach for solving all problems. Similarly, students with different backgrounds may not realize the same benefits from program participation. Programs are generally most effective for populations with specific individual characteristics (e.g., child's age and sex) and family characteristics (e.g., employment status, educational history, parenting skills).

Prevention in the Schools: A Plan for Action

Developing a comprehensive plan for primary prevention programming in the schools may help educators to meet the expanding needs of their students. Programs that are needed can be identified by considering the four basic skills common to primary prevention programs--causal thinking, clear communication, repeated practice of material learned, and general problem solving--together with two developmental stages that place specific competency skill demands on children: the preschool stage (preparatory skills) and the school stage (both academic and nonacademic skills). Academic skills facilitate performance in academic areas (math, science, history); they include study skills, problem-solving skills, causal-thinking skills, and repeated practice of material learned. Nonacademic skills are related to the mastery of problems that only indirectly affect school performance; they include social skills, assertiveness skills, stress management skills, and repeated practice of skills learned, applied to such areas as sex education and drug education.

Once those primary prevention programs that are needed have been identified, the schools must collaborate with other professional, governmental, and business organizations to develop comprehensive programs. The schools cannot be expected to carry the burden of

primary prevention alone. Joint efforts between the schools, mental health systems, and university faculty can result in sophisticated, effective programs that are properly evaluated.

Financial responsibilities also must be shared. State and local governments must share development and implementation costs with the federal government. Businesses that realize the benefits of a healthier and better educated population also must be encouraged to accept their fiscal responsibilities. Many industries are expressing interest in promotional programs. Employee assistance programs, day care for preschoolers of working mothers, and physical fitness programs are all examples of prevention programs in the workplace. The business sector now must be convinced to support programs that are implemented earlier in the developmental process.

Finally, schools and parents must work together to establish political constituencies that support primary prevention. The goal of these lobbying groups would be to establish the political and economic support necessary to implement primary prevention programs on the scale that will be required.

LITERACY AND THE PERILS OF FORMALISM

By E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

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Literacy and Cultural Literacy

We think of a literate person as someone who can understand serious writings addressed to the general public. The imparting of this most practical yet subtle skill is a major goal of humanistic education--practical because it is useful for an indefinite number of future tasks, and subtle because of the inherent complexity of reading and writing. I wish to suggest that literacy in this meaningful sense requires not just technical proficiency but also "cultural literacy." What I mean by this term may become clearer if I describe a recent experience of mine.

A few years ago I was conducting some experiments at the University of Virginia to measure the effectiveness of a piece of writing when it is read by ordinary audiences. (This research was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities.) We were measuring the actual effects of writing rather than mere opinions of its quality. Our readers in the experiment (who were mainly university students) performed just as we expected them to, as long as we kept the topics simple and familiar. Then one memorable day, we transferred our experiments from the university to a community college, and my complacency about adult literacy was forever shattered. (This community college, I should add, was located in Richmond, Virginia; the irony of the location will appear in a moment.)

Our first experiments went well, because we started out by giving the community college students a paper to read on the topic of friendship. When reading about friendship, these students showed themselves to be, on average, just as literate as university students. The evidence showed that, based on the usual criteria of speed and accurate recall, the university and community college groups were equally skilled readers. But that evidence changed with the next piece of writing we asked the community college students to read. It compared the characters of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, and the students' performance with that piece was, to be blunt, illiterate. Our results showed that Grant and Lee were simply not familiar names to these young adults in the capital of the Confederacy.

Shortly after that disorienting experience, I discovered that Professor Richard Anderson of the Center for Reading Research in Urbana, Illinois, and other researchers in psycholinguistics had

reached some firm conclusions about the importance of background knowledge in reading. For instance, in one experiment Anderson and his colleagues discovered that an otherwise literate audience in India could not properly read a simple text about a wedding in the United States. But by the same token, an otherwise literate audience in the United States could not properly read a simple text about an Indian wedding. Why not? The reason wasn't a matter of vocabulary, or phonics or word recognition; it was a matter of background knowledge, of cultural literacy.

Anderson and others have shown that to read a text with understanding, one needs to have the background knowledge that the author tacitly has assumed the reader to have. Back in the 18th century, when mass literacy was becoming a reality in Great Britain, Dr. Johnson invoked a personage whom he called "the common reader" as having the background knowledge that a writer tacitly can assume readers to possess. Similarly, in the present day, the common reader needs to have "cultural literacy" to read diverse materials with understanding.

To give an example of the way that literacy depends on cultural literacy, I shall quote a recent snippet from The Washington Post.

A federal appeals panel today upheld an order barring foreclosure on a Missouri farm, saying that U.S. Agriculture Secretary John R. Block has reneged on his responsibilities to some debt ridden farmers. The appeals panel directed the USDA to create a system of processing loan deferments and of publicizing them as it said Congress had intended. The panel said that it is the responsibility of the agriculture secretary to carry out this intent "not as a private banker, but as a public broker." (Dec. 29, 1983, p. A-13)

Imagine this item being read by persons who have been trained in phonics and so on, but who are as culturally illiterate as were my sample of community college students. They might possibly know words like "foreclosure," but they would surely not understand the text as a whole. Who gave the order that the federal panel upheld? What is a federal appeals panel? Even if culturally illiterate readers bothered to look up individual words, they would not have much idea of the reality being referred to. Nor, in reading other texts elsewhere, would they understand references to such things as, say, "the equal protection clause," or "Robert E. Lee," no matter how well they could read a text on friendship. But a truly literate American does understand references to "the equal protection of the laws" and "Robert E. Lee," as well as newspaper reports like the one I just

quoted. For, as a practical matter, neither newspaper reporters, nor writers of books can possibly provide detailed background information on every occasion. Think if they did, how much more information would be needed even in the short item that I quoted from the Washington Post. Every sentence would need a dozen sentences of explanation! And each of those sentences would need a dozen more.

Thomas Jefferson said that he would prefer newspapers without government to government without newspapers. He thought that the very concept of democracy, depending as it does on all citizens having a vote, requires an informed citizenry, and universal literacy. He thought that literate, well-informed citizens would be able, more often than not, to make decisions in their collective best interest. On Jefferson's principles, we might venture the following definition of the background knowledge that a citizen of the United States ought to have in order to be truly literate: it is the knowledge and information required to read with understanding serious American newspapers, magazines, and books addressed to the general literate public. This background knowledge would include not only social, linguistic, and literary conventions, but "political literacy," and "historical literacy," and "scientific and technical literacy." These sub-literacies taken together constitute what I am calling "cultural literacy."

One reason that we as a nation have hesitated to make a collective decision about the background knowledge that residents of the United States should have in order to be literate is that we object to such decisions being dictated to us from on high. We govern our schools through more than 16,000 independent school districts, each of which decides or fails to decide such matters for itself, and which imposes or fails to impose its decisions on students and teachers. But despite this diversity in our schools, there is nonetheless an unstated body of information that is assumed by writers of books, magazines, training manuals, and newspapers. These writers work with an idea of what their audiences can be expected to know. They assume, they must assume, a "common reader" who knows the things that are known by other literate persons in the culture.

When I say that these writers must assume such background knowledge, I am saying something about language-use that sociolinguists and psycholinguists have been saying with great unanimity for twenty years: The explicit words of a text are just the tip of the iceberg in a linguistic transaction. To understand even the surface of a text, a reader must have the sort of background knowledge that was assumed, for example, in the Washington Post report that I quoted. But in addition to this topic-determined knowledge, the reader needs to know less explicit, and less topic-defined

matters, such as culturally shared attitudes, values, conventions, and connotations that the writer assumes the reader to have. The writer cannot start from ground zero even in a children's reader designed for the first grade. The subtlety and complexity of written communication is directly dependent upon a shared background. Moreover, this need for cultural literacy applies not just to general-interest topics, but also to special technical topics like those dealt with in textbooks and training manuals. Paradoxically, the fastest and best way for any culture to adjust to new developments in technology is for its members to be culturally literate. For in a rapidly changing world, narrow technological literacy may be short-lived.

To an ill-informed adult who is unaware of what literate persons are expected to know, the assumption by writers that their readers possess cultural literacy could be regarded as a conspiracy of the literate against the illiterate, for the purpose of keeping them out of the club. Although newspaper reporters, writers of books, and the framers of the Verbal SAT necessarily make assumptions about the things literate persons know, no one ever announces what that body of information is. So, although we object to monolithic pronouncements from on high about what we all should know, writers and other people in influential positions necessarily assume that there is a body of information that literate people do know. And this creates a kind of silent, de facto dictating from on high about the things adults should know in order to be truly literate.

Our silence about the explicit contents of cultural literacy leads to the following sociological result, and I take as my example the sociology of the Verbal SAT exam. This exam is chiefly a vocabulary test, which, except for its omission of proper names and other concrete information, constitutes a test of cultural literacy. Hence, when young people from disadvantaged backgrounds ask how they can acquire the verbal abilities tested on the Verbal SAT exam, they are told, quite correctly, that the only way to acquire that knowledge is through wide reading in many domains over many years. But disadvantaged students who are now in high school are not in a position to take that advice. Thus there remains a strong correlation between the Verbal SAT score and socio-economic status. Students from middle-class and upper-middle-class backgrounds get their knowledge for the Verbal SAT not just from reading, but through the pores, from talk at home and social chit chat. I am the more confident that the task of disadvantaged students could be eased and given direction, however, when I consider how tenuous and vague is much of the background knowledge that literate people actually possess. I shall illustrate that highly important point with a reminiscence.

Some decades ago there appeared in Britain a charming book called 1066 and All That. It dealt with facts of British history that had

been learned by every British school child, but that had become scrambled and confused in the adult mind. The book was hilarious to Britons, because their memories were not quite so vague and scrambled as the versions of history presented in the book. They knew all too well that their school knowledge had become vague with the passage of time, but, of course, this forgetting of minor details didn't make them less literate than they had been as children. Background information of the sort needed for true literacy is neither detailed nor expert information, though it is usually accurate in its outlines.

For instance, to understand the Washington Post snippet that I quoted, literate readers would vaguely know in the backs of their minds that the legal system in the United States allows a judgment at a lower level to be reversed at a higher level. They would know that a judge can tell the U.S. Government what it can or cannot do to farmers and other citizens. They would know what and where Missouri is, and how the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Secretary of Agriculture fit into the scheme of things. And they would know a lot more that is relevant. But none of their knowledge would have to be highly detailed. they wouldn't need to know, for instance, whether an appeals panel is the final level before the Supreme Court. In general, readers need to share a sketchy but accurate sense of the realities referred to in a piece of writing.

The Historical Tradition of Teaching Cultural Literacy

Let me briefly place what I have been saying in an historical perspective. The core knowledge that is required for adult literacy in the United States is our modern version of what anthropologists call "acculturation into the tribe." In earlier times, before the invention of printing, acculturation into society was accomplished locally, by word of mouth. Later, in the 18th century, when the nation-state began taking its modern form, national written languages were deliberately stabilized, and they were required to be taught in the schools. Throughout Europe, reading and writing in the national languages began to be taught more widely than ever before. Indeed, the modern national state could not have come into existence without standardized national written languages and compulsory schooling in literate national cultures. All modern nations have depended upon this common linguistic and cultural core, based on a national written language.

In our own country, Noah Webster's language publications, which started in 1783 and culminated in the great American Dictionary of the English Language of 1828, were declarations of cultural and linguistic independence that reflected our political independence and nationhood.

Webster was the George Washington of American education. He was shrewdly conscious of the connections between language-making, culture-making, and nation-making. Because of Webster and other educators who thought as he did, schooling in the United States has been a repository not only of our national language, but also of our national traditions and values. The connections between language, schooling, culture, and nationhood were understood not just by Webster, but by Herman Melville, and William McGuffey, and many, many others. They recognized that our dependence upon the national schools was even greater in this heterogeneous country than in the nations of Europe.

This brief sketch of some historical relations between the rise of national languages, cultural literacy, and literacy shows why our schools in earlier days should have so carefully nurtured shared background knowledge among students. The patriotic instinct that prompted the teaching of shared national materials was in concord with what we now know to be the technical requirements for communication by means of national languages. But before turning to the technical evidence, I shall mention a later educational tendency that has opposed these historical traditions.

The Rise of Formalism

In contrast to our early practice of imparting nationally shared traditions along with instruction in reading and writing, we often encounter today the practice of teaching literacy as a set of technical skills. One must grant that in the first stages of literacy, in phonics and so on, there is just enough truth in the idea that literacy is a set of transferable skills to make this neutral, basic-skills approach a respectable theory to hold. But it should be added that in recent times the basic-skills approach in education has also been a safe theory to hold. Specialists in reading and writing who adopt it needn't commit themselves to any particular contents or values, except "pluralism." They can present themselves as technicians who remain above the cultural battle.

This posture of neutral expertness is nowhere better illustrated than in the official curriculum guides of certain states (for instance, California) which mention no specific contents at all. In earlier days, American educators consciously connected the technical skills of phonics and spelling with background knowledge--that is to say, with the acculturative side of teaching literacy. But in our own day, after fifty years of the basic skills-approach, and despite the advances we have made in reading research and educating the disadvantaged, we find a decline in SAT scores and an apparent increase in cultural fragmentation.

The notion that reading and writing are generalized skills has been an attractive theory in many countries, but especially in the United States. Such educational formalism has served our ideal of practical efficiency. What could be more efficient than to learn an habitual skill that can be transferred to an indefinite number of future tasks? Another attraction of educational formalism has been its concord with our characteristic American ideals of diversity and pluralism. What could be more democratic and federalist than to leave the actual contents of teaching up to our diverse local districts? Any appropriate content will serve to teach the skills of reading and writing.

This theory of instruction has recently dominated not only reading and writing courses, but literature courses as well. The most influential literary textbook of our time, Understanding Poetry, by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, appeared as a college text in 1938 and soon spawned progeny at all grade levels. Brooks and Warren usually are associated with literary formalism, the idea that the meaning of a work of literature lies in its total artistic form. But that Now-Critical doctrine was not the chief attraction that Understanding Poetry had for educators, nor was literary formalism the chief influence the book had on education in language arts. The book was taken rather as an instrument of educational formalism, as if it had been designed to teach transferable skills that would work for all literary materials. To educators, this meant that nothing would hinge on the choice of materials, so long as students were trained in reading the different literary genres. So, with a totally clear conscience, the choice of contents could be left to local districts or to individual teachers, or, for that matter, to the students themselves. Needless to say, Brooks and Warren were not themselves educational formalists, and they should not be accused of being so. Most educators who have used their work were and are.

Educational formalism is a powerful position, but not because it is true, for cognitive psychology has discovered that it contains far less truth than meets the eye (see section IV, below). It is powerful because it is highly attractive to public school teachers and administrators who must cope with the genuine political difficulties of curricular choices in our contentious and heterogeneous land. On the one side, literary (i.e., aesthetic) formalism lends comfort to concerned parents by persuading them that controversial or worrisome literary content is not being taught. For, under literary formalism, content as such is not the topic of literary study; its topic is rather the total literary form, which includes and transfigures content. Moreover, educational formalism adds a further reassurance: Nothing significant is lost if an educator decides to omit traditional literary works that have proved controversial or difficult to teach.

For the chief aim of schooling is to impart skills, and these can be imparted through any appropriate materials.

This formalistic account of reading and writing instruction, with its emphasis on "how-to" principles, is based on a psychological premise that only a few years ago educators called "the transfer of training"; but now that that theory is defunct, the premise is assumed without being given any name at all. Under this formalistic theory, an acquired skill in performing a task in one domain, such as chemistry, can be transferred to skill in the methods of another domain like biology, even when the specific tasks do not overlap. Students are thus taught "scientific and critical thinking." This is the idea, for example, behind the doctrine that a student should be required to take a laboratory science in order to become acquainted with "scientific method." The same transfer principle is thought to hold for teaching reading in different domains, since skill in reading about sports can be transferred to other reading tasks, such as reading about a federal appeals panel.

No well-informed cognitive psychologist would today accept this formalistic theory of learning. Recent work has shown that every acquired skill is knowledge-based and task-specific, and cannot be transferred to a substantially different task. This means that there is no substitute in education for the specific background information I have been calling "cultural literacy."

Unfortunately, I have not the space to describe in detail the recent research that has contravened the assumptions of educational formalism. I can summarize three major findings. One is that the surface of language is the smallest part of what we understand. In order to understand what the simplest utterance says, we have to know a lot about whole domains of reality not mentioned in the utterance. The second, related finding is that in order to communicate, we must adjust the prolixity of our speech according to the amount of relevant information we share with our interlocutors. Together these two findings suggest that language use always must go far beyond the mere learning of the language system.

The third major finding is even more embarrassing to educational formalism than the former two. It is that skills are not transferable from one domain to another. We don't learn how to read about politics by reading about sports; beyond the most primitive and universal procedures in reading and writing, there is no generalized "reading ability" that can be transferred from one domain to another. Skills are domain specific, and they depend upon content-patterns (schemata) that turn upon specific information and experience.

Response to Possible Objections

I have outlined some historical and technical grounds for exposing students to a common core of information (though not a common curriculum) in the elementary and secondary schools. Indeed, the goal of cultural literacy does not imply a specific curriculum, since the information it embraces is more extensive than any curriculum could cover in detail. A lot of the information needed for cultural literacy is quite sketchy and superficial.

Yet if some of the material taught in the schools is not to be studied in detail, would that not be an invitation to vagueness and superficiality in teaching? This objection is well taken, and it should be openly faced. I have already alluded to the sketchiness of the information that people in a culture can be relied on to share. One might well take the view that to teach no information would be better than to teach sketchy, superficial material. But such a conclusion would betray a too quixotic conception of the way culture and language work. Much of our linguistic understanding is extremely hazy and superficial. As Hilary Putnam pointed out in his brilliant essay "The Meaning of Meaning" (Putnam, 1975), we all operate on the principle of "the division of linguistic labor;" we rely on others to give us more exact or deeper knowledge of the reference of words, when and if we have need of such deeper knowledge.

A more serious objection to making explicit the specific contents of cultural literacy is that our culture might be better off if its shared knowledge were left implicit and vague. To give authority to any listing of canonical information would be to fix the canon arbitrarily and unnecessarily; when shared knowledge is allowed to develop by itself, the culture can grow flexibly, and embrace all sorts of valuable elements that might be excluded if cultural literacy were explicitly defined.

Again, there is truth in this objection, but it is a partial truth. In my brief historical excursus, I tried to show that large national cultures have always been conscious artifacts, that they cannot exist without self-conscious nurture. This fact has been known and acted on in our country from its earliest days. As recently as the teens and twenties of this century, Baker and Thorndyke, the editors of our then most popular school readers, The Everyday Classics series, did not forbear to say:

We have chosen what is common, established, almost proverbial; what has become indisputably "classic," what, in brief, every child in the land ought to know, because it is good and because other people know it. The educational

worth of such material calls for no defense. In an age when the need of socializing and unifying our people is keenly felt, the value of a common stock of knowledge, a common set of ideals is obvious. A people is best unified by being taught in childhood the best things in its intellectual and moral heritage. Our own heritage is, like our ancestry composite. Hebrew, Greek, Roman, English, French, and Teutonic elements are blended in our cultural past. We draw freely from all these. An introduction to the best of this is one of our ways of making good citizens. (From the "Preface" to Everyday Classics: Third Reader, New York 1917.)

To those who fear that imparting common information in the schools might further solidify an already dominant White Anglo Saxon Protestant Male culture, my reply is this: The various movements that have been resisting such cultural dominance have been working reasonably effectively, and will continue to do so. But there is something adamant about the Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, Betsy Ross, and George Washington. Certainly some of those mythic figures can gradually be replaced by others, and such gradual change is always occurring. But those who believe that such matters can be arranged by an ideological fiat or whim are well advised to read Edward Shils' profound recent book, Tradition (Shils 1980).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to stress again the danger that educational formalism poses for the advancement of literacy. The real peril of educational formalism is that, although it is fundamentally wrong, and although it has proved unfruitful in the real world, it remains an extraordinarily attractive theory. Thirty-eight years after de Groot's classic findings on the non-transferability of skills, findings that continue to be confirmed in every domain in which they are tested, educators still hold fast to the idea that schools should teach "the basic skills that train for life." But, in fact, the only skills that train for life are those knowledge-based activities that continue specifically to be used in life. Reading and writing, of course, continue to be used. Everyone knows they are absolutely central to productive membership in our society, and to the ability to acquire new knowledge-based skills when needed. Reading and writing at the high levels required for such future flexibility are skills that are based on a large, complex system of world knowledge that I have called "cultural literacy."

We all know that our continuing failure to achieve a high level of national literacy ensures a continuing lack of subtlety in the

communications that we can transmit widely in speeches, books, and newspapers by means of the national language. Even a training manual can be much more effective and functional if its author can assume a readership that is culturally literate. Moreover, we know that a low standard of literacy debases to only the level of general culture, but also the level of political discussion, and of technical and economic effectiveness. It affects our ability to accommodate ourselves flexibly to new technological and political challenges. We know that a great deal is at stake in raising the level of national literacy.

But raising the level of adult literacy beyond the elementary stage is not just a matter of raising the level of linguistic skills. Adult literacy is less a system of formal skills than a system of information. What chiefly counts in higher reading competence is the amount of relevant prior knowledge that readers have. This is not a mere ideological sentiment on behalf of a shared national culture, but an empirical truth about literacy that coincides with more general findings about the importance of specific knowledge in the acquisition of all higher skills. Adult literacy is a problem that requires decisive leadership at least as much as it requires money. Our illiterate citizens simply do not know the essential background facts and the essential words that represent them. Our schools have not imparted these essential facts and words, because in recent times we have not been willing as a nation to decide what the essential facts and words are.

Despite our national virtues of diversity and pluralism, our failure to decide upon the core content of cultural literacy has created a positive barrier to adult literacy in this country, and thus to full citizenship and full acculturation into our society. We Americans need to be decisive and explicit about the background information that a citizen should know in order to be literate in the 1980s. If we were to act decisively to define and promote cultural literacy, then the level of literacy in the nation would rise as a matter of course.

HELPING TEACHERS DO WHAT THEY CANNOT DO ALONE

By Roger Shattuck

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Of the many institutions whose purpose is to shape human society, education has potentially the most lasting effects--both to level and to individualize. I refer to the power of education, when appropriately applied, to level us upward toward our potentialities and capacities, as well as to level us downward toward the lowest common denominator, the minimum competence. And I refer to our desire to encourage individual and ethnic differences within a common culture. The remarks that follow are predicated on the belief that all citizens in a democracy should benefit from schooling that levels everyone upward, the gifted as well as the average and the less gifted, and schooling that leaves ample room for different backgrounds and talents.

Observations on the Present Risk

One significant fact about education through high school in the United States goes virtually unrecorded and undiscussed in the recent spate of reports. That silence partly covers up a situation that would not be tolerated if it occurred in the space program or the automobile industry. The call has gone out from every rooftop for excellence in education, for higher standards, for quality work. But almost everywhere the system omits the step that could measure the results. Schools lack quality control. We spend billions of dollars on education and do not apply to the product, to graduating high school seniors, the kind of checks that would verify standards of excellence and could help improve the system as a whole.

School administrators and other officials use a variety of objective tests to measure the achievement of particular grades, schools, districts, and state systems. But this kind of test, intended principally to generate statistics, to place students, or to predict their future performance, differs from what I will call the examination. The examination is designed to find out what individual students actively know by having them produce in writing (not merely identify among multiple choices) responses to questions based on materials and skills they have studied. Without such externally administered examinations (The SAT for college entrance does not qualify), we cannot know where we are or what we are doing in the schools. Among the dozen-odd recent national reports on education,

only A Nation at Risk, in the section on "Standards and Expectations," clearly recommends a form of quality control:*

Standardized tests of achievement (not to be confused with aptitude tests) should be administered at major transition points from one level of schooling to another and particularly from high school to college or work. The purposes of these tests would be to: (a) certify the student's credentials; (b) identify the need for remedial intervention; and (c) identify the opportunity for advanced or accelerated work. (p.28)

The reforms widely proposed and adopted at the state level rarely include so sensible a step as the one recommended above. In Virginia, for example, the General Assembly has mandated and the Board of Education has distributed (July 1983) new standards for accreditation that include the following (explanatory footnotes are omitted):

To graduate from high school, a student shall meet the requirements for the 20-credit diploma as outlined below for grades 9-12. Students who graduate with an average grade of "B" or better will receive a Board of Education Seal on the diploma.

	<u>9 - 12</u>
English	4
Mathematics	2
Laboratory Science	2
Math or Science	1
Social Studies:	3
United States and Virginia History - 1	
United States and Virginia Government -1	
World Studies -1	
Health and Physical Education	2
Electives	6
(Academics, Fine Arts, and Vocational Education)	
	<hr/>
Total Units	20

*I would prefer a more colorful analogy, like St. Peter checking credentials at the Pearly Gates, or a knight surviving his trials and vigil. But I fear either one would appear flippant or inappropriate, and I reluctantly adopt a common commercial-industrial term. The great disadvantage is that "quality control" does not lay adequate stress on individual evaluation as contrasted with statistics.

As an elective for students, each high school shall offer an Advanced Studies Program which requires 22 units of credit as outlined below for grades 9-12. Students who graduate with an average grade of "B" or better will receive a Governor's Seal on the diploma.

English	4
Mathematics	3
Laboratory Science	3
Social Studies:	3
United States and Virginia History - 1	
United States and Virginia Government -1	
World Studies -1	
Foreign Language	3
(3 years of one language or 2 years each of 2 languages)	
Health and Physical Education	2
Electives	<u>4</u>
Total Units	22

Graduating seniors must also pass minimum competency tests in reading and mathematics.

If you remember that a unit means a full-year course, meeting five hours a week, and that the requirement used to be 18 units for graduation, you will see that the new regulations represent a serious effort to improve the substance and quality of education in Virginia. Debate about these requirements shows no signs of dying out. What will happen to art and music? How can high schools in poor districts put all these courses in place? Such questions have merit and deserve careful answers. They do not alter the fact that the new accreditation requirements represent both a call to raise standards and an opportunity to do so.

But there is good reason to remain skeptical about reform that simply increases class time spent "taking" basic subjects. That kind of change does nothing to modify the one basic circumstance that hampers education, particularly at the secondary level. I would describe it in this way: we load every responsibility, every burden, every decision on the individual classroom teacher. Directives and encouragements and advice come in from all sides. But it is the teacher who turns a stipulated curriculum (usually described in very general terms) into daily lesson plans, presents them, assigns and corrects homework, sets standards, designs the examination, evaluates the students' performance, and assigns the final recorded grade.

Nothing in the present system--not the principal's class visits nor hortatory statements about improving the school--can really help the teacher raise standards and require better work of the class.

As things now stand, the teacher must find those standards in her or his own moral fiber. Truly dedicated teachers, of whom there are many, know that usually they have to establish their island of quality in a sea of evasion and indifference--sometimes of opposition. All too often school boards and district supervisors, parents and principals, and even fellow teachers can dampen the efforts of teachers to give more to students and to demand more from them in return. Yet at the present time there is no means to improve education except through the effort of individual teachers, often uncertain of their support.

Individual effort faces another built-in obstacle. We have become accustomed to a system in which the teachers serve first as guides and taskmasters and then, when they assign course grades, as the final judges of their own products. If no further evaluation exists to set levels of achievement, the teachers are placed in an awkward, even false position. They have to supply their own quality control. The temptation to inflate grades is almost irresistible, as statistics demonstrate. "Over the past decades, grades rose ever higher while scores on such standardized tests as the SAT fell lower." (Stephen M. Cahn, Harvard Educational Review, November 1983, p. 405)

But even grades do not reach the heart of the matter. Athletic, dramatic, music, and debate coaches perform some of the most effective teaching in our schools because their students see themselves and the coach as situated on the same side of an undertaking. They strive together to prepare for the great challenge, for the performance that will elicit the best of the students' abilities. They are in training together.

All teachers could benefit to some degree from this advantageous psychological situation of working toward an exterior standard of excellence clear to both parties, of aiming at a shared goal. It is difficult for a student or a teacher to work this way when the culmination of a course takes the form of a grade given by the same teacher. The usual classroom can lead all too easily to an adversary situation. Of course, it will require a shift in social attitudes to give "studies" as privileged a status as sports and other performance activities. That remains one of our long-term goals.

But why continue to complain about our schools? More than 50 percent of high school graduates go on to some form of higher education. Shouldn't we be satisfied with that figure? By no means.

We have long since become accustomed to the charge that our colleges offer a glorified baby-sitting service, keeping the young off the job market and offering them in some cases more of a vacation than an education. Furthermore, admission to college no longer signifies very much except in a small minority of selective institutions. "A recent survey by the College Board . . . found that most colleges and universities now accept all prospective students who apply and that they require that students meet only minimal standards." (Jim Bencivenga, "Standardized Tests, The Christian Science Monitor, November 4, 1983) This easy passage into college has two disturbing results. By taking poorly prepared high-school graduates, the colleges shoulder an expensive remedial function that should have been taken care of on the primary and secondary level. Even more significant, the high-school diploma tends to be devalued, trivialized into a piece of paper certifying nothing, available to anyone who can just sit out the system.

It is of crucial importance, both for the schools and for the communities they serve, that the high-school diploma be perceived and defended as the central, main-line certificate for entry into our democratic society and adequate for that purpose. The credential craze for ever higher degrees does not serve us well, particularly insofar as it weakens and discredits the lower degrees. A rehabilitation of the high-school diploma as representing genuine accomplishment in basic subjects recognized by all employers would allow it to confer true status on those who earn it.

The national Council for Public Education thwarts this purpose-- probably unthinkingly. It sponsors a radio advertisement that presents what sounds like an elementary-school girl talking proudly about her good grades in school. Her last sentence, however, gives away our lack of confidence in the adequacy of our schools: "And when I go to college, I want to get smart." We should be searching for ways to make students "get smart" much earlier than that.

An Ambitious Proposal

What then shall we do? The first answer is that unless we can rely on parents and ordinary citizens to give moral and practical support to educational standards, and on political leaders to give firm leadership, it will not be worth doing much of anything. It is not enough to see improved schools as the way to regain our economic and technological leadership in the world and to maintain our high material standard of living. Unfortunately, current reports on education speak of almost nothing else. Schools can be given new vitality only if we reaffirm also that our fundamental democratic

freedoms and the intellectual and spiritual fulfillment of individual lives rest in part on the quality of education we offer our children. For a short period we have what appears to be a favorable attitude toward reform in education. How best can we seize the opportunity?

I have one specific proposal directly related to my earlier observations. It may appear to affect only a limited area of schooling, possibly a stage too late in the game to make much difference. But if I am right, this area is analogous to one of the major locations in the art of acupuncture. Appropriate action here will affect vital parts of the system far removed from the puncture itself.

One of the most sensitive points in our educational process is the awarding of the high-school diploma. That document establishes standards for the whole system and certifies individual achievement within it. In Virginia, as in several other states, the first steps have already been taken toward giving greater substance (units) to the diploma. But there is still no control to ensure the quality of work done, less even in the higher range of performance than at the level of minimum competence.

In order to introduce quality control, a wise and logical step would be to create a Commonwealth Diploma, awarded on the basis of statewide examinations (not objective tests) in five core subjects (English, history and geography, mathematics, science, and foreign language). The Commonwealth Diploma need not replace the newly established Board of Education Seal for students earning a "B" average in the regular 20-unit program, or the Governor's Seal for comparable performance in the 22-unit Advanced Studies Program. As many as half the students in an average class could be encouraged to prepare for the Commonwealth examinations as a healthy challenge to them as individuals and to the schools they represent. Competition is not an element alien to either education or democracy. And when a doubting parent asks a teacher why she or he is giving so much homework on paragraphing, the teacher will have a straightforward answer: "The Commonwealth English examination requires that answers be written in paragraph form. With enough practice your child will do well."

At first glance this proposal will appear impossibly idealistic to some, to others simply wrong-headed, and to still others administratively infeasible. I shall first discuss the precedents that point to the practicability of the scheme, and then some of its pros and cons.

There are two comparable programs already in place and working in the United States. The statewide program has a longer history and better known results than the international program.

Following precedents begun in 1865, the New York State Board of Regents now prepares for all schools in the state both minimum competence examinations and Regents High School Examinations with accompanying syllabi and materials. Any student in the state may obtain a Regents Diploma by fulfilling a number of specified units and passing a certain number of Regents Examinations. The Regents, a group of distinguished professionals from many fields, have no doubts about the significance of their mission.

New York has a well established system of State authority to set educational program objectives, curriculum guidelines and syllabi and examinations. Perhaps the most unique in New York is the century old system of statewide examinations at both the elementary and secondary education levels which provides both quality control on school systems and establishes standards for individual pupil performance. (Proposed Action Plan to Improve Elementary and Secondary Education Results in New York, The Board of Regents, August 1983, Revised October 11, 1983)

The Regents Examinations generally contain two parts: an objective or multiple choice section and a section in which the student must himself write fairly substantial answers to questions involving both factual material and interpretation. In March 1984, after eight months of hearings, the regents raised their requirements, and New York legislators simultaneously voted a \$460 million increase in school aid, the largest boost in the state's history. These developments do not suggest public dissatisfaction with the program.

For roughly the past ten years a Swiss initiative joined by the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and several other countries has set up an International Baccalaureate (I.B.). The central office in Geneva prepares syllabi and examinations in basic subjects covering the last two years of high school. In 1983 a total of 103 schools in North America participated in the I.B. programs; among these were 71 schools in the United States, 62 public schools and 9 independent schools. The I.B. examinations contain relatively small portions of objective questions and emphasize students' knowledge, powers of organization, and writing. They are graded centrally in England.

George H. Thoms, principal of George Mason Junior-Senior High School in Falls Church, Virginia, has written a useful assessment of the International Baccalaureate program as it can be employed in an American high school (The Executive Educator, Fall 1983). He faces up quite frankly to problems of elitism, cost, and staffing. His conclusions enthusiastically endorse the whole undertaking: "We are experiencing a ripple effect as a result of the I.B. program that has

increased the purposefulness of many students." Equally encouraging accounts are coming from inner-city, predominantly black Rufus King School in Milwaukee.

Both the Regents program and the International Baccalaureate provide evidence that what I am suggesting for Virginia is far from idealistic and impractical. The two existing programs, one with a long history of readjustment to changing times and needs, the other new and growing, set precedents we cannot afford to overlook.

At this point it will be wise to recapitulate the advantages of offering in a school system, in addition to the local diploma awarded on the basis of having passed a minimum number of prescribed units, a higher diploma based on statewide examination.

1. Improvements widely recommended for our schools (like increased homework, a core curriculum, and more demanding teaching) will be difficult to introduce and maintain unless statewide examinations establish genuine standards and quality control. Classroom grades accompanied by occasional standardized tests unrelated to graduation cannot serve that purpose.
2. Insofar as examinations are tied to the content of sequences of courses, they will help establish coherence and continuity in the basic subjects we wish to teach to high school graduates. The best way to place a core in the curriculum is to examine students and teacher candidates on that core.
3. The principle of the "outside examiner" here proposed allows teachers to step partially out of the role of judge and jury and to assume the role of helper and coach. The adversary relationship can yield at times to the positive one of encouraging counselor.
4. Such a system measuring individual performance (at least in the twelfth grade) can have a genuine "trickle-down" effect on earlier grades. George Thoms's article affirms precisely that. Middle schools, sometimes left to drift across what a few misguided psychologists refer to as "a learning plateau," would benefit particularly from knowing that they too must contribute measurably to students' learning and progress.

5. Examinations for a high school diploma would also have a long overdue "trickle-up" effect, enabling colleges and universities to raise their admission standards.

Such a list of advantages suggests that we look also at the objections.

1. Reliance on examinations represents bad pedagogy because it leads to "teaching to the test."

A strong expression of this view comes from a professional educator, Dianne Ravitch: "Overreliance on standardized testing may be dangerous to the health of education, if a testing mentality is extended too far into school. . . . Such tests measure only a narrow spectrum of abilities, and they cannot measure many important and valuable ways of thinking." (Quoted from an interview in the article by Cahn, cited on page 4)

Poor teachers and badly designed tests may create a situation where one can talk about a "testing mentality." But when examinations are well designed to cover essential content and the skills to organize it, then teaching will benefit, not suffer, from judicious teaching to the examination. Our response to entirely justified criticism of the narrowness and intellectual inadequacy of objective (multiple-choice, machine-graded) tests should be to reduce their use and to introduce meaningful examinations at major transition points.

2. Any form of individual test or examination is elitist. Examinations also tend to discriminate against racial and ethnic minorities and the handicapped.

Here something very basic and straightforward needs to be said. The primary function of examinations is and must be to discriminate carefully and fairly on the basis of intelligence and the control of subject matter generally deemed central to our culture and to the individual's survival and success in the modern world. To deprive anyone of an adequate education based on fair standards represents an injustice. For its survival the country needs cadres of trained citizens (e.g. astronauts, machinists, statesmen), and our minorities should not be denied access because of weaknesses in our primary and secondary schools. No school can allow students to become second-class citizens because of race or color. If tests

or examinations can be shown to discriminate unfairly on the basis of race, they should be modified, not suppressed.

Every American citizen should be expected to learn standard English and to become fully literate in the central culture of the country--a core around which a wonderful pluralism of subcultures can flourish to the benefit of all. Nothing could be healthier than a continuing debate over the content of that core--the books we shall honor, the interpretation of history we shall present, the science we shall learn. Rigorous instruction deprives no one of his or her rights; rather it allows them to achieve full enjoyment of their rights and their freedom within our remarkably open society.

If, while seeking rigor in education, we wish to avoid indoctrination and inflexible curricula, we need to recognize two distinct processes. First, citizens and teachers must agree upon a selection and shaping of knowledge to be conveyed to everyone as the core of our shared culture. Second, the spirit of inquiry and criticism should be applied to that core or canon in order to maintain essential continuities and regulate change. These two vital processes of establishing and scrutinizing the canon should fall, not to an examination board of bureaucrats and "experts," but to a board composed of widely informed and concerned teachers and citizens. The great defender of liberty, J. S. Mill, speaks directly to the need of conveying and certifying such essential knowledge in any society:

All attempts by the State to bias the conclusions of its citizens on disputed subjects, are evil; but it may very properly offer to ascertain and certify that a person possesses the knowledge, requisite to make his conclusions, on any given subject worth attending to. (On Liberty, V, Applications)

There are many ways "to ascertain and certify" a person's competence; intelligently administered examinations remain among the most fair and effective.

3. Inevitably educational administrators will use examination results to evaluate teachers, not just students. Such use is unjust.

Teachers have no control over the selection of students assigned to them and cannot be judged by their students' results.

The results of examinations used over the short run should never be trusted as a single index of teacher competence. Once again this is no reason to abandon the principle of carefully designed outside examinations. In the long run, judicious consideration of examination results can encourage better studying and better teaching.

4. Outside examinations are expensive, difficult to design and correct, and entail organizational and administrative effort we are not prepared to undertake.

No one should underestimate the difficulty of designing and evaluating statewide examinations. But New York State has done so for a century, and 71 high schools in 26 states purchase the service from the International Baccalaureate. The states should probably make an effort to coordinate curricula among themselves and to avoid unnecessary expense by duplication. Still, in spite of certain evident advantages in uniformity, many of us would be wary of a proposal to establish a single national system of examinations to certify high school diplomas.

A few of the world's greatest statesmen have taken particular pride in their contributions to education. Napoleon established the system of lycees in France. Jefferson used his tombstone to recall the fact that he founded the University of Virginia. Where will our educational leadership come from today? Will we find, individually and collectively, the resolve to make the tough decisions necessary to introduce fair standards and quality control through something like a Commonwealth Diploma? The difficulty we have in answering these questions arises in part from our uncertainty about our role in the world today, whether to renew our leadership of the free world or to retreat from the responsibilities history has thrust upon us. Napoleon and Jefferson were troubled by no such doubts. Facing these pressing circumstances, we will do well to ponder Hannah Arendt's sobering statement in Between Past and Present. It is also a challenge.

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it.

A P P E N D I X E S

APPENDIX A
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This list of Assembly participants is included here just as matter of record. It should not be assumed that every participant subscribed to every recommendation included in the Assembly's final report.

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Educator
Roanoke County Schools
Salem

WORSHAM, OVELLO
Past President
Covington Education Association
Covington

WYATT, KATHRYN
Educator
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ZIESKE, LEWIS H., JR.
Executive Director
Association of Retarded Citizens
in Virginia
Richmond

ZUGER, WARREN
History/Latin Teacher
Gloucester High School
Gloucester

APPENDIX B
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR 1984 VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY

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Dean of the College
Sweet Briar College

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Representative, Virginia PTA
Springfield

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Wythe County Public Schools

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Division Superintendent
VA Beach City Public Schools

Dr. Mary T. Christian
Dean, School of Education
Hampton Institute

Professor Mary Ruth Cloudsley
Department of Sociology
Tidewater Community College

Mr. William H. Cochran
Deputy Superintendent/Public
Instruction
State Department of Education
Richmond

Professor Robert D. Cross
Department of History
University of Virginia

Dr. Margaret Dabney
Dean, School of Education
Virginia State University

Ms. Lois K. Draina
Superintendent of Schools
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Professor Thomas Edwards
Department of Economics
Hollins College

Mr. Eric A. Engels
Honors Student
University of Virginia

Professor Alan Fuchs
Department of Philosophy
College of William and Mary

Professor E. D. Hirsch, Jr.
Keenan Professor of English
University of Virginia

Professor George Holmes
Former Executive Secretary
Virginia School Boards
Association

Dr. Richard Hunter
Former Division Superintendent
Richmond City Public Schools

Professor Terry Jones
Department of History
Tidewater Community College

Professor Michael Joyce
Department of Drama
Mary Washington College

Dr. John Markwood
President, Leary-Timber Ridge
(special education school)
Winchester

Ms. Margaret S. Marston
Virginia Board of Education
Arlington

Ms. Terry McConnel
Former President, VA Association
for Infant Mental Health
Prince William County

The Hon. James H. Roberson
Judge, Juvenile and Domestic
Circuit Court
Wise County

Professor Charles Ruch
Dean, School of Education
Virginia Commonwealth University

Professor Richard Salmon
Administrative and Educational
Services
VPI & SU

Professor Roger W. Shattuck
Commonwealth Professor of French
University of Virginia

Professor George Strong
Department of History
College of William and Mary

Mr. Richard A. Velzy
Executive Director
Virginia Association of
Private Career Schools

Professor Jacqueline B. Walker
Department of History
James Madison University

Dr. Howard E. Wainwright
Assistant Superintendent
Essex County Public Schools