

*Open*

*Testimony*  
*US Comm on C. R. - Feb 14-15/72*

**HEARING**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**UNITED STATES**  
**COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

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**HEARING HELD**  
**IN**  
**NEW YORK, NEW YORK**  
**February 14-15, 1972**

MR. WILLIAMS. To some degree we have some success in utilizing them in areas where there is not the same kind of specific licensed duties. We do have a certificate of competency procedure by which we can utilize persons who have a particular skill in the bilingual area and any number of developing bilingual and bicultural programs, because this is not solely a language matter but a cultural matter as well, and we have been able to utilize that and not have them pass through this license examination process.

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. Mr. Williams, we are running overtime, and we have lost a little time. I wish you would give us for the record in writing what affirmative action you are taking to recruit and to train more Puerto Rican principals, together with the number and names of those principals, presently Puerto Rican principals, in this town.

Thank you very much, Mr. Williams. We appreciate your coming.

MR. WILLIAMS. Thank you.

(The material referred to appears on P. 485.)

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. Our next witness is Mr. Shanker.

(Whereupon, Mr. Albert Shanker was sworn by the Chairman and testified as follows:)

TESTIMONY OF MR. ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT, UNITED  
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

MR. POWELL. Mr. Shanker, please state your name, address, and occupation for the record.

MR. SHANKER. Albert Shanker, R.D. 1, Putnam Valley, New York. I am President of the United Federation of Teachers, Local 2, American Federation of Teachers, AFO-CIO.

MR. POWELL. Mr. Shanker, it is acknowledged that Puerto Rican children are not getting quality education. As a matter of fact, dropout and retardation rates indicate they are obviously failing. Has the UFT as a professional union of teachers adopted positions or supported programs which might contribute to the solution of this problem?

MR. SHANKER. Yes, we have.

MR. POWELL. Would you tell us about some of them?

MR. SHANKER. We have called for the establishment of universal early childhood education. We have called for the reduction of class size down to limits as low as 12 to 13, where students are behind in their work. We have supported the programs in bilingual education. We have supported the expansion of the More Effective Schools Program. We have established in the city throughout our contract a number of integrated early childhood educational centers where half of the children are children of teachers returning from maternity leave and the other half are children of parents in the community.

But we feel that the basic answer, insofar as schools can provide the answer, is to provide a high quality of education, which includes starting earlier. It includes working with children, if necessary, on an individual basis.

I want to add, however, that the school is not the only agency in society that is responsible for educational failure, and if we continue to have poor housing and poor health conditions and discrimination in employment and the whole bunch of other factors that we have, even if the schools were to have an ideal situation in terms of teaching and learning, not all of the problems the children come to school with would be overcome by the schools.

MR. POWELL. You do agree, however, the system does have a significant degree of responsibility, do you not?

MR. SHANKER. The system has a degree of responsibility. It can do better than it is doing now if conditions were better within the system. What the degree of responsibility is, how well the schools could do, even if other conditions were not changed, no one is in a position to answer at the present time because that just hasn't been researched, and that's part of what we do not have in the realm of knowledge at the present time.

MR. POWELL. Mr. Shanker, there are some other obvious defects about this system, though, are there not? For example, there are some 260,000 Hispanic speaking students. Yet there are only 800 Hispanic teachers. There is some evidence that the system of the board of examiners unduly screens out Hispanic teachers. Would you say that that system should be changed in such a way, assuming that it does screen out such teachers? Do you believe the system should be changed?

MR. SHANKER. I don't assume that it does that. I think that the question that you pose—and you are not the only one who has posed that question—is really, I would say, rather alarming. We do not recruit teachers from the ranks of children. And, therefore, the percentage of children who are in the school system has nothing to do with the percentage of teachers in the school system of any given ethnic or other group. Furthermore, we do—

MR. POWELL. You do know—

MR. SHANKER. May I finish, please? Furthermore, we do not recruit teachers from the ranks of the adult population at large. We recruit teachers from the ranks of college graduates. And I would say that, given the very, very small number in the city and State of New York and the entire Northeast region of college graduates who are Puerto Rican, that you cannot allege that the school system has discriminated.

I am very happy to see that the City University has instituted an open enrollment program. We are strongly in support of it. And at this very moment we are fighting to maintain that program and to maintain free tuition in the City University.

But before you can allege discrimination, sir, you'd better see

that the percentages you are talking about are the percentages of people eligible for the job and not just the general percentage of people within a society or the percentage of children within a school.

MR. POWELL. Now, looking at that universe, Mr. Shanker, the universe of college graduates, looking at it in national terms, isn't it true that the unduly narrow mechanism of the board of examiners substantially impedes that?

For example, you have a system of State certification here, and that certification requires merely that you pass a National Teachers' Examination with a certain score. Now, every other school system in this State can choose from a much larger pool. Now isn't it true—

MR. SHANKER. And how many Puerto Rican teachers are working in these other systems where they have the larger pool?

MR. POWELL. The question: Isn't it true there are far more Hispanic teachers qualified, certified, on the basis of National Teachers' Exams than you can reach through the narrow mechanism of the Board of Examiners? Isn't that a fact?

MR. SHANKER. Well, we have supported the use of the National Teachers' Exam. We have supported it for about 6 years now, and we were responsible for urging the legislature in the decentralization board to enable the use of the National Teachers' Exam, and furthermore we urged the legislature, and written into that law is the requirement that examinations be given each year in Puerto Rico. I see nothing wrong with that.

I have been a critic, not of the narrowness of the board of examiners. I think the problem with the board of examiners is that it has never been adequately funded and financed. You take a handful of people and don't give them the money—it's like these recruiting programs. Until the union got in there and demanded a recruiting program where we did go to the South and we did go to Puerto Rico, there was one person working in recruitment for the entire board of education in a system with 80,000 employees.

Now, if the board of examiners had sufficient staff to set up an operation in a number of places across the country, recruitment centers, including Puerto Rico, I think it would be a very good operation. But given the fact that we are unlikely to see that kind of funding in the near future, the examinations given by NTE or any other national group that will come up with reasonable examinations would certainly be acceptable with us.

MR. POWELL. The UFT has many times supported equal opportunity movements. In light of this involvement, how many minority teachers are members of UFT?

MR. SHANKER. Well, we don't keep records, but to the best of our knowledge, we have the same percentage of minority members in the union as there are within the school system. That holds for teachers, and that holds true of paraprofessionals also

whom we represent. We represent about 10,000 paraprofessionals in the school system. And I believe that the percentage of the teaching staff is about 10 percent, and therefore it would be about 10 percent of our membership, which is at the present time 72,000.

MR. POWELL. What percentage of your policy-making positions are minority? Is that 10 percent also?

MR. SHANKER. Well, of our officers we have—yes, we have 10 officers, and there are two from minority groups. We have an executive board of 49. I guess there are about four or five there. It's about the same.

I would like to emphasize, however, I realize the special sense in which the words "minority group" are being used here. But in my view, the city is made up of a number of minority groups. Jews are a minority, and Italians are a minority, and Irish are a minority, and WASPS are a minority, and I think before you ask that question in those terms, what you really ought to do is get a listing of our entire executive board and see whether everyone who thinks of himself as a minority—and by the way, everybody who lives in East Borough is a minority, persecuted by the other boroughs. But we have an organization which has only recently come into existence. Ten years ago there were 106 different teacher groups in New York City, and each of those felt they were part of some persecuted minority. And in order to bring all those teachers together, we have provided in our various policy-making bodies a place for each of the groups that considered itself previously a small minority. We have given each group a voice.

MR. POWELL. Mr. Shanker, what is the accountability of the teacher for student performance? By what standard do you, as a teacher representative, want them to be judged?

MR. SHANKER. I think a teacher has to, in the first place, be given the same as any other employee and for any employer, ought to be given an initial period of help and on-the-job training. That isn't done.

I think secondly a teacher has to be responsible for performing in accordance with the best knowledge that's available of whatever competent performance is.

One of the problems is that in the field of teaching we do not have a model of competent performance in the same sense that there is a model of competent performance in, let's say, a field like dentistry or medicine or law. In those fields, if you got a number of colleagues together, they could pretty well agree within a certain range as to the competency of the professional behavior of a given person. But in education we still are faced, not with the situation you have in these other fields, but we face a good many kinds of philosophic and psychological disagreements as to what's good and what's bad. This is still a field in which you

can send five observers in to look at one teacher, and one will say she's the greatest teacher in the world, and another one would say she ought to be fired, and the other three will have different views.

I would say there are some exceptions to this. I would say when it comes to the extremely outstanding magnificent artist, the brilliant person, there's a good deal of agreement that that person has something which obviously catches on and it's something which there can be a great deal of agreement on.

I would say that at the opposite spectrum, that is, the totally incompetent, there can also be a good deal of agreement. But when it comes to the overwhelming majority of more or less average people, and when you've got 80,000 employees, a good many of them are going to be not bunched at either extreme—the magnificent artist or the absolute incompetent—there's a tremendous amount of disagreement.

Now, what we have done is that we have in the 1969 contract between the union and the board of education a clause which provides for the joint development between the union and the board, with parent groups and with community school boards and with universities, the development of objective standards of accountability for the professional staff. And that is a project that is underway.

As a matter of fact, there is under contract now the Educational Testing Service which is the same group that puts out the National Teachers' Exam, and the board of education under this contract has provided a sum of money to develop a plan which is designed to identify which districts are doing better, which are doing worse, and which schools are performing better and which worse, and which teachers are; and then to try to go and find out why it is that some are doing better and some are doing worse. It's not just enough to find out what's good and what's bad, because you know for years we have had 7,000, 8,000, or 9,000 teachers leaving our schools every year, and they are replaced by another 7,000, 8,000, or 9,000 teachers, and unless you know what it is that makes for greater competence or lesser competence, if you are just getting a passing parade of people into a system, you are not able to select for those particular qualities that make for effectiveness.

Now, that program is underway. It isn't an overnight program. Because we are essentially trying to develop a science in this area where there is just a great deal of opinion. But the very notion the teachers as a professional group have not said: "Don't come in and find measures and find ways of evaluating" that there is this cooperative effort, is a very hopeful sign.

MR. POWELL. Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions.

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. Commissioner Ruiz, do you have any questions?

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. You mentioned there were many minorities in New York. What proportion of the New York school population, sir, is Puerto Rican?

MR. SHANKER. I think about a third.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. Which is the largest minority?

MR. SHANKER. I don't know.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. Which is the second largest minority?

MR. SHANKER. I think the school system at the present time, the figures I saw—I haven't looked at them for a while; I know they are in the new Fleishmann report which I just got—but my impression was approximately—

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. If we are not going to allow the witness to testify, there's no point in having him here. Mr. Shanker, will you please continue.

MR. SHANKER. My impression was it was approximately one-third, one-third, one-third. Now, if we've got a few points up on one group and a few down on another, I would be glad to accept your figures, but that's my impression at the moment.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. Well, I realize you don't recruit board members from grammar school, and I realize that you don't recruit board members from the parents, but you mentioned that you had two officers from 10 from minority groups. What is that minority group?

MR. SHANKER. They are both black.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. And you said you have four or five on the executive board, and what is the minority group involved there?

MR. SHANKER. They are black with the exception of one who is Spanish speaking and who is the elected chairman of the Bilingual Teachers Chapter of the UFT.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. And how many are there on the executive board?

MR. SHANKER. Forty-nine.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. How many officers do you have? Just 10?

MR. SHANKER. Ten within that 49. That's 39 in addition to the 10. The executive board is made up of officers, plus. In other words, by saying five, the first two are being counted in the 49.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. Commissioner Mitchell?

COMMISSIONER MITCHELL. Mr. Shanker, would you talk about seniority for a moment as qualification for preference in teaching in New York City?

MR. SHANKER. I don't understand what you mean.

COMMISSIONER MITCHELL. Is there a seniority relationship in the teaching situation here in New York City? Is a senior teacher higher on a list than a junior teacher?

MR. SHANKER. He is higher on a list not to get fired. In other words, if there is a contraction of staff and somebody has to go, the last person to come in is the first person to go out. So senior-

ity does not apply in terms of hiring. Hiring is on the basis of rank lists. And now in many schools it's not on the basis of rank lists, but under the decentralization law in 45 percent of the schools in the city they may hire without reference to rank lists on the basis of qualifying scores in the National Teachers' Examination.

However, seniority does prevail in a number of cases in the school system. One is with respect to layoff or with respect to firing. Seniority counts with respect to transferring from one school to another. That is, it used to be that teachers could transfer very easily from one place to another. Now, as a matter of fact, in a system of 80,000 people, there are under 1,000 transfers a year. It realistically takes at least 9 years or 10 years in a school before a person has acquired enough seniority to be able to be eligible to get out of where they are, and then it takes more than that to be able to pick a school where you want to get in.

That was a contractual *quid pro quo* whereby the teachers gave up their right to transfer easily in exchange for neither their own school nor the receiving school having any voice in whether they go when they have amassed that seniority.

There's a third place in which seniority is used, and that's with respect to after-school jobs. There lists of people who have appropriate licenses are ranged, and as new jobs open up the people are taken onto these jobs on the basis of seniority.

I think these are the three major areas where seniority prevails.

COMMISSIONER MITCHELL. Mr. Shanker, I went to school in New York City. This is my home. I was educated in the New York City system. I went to P.S. 10, originally, if you remember the number, and I'm not even sure it's still around. I graduated from P.S. 165, and I graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School. So I'm a product of the New York City system.

Now, the New York City system I went to and the New York City I grew up in—by the way, I now live in Colorado so I'm a long way from New York—the New York City I grew up in just doesn't exist any more. The composition of the population has changed. The composition of the children in the schools has changed.

What seems clearly to me to be troubling many people and what the Civil Rights Commission I think is troubled about, acknowledging your assumption that you just can't match in automatically ethnic composition of schools and teachers, is the wide disparity in New York City, the feeling you have that the teachers in the classrooms haven't changed at all, but the children have changed.

MR. SHANKER. Well, teachers in the classroom have changed. You know that if you go back a little bit at a time when there were huge numbers of waves of Jewish immigration into the city,



they were taught largely by Irish teachers because the Irish had been a previous wave.

Now, we know that teaching, as professions go, is a relatively inexpensive profession. It takes less time and money to get into than dentistry or law or medicine or a number of other fields. And, therefore, as new waves of immigrants to our country and to our cities start making it through the colleges, teaching tends to be one of the first occupations or professions that they go into, and then the children of teachers go on into these other things. And, therefore, we have always had with these waves of immigration a tendency for the teachers to be the group that had made it in some previous wave, and that's exactly what's going on right now. There is nothing strange about it at all.

COMMISSIONER MITCHELL. In other words, as you see out into some future—whether it's 5, 10, 20 years or what—you see moving into the teaching system of New York City teachers who are ethnically representative of the population now in the schools?

MR. SHANKER. There's no question about it. Five thousand paraprofessionals whom we represent, most of whom are minority group, are enrolled in college as part of our union contract. A few years ago they were selected by community agencies, and many of them did not have high school equivalency. We offered the courses and the city offered the courses. Hundreds of them will begin teaching very soon. They will be the first wave, people who entered paraprofessionalism, having had several years of college. And when the current minorities make it in the city, we will probably then have a huge influx of the successful children of the California grape pickers who are going to demand their share of positions.

But as big cities go in this country, this has been the situation, and it is the situation at the present time. Now, there is a difference, however.

One difference is the fact that we are now going through a period of massive unemployment, not only in the private sector, but there are now 15,000 unemployed teachers in the city of New York.

Now, a few years ago, the question of how quickly could we get more minority group teachers in the city—in the first place, we had no problem in urging our own members to support in their own contract taking a million dollars for the recruitment of teachers, and mainly minority group teachers. Why? Because no one felt threatened. There was a shortage of teachers. No one felt by going out and recruiting: "I will be replaced by someone." Now to engage in a recruiting effort, you have to have your head examined to do it, when there are 15,000 people who are waiting for a year-and-a-half, and if you now go out and try to recruit, the 15,000 people who have been waiting are going to start yelling bloody murder that they have been waiting, and as a matter

of fact the cry will now be for the colleges to stop offering training programs and to stop producing people in a field where there seems to be oversupply. So the tragic thing is just at a time when colleges are offering open enrollment, where there are more minority students going in, and if we were really expanding the public sector the way we should be, I mean if we really don't have an oversupply of teachers, if we had classes of the size which we should have, if we had the other kinds of programs, if we really started with an educational program at 2½ years of age—if we did all these things, we would still have a fantastic shortage of teachers and a fantastic number of openings for both professionals and paraprofessionals, and a very rapid expansion. Whether that rapid expansion is going to take place in a climate of economic contraction, I have grave doubts.

COMMISSIONER MITCHELL. Thank you. I have no further questions.

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. Mrs. Freeman?

COMMISSIONER FREEMAN. Mr. Shanker, of the 15,000 people that have been waiting, say for a year-and-a-half, how many of them are black and how many of them are Puerto Rican?

MR. SHANKER. I don't know.

COMMISSIONER FREEMAN. Could you give that information—

MR. SHANKER. Let me make something clear. We don't hire any teachers, nor do we even accept anyone into membership until he becomes employed. When he becomes employed, that's when we get a card, and that's when we know who he is. At the present time, we have no knowledge of who those people are. We don't even know if 15,000 are still waiting there or gone elsewhere to look for jobs. We know there are lists there with over 15,000 names on them. Now, I assume that a list that's been there for a year-and-a-half with 15,000 names no longer represents 15,000 people, but who they are I don't know.

COMMISSIONER FREEMAN. The question was based on your testimony, Mr. Shanker. According to our information, fewer than 8 percent of the teachers are black, and about 1 percent are Puerto Rican. You have stated that your union has taken some positive steps to improve the situation because as it now stands it looks as if the system has operated to exclude the ethnic minority, the black and Puerto Rican.

What we are trying to find out is what programs, if any, your union supports to increase the number of Puerto Rican teachers, the employment in the schools, to respond to the needs of the pupils.

MR. SHANKER. I think I've given the answer to that. We have the career ladder program for paraprofessionals which will result each year in coming into the system a number of teachers who are Puerto Rican. We have favored the giving of examinations within Puerto Rico. We favor the establishment and expansion

sion of bilingual programs which will also create an expansion in this area.

And by the way, by bilingual I mean bilingual, and there is at the present time the beginning of quite a backlash because the word is used sometimes in a pretty fancy way. We get a principal of a school who asks the board of education to give a special emergency license to Mr. X because they need a bilingual teacher. And the board of education responds: "Why do we have to give a special examination to X? We have a few hundred bilingual teachers who have passed the examination who are waiting for jobs." And the answer from the school is: "Well, we don't really mean bilingual. We mean Puerto Rican," or we mean Cuban or we mean somebody else. Now, what we are really trying to pick is a particular ethnic group and not the qualification of being bilingual.

Now, the extent to which that spreads, namely, teachers being turned down in particular communities because they are told they want somebody that is bilingual, and nobody even gets asked whether they speak a second language, and the extent they do, and where they have spent their lives and everything else, then this becomes a code word for a quota system which we will very strongly oppose. But we are in favor of the programs that I have just talked about. And I would say the most important program, the only way in which this is going to happen is to expand the employment opportunities within a school system, and they can be expanded by improving the quality of education. And if we were to lower class size in New York City by three students per class, we would create 12,000 openings.

Now, of course, those openings could only be filled by Puerto Rican teachers if there are Puerto Rican college graduates here or elsewhere willing to come here and work and take the examination and come into the system. And we ought to reach out for them.

COMMISSIONER FREEMAN. Mr. Shanker, would you have any information as to what changes have been made, what improvements have been made? What we are talking about is a system which over the years has excluded a certain group of people. How can we make an evaluation to determine whether there are 10 this year, last year there were eight, or whether there are no more this year than there were last year. This is what we are trying to do, to improve the condition under which they are taught and under which they live.

MR. SHANKER. Well, look, the function of the board of examiners is quite simple. I think it's quite easy to see why the numbers are what they are. New York City gets approximately 85 percent or has in the past gotten about 85 or 90 percent of its teachers from the City University. It is not a city which has gone across the country recruiting or even very much outside the city. It gets

most of its people—if other people want to come here, fine, but basically they come from the City University.

And if you take a look at the Puerto Rican student body in the City University, up to whatever it was a year or year-and-a-half ago—what was it? One-half of 1 percent, one-tenth of 1 percent, something in that range. And then if you ask yourself what Puerto Rican graduate of the City University, after getting a fine education like that, would want to come to teach in the city of New York with the problems in the schools and the low salaries that were paid up until very recently, most of them were offered much better jobs elsewhere. That explains it.

It isn't an examination system. The examination system as it is today is not—it was a hurdle at one time. I was screened out of the school system in 1950 and '51 because of my speech pattern, and I had to take the examination several times. That thing has gone now for a number of years. The examination at one time was an impossible sort of hurdle. It came out of the depression period where there were 5,000 applicants for every job, and the examination was a way of finding out who would get it.

But in recent years, the examination has become not very much more than a literacy test. And if you would take a look at the examinations of those people who failed the examination, I would like you or anyone else to say to me they would want a person who cannot read or write or spell, and I maintain that those who fail the examination today cannot read or write or spell, that you would want such a person to be a teacher.

It isn't the system. It isn't the board of education. It isn't the board of examiners. The board of examiners could only test people who came to be tested, and they could only test college graduates, and the only college graduates who came to be tested were those in the City University, and the City University had its own examination system in terms of admission, and that examination system screened out those who had not received a proper education at the lower systems. So if you want to talk about a system, yes, there is a system which resulted in all of these conclusions. But the system is not the board of examiners or the board of education or the union of teachers. The system is a much bigger system than the one you are alluding to.

COMMISSIONER FREEMAN. Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN HORN. Mr. Shanker, following that up on the role of the board of examiners, I take it your union takes a very careful watch of the activities of the board as to the examinations given as to are they fair to your membership, especially for promotion and this sort of thing: Is that correct?

MR. SHANKER. That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN HORN. Let me cite three questions here that were excerpted from a recent examination for assistant principal in the junior high school. I find as a college president I could only

pass one out of three, and I'm not so sure about that one.

Question 3: "A number is represented by 321 written in the base 4; rewritten in the base 10 the number is either 40, 46, 57, 214."

My note in the margin is, "Who cares?" as an assistant principal of a high school.

I can cite others. "The islands of Langerhans are important in the prevention of goiter, diabetes, dwarfism, Addison's Disease."

Again, for an assistant principal of a high school, who cares?

Now, what this leads to, do you feel that on behalf of your present membership, let alone people trying to get into the system, that perhaps your union should take a greater interest in the work relationship between the examinations given and actual job performance? In other words, is that a valid test to be given for an assistant principal anywhere in the country?

MR. SHANKER. Well, you are asking two different questions. At least I think you are. And I will answer both of them.

One is a question of relevance, and the other is a question of fairness. I would agree that I wouldn't put those questions on a test, and I don't think they have anything to do with whether a person is a good principal or not. And we have said so. And I won't spend three seconds trying to justify those, and I won't spend three seconds trying to justify some of the rather obscure vocabulary parts of the examination, or others. I could give a pretty good speech on that one. The test is irrelevant, but that doesn't make it unfair. It is equally irrelevant to everyone who takes it. All it does is, it discriminates against those people who don't know what 371 to the base 4 is, and those who don't know a particular word.

What I'm saying is that is not the examination that should be given. That doesn't prove that no examination should be given. Obviously, the answer to a stupid examination is one that is not a stupid one, one that does have some relationship to the actual job to be performed. And I agree that is how the examinations ought to be put together.

But to say that this is irrelevant is not to say that any one candidate is any more disadvantaged by an irrelevant question than any other candidate is.

VICE CHAIRMAN HORN. Well, I think your answer is half right and half wrong, if I may comment. I think you are right—and I am glad to see and I hope that is your position—there should be some job relationship between the examination given and some test of work performance and an ability to relate any questions asked to are they relevant to the job that you are asking the person to be examined for.

On the other hand, not only do those questions that I have just cited—and I could cite others—discriminate against minority group members, they discriminate against a certain type of edu-

cation in favor of a certain other type. And I think as an educator I have grave doubts that the sort of abstract intellectualism, and finding out how many angels dance on the head of a pin, is really relevant to the problems that confront public education in the United States today.

MR. SHANKER. Well, I don't agree with you. I think that's pretty unfair. Our schools are designed—in spite of all the talks about relevance today, our schools will be failures as long as they don't do the traditional things that people expect of them. That is, regardless of how much relevance there is, we expect students are going to learn to read and write and count and speak and to function within our society, which is largely a middle class society in which you can do all sorts of spectacular things, but you can't really live and work unless you have those things. And that includes with it a certain amount of intellectual competence in these areas. And I'm sorry that you said who cares about a particular number to the base 4.

VICE CHAIRMAN HORN. For that job.

MR. SHANKER. Well, for that job, in addition to knowing something about the custodian and how to buy books, you ought to be a reasonably well read person, and you ought to know something about—that doesn't happen to be a very high or obscure level of mathematics. As a matter of fact, there are children learning the answer to that at the present time in our schools in the fourth and the fifth grades. Therefore, it's a reasonable assumption that if your school system is teaching these things in the fourth and the fifth grades, they are related to computer technology and other things which are part of our very real world today.

Now, I think that it's just wrong to throw out, to say that we are not going to have principals and teachers who have a reasonable degree of intellectual competence in what our world and our society considers intellectual competence, and I would consider it to be an ethnic slur against any group to say that there aren't any blacks, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, in equal numbers, who are capable of knowing mathematics and capable of learning the concepts in sociology or psychology or any other field. And I think it is pure racism to say we should devise different intellectual tests for different ethnic groups.

VICE CHAIRMAN HORN. Let me say, Mr. Shanker, to clarify that last point: I was asking a question as a person who is half-German and half-Irish and I guess an Anglo-Saxon, and I find it irrelevant.

MR. SHANKER. That may be your limitation, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN HORN. Let me move on to the next question, and that is in your collective bargaining contract, does your union require, or could it require as a matter of policy of your union, that workshops be provided, that teachers acquire a competency in Spanish or sensitivity to the problems of inner-city schools as a

part of your collective bargaining agreement? Could you negotiate on that basis?

MR. SHANKER. Yes. As a matter of fact, we are going to submit proposals to the board of education. Just as the United States Government, when it was shocked by Sputnik, decided that it would retrain all the science teachers in this country through National Science Foundation scholarships and send people away summers and provide other programs, we will ask that our employer provide time on the job for teachers to learn a second language, provide scholarships, provide time during the summer, send large numbers of teachers to Puerto Rico and other places, and give people who are now in those jobs, who are now teaching, the opportunity to learn a second language. I think it would be a fine thing. And I think the overwhelming majority of teachers in the city of New York would welcome that opportunity. They do not enjoy being in a situation where they are in a class and frequently cannot understand what the students are saying or the parents in the community are saying when they come in to speak with them. And we will make such demands. And I hope if the board of education doesn't comply with these things, and if we are faced with some sort of a showdown in September, you will come down here and help us in that bargaining demand with the board of education.

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. Mr. Shanker, we are already 5 minutes over our time, but I wanted to ask a question in one general area.

We spoke earlier of minorities, and the reason we are here on the Puerto Rican minority is we have been told by all of our studies and by all of the Puerto Rican Advisory Committee advice we received, that this minority is the most poorly educated in the city, it's the most poorly employed in the city, and is probably one of the most poorly housed, although we haven't gotten into that area as deeply as we should.

I take it that the union you represent or lead is a terribly important factor in bettering the situation, or could be, and if the people who have a third of the school system only represent 10 out of 1,000 principals, 800 out of 60,000 teachers, it at least appears to me that they would likely get a better leverage on the problem if they were more involved in the solution of the problem, were actually doing more teaching and doing more principaling, if you will, and certainly more counseling. We haven't gotten the figures on counselors, but that hurts me most of all because I was in a largely Spanish speaking community school on the weekend, and the principal there told me he doesn't have a single counselor who knows Spanish, and the kids that have the most problems are the ones that don't know English very well. And it seems to me that would be a very bad mix.

My question is simply this: I'm only doing it to give you a chance to put something on the record. Do you think the union,

with all of its power in this field, especially in the area of personnel, has some responsibility to try to get more Puerto Rican leverage on the problem of Puerto Ricans in the schools since the schools are so central to upward mobility in the city? That's a complicated question.

MR. SHANKER. I don't think it's too complicated. I think that I have already indicated the lines along which we are working. Let's suppose, for a moment, that tomorrow, either Federal, local, or State government or some great foundation came across with a fairly large sum of money, and let us assume that the community boards and the central board of education and the union all agreed that it would be the wisest thing to spend a large sum of money on the employment of teachers who speak Spanish fluently, and counselors who do, etcetera—people in all categories of the school system, all categories of employment.

Now, the practical question still is that tomorrow you probably could not produce more than a few teachers. I don't believe that there are huge numbers waiting on the list. And even if you had new lists, unless you are going to say that we won't have college graduates, we won't have the State certification standards, and we won't have other things. The point is that the answer to this has to lie in attacking every part of a system, and not one particular point. And part of it is to develop a quality education so that there are large numbers of students who can go to college and who will graduate. Part of it is to encourage them to go to college. Part of it is to keep that system open and free. And part of it is to see that if there are any examination parts which are ethnically discriminatory, that they be eliminated.

These are all parts of a program. And practically all of those sections of the program impinge on things that we are doing in terms of trying to develop early childhood, trying to create opportunities within the school system, trying to keep a system of higher education.

But let me say one final thing. That is, that a good part of the answer to this lies outside of this in terms of the job and economic areas. And in addition to being president of our union, I am a vice president of the New York City Central Labor Council, and vice president of the New York State AFL-CIO. And part of the reason for the horrible economic plight of minority groups in this city is the existence of tremendous numbers of racket unions that make sweetheart deals with the employer and victimize the employees. And I was very shocked to see that on this entire program dealing with all these issues that no one has been invited from the labor movement to come here to talk about the one thing that might lift the economic condition of the poorly paid, and that is their unionization. More has been done to uplift workers, not through the antipoverty agencies or through handouts or anything else, but more was done when the hospital workers were union-



ized to bring workers from \$23 and \$24 a week in poverty, and to bring them up to a living wage. It's not quite a living wage yet, but at least when you compare what they had before. And both as part of the educational problem and the economic mobility, it seems to me that somewhere in your discussions there ought to be a question of the unionization by legitimate unions of people who are poorly paid so they have the muscle to get their share of the economic pie.

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. I take it you would agree with me on this one thing, though, that until we get people who are part of the problem themselves involved in the solution of the problem, we are not going to really solve it. In other words, the black experience I think has been that to the extent that the blacks got into the solution of the problem, it moved along more quickly, because they had more heart for it because it involved them personally.

We have found, at least on the higher education level, that black students move much more quickly in higher education when they see a few more black teachers around or black counselors, or people they feel have their problem at heart.

That was the only point I wanted to make. It would seem to me with the enormous leadership you have in this city, if you said we are going to go from 10 to 20 principals, you could probably pull it off; if we are going to go from 800 to twice that number of teachers, you could probably pull it off.

What I am afraid is, though, that all the bureaucracies get so set in concrete that you simply can't make forward motion on this, and if someone knew a genius of a Puerto Rican to make him a principal tomorrow morning, he would be so caught up in the bureaucracy you couldn't get him aboard. That's my point.

MR. SHANKER. Well, I don't accept the view if only we could get a few people of this group or that group into that position that means everybody moves along a lot faster. I think the conclusive experiment in that was 100 years of segregated Southern education for blacks where all the principals that they saw, and all the teachers that they saw, were black, but that didn't mean that—

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. They didn't have any money.

MR. SHANKER. Well, after a certain point, in some places they had more money, because it was: "We would rather give you money than integrate the schools." That just isn't so.

And we do get large numbers of Puerto Rican children here who have had Puerto Rican teachers and didn't do well with Puerto Rican Spanish speaking—some of them didn't, and its part of the changeover and everything else.

But I think that part of the problem is trying to get easy answers in an area where there aren't any. And I think that the least promising answers are the kinds of answers where we are just shuffling people around without really changing the system.

Now, there are a lot of districts in New York City right now who have many more minority group supervisors and teachers now than they had last year or the year before, due to the changes in hiring and the decentralization law and the community boards and everything else.

Now, I think it's fine if there are more minority group people working in these areas. But there is absolutely no evidence that reading scores have improved or math scores have improved or anything else has improved. And I think the important thing is, there's no question that if we are going to have a society in which there is integration, that we can't have the kind of thing that looks like and is at this point an absolute shutout. But on the other hand, we ought not to make extravagant claims. It is worthwhile as a social thing to do, but when we are all integrated in terms of staff and thousands of blacks and Puerto Ricans and others have jobs in the school system and on community boards and everything else, we are still going to have to lick the problem of how to get the kids to read.

CHAIRMAN HESBURGH. I'll buy that.

With this, we are concluding until this afternoon. Thank you very much, Mr. Shanker.

I would like to say one word about our program this afternoon.

First of all, we have two seminars on demonstration education projects, and then we have the board of education high schools. We have another panel on the decentralization of elementary education. We'll have Dr. Nyquist of the State department of education, and we will have witnesses from the U.S. Department of Health and Education.

That will be our afternoon program. We are adjourned until 1:15.

(Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the hearing was recessed, to reconvene at 1:15 p.m. the same day.)