

ADDRESS BY ALBERT SHANKER
PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION
WAKE FOREST, ~~ILLINOIS~~ NORTH CAROLINA

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THE CHAIR: Our guest this evening, Albert Shanker, has been President of the American Federation of Teacher, AFL/CIO since 1974. Since assuming the presidency of the AFT, the union's membership has grown to 620,000 members.

In addition to serving as AFT President, Mr. Shanker is Vice President of the AFL/CIO, where he ranks fourth in seniority on the Executive Council. He is also President of the AFT's local, the United Federation of Teachers.

Since 1981, he has been President of the International Federation of Free Teacher's Union, headquartered in Brussels, an organization of teacher unions in the democratic countries.

An ardent fighter for civil and human rights, he served on the board at the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, the League for Industrial Democracy, the International Rescue Committee, and the Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners.

For the past 15 years, Mr. Shanker has written a weekly column where we stand on education, labor, political and human rights issues, which appears in the

weekend review political section of the Sunday New York Times, and is picked up by some 60 papers across the country.

He is a frequent contributor to national magazines and education journals, often testifies before congressional committees on education and labor, urban and human rights matters and speaks at numerous conferences and seminars in this country and abroad.

Mr. Shanker was born in New York City in 1928, and educated in the City's public schools, including Steivenson High School. He was graduated with honors in philosophy from the University of Illinois, completed the course requirements for the Ph.D. in Philoosphy at Columbia University.

Mr. Shanker played a strong role in the founding of the UFT, the New York local, in its fight for collective bargaining and its negotiation of its earliest contracts more than 20 years ago, in its strikes and in its successes.

From teacher's salaries of \$2,500 a year when he started teaching junior high math in 1952, he has brought New York City teachers up to a maximum of \$38,000, even while facing a decade long City fiscal crisis.

Along the way were major improvements in health and welfare benefits, pensions and job protection, not only for some 60,000 city teachers, but also for 10,000 classroom para-professionals, mostly minority women, for whom Shanker negotiated a successful college career ladder that leads to teaching jobs.

In recent years Mr. Shanker has been prominent in urging teachers to take seriously the various reports sharply critical of American education, and to play a strong role in education reform, even to the point of being willing to discuss issues teachers have long shunned, including differentiated salary schedules and other proposals that businessmen, governors, and educators have put forth.

His topic this evening is the Revolution that is Long Overdue. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Albert Shanker.

MR. SHANKER: Thank you very much for your warm welcome, and I think that perhaps the best way to get into this evening's topic is to start with the events of the last three years.

This is the third anniversary of the

beginning of the school reform movement. Just three years ago A Nation at Risk was published and was followed by more than 30 other reports.

The Nation at Risk, together with the Reform Movement that is represented from California and Florida and Texas, and a number of other states is a very unique event in the history of American education.

When these reports were published most of us involved in public education read them and started underlining them and started getting ready to take issue, because the reports contain many inaccuracies, many of them were very limited in their vision. It would not have been very difficult to take issue with the report.

But, for a number of us, before we decided to go in and engage in that battle, we stopped and we did a little bit of thinking. Where was American public education three years ago? Did these reports represent accurate or inaccurate support for, or was it an attack on public education?

And if we look back over recent years, we find that in the late 70's and early 80's, American public education was in a pretty desperate state. Any reasonable person had grounds for feelings of great desperation and

despondency.

The Gallup Polls each year showed that a higher and higher percentage of the American public thought the schools were doing a poor job. You know, they say, give them an A, B, C, D, mark each year, and the poll has been in existence for about 15 or 16 years now, and the marks have been going down.

SAT scores were going down. A higher percentage of the American public each year believed that it was all right to expend public funds for vouchers or tuition tax credits because the public schools were so bad that parents ought to be given the alternative of providing an education in private settings.

A smaller and smaller percentage of the adult population had children in the public schools. Within a very short period of time, in the 60's, we had 57 percent of the adult population who had children in public schools. We are now down to about 23 percent, people having fewer children, people living longer.

So that from a political point of view, the popularity of supporting public schools became less compelling for politicians. The issues for what to do for retirees and the aged became more of a priority than

what to do for public education.

And at the same time as public education lost political power in terms of numbers and was losing support in terms of where people thought the schools were going in terms of quality, there are other major issues that emerged on the national agenda; reindustrialization, rebuilding of the infrastructure, rebuilding of the military, which both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan agreed on in 1980, and if you agree on rebuilding and reindustrializing the infrastructure and the military at a time when your economy is going down, clearly there are implications for education.

That is where we were when these reports started coming out. And the reports, in spite of all of the critical statements that they made, the students were automatically promoted, the teachers were hired without any examination of quality standards, that students could graduate from high school with all kinds of mickey mouse courses and without the requirements, that there were so many electives and alternatives, that students could leave high school without taking anything of worth.

In the first place, many of us agreed with

those criticisms. But it was not only the criticisms that were at issue. What we had in these 30 reports were that 30 groups of businessmen and leaders across the country had debated the issues of education in this country and 30 groups, out of 30 groups, not a single group supported tuition tax credits or vouchers. Every one of these 30 commissions essentially said that public education was the delivery system, and that what we need to do is not to provide an alternative, or to destroy the system, but rather to make it a good system.

And then, as these reports were coming out, we had instances of reform movements of particular states, California is instructive because it was the state of Proposition 13, and in California, a group representing the 80 largest corporations in California, the Business Roundtable, not only got together and decided that they would study education, but they hired a group of outstanding consultants, and for a year and a half, the business leaders of California asked questions like, who are the teachers, how are they hired, what are the standards, what happens when they get into a school, what are students required to take? Let's see what their transcripts are. What examinations are they required

to pass? Are they automatically promoted? Does a high school diploma mean anything? Does an elementary school diploma mean anything? What is going on here? What are the management structures?

And when they were finished, they proposed a piece of legislation that was 150 pages long, and attached to that legislation was an increase in aid to education of \$2.6 billion over two years.

Now, if ever there was a unique event, it is having the 80 largest corporations that are usually campaigning for lower taxes meeting with a newly elected Republican governor, Duke Magan, saying that our industries are going to have to leave the State or go under, unless the State makes an investment in education, and we are not just talking about putting more money in for the same thing. We don't believe that. There is a tradeoff here. We have a series of changes that we want and if we get those changes, then we want to add \$2.6 billion over the next two years, so we want to invest more but not for the same old thing, for something different.

That same formula we found in Texas when Ross Perot became the Chair of the Commission, appointed by

Governor White, and in Florida Governor Graham had bumper stickers and buttons, "Education means business."

And again, bringing together the business community.

Lamar Alexander in Tennessee, I guess, figured that the Saturn Project was looking around for a place that had good education and good roads and fought for education reform and was successful in getting the GM to locate the Saturn project there.

So, what we had during this period of time was essentially a wave of reform which was really a wave of regulation.

I think we have to look at the strange situation over the last few years. We have had an administration in Washington, and the general acceptance on the parts of states and population that we have been through a period of over-regulation and that regulation is bad; it stifles initiative and it creates too much bureaucracy, and we have been through a period of deregulation, and at the same time, we have states passing 150 page pieces of legislation, telling them how long students must attend class, what courses they must take, what books they must have, what examinations they must have.

So, in the business world what was called over regulation and was abolished or deregulated, in education it was introduced and it was called reform. And it was exactly the opposite thing. It was exactly the thing that was being criticized in one area that was being introduced in the other. I don't think that is necessarily irrational. It may very well mean that over a period of time we did over-regulate business and it may mean that local education agencies did not do a good job in providing quality education and therefore some central authorities felt that they had to step in and regulate an area. It is not necessarily irrational, and I don't think it was.

So, we have this movement now across the country. And at the time that it has occurred, many people said to me, Look, don't get excited about it. The American people get very interested and politicians get very interested, all sorts of things, things will last a week or two weeks or a month or a month and a half or two months, but nothing lasts very long. This is all television and newspaper headlines. It is editorial writers. It is politicians, and at the next election--and that has not happened.

It is three years later and education is still a major agenda item of practically every legislature in the country.

The National Governor's Association has a number of task forces about to report. The Carnegie Foundation has a task force about the report on some major changes. California has had a number of later reports.

That is another unique development, and that is, a period of concentration on an issue so far over a period of three years, and it seems that it will not end with this three years. That is very different from what we have had.

Now, my topic is a Revolution that is Overdue. And, this is toto form, and I would like to, with that introduction, connect what I think is the urgency of the reform issues and the issues that are before us in American education, to the preservation of democracy and democratic values, and then move to what I consider to be the neglected issues in reform and the Revolution is Overdue.

I believe that American education today, public education is in about the same position that the

automobile and steel industries in this country were in about ten or twelve or fifteen years ago.

Now, the handwriting is on the wall. People are unhappy and dissatisfied. They don't think the public schools are doing a good job. About half of the American people now favor some form of vouchers and tuition tax credit.

What we see now in the way of reform is in a way a last opportunity. People are saying, okay, we are going to give you some new rules and we are going to give you some more money, but if this doesn't work, we are going to be very bitterly disappointed and we may look for some very different radical alternatives.

And it is very much like the auto and steel industry because 10 and 12 and 13 years ago, people in auto and steel in this country knew what the Japanese were doing and what the Koreans were doing and what was happening in Taiwan. They had very friendly relations. I know those leaders of both industry and labor. They were over there and they knew that those countries were producing better and cheaper steel and automobiles.

And, at some point, they must have had

meetings over here where they say, well, how can we compete with them, and they probably had discussions about how management probably has to take profits and redo their entire productive set up and how labor might have to reduce the work force and introduce robots and change some of the work rules. We can imagine all the things that they talked about when they sat there and we can also know what happened at the end. They decided that it was too difficult to do, that management couldn't do it and labor couldn't do it and then they decided that, well, maybe nobody will buy these crazy little automobiles with foreign names, or we can always go to the Congress and get import duties or something else will happen, but we can't change. It is just too difficult.

And, of course, now we are in a situation where we don't know if there is going to be an automobile or steel industry in this country five or six or seven years from now. There are last ditch efforts on the part of Chrysler, on the part of GM with Saturn, a last effort to retool and to redesign and to put out a quality product on a different basis in the hopes that

we can still preserve some industry.

Well, in education we are in a similar situation. The signs of dissatisfaction are all there. There was a poll that was taken several years ago, a national poll asking parents, if you were to get \$250 or \$500, how many of you would take your children out of public schools and put your child in a private school.

And that poll indicated that the current percentage of students in the private schools, which is about 11 increase, would increase to about 33 percent, at least if parents were able to find places after they got the money for their students.

Now, that is a tremendous shift. And, of course, since private schools don't have enough seats for all the students, and if you were heading a private school and you had a long line of students waiting to get into your school and some of them were outstanding students who were doing very well and other students were students who had problems, the way private schools have operated in the past is that you would take the good students.

And of course, as these students leave the public schools, the public schools lose several things.

They lose students who are learning models for other students. The grades of the school go down. The students are being addressed by teachers are then -- (Nothing is recorded on the tape for a period of about 30 seconds.)

MR. SHANKER: (Continuing.) More political influence in a community or state than other parents, and you could lose ten percent of your students so that over a short period of time a movement of students from public schools to private schools could result in a very major and permanent shift of support away from public education and toward private education.

So these reports and these efforts at reform represent an effort to preserve public education in this country. I am sure we will always have public education. The question is whether public education is the major delivery system of education or whether public education becomes the school system for those kids who are kicked out of private schools or who are not accepted in private schools.

That is, will public schools be the public clinic for those who can't make it anywhere else, the reject, or will public schools continue to be

the main educational delivery system of the country?

Is that important? Well, in my view it is a key issue for the country. Unlike Japan, which accepts almost no immigrants and where everyone is Japanese, and unlike France or Germany or England where you can have Turks and Greeks and Spaniards in Germany as Gost Arbiter or for 20 years or 30 years or 40 years, you can have Turks who no longer speak Turkish and speak only Germany, but they will never be Germans as far as the Germans are concerned. They are not expected to be citizens and they won't be citizens. This country is a country which is made up of different religious, racial, national groups. We continue to take more immigrants than all the other countries in the world combined, and a school system which educates all of our children plays a national role which, well, we have a word for it. When I was a kid, it was a dirty word--it was for a while--we used to talk about the public schools as playing a role in Americanizing. I don't happen to think that is a dirty word. I have very positive feelings about it.

As a child of immigrants who entered the public schools without speaking any English, I was Americanized and so were many of the other students who

attended with me.

The alternative in the future might be a series of private schools in which students go off to, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish schools, Communist schools, Spanish-speaking schools, Vietnamese schools, Ku Klux Klan schools and anything anybody wants in, private corporate schools and anything that anybody else wants.

Unlikely? No, it is not unlikely. Are there places where kids go off to schools like that? There sure are. Does the existence of a series of private school systems like that have an effect on a society? And on the ability of that society to maintain a democratic social order? It certainly does.

Look at countries that have that. And, countries that have separate national and religious groups, not at societies that are very homogenous and you see the problems that are created with respect to democracy.

Well, what is wrong with the reforms? What is right with them? I have already that what is right with them is that the reforms represent a commitment on the part of the business and political community of the country to support public education as the major delivery system. And for the most part what

they did was positive.

There should be tests for teachers. Just as lawyers go to law school and have to take a bar exam, and doctors go to medical school and have to take examinations, and accountants and actuaries, and others have to be examined. There is absolutely no reason why teachers should not be examined and the results in Florida, in California and other places that show that about 35 percent of perspective teachers who take an examination can't pass simple arithmetic tests or can't read simple paragraphs is an adequate indication of several things. One is that you need examinations and the other is that the level of examination at the present time is just much too low. We should not be bringing people into teaching who are merely literate and that is all.

But at the same time, and we needed the stimulation of the reform reports to say that students must take English and they must take science and they must take mathematics, we needed to get away from the notion that students must determine what the curriculum is on the basis of what their immediate pleasures and desires are.

I don't know of any student who ever opened a play by Shakespear and said, Oh, this is just great. I have been waiting to get into this. Usually, it is ugh, I can't understand it, what do I need it for. It is old fashioned, I don't like it. But if you compel a student to go through one or two plays, a substantial number of those students later do read another play or do watch one on television or do go to a movie. And there are many educational experiences which are of that nature that are not immediately enjoyable, gratifying, and there needs to be a certain amount of pressure and a certain amount of compulsion.

It seems to me that that is something which the reform legislation introduces, and it is unfortunate that it had to be done through legislation and that you couldn't have school authorities doing that in the absence of legislation. That is, too bad the people had to be forced to do what they should of done on the basis of what their own obligations were in terms of the official positions that they held.

But the problem that we face today is how to carry out these reforms in view of a critical demographic problem that we are about to face.

This country has 2.2 million public school teachers. One half of those teachers, 1.1 million, are about to leave within the next 7 years. And one might say, well, so what, teachers have always been leaving. Everyplace I go people say, Hi, Al, I used to be a teacher. So, teachers have always left. There is nothing new about that.

But, of course, the question is now that there is a very different situation in terms of who will replace them.

Teachers in the recent past have not come as people strongly competing for a job which they place great value. One of the best things that happened to public education in recent memory was the great depression of the 1930's. There was a large number of people unemployed. Teaching was a job. Many people who would have ordinarily gone into other fields came into teaching and the schools ran and ran very well with those teachers, but most of them are now gone.

And then we had a large number of men who were subject to military conscription from the end of World War II until the end of the Vietnam war who preferred to fight in many of our schools rather than

overseas.

Conscription is over so now no one comes into the schools because it is a way out of service which they wanted to avoid.

The largest group of people who are now not available to us are women. If you look at law schools, medical schools, dental schools, business administration schools, accounting schools, personnel director degrees, and if you look at the percentage of bachelor's, master's and doctorate's awarded in each of those fields to women in 1973 and 1983, you will see that it has moved from 3 percent, 5 percent, 8 percent, 9 percent to 48 percent, 38 percent, 53 percent, et cetera, huge numbers of women have moved into other professions as a result of removal of barriers. Those are mostly women who would have become teachers.

And so you might view teaching as a field that never really attracted people on a positive basis but always got refugees who were fleeing away from the depression or the draft or women's discrimination, and now all that depression has stopped elsewhere and the flow of refugees is not there any more.

We could support a reintroduction of

discrimination against women. We could pray for a depression or we could reinstitute military service. I don't see great support in this audience for those solutions.

So, we now have to ask ourselves, how do we? So this is not the same situation. This is not what existed before. We cannot just say so what. People are leaving and they always left and people always came to replace them. People always came to replace them because they were running away from something else and large numbers of people who were running away from something else, aren't any more, because things have gotten better in these other areas, and therefore, I go across country, and there are all these conferences about how to attract and retain competent teachers.

There are no conferences on how to attract and retain competent lawyers, doctors, engineers; everybody knows that the way to get people is to offer various incentives. If you have a shortage, offer an incentive.

Then I realized that what these conferences about teachers were about. They were really conferences about how to attract and retain competent teachers without

any incentives, which is quite an exercise, and if anybody comes up with an answer, I think it will be worth looking at, but we have not found it.

Now, let me talk about what the problem is. We are about to lose, as I said, one-half of our teachers, one point one million. In 1973, 24 percent of all the undergraduate students in this country said that they were going to become teachers. That was the baby boom generation.

In the 1983 baby bust generation, 4.5 percent of all undergraduates say they want to become teachers. We need about 240,000 teachers a year. The colleges are producing 110,000 teachers a year. The overwhelming majority of those who are going into teaching on a national basis are in the bottom percentile of all college students.

And if you give them a minimum examination of literacy, about 35 percent of them will fail, and if you develop any standards that are reasonable and higher than that, you will get less than half.

So, nationally, we have a nation that has given large amounts of money. Texas has almost put \$3 billion in in two years. California has put \$2.6 billion.

Inflation has been 8.39; teachers salaries have gone up 7 percent a year for the last two years. The public is saying, we are putting more into education because we believe in education. We want it to be better, and while the public is putting up more and more money, we are about to get dumber and dumber people for that money, just because of supply and demand.

What will be the reaction? Is there any doubt? Is there any question about what the reaction will be?

So, what is the response of the education community? Our response of the education community and the response of most people is very simple. If you don't have, if you can't get enough teachers, obviously, you ought to increase salaries. Well, I am certainly not going to stand here and oppose that.

Now, they say, well, the job is a very difficult job. There are too many students in a class, and if you read Ted Sizer's book, he says if you are a really good teacher, you don't want to do just multiple choice examinations with your students; that the job the school is supposed to do is to get students to be able to think and if you want to get them to think, you have

to organize their thoughts and to argue and persuade and to express, then the best way to do it is to get them to put their thoughts on paper and then you have got to read them and you have got to make some comments and you have to meet with each student and you have to coach the student to say, well, what do you really mean here, and is that the best way of doing it.

And if you have five classes a day and 30 students in a class, you have 150 students and a set of papers, 150 papers and if you take five minutes to mark a paper and five minutes to meet with the student, that is 25 hours. So if you reduce class size, if you reduce class size by 20 percent, so you wouldn't need 25 hours. You would only need -- you still spend most of your time -- it is impossible, you see.

Not only that, but if you reduce class size by 20 percent, you need 20 percent more teachers. And I just said that we are about to hire dumber and dumber people because there aren't enough people, so if you hire more, where do you get them? You have to dig lower to get them, so that to make an improvement which would attract more people actually creates a system in which the standard deteriorates.

So, then, the teacher cannot get satisfaction from the job because either you do the job right in which case you are devoting so many hours of your life to it that you can't stand it, or you don't do the job right and you feel guilty because you are just giving multiple choice examinations and students aren't learning to think or to write or to express themselves.

And then, of course, there is a third aspect which is much talked about, and that is that the teachers need time with their colleagues. They need a colleague relationship and that one of the reasons that people don't want to be teachers is that it is a very isolated profession in which an adult is locked in a room for his or her entire lifetime with a bunch of people who are not yet human beings, namely, children.

And so what you need is some time which means that you shouldn't be teaching for five periods a day but they should give you a period a day where you can talk to colleagues and share experiences.

But if you are going to teach one period a day less then you need another bunch of teachers, and, again, you dig lower and dumber and deeper. So, the fact is that the traditional slogans which are all over the

place. They are there with governors. They are there with legislators, they are there with teacher leaders, they are there with principals, with school board members. That is, if you go around and press a button and ask people, how do you solve the problem, it is always, higher salaries, lower class size, more time, or that sort of thing, and these three things, first of all, even if the people were there and you could find them, the cost of a package of that, of modest increases in all those is about \$75 billion, and the fact is that if we were to have a reasonable standard as to who was to become a teacher, well, teaching needs 25 percent of all the college graduates that are going to be produced in the next 10 years.

So if you don't take the bottom quartile because they are too dumb and if you don't take the next quartile because they are still in the bottom half, and given college standards today, the bottom half really shouldn't be teachers, and if you need a quarter, you really need half of the top half of all the college graduates in the country. What chance is there from a demographic point of view that the United States can afford to take that amount of talent, one half of all the

top half and put them into classroom teaching, given the fact that we need doctors and dentists and lawyers and politicians and businessmen and ministers, and everybody else.

But, it seems very clear that while the slogans are very appealing, they do not take account of demographic or economic realities and they won't work.

So, what is it that needs to be done? There needs to be some very fundamental changes. I want to add one other problem that we have because we talked about salaries and we talked about class size and we talked about being locked in a classroom.

In a different role that I have as vice president of the AFL/CIO, I served as a member of the Commission on the Future of Work, on the changing nature of workers--it had several names--and basically this was a committee of vice presidents of the AFL/CIO that asked the question, why is it that the labor movement is not only losing members, but is constantly losing the percentage of people who are in the AFL/CIO as a percentage of the overall work force?

And, of course, at first we did the easy things. We said, well, we have an anti-labor administration

and the laws aren't being administered fairly and there are a lot of jobs that are going overseas and there are a lot of anti-labor consultant. All that is true.

But then we said are there any things that we are doing, things that may be our fault that result in people not joining unions or leaving unions. And so we looked at the results of various polls and we commissioned some polls of our own, because the assumption of most unions was that workers don't like their jobs and they don't like their bosses and so the way to organize them is to go in and tell them how lousy the work is that they have and how terrible the employer is and how they are being exploited and if they want to change this whole thing, they ought to join the union.

And the polls were very fascinating, especially in terms of my own experience. I remember growing up as a child in New York City in the 1930's and at one point or maybe at two or three I asked my parents, you know, why do you work or why do you do that, and I got a very fast answer from my mother and father. One was, "You want to eat," and the other was, "You want a roof over the head." you know something like that, very quickly rolled over the tongue. It was very simple. My

parents hated the work they were doing. They never enjoyed a second of it. The only reason they did it was bread and butter and shelter, and I can remember my parents at the age of 30 or 35 dreaming, fantacizing about the day they would be 65 so they could stop working and get social security.

Imagine people who are 30 wanting to press a button and give up 35 years of their lives because life was so horrible and terrible, and it was for many workers in those days.

Well, that is not the way workers think about their jobs today. Seven out of ten workers were asked about, why do you work, didn't say, because I have to eat. They said, I have got talents. I use my talents on my job. I get great satisfaction from it. I am not told exactly how to do it. I am given discretion; because I am able to do it my way I do it better. And I get recognition, and of course, it does not mean that the people would want to work if they were not being paid. They are being paid, but they don't feel so insecure, and they don't feel that they are exchanging sweat for dollars. They are getting something. There is fulfillment and there is satisfaction from the

job.

Now the question is what relationship does this have to teaching today? And the interesting thing is that we are living through a period in which the auto industry and the steel industry are trying to change the nature of jobs so that workers are happier and are more involved and they are not used as mere hired hands. That is, more of a Japanese management philosophy where workers are, in a sense, also inspectors, and thinkers and providers of ideas. But we still do not have a philosophy of this sort that permeates schools.

What is happening as you get this wave of reform legislation and you have a bright kid in college, and he says, oh, that's great, I may go into teaching because the state legislature has increased salaries, and is interested in education, and he says, now, wait a minute. They just passed this 150 page book telling me what to do as a teacher, how many minutes to teach English, what the text book is, what the test is. They must think we are a bunch of idiots. And I don't want to go into a field where my girlfriend and my mother and father and everybody in the community is going to think that I am going into a field which is a field for people who are not

bright or can't make it anywhere else.

Now, what will happen if we don't do anything or if we just keep repeating the same slogan? I think what will happen is very simple. We will hire dumber and dumber people and when you hire dumb people, I can tell you what you do. If you hire smart people then you give them a little bit of training and then you leave them along, because they are smart and they will know how to do it.

But if you hire dumb people, you have to watch them very closely. You do, because you can't trust them because they are dumb. You have to watch them. So watch them.

Now, in a school you can't go into this fellow's room and say, "I'm watching you because you're dumb but I'm not going to watch you because you're smart because then you would get a grievance, at least, and you would get demoralization and besides which that is not the way public institutions work. You just treat everybody the same way.

So if you are going to watch the people you just hired, you are going to watch everybody else very closely, and the more you watch people who are very smart, they are going to say, I don't need this, I'm leaving.

Because people who have some sense of dignity and self respect and feel that they have ability don't want to be treated that way.

And so, if we don't do anything different we are headed for a downward spiral in which we bring in more and more people who are not fit and we drive out people, and we have, who are fit, and there is no doubt as to what the end result of that is. The end result of that is an American public that says, after all the money we gave you, after all the reform legislation, after all these things and look what happened. We ended up with a worse school system with dumber people. Let's give people to buy the education that they want, and this whole thing is impossible. You have got teacher unions, you have got school boards, you have got superintendents, you have got state education departments, you have got higher education where

(Nothing is recorded on this tape for approximately ten minutes.)

MR. SHANKER: (Continuing): You can't get responsiveness, receptivity, anything else; that's it. So the question is, how do we bring people of some quality into the institution? And the revolution that is overdue,

I believe, there is no substitute for it, is to decide that we must do for education what we have done for other professions, for lawyers, for doctors, for dentists, for engineers, for actuaries, for just about every other professional field.

And that is, we have to say to people in the field, you are no longer going to be viewed as hired factory workers working under someone else's supervision. The responsibility for managing this institution is going to be turned over to you. We are going to have a very high standard of entry, as we do in other professions. We are no longer going to have a system where everyone is paid the same on the basis of a single salary schedule and on the basis of seniority.

Other professions have people who are board certified, who are specialists, who are recognized in certain ways. We are going to develop similar systems within the schools, because of the fact that not everyone will be on the same schedule, some people will be able to earn salaries that are \$70,000, and \$80,000 and \$90,000 a year. By the way, very few institutions in our society are made up of completely of top notch people. Very few firms of any kind can hire everybody who is outstanding.

The basis for excellence in any institution is to get a fair share of outstanding people and to organize the institution in such a way that the outstanding people have enough communication and enough of an organizational relationship with all the other people so that the entire quality of the institution is improved.

Well, that implies something about the nature of the way schools need to be organized. As long as teachers are locked into a room with a bunch of kids and the door is shut, several things happen. One, you are not going to get any very intelligent people to do that. Not in today's world where there are other opportunities.

So the school needs--by the way, it is not very good for students. Everything that is written about this says that students will not sit in one place from 9:00 o'clock in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon listening to someone lecture.

The teacher doesn't like it. So what is needed is a move toward the professionalization of teachers. Starting with the entry standards and then developing teachers who are the equivalent of specialists in other fields, a national system of examination and a board certification, and with schools essentially run the

same way a, let's say, a legal firm is run by the senior law partners, so that teaching is no longer viewed as a job in which you are a hired hand. If you do that, you cannot get any good people today. Nobody wants that kind of a job. You can't even get people that work well in factories.

Now, this means that schools need to look like institutions that are different than the ones that they look like today, and I want to conclude by giving a very brief picture of what that school would look like.

First I want to say that if we were to invent education today, it is most unlikely that we would create the schools that we have today.

Suppose that we had not had schools before. Suppose this had been a very poor country and that we had just recently discovered that all of us in this room were about to invent an institution to educate our children, and somebody said, great, we will build a building called a school and we will put 35 seats in a room and we will put the kids in there at 8:45 and they will sit there and listen to the teacher, somebody would say, what would make you think that the kids will sit still, and be quiet. Somebody else would say, what makes you

think that an adult would want to be in the room with those kids for that period of time.

Someone else would say, what makes you think that 30 kids can all learn at the same time because they are all going to be of different abilities. Somebody will be absent one day. There will be all sorts of very interesting questions, and the chances are we would not end up with an institution of that sort.

Now, I would like to throw out -- this is very difficult because of us have been to school and so we know what education is like. If you don't have a blackboard and you don't have a teacher and if you don't have chalk, if you don't have homework, you don't have text books, then it is not school and it is not education. We cannot think in any other terms.

I would like to throw out one other model, not as the model, but just to show that there is another way of doing it.

The boy scouts and the girl scouts. Both those institutions have a series of examinations and achievements that the scouts have to do. There is never a time when the scout master stands in front of the scout troop, and says, today, scouts, we are going to learn ten

knots and I am about to give you a lecture on ten knots. Why not? Because the scouts come in individually, and the way the scouts advance is very simple. They have a thing in the pocket, a sheet of paper which says, here are the 12 things you have to do before you go to the next rank and each time they master one of them, somebody signs the sheet.

So, when someone has to learn ten knots, how do they do it? The job of the scout leader is not to lecture. The job of the scout leader is to connect each scout with some activity that will help that scout to -- what is that activity? Well, the scout, you may give him a book and a piece of rope and say, go over there in the corner and see if you can learn these knots. Very hard, John, you probably can't do it, but a few kids do it that way. Ten minutes later, you go over to Johnny and say, well, I am sorry you couldn't do it. I told you it was hard. Now, I am going to take out this board that has real knots on it, pull them off and take them apart and put them back together. See if you can learn it that way.

And then finally you go over to him and say, why don't you go over to Jack over there. He is

another scout, he is terrific at this. He will give you stories about how this piece of rope is a tree and this one is a rabbit and the rabbit goes around the tree so you are all learning knots that way, right? With little crazy stories like that.

But a sort of a peer instruction. What about a school in which there is a required curriculum. This is not the 1960's. What the students are required to learn from the master is set by adults. But the students are moving individually. The master teaches our teachers who have to train other teachers and who help to prepare materials and who coach students in their writing and rewriting of essays. And the school looks something like this:

You have got a certain number of teachers who are these outstanding board certified teachers. A lot of the time the students spend, they spend with video cassettes, because imparting information, learning about how Eskimos live in Alaska or what were some of the discussions at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, or other things, can be better presented. The material is already there on a video cassette, better presented by a video cassette than by about 98 percent of all the teachers who are trying to do it all on their own, the

presentation of materials.

When I went to school as a kid, I loved to have the teachers talk to me. There was no television, we didn't own a radio; to have somebody talk to me was better than for me to talk to myself. But today, the competition is too great, and most teachers can't do that.

In addition to that, you have some computers for work, and you have an internship program, so you have interns and residents. New teachers are being trained who are working there in some tutorial capacity with students. The students are now moving through a curriculum on an individual basis.

The classroom is not there, and teachers, because many students are spending time with video cassettes and with peer tutors, teachers have a great deal of time for professional relationships and for the kinds of things we talked about, which is individually coaching students and writing and so forth.

And there are the para-professionals; there are interns and residents, and there are also, and I believe very strongly that a part of all schools of the future, I don't think that in the next 30 years we are going to have enough people who know math or science in this

country that we are going to have math or science teachers. Why? Because for the last 15 to 20 years nobody has studied math or science. They didn't have to. The next generation of mathematicians or scientists of any number will come from kids who are now in the first, second, third grade, who are now going to be required to do something.

And even then, we may not have enough of them. So how do you get people to math and science in schools? Well, you could do what we do now; get teachers who want a job and who know English to teach math, even if they don't know it, so we are kidding ourselves.

I think that in addition to a permanent corps of professional teachers, that we need a large corps of teachers who will teach for five years or four years as a national responsibility, as a form of service, service that will be recognized by IBM. It should not be recognized by the United States Government because nobody would care about that. But if it was recognized by IBM, it is very important, because IBM is going to say to these people in math and science, listen, we want you, but we also want people in the future who know math and science, and if you immediately come to IBM, then all the people who teach math and science or English and social studies, where are

we going to get our math people ten years from now.

So if you are a teacher five years, when you come to IBM, we are going to treat you as though you were a veteran of a very important war and we will count that as a form of service to IBM and to the country, and we will take that into consideration in your status and salary and so forth to the company. Is that unreasonable? I don't think so, after having spoken to many business people in the country.

So now the school is made up of brilliant outstanding teachers who are earning a lot of money who are not locked into the classroom who are evaluating the computers, who are looking at the text books, who are evaluating the audiovisual material and who are training new interns and residents.

And then you have some people who are there for four or five years who are on their way to business or industry who are going to get their college loans paid off and some graduate work paid for, and recognition by IBM and other major corporations for performing an important national service, and you have a totally different institution of students who are expected to perform but who are not locked into sitting in one place for all those hours in the way that most adults cannot. We have been here

for less than an hour and people are starting to fidget a little bit. Just imagine if you were six years old, and you had been sitting here for the last seven hours. Cruel and inhumane punishment.

So, what I am saying is this: I am saying that the reforms that we have had up to now are the equivalent of those reforms that tried to improve the automobile industry by changing the color of the paint and putting a better stereo center into it. It didn't work.

If we end up with an automobile in the street, it is because the silent project will bring robots in and will put in forms of quality control, and will do things that are revolutionary compared to the way the auto industry had performed in the past.

The reforms which thus far have been discussed and proposed in education are important, because it is better to have a system in which students know what they are supposed to do, and which illiterate teachers, prospective illiterate teachers are weeded out, but that in itself, doesn't create a decent or productive school system. Those are very minimal and minor improvements in the system.

What we need to do is address the question of

how can you get students to be actively involved in their own learning, which they are not if somebody lectures at them all day long, how can you get intelligent adults to devote a lifetime of service in an institution? How can you change the structure of the institution to make it rewarding enough for them, both financially and intellectually? You cannot do it if you lock them in a room with a bunch of kids for their entire lives at a low salary, et cetera, with an impossible job.

You can do it if you say, you are a partner in a firm that is managing a school that has a budget of X number of dollars in which you can train new staff, hire people, bring in the technology, you are a partner in a firm, and there is no one standing over you and telling you what to do. You are one of the partners managing this things.

It seems to me that unless we move into the area, not of minor improvements, of teachers' minor improvements and the text book minor improvements, are you going to take three hours of this course or six hours or something like that, but the important issue before us is structural change, radical structural change in American public education.

Why do we need it? We need it because if we succeed with the changes that are now being proposed by the reforms, what will we have? The reforms that are now being performed are very simple. Test the teachers. Don't promote kids automatically. Force the kids to take certain subjects. I'm in favor of all this.

If you have all these reforms, what do you have? You have the schools that we had in 1952. That is what you have. You have the schools we had in 1952. We did not automatically promote kids. We tested teachers. We required the kids to take certain subjects. What did we have in 1952? What percentage of students graduated from school able to write, able to function? About 35 percent.

By the way, the British have a system like that. They force all the kids to do that, then they give them a test at a certain point and say, anybody who doesn't do this, out, you go to the lower-- you are going to become a worker.

So what we are doing now is we are going back to a model that we had before which was unacceptable to us because we did not educate enough students to the standards that we wanted.

What is needed is radical structural reform, and the way to do it is obviously not to abolish the system

we have and to go into something which is different, but what is needed is a number of models within each state which are very different from the models that we have, so that we can hit upon the right model to move to.

A continuation of the present structure will inevitably result in poorer and poorer teachers coming into the schools with greater disappointment on the part of the general public that reform is not working, where the movement to a privatization of education, privatization in our country will mean more separatism of every religious, racial and ethnic type and will ultimately have major consequences for the continued democratic functioning of this country.

Thank you.

Yes.

QUESTION: In anticipation of your visit, I asked my father, an elementary teacher for the first five years, and I surely will agree with you, your notion of attracting the best top quality graduates. He felt that the great sociological changes in our society are far more responsible for attracting a number of and parents working. Parents don't have time for their children. In fact, the parents are living their lives

through their children.

After hearing your lecture, which I enjoyed,
I feel you have

and we don't have societies to go backwards.

MR. SHANKER: I don't think I was blaming teachers at all. I think I was blaming the structure of the institution. It is a structure that compels people to work in certain ways. It attracts people. It drives certain people out and a structure that I am dealing with.

By the way, I have absolutely no doubt that unless there are certain ways of reasserting the role of parents or parent substitutes before school and outside of school, that what schools can do will be very limited.

There were -- about two months ago, there was a whole question of values, and values, to a large extent, deals with character formation of children at an early age, the willingness of children to forego immediate pleasure and do things that are unpleasant for a period of time because something has to be done or it is required of them.

That is not something that the schools can play a major role in, if there is no support from outside.

There is a story in the New York Times about

two months ago about a child who had found some money, a wallet or something and returned it. And then it said every teacher in the school had a discussion with the class about this student who had returned the money and it described all the interesting discussions as to whether this child would have done the same thing or thought it was right or wrong or foolish.

But the devastating about it was that in that school the Times reported that not one single teacher said that returning the money was the right thing.

Now, I will give you a second story.

Ahmed Tascione, the White House intellectual in the last two years of Carter's administration, talks about the fact that his son went to a school in Montgomery County and said, this is a great school. There is no private school I could buy that would be better than this. He said, but one day I was called to the White House and I was told, please come, your son has had an accident. Don't worry, your son is going to be all right, and he came and he found that the child who was sitting next to his son had taken a pencil and poked it through his son's cheek and the son had to have a number of stitches.

And a day or two later, he came to speak to the

principal of the school, and the principal said, "Sit down, I feel very sorry about what happened, but before you say anything, I want to tell you two things about what happened." And the principal then proceeded to say, well, first thing I want you to know is that the day this happened was a very hot day, the kind of day when kids are poking around and do things like that because the weather is so uncomfortable.

And he said, the second thing I want you to know is the kid who did this, his parents are being divorced and the kid is under a lot of strain. So Tascione said he looked at the principal and said, "Look, I am a sociologist, and all my life I have been teaching things about the effect of weather and the effect of family conditions on people and I understand this. I am glad you told me.

"Now, you have told me two things. I would like to ask you a question. Did anyone tell that boy that what he did was wrong, that it will not be tolerated and that he will be punished for it and that if it happens again that there will be a worse punishment." And the principal just sat there very embarrassed, because the principal and the teachers in the school were so convinced

that what that child had done was sociologically determined and therefore there was no point in talking to him about it, no one had mentioned to the kid that what he did was wrong.

So, I think that we have questions that are outside the schools in terms of the psyche of our people and of our educators. This was inside a school, but they represent attitudes both inside and outside of schools.

But nevertheless, I wasn't blaming teachers. Earlier today, I talked about summer camps. The toughest time of the day in a summer camp is the rest hour. Right after lunch all the kids are told they have to be fairly quiet on their beds and they are told that because camp life is so strenuous that they have to rest. Of course, they are being lied to. The reason for the rest hour is that most counselors need a break during the day and therefore one person has to guard all the prisoners. And in order to control them all, you have to put them in a, you know, you have to control their activity.

And so what is usually a very nice experience in a camp of having a counselor with three or four kids and have a very pleasant relationship through recreation, you have got one counselor who is screaming at

the kids says, and if you don't shut up and start moving, you get no desert tonight and you get no canoeing and the whole thing is -- and that is not that counselor's fault. That counselor is threatened.

What teachers do in the current system is not the teacher's fault. You put a teacher in a room with 30 kids and one-third of them are going to be in the middle of ability. Another third already know what you are going to say, and this group is so far behind that they don't understand who you are talking to.

Or you give a homework assignment and half of them don't bring it in. What do you do? Well, if the kids who bring it in, they won't keep doing it if they see that the others get away with it. But sanctions do you have against the others.

So what I am talking about is not a blaming of teachers. I don't blame supervisors either. I go to supervisors' conventions. There will be 2,000 principals in a room, and say, how many of you were once teachers. They all raise their hands. How many of you, when you were a teacher, had a principal come into your room and sit there and do an observation, you know, write down what the end of your lesson was and three good points and three weaknesses.

They all raise their hands and smile. How many of you ever felt that this improved your teaching? Two thousand people, three hands go up. Everyone laughs. And I say, well, how many of you do this, now that you are principal, how many of you do that to your teachers? All the hands go up and they laugh. Now, I am not blaming them. If they didn't do it, they would be fired. It's a routine, it's a ritual.

We know that 100 percent of all the kids who reach the fourth grade not knowing how to read, write and count will reach 17 without knowing how to read, write and count. So if they reach the fourth grade not knowing how to do it, we should find some other way of teaching them. We shouldn't just put them through the other grades. But we do it.

So at any rate, I am just responding to that one point that you made that I am not blaming individuals. Most individuals in mass institutions like this do what they have to do. They do what they are told to do. They do what they are expected to do. Even if it doesn't make a damn bit of sense, and even if they know it doesn't work. I mean, every junior high teacher who has a bunch of kids who don't read, write or count knows that they will not at

the end of that year, because they haven't for the last 30 years. Because if you were in elementary, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, you are in there for four or five years and you haven't learned how to do this and everybody has, what do you think about yourself? I'm dumb. It's not important to do anyway. You give up. I give up if I try something for five years and it doesn't work. Anybody here tries for five years and it doesn't work, you keep trying? You are a ritualist.

Anyway, I am not blaming anybody. I am saying that you shouldn't blame people. If something doesn't work, you change the structure of things.

The auto industry isn't saying we have lousy auto workers. Our auto workers are as good as the Japanese. They are not working in the same sort of structure. We are trying to change the structure of management, the structure of participation of workers, the automation and a whole bunch of other things. That is what they are doing.

If they started saying, well, we will fire these auto workers and we will get a new bunch in, they would have the same problem. They would have worse. They would have an inexperienced bunch of auto workers, you know.

So, I accept your statement that there are all these other factors. Very important factors of values, of character development; these are so important, which the schools alone can't solve. But I didn't blame any group of individuals. I am talking about institutional reform and not individual blaming placing.

Yes.

QUESTION: I would like for you to discuss what the merits are in training

MR. SHANKER: Well, you don't really have a career ladder in this state or any other place right now, because basically if you have a career ladder, and schools as they are now organized, it is one of several things.

If a career ladder means that you are taken out of the classroom to do other things, then that is nothing new because people have always become administrators and gone out of the classroom, and that has been a career ladder.

On the other hand, if you stay in the classroom and are given more money because you are doing a better job, then that is merit pay and it is somebody's evaluation of it.

Basically what you have is something that is political rather than educational. And that is that your governor and your legislature decided in the last couple of years, and that was done in a number of states, that in order to convince the public to add more money to education and create more of a commitment that they had to convince the public that they were doing something to recognize excellence. And even if they are not really recognizing excellence or doing it well, they did it for a good reason. And what you ought to do is work with your own district in such a way so that it does the least damage. That's all. It is political.

Look, if you want to convince people to give you a lot more money, sometimes you have to -- sometimes they won't do it for real reasons. I mean, the politicians decided the best way to get more money was to tell people that they were going to get a lot more for their money if some people got a little more.

Now, you know better than that and so do I.

But you did want the more money for everybody, right? That is called negotiation. I can always write a better contract myself, but they wouldn't let me. There are always other people that want to.

QUESTION:

MR. SHANKER: I don't mean formally, but I mean, you influence the legislative process. You influence what the school district does.

Look, what you have got to do is you have it as part of a package that got you more. And therefore, I am not saying that you like it. I don't like it. But if the public thinks that by doing something like that the schools are better, and in a democratic society what the public thinks makes a difference.

Then, my advice would be to do what you can to turn this into the best system to do the least damage. I am being very honest. I don't think that that is going to go your system any good.

But you can reduce the damage. I mean, if it is being given to some political favorite, find a system of selecting people that generally everybody says, okay, they are good people and it doesn't do any damage if those people get some more.

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