

*Good Morning America
Interview*

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*file
at your Good Morning America interview
- Scott*

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DAVID HARTMAN HOSTING: AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

The quality of American public education or the lack of it is getting a lot of attention these days and now the 1984 election is drawing closer education is becoming a very hot political issue. Part of this is because America's 2 major teachers organizations carry a lot of political clout. Albert Shanker has been president of the American Federation of Teachers for nearly 10 years. He's joining us this morning from our ABC station in Chicago, WLS. Mary Hatwood Futrell is the newly elected president of the National Education Association and she is joining us this morning from Washington.

HARTMAN: Good morning, Mr. Shanker. Good morning Miss Futrell.

FUTRELL: Morning.

SHANKER: Morning.

HARTMAN: Miss Futrell, first... with all the politicians, the candidates, the President jumping on public education as a major question, issue, today... to what extent are all these people focusing, in your judgment, on the right issues?

FUTRELL: I think that the candidates are making it a very political issue and one of the responsibilities we have as an organization is to bring the discussion back to the educational side of the issue. And we will be making sure that in addition to talking about politics that we also put forth a very sound educational program... a very positive educational program especially for the public schools. And so, we have to make sure that the public understands that in addition to the rhetoric, they must insist that there is a sound public educational program.

HARTMAN: Mr. Shanker, how much of this is rhetoric and how much are the candidates and the President focusing on the real issues?

SHANKER: I think about 95% of it is real issues. I think they're talking about the fact that we lowered standards back around the late '50s and '60s. That we ought to test teachers before they come in so that we know that they meet a high standard. We ought to test students. We shouldn't automatically promote them. We should give plenty of homework. We should make sure that students take English and mathematics and science and not the soft courses in living and loving or something like that. And I would say that



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most of it is there including, in most of these reports, and here's the big difference with the President of the United States... almost everybody understands that you can't do this without more money.

HARTMAN: All right, now on that question Miss Futrell, the President says that we can solve these problems without throwing a lot more money at them... that money isn't the solution. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the President.

FUTRELL: I think that there are some problems we can address without money. We can address the problem of discipline, of homework... but most of the problems we are dealing with will require additional dollars. If we want to attract and retain the best teachers in the profession, that will cost more money. If we want to improve the curriculum, to change the textbooks, that will cost more money. And so while there are some areas where we can make improvements with a minimum of money or no money at all, most of the areas will require money and I think that the American public is willing to pay for the quality of education that they wish in the schools.

HARTMAN: Now you say, excuse me, you say more money and the people of America are willing to pay for quality education. Is it to come from the federal government, as some are suggesting? Or is it to come from the local community or the states?

FUTRELL: I think that we have to have a partnership. Most of it does come from the state and/or the local government...

HARTMAN: About 90%, I believe.

FUTRELL: Yes, 90%. Eight percent comes from the federal government and, for instance, since the report was released 'A Nation at Risk' an additional 2.2% out of every dollar, we can implement that report and so what we're asking...

HARTMAN: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, how much?

FUTRELL: 2.2% out of every tax dollar... we can implement the federal report which was released in April. And so we believe that it is a full partnership roll of the federal, the state and the local governments working together to bring about the change that's needed in the schools and to finance that change.

HARTMAN: All right, now you're saying that 2.2% out of each federal tax dollar? Is that what you're saying?

FUTRELL: Right!

HARTMAN: Mr. Spanker, what do you think? Do you agree with that?



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That that's where the money ought to come from if money is required?

SHANKER: Well, most of the money will not come from the federal government. The federal government's responsibility is in the area of civil rights, continued and, indeed, increased support for education for minorities, the handicapped, the poor, we did a good job with that in the last 15 years and we shouldn't forget that that agenda is not finished. And then the other thing the federal government ought to do is take care of those items in education which constitute a national threat or national emergency and which are unlikely to be taken care of by local school districts... mathematics and science, teacher shortages... one of those. It may very well be that the critical shortage of new teachers is something that the federal government ought to address itself to. We've got to remember that the current crisis is largely due to the fact that we no longer have as a captive audience women and minorities, many of whom had no other place to go out teaching and today what we get when we start a new teacher is \$10,000 worth of college graduate and you don't get very much for that.

HARTMAN: Are you... are you in favor of this idea of merit pay for teachers, Mr. Shanker?

SHANKER: I think it's mostly a diversion. The problem is that the best and the brightest are not coming into teaching and those who do come in, the best and the brightest drop out very early so that if you've got merit pay for somebody who's been in for 15 years you're not doing the job that has to be done and that is to compete for the brightest college youngster at the time when it makes a difference... that's the time when he graduates and is looking for a job.

HARTMAN: So you're saying across the board that you just have to boost salaries to become more competitive with private industry, is that the idea?

SHANKER: well you do for the starting teacher. Otherwise he's just not going to come in and there's not much point bringing in somebody who's at the very bottom of his college class and then rewarding him 15 years later. That just... that's just silly. It's not the right priority. There might be some schemes of merit pay that would be not destructive or acceptable to teachers. I just don't think that that's the front-burner issue today.



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HARTMAN: Miss Futrell, if all this political attention continues regarding public education, 10 years from now let's say, how much better educated are our children going to be as a result of this attention today?

FUTRELL: well, I think the attention we're getting is good. In the past, education has been relegated to the back of the classroom and we have not been able to garner the kind of support and the kind of attention that we thought should be focused on education. So while much of it is political, at least the public and at least the politicians are discussing education. And we would like to see the discussion broadened. That it should not simply focus on merit pay. It is a responsibility of all levels of government to make sure that we have adequate funding, that we have quality education. The teachers are willing to work with the community... work with the levels of government to bring that about and I think that if we address the issues today, then 10 years down the road we will have a much better, a much stronger education system than what we have right now. So I think that the discussion, the debate, that is very healthy for the schools. What we have to make sure is that we do bring about change. And as we bring about that change that the teachers are fully involved in efforts to improve, to enhance, excellence in the schools. And we're committed to working toward that goal.

HARTMAN: Mr. Shanker, briefly, what would you ask of either the President and/or the candidates... whoever's going to be the next President? What would you say to him this morning that you need from the White House to make education better for all our children?

SHANKER: I would ask him to pick up... I think he's got half of an educational program. He's saying the right things about testing, about quality and standards but he doesn't have the other half of it which is money. And I would ask him to say, all right, I've gone around the country, I've made these great speeches about how we ought to be tougher and we ought to have these standards and now I'm willing to come up with some money from the federal government if states and localities will do the same thing. Because without both... without the standards and the money, we really can't bring about improvement.



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