

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

David Selden, Assistant to the President  
American Federation of Teachers

Albert Shanker, President  
United Federation of Teachers, #2

Solving the problem of teacher recruitment is the key to improving the quality of American Education.

There is a long-standing nationwide shortage of teachers. This shortage is the greatest single depressant on the quality of American education, and it bears heaviest on the children of poverty. The full extent of the shortage is obscured by high class sizes, excessive teacher classroom hours, and low teacher certification and licensing standards.

If classes in elementary and secondary schools were reduced to educationally-sound limits, and if the classroom time of teachers were limited to no more than twenty hours a week, the public school teaching force of the nation would have to be doubled. A minimum of a million and a half more teachers would be needed. If the full time teachers who do not meet present certification and licensing standards were taken off the job, another 100,000-200,000 teachers would be needed to replace them.

When one overlays the above estimates with the fact that certification and licensing standards are much too low in most states, the immensity of the task of building a truly professional teaching force in the United States becomes all but overwhelming. It cannot be done in less than 5 years, nor at less than \$10-\$15 billion more than we now spend on education.

Many of the people, who are concerned with educational strategy, have all but given up the idea of basing education on a highly qualified teaching staff with a low pupil-teacher ratio. Instead, they advocate teacherless teaching; increased use of teacher aides and other paraprofessionals, computers, television and other educational hardware, and various reorganization schemes such as team teaching, modular programming, flexible programming, twelve-month academic year, and other substitutes for having enough highly competent teachers with enough time to do the job. Very often the supporting arguments for these devices indicate much more concern for the costs of education than for its effects.

The main thrust of ESEA, in fact, with its emphasis on "innovation", is an attempt to increase the quality and quantity of education without materially increasing the supply of highly qualified teachers. Many of the innovations coming out of the new federally-financed programs, are educationally productive. Certainly one could not say that ESEA has had no favorable impact on the quality of education in United States. But to the extent that the innovations are attempts to evade accepted educational quality determinants, they must be given careful scrutiny.

Teachers should strongly support efforts to evaluate as objectively as possible the effects of our educational strategy. Even if such an evaluation should reveal that teacherless teaching gets good educational results, hundreds of thousands of additional highly qualified teachers still will be needed to staff our schools properly. Like the supply of disease, the supply of ignorance seems

virtually unlimited. Penicillin did not throw doctors out of work. Likewise, the shortage of teachers and school facilities is so great that teachers need have no fear of unemployment.

Furthermore, a teachers' union cannot even base its policy on restricting the supply of teachers in order to jack up the asking price. Limiting the supply of teachers would mean giving up two other basic union objectives: reduction of class sizes and reduction of classroom hours. The strategic self-interest of teachers must be represented by an equation which optimizes material benefits to teachers, smaller classes, and fewer classroom hours. An "automation factor" could also be thrown in without materially changing the task of teacher recruitment. Thus there is no conflict between teachers union objectives and public objectives, and at the present time, at least, there is essential agreement. Recruit we must!

At least two large local unions of the American Federation of Teachers are trying to help their local school boards recruit more teachers. The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers has placed advertisements in southern New Jersey newspapers, urging teachers to change jobs and come into the Philadelphia system. Perhaps some of the impetus for this effort stems from the fact that the shortage of teachers in Philadelphia has led civil rights groups to demand that experienced teachers be forced to transfer to the slum-ghetto schools.

The United Federation of Teachers in New York City, AFT Local 2, urged the New York City Board of Education in 1963 to join with the union in a joint nationwide recruitment program. The UFT plan was

specific, calling for branch offices of the Board of Examiners, which licenses New York City Teachers, in key areas where salaries were as much as \$4,000 lower than those paid in New York for teachers with comparable training and experience. In addition, the UFT plan envisioned paying the teacher's transportation to New York City, and helping him find a suitable place to live. The New York City superintendent turned down the union's proposal, and while the idea has been revived periodically since, nothing effective has been done. In the meantime, the lack of sufficient numbers of applicants for teaching positions in the City has caused the Board of Examiners to progressively make its exams easier to pass.

Recruiting teachers from one district to work in another is beset with great difficulty. Pirating teachers from lesser-paying school districts to higher-paying districts is frowned upon by the school administrative fraternity. Hence, very little has been done to make teaching certificates portable. Many states have special requirements which can only be met by taking courses in the state's own colleges. In fact, a whole series of restrictions on the teacher trade make it difficult for teachers to change districts, even within the same states. Few school districts give year for year experience credit in placing teachers on their salary schedules. The managers of the school system are not interested in hiring teachers at the upper ranges of the schedule because it is cheaper to get a kid out of college at the first step.

It is almost impossible for a teacher to move from one state to another without losing pension credit or having to pay large sums

to buy into the receiving state's retirement system. Tenure laws, too, tend to reduce teacher mobility. If a teacher changes his district he must undergo another one to three year probationary period before he acquires tenure, and tenure is very important to teachers.

Toronto, Ontario, school authorities, faced with a mounting teacher shortage, have sent recruiters to England. Large American school districts with recruitment problems might send recruiters to England, Ireland, and other English-speaking (or Spanish, French, and Italian-speaking countries, since English is a common second language in many such countries) were it not for the difficult red tape problems which now stand in the way.

Perhaps the growth of teacher collective bargaining can find a way to cut through the unnecessary restrictions on teacher mobility. The AFT now represents the teachers in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and Hartford. It is not inconceivable that a conference of big city unions might be able to work out uniform demands for licensing, pension, reciprocity, and tenure, which would do much to free the market in teachers.

Some may cry that making it easier for teachers to move from one district to another would result in draining of teaching talent to the highest-paying districts, thus depriving those with less ability to pay. The temporary effect might be just that. But making the market in teachers more competitive would result in raising the entire level of compensation, undergirding national recruiting efforts with a solid monetary appeal and hence, reducing the shortage.

It might be predicted, too, that when this sort of development begins to set in, the federal government will be called on to underwrite teacher salaries in order to bring about some degree of equalization.

The present restrictive arrangements have worked to the detriment of all, poor and rich school districts alike.

Is it possible to recruit more teachers and at the same time be more selective and raise the level of teacher education and training? We think that it is possible - but not without money. We cannot recruit more teachers without making teaching as a career more attractive than it is now. Teaching must become competitive with other intellectual occupations in salary, fringe benefits, psychic satisfaction, and other conditions of employment. A recent study by the Research Department of the American Federation of Teachers found that teachers are \$5,000 below other comparable occupations in average salary. Even psychic satisfaction is dependent upon what we might determine a "success factor". The constant confrontation with defeat which thousands of teachers experience every day in our over-crowded, turmoil-ridden slum schools brings only frustration. Where teachers have high psychic income in schools such as in Boston's Boardman School and New York's More Effective Schools, much more investment of money has been made in order to reduce class sizes, give teachers more free time, and provide saturation educational enrichment.

On the other hand, money alone will not do the trick. Not only must teaching be made visibly more attractive to college undergraduates. Teacher recruitment must be tied in with a thorough-going process of selection, education and training. The appeal should not be on the basis of, "Why not try your hand at teaching and see if you like it." Rather, it should be on the basis of, "You may be able to qualify for admission to a teacher training program which will prepare you for a successful and rewarding teaching career."

There are a number of effective teacher training programs now in operation or on the drawing board. Their essential elements are (1) a high degree of academic content in undergraduate years, (2) theoretical education (educational methods) introduced in graduate study, and (3) internship in functioning schools - not special, hothouse laboratories - as a part of graduate study. Perhaps the model of this kind of teacher training program is that now being developed by the National Teacher Corps.

The Teacher Corps program takes 4-year liberal arts graduates and places them under the direction of an experienced teacher in a difficult school situation for two years. The Corpsmen - trainees - are also under the over-all supervision of a graduate school in the area. During their training period, the Teacher Corps trainees do not carry a "normal" teaching load. Neither are they put to doing the drudge-work of teaching correcting papers, keeping records, ordering supplies, etc. Instead, Teacher Corps trainees are encouraged to get at the basic problems which children face in their efforts to

grow into functioning adults.

The Teacher Corps offers hope for developing a high quality teaching force on a nationwide scale. Off to a rocky start because it was not funded on its originally planned basis, and still facing difficulties in getting its appropriation renewed, the NTC, nevertheless, promises to "graduate" some 4,000 carefully selected, thoroughly trained, classroom tested teachers by the end of the 1967-68 school year. It is not at all inconceivable that the annual number of NTC graduates could mount to as many as 50,000 annually within a very short time. Perhaps the program could top out at double that amount.

The best thing about the Teacher Corps program is that it draws on the liberal arts colleges, the graduate schools of education, and the experience of practicing teachers. The six-year program introduces an additional element of selectivity, since it can be expected that anyone who could survive the various elimination factors in such as course, and who has undergone such rigorous and practical training, could and would look forward to a successful teaching career.

The recruiting appeal of the Teacher Corps has been modeled after that successfully used by the Peace Corps. Corps teachers do perform many duties which local school districts have not properly handled. In fact, the NTC could be viewed as an attempt to exploit the idealism of young people in order to make up for the failure of American society at all levels of government to provide good education.

There is some indication that teacher corpsmen feel the proper indignation which this exploitation calls for. It is doubtful, however, that the appeal to idealism alone will effectively solve the teacher recruitment needs of the nation. If the National Teacher Corps or similar programs should become internship programs comparable to those in the medical profession, there must be the promise of ultimate material reward waiting at the end of the course.

What we have been saying is that teacher recruitment must begin at the undergraduate level, that there is no short-range adequate solution of the recruitment problem, and that the problem cannot be solved at all unless teaching as a career is made more appealing. In addition to selecting and training new teachers for successful classroom careers, the level of teacher compensation must be raised. In the meantime, the teacher market should be freed from present restrictions so that the impact of the teacher shortage can be felt on the teacher wage level.

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