Vouchers Dramatically Improve Milwaukee Public Schools

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

Although some policy analysts have claimed tuition tax credits for K-12 education are less likely to bring increased regulation to private schools than other reforms, such as school vouchers, a recent study of the effects and consequences of the 1997 HOPE Scholarship Program for higher education effectively refutes such claims.

As well as putting individual taxpayers under increased scrutiny from the Internal Revenue Service, the HOPE program has greatly increased the administrative burden imposed by the federal government on institutions of higher education—a burden likely to increase as the revenue focus of the IRS supersedes the traditional educational focus of federal student aid programs.

Regulatory Burden

“The burden imposed by the HOPE tax credit far exceeds any federally imposed burden that we have encountered previously,” complained Stanley O. Ikenberry, president of the American Council on Education, in a 1998 letter to then-Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin.

According to a new study by the Milwaukee-based American Education Reform Council, those students were in fact lifted up by the positive response of public schools to the injection of competition into the education marketplace. The schools’ response included reforms that have proven virtually impossible to implement in most other urban school districts, such as funding schools according to student enrollment.

MILWAUKEE continued on page 6

HOPE Tax Credits Bring Increased Regulation

Tax credits for college tuition raise regulatory burden, exclude poor

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

Although some policy analysts have claimed tuition tax credits for K-12 education are less likely to bring increased regulation to private schools than other reforms, such as school vouchers, a recent study of the effects and consequences of the 1997 HOPE Scholarship Program for higher education effectively refutes such claims.

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MILWAUKEE continued on page 6

U.S. Scores Still Mediocre on New International Test

BY ROBERT HOLLAND

A new international test designed to gauge 15-year-olds’ ability to apply what they’ve learned in reading, mathematics, and science shows U.S. performance to be distinctly mediocre.

Scores of American students generally were in the mid-range of those collected for 32 nations by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), sponsored by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Unexpected Gender Gap

The most eye-opening PISA results, however, were deep in the report and generated few, if any, headlines. Despite claims by groups like the American Association of University Women of a “gender gap” in education favoring males, 15-year-old girls scored higher than boys in combined reading literacy in all 31 nations for which those particular data were presented. And in every case, the female/male difference in scores was at statistically significant levels.

MEDIOCRE continued on page 8
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NCATE Standards

The accreditation standards developed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education are detailed in the January 2001 report, “Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education,” available for viewing at NCATE’s Web site at http://www.ncate.org/2000/2000stds.pdf. There are six standards:

Standard One: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions
Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Standard Two: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation
The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

Standard Three: Field Experience and Clinical Practice
The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skill, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

Standard Four: Diversity
The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools.

Standard Five: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development
Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance. They also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

Standard Six: Unit Governance and Resources
The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

by G. Pritchy Smith*

Although NCATE’s standards were prepared to run as a sidebar to the January article, they were not published because of space limitations. That oversight is corrected here, where readers will note that content knowledge and skills are among several specifications in NCATE’s first standard. While the standards do call for doing much “to help all students learn,” there is no specific language about the level of student achievement.

*Interesting sidenote: Although this article appeared in the March 2002 issue of School Reform News, the accreditation standards referenced were not released until May 2002.

NCATE Objects to SRN Report

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

Donna M. Gollnick, senior vice president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), recently contacted School Reform News regarding an article about NCATE’s standards and diversity by contributing editor Robert Holland. (See “New Teachers Face NCATE Litmus Test on Diversity,” School Reform News, January 2002.)

Gollnick objected to Holland’s comment that “the new NCATE standards have little to say about raising student achievement.” In NCATE’s system, she said, “content knowledge and skill in teaching come first.”

The article in question provides an account of what was said at the annual conference of the National Association for Multicultural Education last November, where Gollnick addressed a pre-conference institute on “Knowledge Bases for Cultural Diversity in Teacher Education: Meeting the NCATE Standards for Diversity.”

According to the conference program, the institute “is designed to assist higher education administrators in redesigning their teacher education program to meet the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standard on diversity, with an emphasis on curriculum. Registration includes a copy of Common Sense About Uncommon Knowledge.”

Although NCATE’s standards were prepared to run as a sidebar to the January article, they were not published because of space limitations. That oversight is corrected here, where readers will note that content knowledge and skills are among sev- eral specifications in NCATE’s first standard. While the standards do call for doing much “to help all students learn,” there is no specific language about the level of student achievement.

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**- David Wing**
Despite 50-Year Effort, Schools Become More Segregated

Search for better remedies includes school choice

BY KELLY AMIS

Half of a century of attempting to improve the academic achievement of African-American students and better integrate American society through the desegregation of public schools has proven largely disappointing.

The achievement gap between black and white American students remains wide and glaring. Moreover, according to an August 2003 Census Bureau Report, the black population in the U.S. remains highly concentrated geographically. Supporters of school choice contend relatively new and non-compulsory reforms, such as charter schools and publicly financed voucher programs for low-income students, are already proving better able to serve minority students and create more integrated schools. Others believe the goals of desegregation should still be pursued, and can be attained, through the traditional K-12 public education system.

And one small group of education policymakers is shifting to an altogether new tack: to desegregate schools on the basis of income, not race.

Achievement Gap

While the debate over the value of forcing school desegregation continues, the lingering achievement gap between black and white youth is indisputable. Almost 50 years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of desegregating schools, research reveals today's African-American high school seniors perform at the academic equivalent of white eighth-grade students. Black students are more likely than white students to be labeled "learning disabled," and less likely to graduate from high school than their white peers (34 versus 78 percent nationally).

The high hopes for desegregation policies to improve black students' educational success were mitigated over the last few decades partly due to a "white flight" that left some cities' schools with a diminishing tax base and higher concentration of minority families. Additionally, white families who remained in cities may have been given a free pass from local school officials responsible for integrating city schools, who placed the primary responsibility for integrating schools on black children and their families.

Busing Burdened Blacks

Such was the case in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, according to Dr. Howard Fuller, founder of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning and the Black Alliance for Educational Options.

Fuller's 1985 research showed the Milwaukee Public Schools system (MPS) deliberately limited the number of white students bused involuntarily and placed the greatest burden of busing on African-American students. His findings were explicitly confirmed in 1999, when the officials who designed Milwaukee's school busing plan in the early 1970s publicly admitted the plan had been set up for "white benefit" at the expense of black children.

The then-superintendent of MPS confessed it had been "an issue of how do we least disrupt the white community." By 2000, the issue of Milwaukee's desegregation was "largely moot because of the scarcity of white students enrolled in MPS," according to the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.

Segregation Has Increased

A July 2001 report by Harvard University's Civil Rights Project revealed school segregation continued to intensify nationwide during the 1990s.

According to Gary Orfield, co-director of the Civil Rights Project, some 70 percent of U.S. black students now attend schools where the minority enrollment is over 50 percent, and more than one-third of black students attend a school where the minority enrollment is between 90 and 100 percent. White students on average attend schools where more than 80 percent of the enrollment is white and less than 20 percent are from all other racial and ethnic groups combined.

Not surprisingly, those data coincide with recent census data showing black America is still highly concentrated geographically. The broader social goal of desegregation— to create more integrated society— has proven elusive as well.

According to the Census Bureau's report, "The Black Population," while African-Americans constitute about 13 percent of the nation's total population, 64 percent of all U.S. counties have fewer than 6 percent black residents. In 96 counties, 95 of which are located in the South, blacks comprise 50 percent or more of the population. The 10 largest cities in the U.S. are home to 20 percent of the total African-American population. Of these, Detroit has the largest proportion of African-Americans (83 percent), followed by Philadelphia (44 percent) and Chicago (38 percent).

Forced Desegregation by Race and Income

To curtail "racial and ethnic polarization and educational inequalities, the Civil Rights Project recommends policies that include expanding the federal magnet school program, imposing desegregation rules on charter schools, and supporting research, advocacy, and litigation to continue local desegregation plans.

Orfield says "evidence exists that desegregated schools both improve test scores and positively change the lives of students, and that Americans increasingly express support for integrated schools:"

The proponents of choice also note today's parents are more concerned with academic achievement than whether their child's school is integrated.

A 1998 Public Agenda survey "Timesto Move: African-American and White Parents Set an Agenda for Public Schools," revealed that about three-fourths of both black and white parents believe that "too often, the schools work so hard to achieve integration that they end up neglecting their most important goal: teaching kids." (See "Parents Prefer Academics Over School Integration;" School Reform News, November 1998.)

Kaleem Caire, president and CEO of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, is one such parent.

"We have spent far too many years limiting our social engineering practices within our schools to sitting children next to each other in a classroom and calling that integration," explains Caire. "What we should be doing is making sure that each child sitting in our classrooms has access to the very best educational opportunities we can provide for him or her both within and outside the schools."

While the debate over the merits of compulsory race-based desegregation of American schools is likely to continue for sometime, some school officials have turned their attention to economic desegregation as a way to reduce stubborn achievement gaps.

Cambridge, Massachusetts is the latest district to adopt a plan to systematically place low-income students next to their more affluent peers, hoping the exposure will increase their academic performance.

Richard Kahlenberg of the Century Foundation, an outspoken proponent of economic desegregation, believes "all school children in America should have a right to attend a solidly middle-class public common school." Not a right to middle-class parents, or a right to live in a middle-class neighborhood, or a right to a middle-class income and lifestyle. But every child in the United States— whether rich or poor, white or black, Latino or Asian— should have access to the good education that is best guaranteed by the presence of a majority middle-class student body.

Educational Choice Proposed

Others contend the policy focus should be shifted to creating new and better educational opportunities that minority students can voluntarily choose. This, it is argued, will not only reduce the achievement gap but render more integrated schools as well.

Latino View: Serve Student Needs

Similar thoughts have been voiced by leaders of the Latino community, which is adding its own chapter to the school integration debate in America.

A relatively small population during the height of the federal school desegregation effort, the Latino student population has increased by 245 percent since 1968. Anthony Colón, vice president of education programs for the National Council of La Raza, observes Latino students are lagging behind white students academically, and dropping out of school at alarming rates.

Colón believes charter schools hold strong promise for providing Latino children with educational opportunities that will begin to turn this around. He is more concerned the schools serve students needs than with the diversity of their population.

"I don't think that having children from the same ethnic group is harmful, unless it's a forced kind of thing, and this certainly isn't forced," he says. The National Council of La Raza recently announced it had raised $10 million to help launch some 50 new charter schools to be aimed at Latino students.

Kelly Amis, former program director for The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, is now president of Education Allies, a new nonprofit organization that provides research and advisory services to education donors. Her e-mail address is KLaMisis@aol.com.
Tax-Funded School Choice Options in Milwaukee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>New options since 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>Open enrollment in other school districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>New MPS partnership schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>New city- and university-authorized charter schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>New MPS-authorized charter schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,900</td>
<td>Private independent and religious schools (voucher program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>New MPS specialty, early childhood, and K-8 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43,400</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-third of Milwaukee’s K-12 students are in choice schools.

For more information...

WWW


The SchoolChoiceInfo.org Web site offers a Media Kit about the Cleveland voucher case, prepared by the Institute for Justice, Milton & Rose D. Friedman Foundation, and Institute for the Transformation of Learning. It addresses key issues at stake in the case, pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as facts about the programs in Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Florida. The Kit is available at www.schoolchoiceinfo.org/supremecourt.


The 1998 Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in Jackson v. Benson is available at www.courts.state.wi.us/html/sc/97/97-0270.HTM.

The Democratic Leadership Council’s views on education reform are available at www.ndol.org/ndol_ka.cfm?kaid=110.
“A Stubborn Unwillingness to Concede”

In his report detailing the positive effects of school vouchers on Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), school board member John Gardner notes editors and reporters at the city’s major paper, the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, “once expressed considerable skepticism about the school choice movement.”

However, in news stories over the past two years about improvements at MPS, editors have recognized that competition from vouchers has strengthened the hands of reformers.

A January 21 editorial concurred with Gardner’s argument that “many of the improvements in MPS came about in part because of the controversial policy of applying public funds to tuition at private schools for low-income students, not despite the policy.”

The editorial continued: “In fact, the link between school choice and MPS improvement seems so obvious that its denial strikes us as reflecting a stubborn unwillingness to concede anything good can come from vouchers.”

Back to Court

Just 11 days earlier, a group opposed to the voucher program took it back to court again, petitioning the Wisconsin Supreme Court to overturn its 1998 decision, in Jackson v. Benson, upholding the constitutionality of the program and allowing it to expand to include religious private schools.

The petition contends Justice Jon Wilcox was not impartial in helping render the 4-2 decision and so should not have participated in making it. The charge relates to Wilcox’s 1997 re-election campaign, when he received thousands of dollars from school choice supporters. Wilcox said two years ago he might have withdrawn from the school choice case if he had known about this financial help. The suit contends he should have known.

The court—excluding Wilcox—will hear responses to the petition and then meet to decide what to do.

As well as this new court battle, there is a continuing campaign on the part of voucher opponents to impose further rules, regulations, and oversight on the operation of voucher-accepting private schools. Existing statutes and administration must be strengthened, voucher opponents contend, to ensure the schools are “accountable” to the public. That issue would appear to have been settled by the 1998 Jackson decision, when the state supreme court determined:

• Existing statutes provide “more than sufficient control and accountability...to ensure that the program serves the public purpose to which it is directed.”
• The state “need not, and in fact is not given the authority to impose a ‘comprehensive, discriminating, and continuing state surveillance’ over the participating choice schools.” To do so, the Court said, could “result in an excessive governmental entanglement with religion” that is not constitutionally permitted.

As voucher supporters reminded state legislators in a September 2000 letter, “These determinations, by Wisconsin’s highest judicial tribunal, are not ambiguous.”

Democrats Redefine Public Education

The Democratic Party and its national candidates are generally opposed to the idea of school choice and the use of publicly funded school vouchers. Notable exceptions at the local level are strong school choice supporters John Norquist, mayor of Milwaukee, and John Gardner, Milwaukee school board member.

In a recent report, Gardner calls for a redefinition of public education to include multiple providers, both public and private.

The Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) has issued a similar call for redefining public education. That request has fallen on deaf ears among national party leaders.

“We should rid ourselves of the rigid notion that public schools are defined by who owns and operates them,” stated the DLC. “In the 21st century, a public school should be any school that is of the people (accountable to public authorities for its results), by the people (paid for by the public), and for the people (open to the public and geared toward public purposes).”

“In the 21st century, a public school should be any school that is of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
Catholic Schools Achieve High Marks at Low Costs

Significant and effective players in American education

By HanNa SkanderBy and Richard Sousa

Historically, Catholic schools have played a significant role in educating America's children. They continue to be important and effective players in the field today, despite substantial changes in the size and makeup of the Catholic school student body over the last four decades.

Not only do Catholic schools continue to advance the academic, religious, and moral development of the students in their care, research shows, they do it at less than half the cost of the public schools.

Catholic schools are characterized by a strong sense of community, high academic standards, and a committed faculty. Students are disciplined and orderly. Academic achievement is notable, particularly among inner-city African-American families, where parental satisfaction is also high.

The number of children Catholic schools educate has fallen in recent decades. It peaked in 1960, when about one in every seven U.S. children attended a Catholic school; by 1999, that ratio had fallen to nearly one in 20. The composition of the student body underwent a dramatic change. (See Table 1 on the following page.)

Enrollment changed in terms of race, ethnicity, and religion. For example, in the 1970-71 school year, minority enrollment in Catholic schools was 12.2 percent of total enrollment. In the 1999-2000 school year, by contrast, minority enrollment had nearly doubled, to 22.3 percent. In 1970 only 2.7 percent of Catholic school enrollment was non-Catholic; by 2000, that number had risen to 33.4 percent. (See Table 2 and Figure 1.)

In most Catholic schools, students said reading is a favorite hobby. Nearly 22 percent of males gave reading that kind of priority in their lives. In 2003, PISA will examine students’ ability to solve problems, and in 2006 it will look at students’ proficiency in using information and communications technologies. Reading, math, and science will continue to be assessed as well in an attempt to develop trends lines useful to the participating countries.

Robert Holland is a senior fellow at the Lexington Institute, a public policy think tank in Arlington, Virginia. His email address is rholl1176@yahoo.com.

For more information...

WWW

The report from the Program for International Student Assessment, Outcomes of Learning, is available for downloading at http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa.

CATHOLIC continued on next page

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Kent Corrall, PEF

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Fearless Reviews
CATHOLIC continued from previous page

Attending a Catholic high school raises the results and lifetime advantages: schools producing the following long-run advantage was still evident, with Catholic of Education data and took that potential bias University of Chicago analyzed U.S. Department in public schools. But when Derek Neal at the worst-performing and worst-behaved students ity bias, claiming the Catholic schools leave the argued the differences were a result of selectiv- schools often were discounted by critics who early studies comparing Catholic and public

Selectivity Bias
Early studies comparing Catholic and public schools often were discounted by critics who argued the differences were a result of selectivity bias, claiming the Catholic schools leave the worst-performing and worst-behaved students in public schools. But when Derek Neal at the University of Chicago analyzed U.S. Department of Education data and took that potential bias into account, he found the Catholic school advantage was still evident, with Catholic schools producing the following long-run results and lifetime advantages:

- Attending a Catholic high school raises the probability of finishing high school and entering college by 17 percentage points for inner-city children.
- African-American and Hispanic students attending urban Catholic schools are more than twice as likely to graduate from college as their counterparts in public schools. 27 percent of African-American and Hispanic Catholic school graduates who started college went on to graduate, compared with 11 percent from urban public schools.
- When compared with their public school counterparts, minority students in urban Catholic schools can expect roughly 6 percent higher wages in the future.

Productivity
A more recent study of New York City schools confirms the stellar results of Catholic schools. Paul Peterson of Harvard University and the Hoover Institution and Herbert Walberg of the University of Illinois compared the costs and performance of students in 88 public and 77 Catholic elementary and middle schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. They found Catholic schools are at least twice as efficient, and their students perform better on state tests.

To ensure a fair comparison, Peterson and Walberg deducted all expenditures that did not have a private school counterpart, including all monies spent on transportation, special education, school lunch, and numerous bureaucratic functions. After removing all of those expenditures—which represent nearly 40 percent of the cost of running the New York City public schools—the analysis showed public schools still spent more than $5,000 per pupil each year, compared to $2,400 spent by Catholic schools.

Test score comparisons also were revealing. When schools serving populations with similar poverty levels were compared—with special education student test scores excluded—Catholic schools outperformed public schools on state-administered math and reading tests for the third and sixth grade. Additional analyses showed test scores remained higher in Catholic schools even after adjustments were made for race and ethnicity.

Even when the attributes of families who choose to pay for private education are taken into account, other studies show African-American students from low-income schools learn more—or at least as much—at half the cost of public schools. (See Figure 2.) Although their enrollments have declined, the effect of Catholic schools still stands out.

Catholic schools continue to contribute to the fabric of American education.

Hanna Skandera is a public affairs fellow at the Hoover Institution. Her email address is skandera@hoover.stanford.edu. Richard Sousa is an associate director at the Hoover Institution. His email address is sousa@hoover.stanford.edu. Copyright 2002 Hanna Skandera and Richard Sousa. Reprint requests should be directed to the copyright holders.

For more information...

Table 1 Catholic Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment 1919-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Catholic elementary enrollment</th>
<th>Catholic secondary enrollment</th>
<th>Total Catholic enrollment</th>
<th>As a percent of public enrollment</th>
<th>As a percent of private enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>1,795,673</td>
<td>129,848</td>
<td>1,925,521</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>113%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>2,222,598</td>
<td>241,869</td>
<td>2,464,467</td>
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<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>2,035,182</td>
<td>361,123</td>
<td>2,396,305</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>2,560,815</td>
<td>505,572</td>
<td>3,066,387</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 60</td>
<td>4,373,422</td>
<td>880,369</td>
<td>5,253,791</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>3,355,478</td>
<td>1,008,088</td>
<td>4,363,566</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>2,525,000</td>
<td>890,000</td>
<td>3,415,000</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>2,269,000</td>
<td>837,000</td>
<td>3,106,000</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>2,061,000</td>
<td>760,000</td>
<td>2,821,000</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>1,883,906</td>
<td>591,533</td>
<td>2,475,439</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>1,884,461</td>
<td>606,650</td>
<td>2,491,111</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1996-97</td>
<td>1,885,037</td>
<td>612,161</td>
<td>2,497,198</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
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<td>1997-98</td>
<td>1,879,737</td>
<td>618,157</td>
<td>2,496,848</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
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<td>1998-99</td>
<td>1,876,211</td>
<td>620,277</td>
<td>2,496,488</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
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<td>1999-00</td>
<td>2,013,084</td>
<td>639,954</td>
<td>2,653,038</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2,650,202</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2 Catholic School Enrollment by Ethnic Background 1970 - 2000

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Americans</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Americans</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Energy = MC\(^2\)

Just as Einstein had a formula for transforming solid matter into energy, New Jersey engineer-businessman Peter R. Denton has a formula for transforming American public schools into education powerhouses:

**Parental School Choice = E\(^3\)**

Empowering parents with school choice, Denton says, reforms public education to produce Excellent Education for Everyone.

E\(^3\) is also the name of the organization that Denton, his wife Audrey, and Newark city councilman Cory Booker co-founded three years ago as a coalition of Garden State citizens sharing similar views on school choice despite differing religions, ethnic groups, and political allegiances. E\(^3\) has grown rapidly to become one of the largest grassroots school choice organizations in the country, with a budget of over $2 million and a paid staff of 15 to 20 people.

Peter Denton is chairman of Denton Vacuum, a Moorestown-based high-tech firm started by his father in 1964 to serve the precision optics industry. After graduating from MIT in 1967 with a B.S. in electrical engineering and earning an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1969, he worked as a management consultant with Peat, Marwick & Livingston before taking a job to manage the finances of Donley Manufacturing, a Boston-area jewelry manufacturer.

He joined the family business in 1976 and was named president in 1982. Denton expanded the firm from 35 employees in 1976 to over 100 in 1996, with the Denton Companies now generating annual revenues of more than $20 million.

But in 1999, at the age of 53, Denton turned his successful businesses over to his managers, resigned as president, and turned his attention to reforming public education in New Jersey. Although a product of public schools himself, he had become disillusioned with them as his two children attended supposedly good suburban public schools that he came to regard as expensive, bureaucratic, and unresponsive to parents and students.

Denton’s sister also provided him with further insight into public education issues through her involvement in the charter school movement in the District of Columbia. Finally, as a businessman recruiting new employees for his firm, he had found that a very large number of applicants from inner-city communities were just not literate enough to meet the requirements even of simple entry-level jobs.

Denton spoke recently with School Reform News Managing Editor George Clowes.

**IT’S ALL ABOUT MONEY & POWER**

"School reform—particularly in urban districts—has very little to do with children and education and everything to do with power and money. Disadvantaged parents do not have money and power, and therefore they cannot force competitive improvements in urban public schools the way that suburban parents can."

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BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

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Denton spoke recently with School Reform News Managing Editor George Clowes.
CLOWES: What was your motivation for getting involved in school reform?

DENTON: In the mid-1990s, things were very good in business and I realized I could spend another 10 years making more money or I could give something back. I decided to work on fixing the public education system in New Jersey, which is a $16 billion industry. I had no comprehension of the magnitude of the task I was undertaking.

My motivation for working on fixing the system is because it's the right thing to do. We cannot have a functioning democracy with a permanent underclass that is racially segregated both geographically and economically. It is a civil rights issue and an issue of fundamental fairness.

There's no question that, on the business side, we are impacted by the school system, but get very concerned when people say, "Well, you only care about this because you can't get good employees for your business." In my view, that's an insulting, racist, and ignorant statement. People who run businesses are citizens of this country. We want this country to grow and survive and be a fair place for everybody to live in. If the country does better, then obviously our business environment will be better, but we get no direct business benefit.

CLOWES: How did you settle on parental school choices as the reform mechanism?

DENTON: That's a key question. When I started to do this, I decided to get educated about education and I started going to conferences. I found there were two vastly different types of conferences.

One type was the professional educators who talked about the reform du jour. They would talk about a different textbook, or different hours per day or different teacher certifications. But there was no interest in making any substantive changes and no interest in establishing measures of accountability. The focus was on the process and increasing the cost of the process. That meant more jobs, more money, and more contracts. To me, that is simply re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Now, many of us have grown up with the public education system. It never occurs to us there could be a different way until we step back and ask, "What works organizationally in our society, and what doesn't work?" We know bureaucracies don't work. We know monopolies stifle innovation and are very expensive. In this particular case, we've got a monopoly that is also bureaucracy— the worst of all possible worlds.

The public school system is a monopolistic bureaucracy.

The other type of conference had relatively few professional educators or had people who were on the professional education board. They would be super-teachers and super-intenders who had realized good people can't do a good job if the public education bureaucracy is not restructured.

People who run businesses are citizens of this country. We want this country to grow and survive and be a fair place for everybody to live in. If the country does better, then obviously our business environment will be better, but we get no direct business benefit.

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Education Industry News

A sampling of education industry news from The Education Economy, a weekly publication of the market research firm Eduventures, Inc., which conducts research on the K-12, post-secondary, corporate training, and consumer markets worldwide. This copyrighted material is used by permission of Eduventures, Inc.

Education Industry News

Investments Recover Sharply
After six straight quarters of decline, U.S. education industry investments grew by $102 million in the fourth quarter of 2001 to a total of $160 million, up from $58 million in the third quarter, according to Eduventures, Inc. Executive Vice President Peter J. Stokes in The Education Economy on January 15. At the same time, total U.S. venture capital investments fell from $6.7 billion to $6.1 billion. The net result was a sharp increase in the education industry’s share of overall venture capital investments, which rose from 2.4 percent in the third quarter to 2.6 percent in the fourth. In another positive sign for the education industry, the average transaction value in the fourth quarter was $6.4 million, up 36 percent over the $4.1 million average for the third quarter. Stokes also notes Business Week gave “A” grades to only two industries in its 2002 “Outlook” issue: pharmaceuticals and education.

Kaplan Acquires
Schools and Test Help Tools
Kaplan, Inc., a provider of education services for individuals, schools, and businesses, announced on January 31 it will acquire Achieva, a company that specializes in on-line tools to help students in grades 6-12 improve study skills and standardized test performance. In a separate release, Kaplan also announced it acquired Texas Careers in Texas, Thompson Institute in Pennsylvania, and Technology Education College in Ohio. Those schools will become part of Kaplan’s higher education division.

The Education Economy is read by leading education company executives, investors, academics, policy experts and education leaders around the globe.

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The HOPE Scholarship. Wolanin, the HOPE Scholarship fragments higher education policymaking between the Treasury and Education Departments. As a tax preference measure, this new program for middle-income families is not subject to annual review and appropriation, as are Pell Grants and other traditional aid programs for low-income students. The HOPE tax credit makes the federal tax system more complex and less fair, as well as distorting free-market decisions. Since tax credits reduce government revenues for a given set of tax rates, the widespread use of a specific tax credit provides a perverse incentive to keep tax rates high—or even to increase tax rates—in order to produce sufficient revenue for other government purposes.

“The HOPE Scholarship squanders a substantial sum of federal tax resources by its failure to produce significant benefits.”

THOMAS R. WOLANIN

In 2001 the U.S. Congress approved an expansion of college savings accounts to include K-12 education, and to increase the annual contribution limit from $500 to $2,000 in after-tax dollars.

The Savings Accounts, named after their foremost champion, the late Georgia Senator Paul Coverdell, allow interest to accumulate tax-free, with no taxes on withdrawals if the money is used for qualified educational expenses. Contributions to the accounts may be made by individuals, corporations, charitable organizations, and foundations.

Like all tax-benefit programs, Coverdell Education Savings Accounts are governed by rules from the Internal Revenue Service. Although the rules are scattered across three publications, the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) has helpfully consolidated the 17 relevant pages of instructions into a single document, together with the required two-page IRS Form 8891.

The CAPE consolidation and the documents from which it is derived are available from CAPE’s Web site at www.capenet.org/esa.html.
Roundup

State Education Roundup

CALIFORNIA

Davis’ Budget Puts Kids on Hook
A key element in California Governor Gray Davis’ proposed budget for 2002-03 would require the state's children to pay for the governor's current budget deficit woes when they are grown and in their twenties, according to Pacific Research Institute Education Director Lance Izumi. Although the proposed budget contains spending reductions of $2.7 billion, Davis’ main balancing strategy involves not spending cuts but $5.6 billion in loans, transfers, and other internal shifts from various state special funds to the general-fund budget.

“One of those loans will not be repaid for more than 20 years,” notes Sacramento Bee columnist Dan Weintraub. “Children born this year would, as adults, still be paying for the operating expenses in this year’s budget. That seems neither fair nor responsible, and is eerily parallel to the ‘solution’ Davis devised to last year’s energy crisis.”

Davis blames much of the state’s $12.4 billion deficit on the recession and September 11, but Izumi points out that state general-fund spending surged by 37 percent during the first three years of the governor’s term, while population increased by only 5 percent.

Also, when Davis presented a revised 2003-02 budget in May 2001 to address a $4.2 billion deficit, state Legislative Analyst Elizabeth Hill warned that he was not cutting ongoing spending enough, and predicted a large deficit for 2002-03.

FLORIDA

Fundamental Principles of Government Stressed
Arguing that “reason is the strongest weapon against the mindless fear the terrorist seeks,” Florida State Representative Jerry Melvin (R-Fort Walton Beach) has introduced a bill calling for the state’s public school students to start each day by reciting the opening words of the Declaration of Independence. The aim of reciting the words is to serve students to start each day by reciting the opening words of the Declaration of Independence. The aim of reciting the words is to serve as a reaffirmation of the American ideals of individual liberty, and to provide students with a reasoned understanding of the principles of American government.

“In writing the Declaration of Independence... Thomas Jefferson set forth in 55 words a statement of the fundamental human principles of government upon which the new nation was to be founded, and this statement continues to have resonance long after the contents of the remainder of the document have been forgotten,” declares the bill’s preamble.

The portion to be recited is: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

“I love this country and am proud of the foundations our Founding Fathers used in putting together a Constitution and government unequalled in history,” said Melvin.

Declaration Foundation News Release, January 14, 2002

ILLINOIS

Archdiocese Will Close 14 Schools
In January, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago announced the closing of 14 schools and hinted that two more struggling schools might be added to the list by the end of the year.

Cardinal Francis George said that after years of saying there is “a severe shortage of funds,” the closings should not have come as a surprise. He maintained the school system might be smaller but it would be stronger.

“A lot of other things besides Catholic schools are downsizing these days,” he told the Chicago Tribune.

The school system’s problems are widespread: Declining enrollments, a need for additional revenue besides tuition, low teacher salaries, and schools not located where most Catholics live.

Since tuition fees do not cover the full costs of the schools, the difference historically has been made up by contributions from the archdiocese, individual parishes, and private foundations. But the archdiocese’s own budget problems have curtailed its contributions in recent years.

Although officials are promoting the idea of students eventually paying the full cost of their education, they also are aware that increased tuition in 2000-01 may have contributed to the school system’s 3.4 percent decline in enrollment that year—the biggest drop in 10 years. To keep tuition affordable, archdiocesan officials announced the creation of a systemwide endowment fund to support school operations. Some 70 of the 261 archdiocesan elementary schools already have established individual endowment funds.

Chicago Tribune January 25, 2002

KENTUCKY

Teacher Credentials Now Online
If parents in Kentucky want to take a look at the credentials of their child’s algebra teacher or of an administrator at their child’s school, they need look no further than the Internet.

In January, the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board, an independent agency attached to the Office of the Governor, established the Teacher Certification Inquiry Website, which shows the educator’s teaching certificates and the subjects and grades the teacher has the permission to teach.

Although creation of the Web site was spurred by concern about “out of field” teaching—where, for example, a gym teacher might be assigned to teach history—one of the biggest job-killing factors in the school system’s $2.7 billion deficit is high costs, according to Pacific Research Institute Education Director Lance Izumi.

In February, the Kentucky Board of Education approved the creation of a systemwide endowment fund to sup- port school operations. Some 70 of the 261 archdiocesan elementary schools already have established individual endowment funds.

The URL for the Web site is www.kde.state.ky.us/otcs/epsb.

Lexington Herald-Leader January 16, 2002

MICHIGAN

Deficit Forces Detroit Public Schools to Cut Jobs
Facing an estimated budget deficit of between $122 and $135 million, Detroit Public Schools officials have laid off 69 maintenance workers,
privatized the management of maintenance operations, and cut 70 of 277 upper-level administrative positions. In total, the district has eliminated 688 jobs because of the looming shortfall. That number would have been 3,000 higher if the maintenance operations themselves had been privatized.

Five of the administrators will be assigned to fill empty principal positions, but most will be reassigned to classrooms, where—under the rules of seniority—they will bump others from their jobs. The employees with least seniority will be laid off. District chief of staff Lavonne Sheffield pointed out there was “a silver lining” to everything.

“We’re going to have more certified teachers in the classroom,” she said, noting the district now has about 1,300 non-certified teachers in classrooms.

Parents seemed to agree. “If you have to save money, save it at the top,” M. Axine Wright told the Detroit Free Press. “Get rid of the upper echelon and leave the teachers alone,” she said. Detroit Free Press

January 17, 2002

January 19, 2002

NEW HAMPSHIRE

House Declares State Supreme Court Was Wrong

A 35 percent majority of New Hampshire House members voted in January to support a resolution declaring that recent state supreme court rulings on school finance in 1993 and 1997 were wrong. The measure, which has no legal effect, is seen by supporters as the first shot in a battle by the state legislature to reassert its control over school funding.

“The court is wrong and today we are doing something,” said House Ways and Means Committee Chairman David Alkonis (R-Hudson).

In 1997, the state supreme court ruled that funding public education through local property taxes with widely varying rates was unconstitutional since public education was a state responsibility requiring a uniform statewide tax. Although the court did not tell the legislature how much to spend on education or how to raise taxes to pay for it, legislators reluctantly adopted a statewide property tax in response to the court ruling.

As a result, towns with high property values have seen very large increases in real estate taxes, while towns with low property values have seen substantial decreases. Voters from the so-called “wealthy” towns advocate constitutional amendments to put the legislature back in charge of funding decisions.

“We are changing a philosophy of subservience,” said Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Mood. Foster’s Online

January 18, 2002

NEW JERSEY

History Standards

Omit Historical Figures

The latest revision of the New Jersey Department of Education history standards omits major historical figures and substitutes the word “conflict” for “war” in material dealing with the colonization of the New World and the later expansion of the United States.

The state’s existing history standards, approved in 1996, already exclude most historical figures and had been rated “F”—“useless”—by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

The revised standards now also exclude: the Pilgrims and the Mayflower, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. However, some new names were added, such as slavery opponents Theodore Dwight Weed and Angelina and Sarah Grimke.

The exclusion of the Founding Fathers’ names is “political correctness at the end of the nth degree,” commented Penn State University education professor David Saxe, who reviews state history standards for the Fordham Foundation.

But Jay Doolan, acting assistant commissioner of the state’s Division of Academic and Career Standards, said the standards would undergo 20 public hearings before approval. If people are upset with the new standards, he said, “then they should let us know at the public hearings.”

Washington Times

January 28, 2002

Pennsylvania

Parents Will Choose Tutors in Governor’s New Program

Parents in Pennsylvania now have access to a new and innovative program to help their poorly achieving schoolchildren get the additional educational support and tutoring they need.

The program, established by Governor Mark Schweiker’s administration, offers parents of eligible children in grades three through six grants of up to $500 to purchase after-school tutoring in math or reading.

“We believe parents deserve choices when it comes to their children’s education,” said Schweiker’s Education Secretary Charles B. Zogby. “And we built ‘Classroom Plus’ on that idea—give the grants directly to parents, and let them choose the best way to get their children the extra help they need.”

Qualified applicants will receive grant certificates together with a list of approved providers. When a student completes the program, the provider completes verification information on the certificate, which the parent then redeems for up to $500 through the Department of Education. Pennsylvania is the only state in the country to offer this type of program to parents.

Providers may include public schools; colleges and universities; certified teachers employed by a school entity; private schools; and nonprofit or for-profit organizations, such as the YMCA, Boys/Girls Clubs, or Huntington Learning Centers.

A complete list of approved providers is available on the PA PowerPort at www.state.pa.us, with keyword “tutoring grants.”

Pennsylvania Department of Education

News Release, January 25, 2002

VERMONT

Expansive School Choice Bill Introduced

Three school choice supporters, Vermont State Senators Hull Maynard (R-Rutland), Julius Canns (R-Caledonia), and William Corrow (R-Orange), introduced an expansive school choice bill on January 9. The measure, S. 227, is designed to reimburse parents for expenses they incur in educating their children.

Specifically, the bill would require school districts to pay up to “an amount equal to 50 per cent of the calculated net cost per pupil in average daily membership” to parents who choose to send their children to any approved sectarian or nonsectarian public or independent school. The money would be in the form of reimbursements after the school year was completed. Home study parents also would qualify for reimbursements.

The bill’s preamble notes that “parents are the natural guardians of their children” and points out the Vermont constitution not only requires towns to maintain public schools but—in the same section—also provides for the encouragement and protection of “all religious societies of bodies of people that may be united or incorporated for the advancement of religion and learning” (emphasis added in bill).

Vermont Education Report

January 14, 2002

WASHINGTON

Judge Raises Teacher Union Penalty to $770,000

Judge Gary Tabor ordered the Washington Education Association to reimburse the state $190,000 in legal fees related to the union’s illegal use of agency fees for political purposes. Coupled with a previously assessed $400,000 fine and a $180,000 reimbursement to fee-payers, WEAs bill now stands at $770,000. (See “WA Teacher Union Found Guilty,” School Reform News, October 2001.)

The penalty is by far the largest ever imposed in Washington for campaign finance violations, approached only by a previous $430,000 penalty for similar infractions charged to WEA in 1998. The union will appeal.

Education Intelligence Agency Communiqué

January 7, 2002

NEA Refunds Paycheck Deductions

The National Education Association (NEA)—the largest teacher union in the nation—is sending thousands of Washington state teachers a refund for money taken from their paychecks and spent on political purposes. The NEA’s state affiliate, the Washington Education Association (WEA), was recently charged $700,000 in penalties for illegally spending money taken from non-member teachers on politics. The court ordered the union to send refund checks totaling $180,000 to the 4,000 teachers involved, and to reduce mandatory non-member fees by eight percent.

EFF believes that no teacher should be forced—against his or her will through mandatory dues and fees—to support the political goals of union officials.

“…This is a major victory in the battle for free speech and fair elections, but it is only the first step,” said Bob Williams, EFF president. “Our investigation leads us to believe the NEA spends nearly 100 percent of the dues it collects on activities not related to collective bargaining, contracts, or grievances.”

Evergreen Freedom Fund

January 23, 2002

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Examining the inputs and outputs of K-12 schooling

By GEORGE A. CLOWES

Productivity is the rate of output per unit of input. In most instances, productivity means labor productivity: the quantity of output produced by a given quantity of labor. For example, if an employer gives two workers the same tools and equipment to perform the same task, such as assembling circuit boards, the worker who assembles more operational boards per hour is said to be more productive.

In a market economy, a highly productive worker commands higher pay than a less-productive worker. Improvements in workflow procedures and investments in technology allow workers to increase their productivity.

Labor productivity may be increased by changing one or more of its three components:

• by producing a larger quantity of the same quality output;
• by producing the same quantity of a higher quality output; and
• by producing fewer rejects.

Increased productivity is a key fuel for economic growth, since it permits employers to pay higher wages for the same hours of work. In the U.S. economy, wage increases in the non-farm business sector over the past 30 years have been made possible by a 74 percent increase in output per hour, from 67.0 in 1970 to 116.6 in 2000, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Using the circuit board analogy, that productivity increase means a worker in 2000 assembles more operational boards in a given hour, from 67.0 in 1970 to 116.6 in 2000, made possible by a 74 percent increase in output per hour, from 67.0 in 1970 to 116.6 in 2000, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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PRODUCTIVITY continued

students per teacher, or the pupil/teacher ratio, provides a ready measure of the productivity of the system as a whole. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the pupil/teacher ratio in public schools fell from 22.3 in 1970 to 14.1 in 1999, a decrease of 37.4 percent. Elementary and secondary schools experienced similar decreases over the same period, from 24.3 to 17.6 for elementary schools and from 19.8 to 14.1 for secondary schools. The overall pupil/staff ratio fell from 13.6 in 1970 to 8.6 in 1998, an even larger decrease of 36.8 percent. (See Figure 2.)

When coupled with the static student achievement levels, the drop in pupil/teacher ratio indicates K-12 public education at all grade levels has become significantly less productive than it was three decades ago. In 1999, public schools required 50 percent more staff to achieve the same level of quality as they did in 1970. Thus, while productivity in the economy as a whole increased by 74 percent, productivity in K-12 education fell by 27 percent.

Class-Size Reduction

Although pupil/teacher ratio is not the same as class size, the two are closely related, and a reduction in class size has the same negative effect on productivity as a reduction in the pupil/teacher ratio. Despite its detrimental effect on productivity, reducing class size is widely promoted by public school educators as a means of improving student achievement, i.e., product quality.

However, research studies provide no support for this reform strategy, according to Stanford University economist Eric Hanushek. Most of the more than 200 studies examined by Hanushek show an insignificant effect of class size on student achievement, and the rest report a balanced of positive and negative effects.

As well as the flat national NAEP test scores since the 1970s, state-level NAEP scores in mathematics, science, and reading all show no relationship to pupil/teacher ratio, despite a two-fold variation in the ratio, from 11.9 in Vermont to 22.1 in Utah.

For example, in the 2000 NAEP mathematics test, Nebraska and Oregon produced similar percentages of eighth-graders scoring at proficient or above—31 percent and 32 percent, respectively—yet Nebraska had 13.7 pupils per teacher, while Oregon had 19.6. In the same test, Kentucky and Minnesota had similar pupil/teacher ratios—15.3 and 15.1, respectively—yet only 21 percent of Kentucky's students scored at proficient or above compared to 40 percent of Minnesota's students.

High School Graduation Rate

Although the flat NAEP test scores and the decline in pupil/teacher ratio indicate a decrease in public school productivity since the 1970s, school productivity could have increased if today's public schools were graduating a higher percentage of their students with high school diplomas. Is that the case?

According to government reports, the U.S. high school completion rate increased from 82.8 percent in 1972 to 86.5 percent in 2000. While this increase appears to show the productivity of the K-12 education system has increased, a closer examination of completion rates suggests high school graduation rates may be lower now than in 1972.

That is because the reported "completion rate" is not the same as the high school graduation rate, which may be significantly lower. In fact, a recent study by Jay P. Greene of the Manhattan Institute computes a national graduation rate of only 74 percent for the class of 1998. (See "Study Exposes Severity of School Dropout Problem," School Reform News, January 2002.) (See Figure 3.)

Completion rate includes not only students who received a diploma at the end of their high school careers, but also students who dropped out of high school before receiving a diploma and subsequently secured a General Educational Development credential outside of the K-12 educational system.

Young people who complete their high school education with a GED are analogous to circuit boards that come off the production line in non-working order and are made functional only by the application of additional corrective work.

Cost Per Finished Student

While per-pupil spending is frequently used to compare how much taxpayers put into different school districts, dividing this figure by a district's high school graduation rate provides a means to compare how productively each district is using those tax dollars to create high school graduates. That measure was proposed by former Associate U.S. Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education Leon M. Lessinger, (See "New Measure Calculates Cost Per Prepared Student," School Reform News, September 1998.)

"We have not been including the cost of our "scrap"—students who cannot function in today's society—and therefore we do not arrive at the full cost of our education system," says Lessinger, arguing the cost-per-prepared-student statistic permits taxpayers to measure the effective contribution of schools to the good of society and to the community.

When per-pupil expenditures for the 1997-98 school year are divided by Greene's high school graduation rates, the resulting cost per finished graduate varies significantly across school systems and states. For example, although Cleveland's per-pupil cost is only slightly above the U.S. average, the Ohio city spends almost three times the U.S. average—$297,282 versus $108,726—to produce each graduate. By contrast, Utah's Jordan school district produces each finished graduate for just over half the U.S. average—$59,199. (See Figure 4.)

"Disadvantaged" Raw Material

If the quality of the raw material used in an industrial process falls, more value usually must be added in the production process for the quality of the end product to be maintained at the same level as before.

That frequently results in a temporary reduction in productivity, either because of increased rejects or because of the additional remedial work needed to bring the raw materials up to the required standard before they can be used in the production process. However, as these new elements are incorporated into the production process, productivity usually is restored to its previous level.

The term "lower quality input" isn't used in K-12 education, but a large number of public school students are regarded as "disadvantaged" by one or more characteristics, such as minority status, coming from a low-income household, not speaking English at home, and having parents who aren't highly educated. Many educators claim such students cannot achieve at the level expected of the average "advantaged" student unless significant additional resources are applied to their education.

Three years ago, Samuel Casey Carter, a Bradley Fellow at The Heritage Foundation, interviewed more than 100 principals at schools that scored in the top one-third in national exams but where more than 75 percent of the students came from low-income families. His conclusion: Children from all income levels can excel—it all depends on the attitude of the school, not the demographics of the student.

The Education Trust surveyed 366 high-poverty, high-minority, high-performance schools that same year and, in a report titled "Dispelling the Myth," reached the same conclusion.

In a follow-up report last December, the Trust buttressed the point that all children can excel by identifying more than 4,500 schools that achieve high levels of performance with high-poverty, high-minority student bodies spending more than 2 million. The traits of the schools are the determinants of student success, not the traits of the students.

Administrators at New York City's Baruch College came to a similar conclusion about a broader range of students when they decided to eliminate remedial education some years ago. They found the need for remedial education was not correlated with a student's economic, social, or cultural background, but with the high school the student attended. (See "Is Remedial Ed Necessary?" School Reform News, November 1999.)

With regard to educational productivity, this means the quality of the incoming student is much less important than the nature of the educational process that takes place in the school. School trumps demographics.

Next month: How to increase student achievement without increasing spending.
President Bush’s Education Bill
The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The U.S. Department of Education has placed information on President Bush’s new education bill online at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea. The following information is based on the Fact Sheet from that site.

A few days after taking office in January 2001, President George W. Bush asked members of Congress to focus on how to use the federal role in education to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers.

The resulting bill that he signed almost a year later, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, H.R. 1, redefines the federal role in K-12 education with the aim of helping improve the academic achievement of all students. It is the most significant reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since it was enacted in 1965.

The bill’s reforms embody four principles:
• stronger accountability for results;
• expanded flexibility and local control;
• expanded options for parents; and
• an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

The following are some of the key provisions of H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act.

Stronger Accountability for Results
More Tests: H.R. 1 will result in the creation of assessments in each state that measure what children know and learn in reading and math in grades 3-8. Student progress and achievement will be measured according to tests that will be given to every child, every year.

More Feedback: H.R. 1 will empower parents, citizens, educators, administrators, and policy-makers with data from those annual assessments. The data will be available in annual report cards on school performance and on statewide progress. They will give parents information about the quality of their children’s schools, the qualifications of teachers, and their children’s progress in key subjects.

More Comparisons: Statewide reports will include performance data disaggregated according to race, gender, and other criteria to demonstrate not only how well students are achieving overall but also progress in closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other groups of students.

Expanded Flexibility and Local Control
Less Red Tape: To cut down on federal red tape and bureaucracy and enhance local control, H.R. 1 will reduce the overall number of ESEA programs at the U.S. Department of Education from 55 to 45.

Fewer Approvals: For the first time, H.R. 1 will offer most local school districts in America the freedom to transfer up to 50 percent of the federal dollars they receive among several education programs without separate approval.

More Freedom: For the first time, all 50 states will also have the freedom to transfer up to 50 percent of the non-Title I state activity funds they receive from the federal government among an assortment of ESEA programs without advance approval.

More Flexibility: H.R. 1 will allow the creation of up to 150 local flexibility demonstration projects for school districts interested in obtaining the flexibility to consolidate all funds they receive from several programs in exchange for entering into an agreement holding them accountable for higher academic performance.

More Options: Up to seven states will have new flexibility in use of their non-Title I state-level federal funds in a variety of categories in the form of waivers from federal requirements relating to a variety of ESEA programs. States participating in the new demonstration projects will also be able to coordinate their efforts with local school districts through state-local “flexibility partnerships” designed to make sure federal education funds are being used effectively to meet student needs.

Rural Input: H.R. 1 will give local school officials serving rural schools and districts more flexibility and a greater say in how federal funds are used in their schools.

Expanded Options for Parents
Escape Ladders: H.R. 1 creates meaningful options for parents whose children are trapped in failing schools and makes these options available immediately.

Public School Choice: Parents with children in failing schools would be allowed to transfer their child to a better-performing public or charter school immediately after a school is identified as failing.

Supplemental Services: Federal Title I funds (approximately $500 to $1,000 per child) can be used to provide supplemental educational services—including tutoring, after-school services, and summer school programs—for children in failing schools.

Charter Schools: H.R. 1 expands federal support for charter schools by giving parents, educators, and interested community leaders greater opportunities to create new charter schools.

Emphasizing Teaching Methods that Work
Reading Instruction: H.R. 1 authorizes an increase in federal funding for reading from $300 million in Fiscal Year 2001 to more than $900 million in Fiscal Year 2002 and links that funding to scientifically proven methods of reading instruction through the President’s Reading First plan.

Teacher Quality: H.R. 1 asks states to put a highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom by 2005. The bill also makes it easier for local schools to recruit and retain excellent teachers. The bill also creates a new Teacher Quality Program.

Spending Flexibility: In addition to specific funds for teacher quality, H.R. 1 will give local schools new freedom to make spending decisions with up to 50 percent of the non-Title I federal funds they receive. With this new freedom, a local school district can use additional funds for hiring new teachers, increasing teacher pay, improving teacher training and development, or other uses.

Other Provisions
Confirming Progress: Under H.R. 1, small sample of students in each state will participate in the fourth- and eighth-grade National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading and math every other year in order to help the U.S. Department of Education verify the results of statewide assessments required under Title I to demonstrate student performance and progress.

Learning English: H.R. 1 consolidates the U.S. Department of Education’s bilingual and immigrant education programs in order to simplify program operations, increase flexibility, and focus support on enabling all limited English proficient (LEP) students to learn English as quickly and effectively as possible. The new Act will focus on helping LEP students learn English through scientifically based teaching methods.

In English: Under H.R. 1, all LEP students will be tested for reading and language arts in English after they have attended school in the United States for three consecutive years. Parents will be notified if their child demonstrates limited English proficiency and is in need of English language instruction.
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— Tina Hudak
Reviewer, Calaveras School Library Journal, St. Bernard’s School

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— Herbert Horne, Linguist, teacher, and school administrator

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