

School Reform News

©2005 The Heartland Institute

THE MONTHLY NEWSPAPER FOR SCHOOL REFORMERS

Vol 9 No 1 January 2005

Appeals Court Strikes Down Florida Vouchers

Driving "a semi-truck" through the Constitution?



STEP UP FOR STUDENTS

by George A. Clowes

In a ruling the dissent characterized as driving "a semi-truck" through a "small window" in the U.S. Constitution, the full 1st District Court of Appeals in Florida on November 12 struck down the state's five-year-old Opportunity Scholarship program, ruling it violated a provision in Florida's Constitution barring public funds being used to aid any religious institution.

More than 730 students currently use the program to gain access to better-performing K-12 schools. Although they will be able to continue in their choice schools while the ruling is appealed to the Florida Supreme Court, the breadth of the appeals court decision places a cloud not only over the future of the Opportunity Scholarship program, but also over similarly funded post-secondary scholarship programs used by almost 200,000 other Florida students.

"We are saddened to see Florida's 1st

District Court of Appeals rule against low-income parents choosing the best schools for their children," said John Kirtley, chairman of the Florida Education Freedom Foundation. "We also are very concerned about the impact a negative State Supreme Court ruling will have on other state educational programs such as the Bright Futures Scholarships,

FLORIDA p. 16

INSIDE SRN

- 3 Spellings May Replace Paige at DoEd
- 5 Multiculturalism and Diversity
- 9 Innovative Programs Highlighted
- 12 Teacher Unions Fail '04 Election
- 13 Three Cheers for Paige
- 17 Fordham Praises "Change Agents"
- 19 Voucher Research Defended

Hispanic CREO: Awakening the Power of the Parent Voice

by George A. Clowes

When Hispanic CREO convened its second annual conference, "Activate the Latino Voice," on October 21, 2004 in Westminster, Colorado, the 400 attendees were ready to celebrate the many achievements the organization had made during the previous year.

Yet throughout the three days of conference sessions that followed, the aim of the participants remained sharply



focused on the future, on working to create a world with better educational opportunities—and outcomes—for their children.

"If we improve the educational options for Latino children, we improve the whole world," said Robert

Aguirre, chairman of Hispanic CREO, the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options.

HCRO p. 6

Opponents of Outsourcing Seek to Discredit Private Sector

by Lisa Snell

As the private sector offers services in more segments of the \$500 billion K-12 education sector, special interest groups are working to discredit not only private-sector involvement in public education, but also the private sector as a whole.

Two recent examples illustrate how teacher unions and other education advocacy groups often present their members with a negatively biased view of the pri-

vate sector and its involvement in education. This approach leaves educators unexposed to the larger body of evidence that shows competition and privatization have improved service in almost every business sector, including education.

NEA Today: Horror Stories

In the September 2004 issue of *NEA Today*, the monthly organ of the National

OPPONENTS p. 8

Tiny Gains Trigger Large PR Effort by National Teacher Certifiers

by Robert Holland

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is touting a new study as proving that its performance-based system of national certification identifies effective teachers who deserve rich bonuses because their students show substantial achievement gains.

Critics are saying there's less evidence than the high-powered PR from the

NBPTS would suggest. The study author's preferred model shows an average achievement gain—or "effect size"—of just 7.4 percent of a standard deviation.

The study—of math tests taken by ninth- and 10th-grade students in Miami-Dade County, Florida public schools—found that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) helped their

TINY p. 4

The Heartland Institute
19 South LaSalle #903
Chicago, IL 60603

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
BEAVER DAM, WI
PERMIT NO. 412

FREE BOOKS FROM HEARTLAND

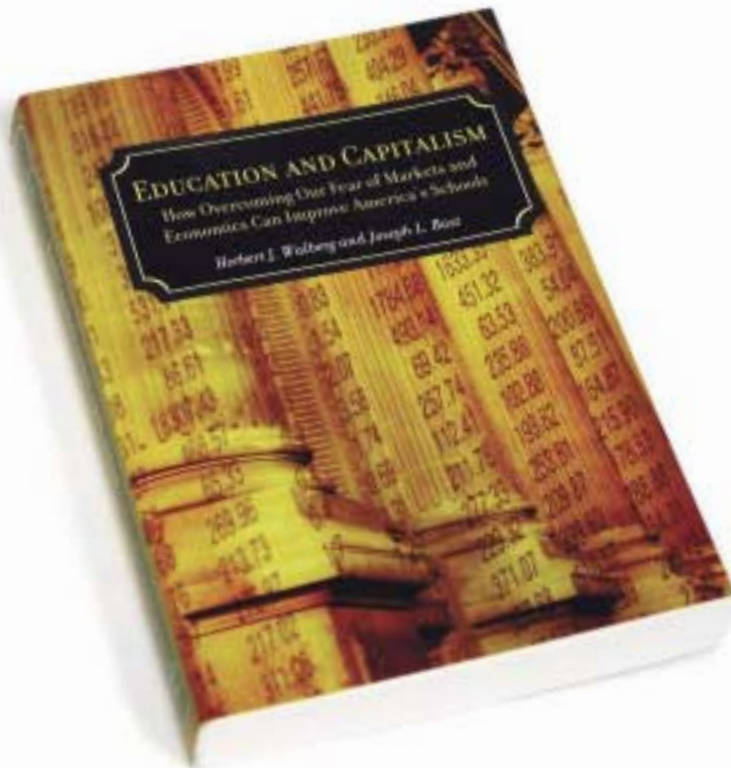
Education and Capitalism

How Overcoming Our Fear of Markets and Economics Can Improve America's Schools

One copy **FREE** to principals of charter, parochial, and independent schools who submit a request on letterhead.

"Walberg and Bast have written a scholarly, readable, and timely book that cogently explains how market competition can promote school improvement. I recommend it as a college-level text in economics, education or public policy, and to anyone who cares about the education of our children."

JOSEPH P. VITERITTI, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY



Let's Put Parents Back in Charge!

A Guide for School Reformers

Up to ten free copies of *Let's Put Parents Back in Charge!* are available to anyone who submits a request on letterhead.



Order Your Copies Today!

Fax us your request on letterhead to 312/377-5000 or write The Heartland Institute at

19 South LaSalle Street #903, Chicago, IL 60603

These and other great books are also available for purchase on our Web site. Visit www.heartland.org.

The
Heartland
INSTITUTE

The Heartland Institute
19 South LaSalle Street #903
Chicago, IL 60603

School Reform News

EDITORIAL OFFICES



The Heartland Institute
19 South LaSalle Street #903
Chicago, Illinois 60603
312/377-4000 voice • 312/377-5000 fax

School Reform News is available on the Internet. Point your web browser to <http://www.heartland.org>.

PUBLISHER
Joseph L. Bast

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
Nikki Comerford

EDITOR
Diane Carol Bast

MANAGING EDITOR
George A. Clowes, Ph.D.
clowes@heartland.org

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
Kevin Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Ow

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Nikki Comerford

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Latreece Vankinscott

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Mike Antonucci, Robert Enlow
Robert Holland, Krista Kafer
David Kirkpatrick
Nina Shokraii Rees (on leave)
Paul Seibert, Lisa Snell,
Don Soifer, Kelly Amis Stewart
Kevin Teasley, Royce Van Tassell,
Herbert J. Walberg Ph.D., Lee H. Walker

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Rajeev Bal, Joseph Bast, Walt Buchholtz
Robert Buford, James Fitzgerald
Paul Fisher, Dan Hales
William Higginson, James L. Johnston
Roy E. Marden, David H. Padden
Frank Resnik, Leslie Rose, Lee Tooman
Herbert J. Walberg Ph.D.
Lee H. Walker, Thomas Walton



ADVERTISING: *School Reform News* accepts display advertising and advertising inserts. For an advertising kit with rate card and editorial calendar, contact Associate Publisher Nikki Saret at 312/377-4000, e-mail nikki@heartland.org.

School Reform News is published 11 times per year by The Heartland Institute. Subscriptions are \$36 per year. Order online at www.heartland.org. Heartland is a nonprofit and nonpartisan public policy research organization serving the nation's federal and state elected officials, journalists, Heartland Members, and other opinion leaders. Its activities are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

© 2005 The Heartland Institute. Nothing in this issue of *School Reform News* should be construed as reflecting the views of The Heartland Institute, nor as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any legislation.

CAPITOL HILL BEAT

Spellings May Replace Paige as Head of Department of Education

Substantive changes in IDEA reauthorization achieved

by Robert Holland

The expectation was that if President George W. Bush won re-election, he would "stay the course" with implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), his signature school reform law. The first weeks of Bush's transition to a second term and the final days of the 108th Congress convened in lame-duck session brought signs that "stay the course" won't mean status quo.

Congressional negotiators reached agreement on a substantive reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), an outcome that had eluded the House and Senate for almost two years. After an extraordinarily bitter presidential campaign, the reaching of a conference committee compromise on a range of prickly issues brought flowery tributes to bipartisan cooperation from both sides of the aisle. (See more about IDEA below.)

Meanwhile, a shakeup at the top in the U.S. Department of Education—Secretary Rod Paige departing, Bush policy advisor Margaret Spellings nominated to succeed him—prompted speculation as to what changes might be in store for federal education policy in Bush's second term.

Paige a Choice Crusader

Rod Paige served as the seventh Secretary of Education since education became a Cabinet-level department under President Jimmy Carter. When the Senate confirmed Bush's nomination of Paige on January 21, 2001, a number of "firsts" were put in play. He was the nation's first African-American education secretary and also the first superintendent of schools to serve in that post. Bush had admired Paige's work as chief of the Houston public schools.

It soon became clear Paige's appointment was far from window-dressing. While the major decisions about No Child Left Behind may have been made by the White House inner circle, Paige traveled the country tirelessly to promote the NCLB credo.

A son of segregated Mississippi, Paige spoke from the heart about the necessity of holding schools to account for academic performance—not just of the student body as a whole, but for each disadvantaged subgroup within the school population. Only through such close attention to specific need could the nation ever close the infamous achievement gap for underprivileged children, he believed.

As part of this crusade, Paige became

one of the strongest advocates of school choice ever to lead the U.S. Department of Education. He has worked hard for expansion of public charter schools and the start-up of private vouchers for low-income families not served well by Washington, D.C. public schools.

Spellings an Accountability Advocate

To take over as Education Secretary at the start of his second term, Bush nominated Margaret Spellings, who was his trusted domestic policy advisor in the White House throughout his first term. For six years before that, when Bush was



Rod Paige was the nation's first African-American education secretary, and the first superintendent of schools to serve in that post.

governor of Texas, she was his senior advisor with special responsibility for education policy. A graduate of the University of Houston, Spellings also was political director in Bush's first successful gubernatorial run in 1994.

In Texas, Spellings was responsible for developing and putting into action the strong accountability system that eventually became the model for No Child Left Behind. At the White House, she has overseen work on a broad range of issues, including health care, criminal justice, the environment, welfare reform, and veterans affairs; however, implementation of education reform policy continued to be her specialty.

Upon her nomination, Spellings drew bipartisan praise on the Hill for her intel-

lect and work ethic. Observers expect Spellings to be a strong advocate for standards and accountability, notably including Bush's stated vow to extend NCLB testing into high school. School choice advocates, however, worried about the depth of her commitment to increasing parental options. She has supported charter schools but has not advocated vouchers.

Bipartisan Reauthorization of IDEA

With regard to the reauthorization of IDEA, the massive special education law affecting 6.7 million students, it passed with nary a partisan outburst. A cynical explanation would be that the measure was so watered down by compromise as to be non-controversial. Indeed, one of the boldest ideas—school choice for parents of special ed children, as advocated by Rep. Jim DeMint (who won election to a U.S. Senate seat from South Carolina in November)—was missing from the final bill. However, there appeared to be substantive changes. Those include:

- Seeking to ensure reasonable discipline and safety by shifting the burden from schools to parents to prove that a child's disabilities caused misconduct.
- Reducing incentives to misidentify and label children as disabled.
- Aligning IDEA with NCLB so as to ensure that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) address the academic achievement of special-ed pupils.
- Improving early intervention so children can learn to read rather than being misidentified as needing special education.
- Reducing litigation by creating opportunities such as mediation to resolve conflicts between parents and school personnel.

In the first IDEA reauthorization since 1997, the House and Senate also recommit Congress to meeting by 2011 its original goal of the federal government covering 40 percent of the cost to school systems of providing special education. The current level is 18.6 percent. There may be less to that accord than meets the eye, because future spending increases still will be optional. Even with the federal share never exceeding its current percentage, federal spending on special education has risen from \$2.1 billion in 1994 to more than \$10 billion in 2004.

Robert Holland (holland@lexingtoninstitute.org) is a senior fellow at the Lexington Institute, a think tank in Arlington, Virginia.

Tiny

Continued from page 1

students to larger testing gains than did teaching colleagues who lacked the certification.

A news release on the NBPTS Web site says chief researcher Linda Cavalluzzo of the nonprofit CNA Corporation's Education Center isolated the effects of NBPTS certification from other factors (such as teacher experience and education, per-pupil spending, and previous levels of student achievement) that might affect test scores.

"This study should put to rest many of the doubts that well-intentioned skeptics may have harbored about National Board Certification's ability to pinpoint what makes an exceptional teacher," said NBPTS Chairman Roy Barnes, former governor of Georgia. He added, "we are left to conclude" that certification "is indeed a true and valid indicator of teaching excellence."

Cavalluzzo asserted that if parents asked "What class do I want my child in?" the answer should be "you want your child in a class taught by an NBCT."

Achievement Advantage Is Small

However, data in the study itself, not cited in the NBPTS release, appear to produce results far more ambiguous.

While NBCTs may produce gains that are "robust" (i.e., repeatable) and "statistically significant" (i.e., non-random), the size of the average gain is very small. Using Cavalluzzo's preferred model, teachers with National Board Certification showed an average achievement gain of just 7.4 percent of a standard deviation when compared to otherwise similar teachers. Another recent NBPTS-sponsored study reported similarly small gains for NBCTs. (See "Study: NBPTS Teachers Produce Only Tiny Gains," *School Reform News*, November 2004.)

Also, the report's Table 2 (page 18) shows that the achievement gain for

NBCTs was 66.70, while the achievement gain for Miami-Dade math teachers who had no involvement with NBPTS was 65.45. That is a mere 1.25-point difference on a score scale ranging into the thousands.

That 1.25-point advantage contrasts with the 159-point gap in prior test scores between students taught by the NBCTs and average students in the Miami-Dade school system. Critics suggest that shows how trivial the purported gain is relative to the magnitude of the problem.

Price Paid Is High

"Is this what policymakers thought they would be getting when they committed to 10 percent salary increases and a \$5,000 bonus?" asked East Tennessee State University Professor J. E. Stone, who conducted his own study indicating Tennessee's NBCTs did not perform significantly better than other teachers in advancing student achievement. (See "Nationally Certified Teachers Come Up Short on Achievement," *School Reform News*, August 2002.)

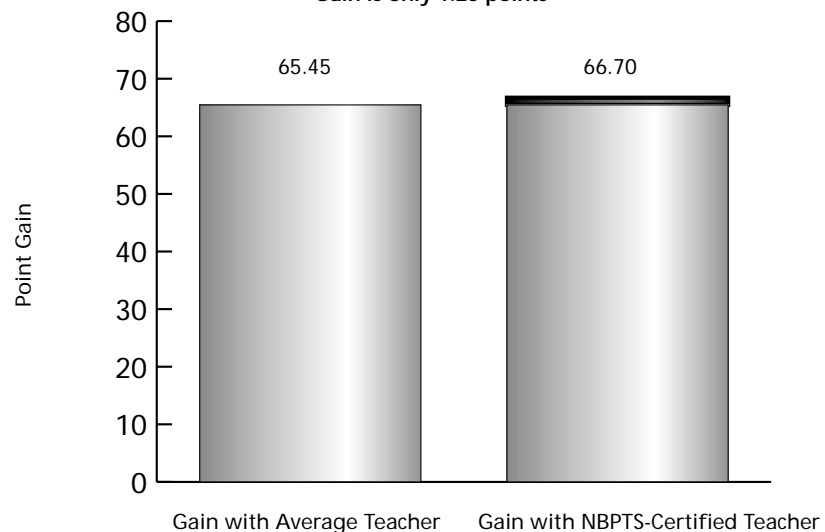
In practical terms, explained Stone, this result means that if all 1,947 ninth- and 10th-grade math teachers in the Miami-Dade School System became NBPTS certified, math scores would presumably rise by only 1.25 points. However, he continued, with the 10 percent salary increase and \$5,000 bonus that are awarded for NBPTS certification, "the cost would be in the neighborhood of \$15 million."

"Whatever else can be said about NBPTS certification," commented Stone, "it is becoming increasingly clear that is not a cost-effective means to improved student achievement."

The data also indicate that the NBCTs started with the best students and taught in the best schools. Even if the study showed they led students to praiseworthy gains under those conditions, it does not necessarily follow those teachers would be as effective were they assigned to schools with the disadvantaged students who are most in need of help.

Tiny Test Score Gain from NBPTS Certification

Gain is only 1.25 points



Under such circumstances, NBCTs might be below-average teachers. Research by the late Jeanne Chall of Harvard, among others, shows student-centered pedagogy (which NBPTS favors in evaluating teachers for certification) helps such students far less than do structured, teacher-centered methods.

Stone and other researchers said it was not clear exactly how Cavalluzzo had conducted her statistical analysis and expressed interest in gaining access to the Miami-Dade data to conduct their own studies. The data set used by Stone in his NBPTS study, for example, is freely available so that other researchers can replicate his work.

However, Cavalluzzo told *School Reform News* the data she used was "proprietary" and belonged to the Miami-Dade district.

Robert Holland (holland@lexingtoninstitute.org) is a senior fellow at the Lexington Institute, a think tank in Arlington, Virginia.

INTERNET INFO

The November 2004 report from the CNA Corporation, "Is National Board Certification An Effective Signal of Teacher Quality," by Linda C. Cavalluzzo, can be found at <http://www.cna.org/documents/CavalluzzoStudy.pdf>. Other CNA reports on education are available at <http://www.cna.org/expertise/education>.

The NBPTS news release on the study can be found at <http://www.nbpts.org/news/article2.cfm?id=551>. Robert Holland's August 2002 *School Reform News* article, "Nationally Certified Teachers Come Up Short on Achievement," is available at <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=1033>.

Robert Holland's November 2004 *School Reform News* article, "Study: NBPTS Teachers Produce Only Tiny Gains," is available at <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=15821>.

Degrees without Value

Although Linda C. Cavalluzzo's recent study of teacher-student data from the Miami-Dade County School District was designed to throw light on the value

of certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, her study inadvertently exposed how little value graduate degrees add to teaching performance.

While teachers with National Board certification had a size effect on student achievement of about 7 percent, teachers with a major in the subject they were teaching—in this case, math—showed a much larger size effect of 11 percent. Teachers with graduate degrees had a

size effect of only 2 percent. In other words, teacher graduate degrees—which are rewarded with much higher pay—make virtually no difference to student achievement.

The higher teacher pay triggered by the possession of a graduate degree has led some teachers to fraudulently claim pay increases by means of bogus degrees. Last July, Georgia's Professional Standards Commission revoked the teaching certificates of 11 Georgia educators who accepted pay raises with fake master's and doctorate degrees from Saint Regis University, a Liberian-based institution that allegedly sells degrees without requiring coursework.

The Evergreen Freedom Foundation (EFF) recently attempted to get information on teacher qualifications from Washington's 296 school districts. Only 65 provided the requested information. Of the 65 districts, five had a total of seven teachers claiming illegitimate

degrees, such as Ph.D.s from Berne University in St. Kitts and LaSalle University in Louisiana.

"This data is troubling when one considers that, of the 22 percent of school districts that provided information, there are at least 7 degrees from 'institutions' unaccredited for use in qualifying for higher salaries based on degrees obtained," noted EFF research assistant Sarah Carrico.

INTERNET INFO

The November 9, 2004 *Policy Highlighter* from the Evergreen Freedom Foundation, "Illegitimate 'degrees' being used by some teachers to obtain higher pay," by Sarah Carrico, is available online at http://www.ewffwa.org/highlighters/v14_n26.php

Table: Effect Sizes for Teacher Characteristics
(All else equal)

Characteristic	Effect Size
Teaching In-subject	+11 %
National Board Certified	+7 %
HS certified in math	+6 %
Graduate degree	+2 %
Failed/withdrew from NBC	-3 %
Inexperienced	-5 %

Source: Cavalluzzo Presentation (slide 18)
2004 National Conference on Teacher Compensation & Evaluation
November 2004

Multicultural Educators: Disciples of Social Justice

by Robert Holland

Advocates of multicultural education from schools and colleges across the country gathered in Kansas City the week before the 2004 presidential election to rededicate themselves to transforming teaching and school systems into instruments of social justice as they define it.

Many of the more than 200 presentations at the 14th annual conference of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) focused on teacher preparation as the best hope for making multicultural diversity the engine of educational progress.

At one session, presenters from Central Missouri State University and local school districts expressed the view that teachers should be trained to rewrite a curriculum they view as oppressively Eurocentric.

"The silent but deadly oppressor of the ethnic minority child's spirit is a state of injustice that is imbedded in a systemic society of a one-sided truth espoused through the Eurocentric lens of American education," Uzziel Pecina and Catherine Frazier said in their prepared presentation.

Excoriating textbooks that continue to be dominated by "white middle-class values," they said "these oppressive and culturally exclusive curriculums leave the

faces of minority children off the pages of history, and leave the minds of the middle-class majority children ignorant of their minority counterpart's societal contributions."

The pair concluded that "the only hope" for change "lies in the embrace of an educational system that can transform and restructure the political imbalance of curriculum practices in the American schools. ... Teachers must get educational training that empowers them with knowledge about their ethnic minority students so that they can feel committed and confident in unleashing the voices for social justice."

They made these comments as they presented research indicating relatively few schools of education are requiring undergraduates to take courses on multiculturalism that align with the objectives of organizations like NAME. The presenters strongly urged that such coursework be mandatory, and that it be geared to helping future teachers transform the curriculum according to multiculturalist objectives.

Their depiction of widely used textbooks as being European-dominated was at odds with a Thomas B. Fordham Institute study, "The Mad, Mad World of Textbook Adoption," reported in last month's edition of *School Reform News*.

"The chief historical shortcoming [of history texts] was their willingness to rewrite history by downplaying the European heritage of America, while exaggerating the significance of pre-Columbian civilizations and African tribal kingdoms," the study stated.

Teacher Training

The multiculturalists' most extensive look at teacher training came at a day-long pre-conference institute led by former NAME president Donna Gollnick, senior vice president of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Gollnick said that while five of the six NCATE standards have diversity implications for teacher-training institutions seeking NCATE accreditation, Standard Four is 100 percent about commitment to diversity.

It requires teacher-education units to provide curricula and experiences for teaching 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." ("P" stands for preschool.) Gollnick suggested college officials seeking NCATE accreditation heed NCATE's definition:

"Diversity: Differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area."

During discussion, Gollnick denied NCATE seeks any sort of hiring and admissions quotas.

"There is no magic number," she said. However, she also pointed out the institutions should have an assessment system to ensure that trainers and teachers do not harbor racist, sexist, or homophobic attitudes.

Her copresenter, Professor G. Pritch Smith of the University of North Florida, expressed his goal for teacher education this way: "People who live multicultural lifestyles, live multicultural ways. We need a deep-rooted transformation of values and dispositions: the multicultural teacher."

In his booklet titled "Common Sense About Uncommon Knowledge," which was distributed to conference participants, Smith spells out 13 "knowledge bases" he deems essential for the multicultural teacher. These knowledge bases range from distinctive "learning styles" members of each minority group supposedly exhibit to the foundations of racism to issues of gender and sexual orientation.

Homosexuality an Honored Culture

In NAME's early years, the idea of homosexuality as an honored and protected culture was controversial. That's no longer the case. Smith argues in his booklet, published by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, that the "minimal essential elements" of a teacher-education knowledge base must include "the unique psychological, emotional, and education needs of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students."

Many workshops at the Kansas City conference built on that theme. One roundtable examined inclusion of what was called "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) issues" in teacher preparation.

The National Education Association (NEA), the 2.7-million-member teacher union, cosponsored the conference with NAME and took the lead in making it resemble, at times, a political convention. In a spirited keynote speech, NEA executive committee member Rebecca Pringle charged that President George W. Bush's signature education reform, No Child Left Behind, is "an unfair, unworkable, and punitive form of accountability that threatens the very existence of public education."

Pringle further charged that Bush's vision of "an ownership society" was just a scheme to privatize education and other services. She urged the NEA/NAME allies to go to the polls and defeat it. Election Day—just two days after adjournment of the NAME conference—brought them great disappointment.

Robert Holland (holland@lexingtoninstitute.org) is a senior fellow at the Lexington Institute, a think tank in Arlington, Virginia.

Ethnic and Gender Diversity Lacking in Teaching Profession

by George A. Clowes

Although white students made up about 60 percent of the student body in public schools in 2001, white teachers made up 90 percent of the teaching corps in those schools,

"While 17 percent of students in 2001 were black, only 6 percent of teachers were black."

according to a new analysis of teacher diversity prepared by the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force. While 17 percent of students in 2001 were black, only 6 percent of teachers were black.

"Today there are too few teachers of color, too few qualified teachers, and too many teachers who leave too soon," said Rushern L. Baker III, executive director of the Community Teachers Institute, one of six members of the collaborative. Other members include the National Education Association and American

Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

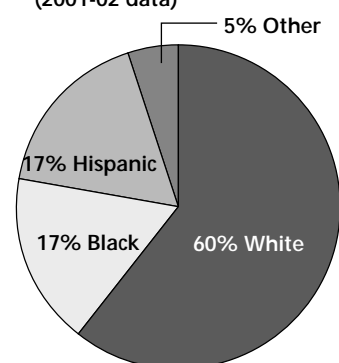
Saying that black students tend to perform better when taught by black teachers, the collaborative proposes changing the No Child Left Behind law to specify "diversity" as a critical element of a "highly qualified" teacher workforce. Another proposal is to help minority candidates pass teacher entry tests.

One major element of diversity the collaborative does not address in its report is gender and the disproportionate lack of males in the teaching profession. Since 1971, the percentage of male teachers has dropped from 34.3 percent to only 21.0 percent in 2001. Almost four out of five teachers in public schools are female.

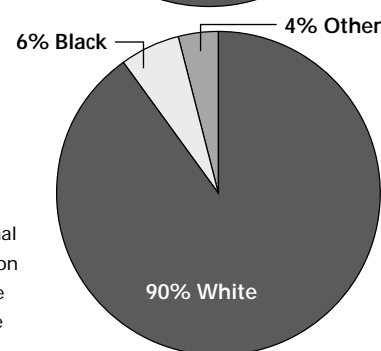
George A. Clowes (clowes@heartland.org) is managing editor of *School Reform News*.

Ethnic Breakdown of Public Schools
(2001-02 data)

Students



Teachers



Source: National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004)

INTERNET INFO

The November 2004 analysis by the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, "Assessment of Diversity in America's Teaching Force: A Call to Action," is available online at <http://www.nea.org/teacherquality/images/diversityreport.pdf>.

HCREO

Continued from page 1

Launched in October 2003 at the National Press Club, Hispanic CREO started 2004 with fewer than 500 members, according to Maite Arce, director of membership and chapter development. By August 2004, membership had soared to more than 3,000 and affiliate organizations were increasing at the rate of one per month.

"Parents in this movement usually don't realize the power of their voice," said Hispanic CREO President Rebeca Nieves Huffman. She said her organization has seen the awakening of "the sleeping giant" of the school choice movement: parents.

"We're so happy that we've been able to turn spectators into participants," she said, after recapping the results from a five-city outreach project, Project CREO, that was initiated after the 2003 conference. The project was to get information out to parents about the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

As Education Undersecretary Nina Rees explained later in the conference, the U.S. Department of Education in 2003 became concerned that school districts with many schools in need of improvement often weren't doing a good job of disseminating information about the alternative educational options available under NCLB. To address this, the department provided grants to organizations like Hispanic CREO and BAEO—the Black Alliance for Educational Options—to get the word out to parents about the school choice and free tutoring features of NCLB.

NCLB Outreach with Project CREO

Hispanic CREO took the project on as a grassroots campaign to raise public awareness about parents' rights under NCLB. Huffman provided highlights of the campaigns in the five cities selected:

Miami, Florida: In just a two-week time-frame, outreach efforts resulted in 100 students being transferred to better schools and 200 students being signed up for free tutoring.

Austin, Texas: Outreach efforts were focused on immigrant and migrant families.

San Antonio, Texas: Huffman called this campaign "a stellar example" of reaching out and working with churches and faith-based organizations.

Dallas, Texas: Efforts here involved working with and through many, many different organizations.

Camden, New Jersey: In New Jersey, the focus was on working directly with the school district—including the superintendent—to get children transferred and to work out problems. The Camden effort was the subject of a new video titled, "Hispanic CREO: Bridging Reality with Hope."

"The more that we can strengthen our public schools, the better," said Huffman, while pointing out that traditional public schools were only one item on a whole menu of school choice options that Hispanic CREO was seeking to make available to parents.

Rees, who heads the Education Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement, presented Hispanic CREO with a \$2.5 million check at the conference to continue Project CREO over the next five years.

Rallies in Florida, Texas

In Spring 2004, Hispanic CREO joined forces with BAEO and the Florida Alliance for Choice in Education to organize the largest school choice rally in the history of the movement. Several thousand children, parents, and teachers converged on the state capitol in Tallahassee to demonstrate their support for the state's voucher programs.

In what Huffman called a demonstration of "the power of the Latino voice," Hispanic CREO also organized an effort to bring people from five different cities in Texas to a mass rally in Austin last May to coincide with a special legislative session on education reform. Despite getting less than three weeks' notice, some 2,300 Latino parents went to the state capitol to call on state lawmakers to make better educational options available for their children's education.

"Our mission is bold, and our purpose is courageous," Huffman told conference attendees. "Our mission is to improve the educational outcomes of Hispanic children specifically by empowering their families with parental choice in education. ... Our purpose is to be a national voice for the right of Hispanic families to access all their educational options and to be an agent for equity and quality in education."

Town Meeting: *El Grito del Pueblo*

The conference featured a large number and variety of workshops, all related to school choice but split into three general tracks: Empowerment, Advocacy, and Unity. Workshops included: becoming parent leaders, updates on school choice legislation, charter schools, working with local school boards, education reform efforts in Colorado, and working with the media to get the most out of events.

The conference also featured a Town Hall Meeting—*El Grito del Pueblo*, or



"Our mission is bold, and our purpose is courageous. Our mission is to improve the educational outcomes of Hispanic children specifically by empowering their families with parental choice in education. ... Our purpose is to be a national voice for the right of Hispanic families to access all their educational options and to be an agent for equity and quality in education."

REBECA NIEVES HUFFMAN, PRESIDENT
HISPANIC CREO

GEORGE CLOWES



Robert Aguirre, chairman of Hispanic CREO



Rebeca Nieves Huffman (left) and Marcela Garcini (center) accept a \$2.5 million check for Hispanic CREO from U.S. Department of Education official Nina Rees (right).

GEORGE CLOWES

HISPANIC CREO

Conference Quotes

"Stop worrying about whether school choice proposals are radical—worry about whether they are radical enough."
Clint Bolick, president
Alliance for School Choice

"When legislators try to regulate homeschoolers, it's like hitting a hornets' nest."
Scott Somerville, staff attorney
Home School Legal Defense Association

"[Many children today] are not educated in the basics. Tom Brokaw had it

half-right when he said it was the Greatest Generation. It also was the Most Educated Generation."
Major General Alfred Valenzuela
ret. U.S. Army

"Henry Ford said, 'You can have any color of car you like as long as it's black.' The public schools are the same: 'You can go to any school you like as long as it's the one we choose.'"

Pierre Jimenez
Jimenez & Associates

George A. Clowes (clowes@heartland.org) is managing editor of School Reform News.

False Rigor: 8th-Grade Math Test Requires Only 3rd-Grade Skills

by Krista Kafer

The dramatic gains in student test scores on a national math exam over the past decade are being called into question by an analysis from the Brookings Institution's Brown Center, which found questions on fourth-grade and eighth-grade tests to be "extraordinarily easy" since they tested mainly third-grade skills.

The report also found a significant number of middle school math teachers did not major in math in college, do not hold a teaching certificate in the subject, and are not receiving adequate professional development to build subject mastery.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is an exam given to a sample of students across the nation for the past 30 years to gauge the level of student proficiency over time. Since 1990, the NAEP math test has reflected the recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

"The good news is that NAEP scores have risen dramatically in mathematics over the past decade," noted Tom Loveless, director of the Brown Center

"The good news is that NAEP scores have risen dramatically in mathematics over the past decade."

**TOM LOVELESS, DIRECTOR
BROWN CENTER ON EDUCATION POLICY**

on Education Policy. NAEP test scores indicate today's eighth-graders know about as much math as a typical tenth-grader in 1990, and today's fourth-graders are about two years ahead of their 1990 counterparts, too.

However, Loveless questioned whether the gains were real, pointing out that most of today's eighth-graders are not even enrolled in the higher math courses—Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry—that many of the tenth-graders in 1990 had completed. To address this concern, he examined the publicly released questions posed in NAEP exams to determine the level of mathematical skill actually tested. His results are reported in the *2004 Brown Center Report on American Education: How Well Are American Students Learning?*

Loveless discovered that most of the

arithmetic required to solve the average question on the fourth-grade and eighth-grade NAEP math tests is taught by the end of third grade. Even though the mathematics required to answer many NAEP questions is "extraordinarily easy," he found students at both grade levels had trouble getting the right answers.

For both the fourth- and eighth-grade tests, the accompanying chart shows the cumulative percentage of questions on the NAEP math test that require the math skills taught through a given grade level. Thus, 64.1 percent of the fourth-grade NAEP test questions require only third-grade skills or less. Remarkably, 58.1 percent of eighth-grade NAEP test questions also require only third-grade skills or less—and 90.7 percent of the eighth-grade NAEP test questions require only fifth-grade skills or less. A bare 9.3 percent of the questions on the eighth-grade test probe skills beyond those required for the fourth-grade test.

Few Correct Answers

Loveless's analysis also broke down how well students scored on questions at each grade level:

- About half of fourth-graders answered questions at a first- and second-grade level correctly.
- About half of eighth-graders answered first- and second-grade level questions correctly.
- Thirty-one percent or fewer of fourth-graders were able to answer questions at a third- through fifth-grade level correctly.
- Less than one-third of eighth-graders answered questions requiring seventh-grade skills correctly.

The study found whole-number arithmetic predominated in the questions at fourth and eighth grade, with few prob-

lems requiring students to use fractions, decimals, and percentages. Failure to grasp these basic mathematical concepts has repercussions since proficiency in the use of non-whole numbers is needed to solve higher-level mathematics such as algebra.

"Really knowing algebra means being able to solve equations that contain more sophisticated forms of numbers than whole numbers," noted Loveless. "Calling these items algebra is conveying a false sense of rigor, making very simple math seem more sophisticated than it actually is."

Students will be able to solve only "mathematically trivial" problems if they cannot handle fractions, decimals, and percents, cautions the report.

The report recommends the following steps for improving the teaching and testing of U.S. students:

- Raising the level of arithmetic skill required in NAEP exams by including more test questions involving the manipulation of non-whole numbers.
- Assessing arithmetic skills of students in fourth and eighth grades, since computation is especially important for algebra readiness.
- Replacing easy "algebra" questions with appropriate grade-level math problems.
- Eliminating calculator use at fourth-grade level and restricting its use in eighth grade.

Teacher Qualifications

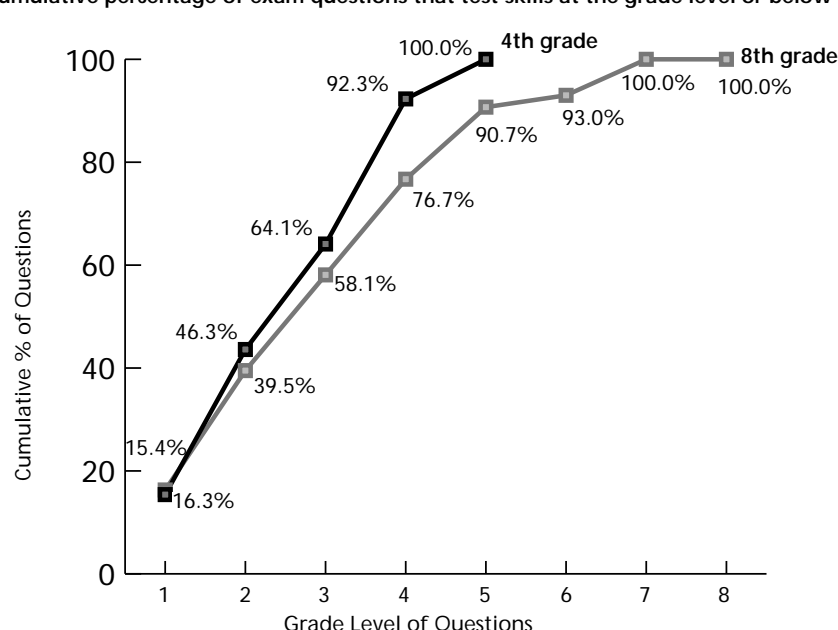
The report also examined the subject mastery of middle school math teachers. To do this, the Brown Center surveyed 252 middle school math teachers across the nation. Of those responding to the survey, only 22 percent majored in math in college, and only 41 percent held a teaching certificate in mathematics.

Most of the teachers surveyed indicated they had received professional development on four or more topics, while 44 percent received development on four to seven topics. Although most viewed the training they had received in the past two years as somewhat or very helpful, a majority also believed that they and their colleagues needed additional training.

"Professional development for middle school mathematics needs to be focused on the core knowledge and skills teachers must master in order to teach their students effectively," Loveless recommended.

Krista Kafer (krista.kafer@heritage.org) is senior policy analyst for education at The Heritage Foundation.

Cumulative percentage of exam questions that test skills at the grade level or below



Test Yourself: NAEP's "Hard" 8th-Grade "Algebra and Functions" Questions

The National Assessment of Educational Progress Web site offers the following questions as examples of "hard" eighth-grade "algebra and functions" problems. Answers are on page 18.

1. The lowest point of the St. Lawrence River is 294 feet below sea level. The top of Mt. Jacques Cartier is 1,277 feet above sea level. How many feet higher is the top of Mt. Jacques Cartier than the lowest point of the St. Lawrence River? Show your work.

2. If the pattern shown in the table were continued, what number would appear in the box at the bottom of column B next to 14?

A	B
2	5
4	9
6	13
8	17
14	?

- a) 19
- b) 21
- c) 23
- d) 25
- e) 29

3. The length of a rectangle is 3 more than its width. If L represents the length, what is an expression for the width?

- a) $3/L$
- b) $L/3$
- c) $L \times 3$
- d) $L + 3$
- e) $L - 3$

4. While she was on vacation, Tara sent 14 friends either a letter or a postcard. She spent \$3.84 on postage. If it costs \$0.20 to mail a postcard and \$0.33 to mail a letter, how many letters did Tara send? Show what you did to get your answer.

- 5. Evaluate the expression: $3^3 + 4(8 - 5) / 6 = ?$
- a) 6.5
- b) 11
- c) 27.5
- d) 29
- e) 34.16

INTERNET INFO

The November 2004 publication, *2004 Brown Center Report on American Education: How Well Are American Students Learning?* by Tom Loveless, is published by The Brookings Institution Press and available online at http://www.brookings.edu/gs/brown/bc_report/2004/2004report.htm.

Sample questions from the National Assessment of Educational Progress are available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls>.

Opponents

Continued from page 1

Education Association, a series of articles collected under the title "Cash Cow" highlights privatization failures and gives union members advice on how to fight privatization initiatives. The report fails to mention the hundreds of case studies showing benefits to children and the public from school privatization.

The *NEA Today* series argues that when "private profits outweigh public accountability, educators and kids pay the price." As evidence for the failure of privatization initiatives, the articles offer stock horror stories of privatization missteps and selected studies showing privatization is more expensive than traditional public-sector operation.

The series fails to mention the large body of research that shows substantial cost savings and improvements in service quality from privatization of school support services. According to the most recent school privatization survey conducted by *American School & University* magazine, 32 percent of the nation's school districts outsource transportation and about 17 percent outsource food service. Extensive literature reviews of cost savings have found between 20 and 40 percent savings from school outsourcing.

For example, in 2002, the Philadelphia school district faced a \$28 million deficit. By turning to privatized transportation, custodial, food service, and other support services, the district saved \$29 million over two years and erased its deficit—while running a robust teacher recruitment program and without firing any teachers.

Despite its focus on privatization failures, the *NEA Today* series reports that private-sector involvement in K-12 education is increasing. The teacher union portrays the growth of private industry in education as a war between "those of us who believe in free enterprise" but think schools don't fit the for-profit model, and free enterprise firms who want to expand "at any cost." Those firms, according to the article, use "slick marketing" to sell their services but then "cut corners every chance they get" because "[t]hey are not in it for the kids."

NEA Today offers NEA members explicit strategies for fighting off privatization. Ironically, some of the examples given of where privatization was avoided are of workers who became more efficient and delivered better service because of the threat of privatization.

For instance, one of the examples discusses a group of food service workers in Adrian, Michigan who won back their food service operation from Marriott Corp. by offering more nutritious meals, using innovative employee work teams, and turning a "profit" that was put back into the classroom. Missing from the discussion, though, is the conclusion that competition encouraged these public employees to work more efficiently.

As well as strategies to avoid privatization, NEA members are offered several specific strategies to prevent privatization. The most lethal of these is to use the collective bargaining process to legally prohibit the possibility of privatiza-

tion or outsourcing—i.e., NEA members should agree only to contracts that explicitly prohibit outsourcing. Advice also is provided on organizing a campaign and doing effective community outreach to stop privatization.

Commercialization in Schools

The NEA position on outsourcing was echoed in a September 2004 report on commercialism in education from Arizona State University's Alex Molnar, who negatively portrays private-sector involvement in education as exploiting children. Even sponsorships, such as corporate support of the National Merit Scholarship Program, are dismissed as programs that "often serve the donors' commercial purposes."

The report, *Virtually Everywhere: Marketing to Children in America's Schools*, measures what Molnar views as the evils of commercialism in schools by counting the number of media references to private-sector involvement in education. Those references include not only privatization but also corporate sponsorships, exclusive licensing agreements, sponsored educational materials, and fundraising.

Molnar reports that media references in five out of eight categories of school-house commercialism increased between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004. Overall, he finds media references to commercialism increased 9 percent as compared to the 2002-2003 school year.

Molnar and his Commercialism in Education Research Unit at Arizona State are affiliated with the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC), a national coalition of health care professionals, educators, advocacy groups, and concerned parents. CCFC's mission is "countering the harmful effects of marketing to children through action, advocacy, education, research, and collaboration among organizations and individuals who care about children. CCFC supports the rights of children to grow up—and the rights of parents to raise them—without being undermined by rampant consumerism."

Molnar concludes in his report that commercialism in schools—whether selling junk food, fundraising, or providing sponsorships—undermines the ideal of schools as institutions for preparing the next generation to participate fully in a free and democratic society.

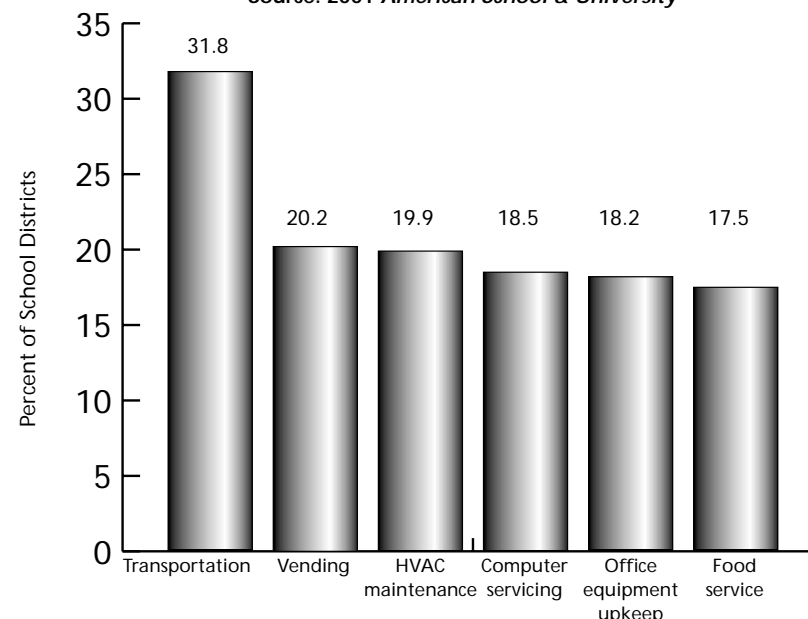
"The more corporate special interests are allowed to influence what schools teach—and by extension, limit what they cannot teach—the less students are seen as active citizens-to-be rather than as passive consumers-to-be-sold, the farther our educational system moves from that ideal," he writes.

Molnar's report offers no evidence of corporations limiting curriculum or blocking participation in the democratic process. His report and the recent *NEA Today* demonstrate the need for a more balanced presentation of private-sector involvement in education for the benefit of administrators, teachers, and parents.

Lisa Snell (lsnell@reason.org) is director of the education program for the Reason Foundation in Los Angeles.

Most Common Contract Services for School Districts

Source: 2001 *American School & University*



INTERNET INFO

The September 2004 *NEA Today* article series, "Cash Cow," by Kristen Loschert, John O'Neil, and Dave Winans, is available online at <http://www.nea.org/neatoday/0409/coverstory.html>.

The September 2004 report, *Virtually Everywhere: Marketing to Children in America's Public Schools - Seventh Annual Report on Schoolhouse Commercialism Trends: 2003-2004*, by Alex Molnar, Arizona State University, Education Policy Studies Laboratory, Commercialism in Education Research Unit, is available online at <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/CERU/Annual%20reports/EPSP-0409-103-CERU.pdf>.

The 2001 school privatization survey by *American School & University* magazine is available online at <http://images.asumag.com/files/134/109as23.pdf>.

"My kids are stuck in a bad public school. What do you think about vouchers?"



You can answer this question—and others—with Issues 2004, an online briefing room that offers good policy advice for important issues.

Issues-2004.org

The Heritage Foundation
202-546-4400

How Do I Educate Thee? Let Me Count the Ways ...

by George A. Clowes

LAPTOP LEARNING: ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL GOES WIRELESS



Laptops now are used in all classes at St. Joseph High School in Westchester, Illinois.

On September 17, 2004, St. Joseph High School in Westchester, Illinois launched itself into a new all-laptop learning environment with a virtual "ribbon-cutting" ceremony that sent the first official email from the school's computer system to U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige. St. Joseph is the first high school in the Chicagoland area to become an all-laptop campus, with all faculty and students using IBM ThinkPad computers in class and in co-curricular activities.

According to Principal Donna S. Kiel, the first classes being switched to online textbooks are U.S. history, world history, geome-

try, and geography. Students, who pay for their own laptops, already have formed a Tech Team and operate a "Laptop Hospital" where machines are repaired. A corporate program is being organized where students can trade work for laptop payments.

St. Joseph High School is a college prep school. On average, 95 percent of its graduates are accepted into their college of first choice. The school is sponsored by the Christian Brothers and admits all students, regardless of their academic, racial, religious, or economic background.

AT VALLEY NEW SCHOOL, STUDENTS PLAN THEIR OWN EDUCATION



A student at Valley New School completes the assembly of a carburetor.

Student empowerment is taken to a whole new level at Valley New School, a charter school serving grades 7-12 in the Appleton School District in central Wisconsin. Students are handed the responsibility for taking charge of their own learning, together with the freedom to pursue their own interests and passions rather than following a predetermined sequence of classes organized by academic subject.

The catch is: Students are required to develop a project plan for everything they do, align the goals of each project with state and local learning goals, get the plan—and the mile-

stones for project completion—approved by their parents and their advisor, and complete 10 projects per year, spending approximately 100 work hours on each project. When projects are completed, students are awarded credit based on the quality and breadth of their work.

The approximately 80 K-11 students currently at the school—it started in 2003 with grades 7-10 and is adding a grade per year—work on a wide range of projects. Current projects cover topics such as computer networking, biosynthesis, fantasy literature, forensics, black history, and martial arts.

MEDICAL MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL OPENS IN LOS ANGELES



Orthopaedic Hospital president James V. Luck, Jr., MD, (third from left) and principal Anthony Sandoval (third from right) welcome students to Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Magnet High School.

Just a month after its construction was completed, the Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Magnet High School (OHMMHS) opened its doors on September 9, 2004, welcoming students to a 32-classroom facility with a capacity of 762 students. OHMMHS is one of eight new schools that the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) opened on the first day of school last year.

LAUSD developed the new magnet school in partnership with Orthopaedic Hospital for two purposes: To reduce overcrowding at near-

by Jefferson High School, and to prepare students for careers in the medicine and health care fields, where currently there are shortages of physicians, nursing staff, and other professionals.

OHMMHS offers students courses in medicine and health care that allow them to gain a better understanding of different careers and professions related to the medical field. The new school includes a library, food service, cafeteria, science laboratories, and administration offices.

FAITH FIRST AWARDS 80 TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS IN PHILADELPHIA



Faith First scholarship recipients celebrate with (L to R, back row) Woodrow L. Wilson, Nelson Llumiquinga, and Dr. Alberta Wilson, founder of Faith First.

Since starting up in July 2003, Philadelphia-based Faith First Educational Assistance Corporation has awarded 143 \$500 tuition scholarships to students across the Philadelphia region. Eighty were awarded for the 2004-05 school year in a combined effort of Faith First, the Bravo Foundation, and WAWA Corporation. The recipients of this school year's scholarships gathered with their parents on October 1, 2004 for an awards ceremony held in the colorful Houston Hall of Flags at the University of Pennsylvania.

Hundreds of other parents attended the event to pick up applications for scholarships for the 2005-06 school year to help their children attend the Christian school of their choice. Also attending the awards ceremony were Virginia Walden Ford, executive director of DC Parents for School Choice; Nelson Llumiquinga, director of outreach and training for the Alliance for School Choice; and Ron Harris, now of A Level Up and formerly with Children First America.

George A. Clowes (clowes@heartland.org) is managing editor of School Reform News.

THE FRIEDMAN REPORT

Profile

Lindalyn Kakadelis: A Passion for School Choice



by Sarah Faulkner

When Lindalyn Kakadelis became director of the North Carolina Education Alliance, she had a passion for school choice and a background that made her uniquely qualified for the job. The alliance is dedicated to refocusing the state's education system on students and publicizing effective solutions to educational problems.

Kakadelis is a former elementary education teacher and a mother of two who has always considered school choice to be important. Her children attended private and public schools, and she knows firsthand that it isn't always easy for parents to send their children to a school of choice. There was a time when "we were going into debt to pay for [private schools]," she says. "I didn't understand the plight of people who can't afford to pay for it until we were in that situation ourselves."

In 1995, Kakadelis was encouraged to run for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. She says now that she was willing to run, but she wasn't sure she was ready to serve. When the election results came in, Kakadelis felt like "a dog who had chased a car and gotten it," she says with a laugh.

Kakadelis immediately discovered there were problems in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). As a result of a 1965 desegregation lawsuit filed by parents, students were being bused to different schools in the area in an effort to achieve racial balance and diversity. However, Kakadelis thought the system was actually becoming less diverse by trying to achieve a particular ratio for racial balance.

At that time, she was most concerned about the long bus rides many students had to endure every day. But then, she says, "I realized the horrors someone has attending a school where they really are stuck."

Kakadelis also was unhappy about some of

the procedures the board had adopted, such as having different waiting lists for blacks and non-blacks at certain schools. She wanted change, but she was in the minority on the school board.

Then, in September 1997, a lawsuit was filed against CMS by a parent who felt his daughter's enrollment in the school of his choice had been denied because of race. The result was the change Kakadelis had been looking for.

She says the courts made it clear race should not be used as the main criteria in determining where students go to school. Parents made it equally clear that if CMS continued to use race as its main criteria, they would sue CMS again.

In response to the lawsuit, CMS launched a new Family Choice Plan at its annual Showcase of Schools in December 2001. Through the new plan, students are assigned to schools near their homes but have the opportunity to apply to other schools or magnet programs.

"We ended up with a choice plan where every school has a home attendance boundary, and on top of that, they layered choice," Kakadelis says. "This was the culminating event that took me six years on the Board of Education to see!"

During her final year on the CMS board in 2001, Kakadelis was also on the board of a charter school and directing the Children's Scholarship Fund - Charlotte, a private charity to help give lower-income families better access to school choice. Kakadelis calls that year "an exciting time. I was able to help parents find the best fit for their children because I really knew about all of them."

Since 2002, she has been the full-time director of the North Carolina Education Alliance. A special project of the John Locke Foundation, the alliance addresses K-12 issues in four main areas:

- student achievement
- teacher quality
- funding
- choice

Kakadelis is quick to point out that teacher quality doesn't necessarily have anything to do with teaching certificates or years spent in the classroom. She notes there is a definite correlation between teacher quality and student achievement. On the subject of funding, Kakadelis says, "Money matters, but how you spend money matters more." And she believes "choice will be the catalyst in forcing effective and efficient schools."

Her goal is to tear down the wall between public and private education. "A child is more important than any one system or education provider," she says.

Her hope for the alliance is "to empower parents and educate the public on the importance of school choice." She believes this will become a reality in the state within the next five to seven years, as the public understands the benefits of school choice. She says, "I have a passion and conviction that everyone should be able to choose schools for their children."

Sarah Faulkner (scummings12002@yahoo.com) is an adjunct fellow with the Milton & Rose D. Friedman Foundation.

SCHOOL CHOICE ROUNDUP

by Sarah Faulkner and George A. Clowes

CALIFORNIA

California Test Scores Influence Real Estate Market

California's Academic Performance Index (API) allows home buyers and real estate agents to identify homes that are not only in the best school districts, but also close to the best schools in those districts. As a result, even slight variations in API score can have a dramatic effect on home prices, according to a recent article in the *San Jose Mercury News*.

For example, a real estate agent told *Mercury News* reporter Dana Hull that the same home in the Fremont Union High School District could vary in price from \$780,000 to \$1 million depending on which high school attendance area it was in.

The API, updated annually, ranks all of the state's public schools based on how well students in each school perform on standardized tests. Although the state wants all schools to score above 800, many home buyers set higher targets for the school their child attends. When Aparna Seethepalli and her husband were looking for a new house recently, they looked for homes near schools with a score of at least 920. They have two young children.

"Education is very important to us, and API scores were the best measure for us to say 'This is a good school,'" Seethepalli told the *Mercury News*.

Realtors are aware of this growing trend. Jack O'Connell, a former teacher and the state superintendent of public instruction, told the *Mercury News*, "Realtors ask questions about API that are as technical as any questions I get from local superintendents."

*San Jose Mercury News
October 29, 2004*

COLORADO

Cyberschool Enrollment Up in Colorado

Many Colorado K-12 students are taking advantage of alternatives to traditional education. According to the *Denver Post*, Colorado will spend \$23.9 million on cyberschool education this year, up from just \$1.08 million in 2000-01.

Over the past five years, the number of students attending online or virtual schools in the state has risen dramatically, from just 166 in the 2000-01 school year to 4,237 this year. The state's largest online school, the Colorado Virtual Academy, has more

than 2,000 students. The second largest online school in the state, Branson Alternative, has 940 students.

According to Troy Mayfield, district superintendent in the Branson Reorganized 82 School District, the needs of nontraditional students are being met by these cyberschools. Nontraditional students include children who have been expelled, children who are bullied, teen mothers, and children whose parents don't want them in regular schools.

"You can't make anything a 'one size fits all,'" Mayfield told the *Denver Post*.

In 2000, Branson's enrollment had fallen so low there were concerns it would be shut down, but online enrollment revived the district. The 940 online students far exceed the 46 students who attend the traditional school in the district.

On the other hand, Rick Monte, superintendent of the Briggsdale School District, lost 12 percent of his budget when several students in his district opted for online schooling. He told the *Denver Post* the increase in cyberschool attendance was a challenge for traditional schools to "do better."

*Denver Post
November 9, 2004*

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Group Discusses Education

The Albuquerque Partnership recently conducted a brainstorming session at its seventh annual Community Education Forum and Fair to come up with ideas for improving education, particularly for low-income and minority children. Participants included parents, teachers, school administrators, policy makers, and other leaders in the community. Lt. Gov. Diane Denish (D) was a keynote speaker at the event.

The aim of the brainstorming was to develop a consensus on which issues to pursue in New Mexico's January 2005 legislative session, according to Moises Venegas, executive director of The Albuquerque Partnership. The *Albuquerque Tribune* reported tax credits, expanding school choice options, and parental involvement were among the issues discussed.

Four local schools presented their success stories at the fair. Two, Lowell and Whittier elementary schools, once had student performance that was ranked among the poorest in the state. For the past two years, the schools have delivered improved test scores.

*Albuquerque Tribune
November 12, 2004*



Milton and Rose D. Friedman



According to study coauthor Roberta Herzberg, a professor at USU, tax credits are a “well-justified policy.”

“We do need to come to grips with the cost of education,” said Herzberg, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*. “Benefits include parental empowerment [in terms of school choice]. There would be savings under most circumstances. Doing nothing is not an option.”

Deseret Morning News
November 12, 2004
Salt Lake Tribune
November 10, 2004

NEW YORK

Chancellor Admits Problems with New York City Schools

Parents in New York City have been complaining for months that a confusing new high school selection process was forcing their children to attend poor schools. But in a November 18 speech to City Council members, Schools Chancellor Joel Klein defended the Education Department's school selection process and said the city's high schools themselves were the problem since most parents didn't want their children to go to them.

“Most of our students and parents do not want to go to a large majority of our high schools,” Klein said, according to the *Daily News*. He went so far as to characterize some of the high schools as “dumping grounds” for improperly educated students.

Klein explained that 86 percent of the city's 316 schools were not “highly sought after,” which means few students selected them for attendance this year. For example, with a capacity for 2,246 students, South Shore High School in Brooklyn received applications from only 68 students. By contrast, Cardozo High School in Queens had only 1,000 seats available but received applications from 3,889 students.

“Unless we get serious about creating new choices ... this is not a choice program. It's a lip-service program,” Klein said, according to the *Daily News*.

New York Daily News
November 19, 2004

TEXAS

Texas Report Calls for Education Finance Reform

A recent report drafted by the Governor's Business Council has given Texas leaders renewed hope for renovating the state's education finance system in the next legislative session. Gov. Rick Perry (R) called the report “promising.”

Titled “From Good to Great: The Next Phase in Improving Texas Public Schools,” the report outlines the failures of the current school system and proposes possible solutions. Failures include poorly performing schools, high dropout rates, and high school graduates who are unprepared for college. Proposals include school vouchers, increased funding for charter schools, and merit-based teacher pay.

Business leaders are reluctant to spend more tax dollars on public education without plans also to improve the public schools, according to Charles Miller, a businessman from Houston who helped produce the report.

“What we need to do is make it [public education] better,” he told the *Houston Chronicle*.

Houston Chronicle
November 18, 2004

UTAH

Tuition Tax Credits Boosted in Utah

Two Utah lawmakers are working on separate bills that would offer tax credits for private school tuition.

Rep. Jim Ferrin (R-Orem) is working on a bill similar to one he introduced in the past legislative session. That measure provided a tax credit worth up to \$2,000 for half of the cost of private school tuition.

The plan offered by Rep. Steve Mascaro (R-West Jordan) would establish a seven-year pilot program for tax credits and reimburse public schools for any lost revenues. Private schools would be required to meet accountability standards similar to those established for public schools.

“I see this as another way to address educational funding problems,” Mascaro told the *Deseret Morning News*. “To me, you've got to test it. I don't know how else we're going to be able to look the public in the eye and tell whether it's good.”

The two lawmakers plan to meet to see if they might be able to combine their ideas and together present one bill for school choice.

In the meantime, a new study of tax credits by a politically neutral group provides support for tax credits, showing they would save the state money. The study was conducted at the state's request by researchers from Utah State University and Southern Utah University.

According to the study, savings of as much as \$1.3 billion could be achieved over the next 14 years if as few as 15,000 students used tuition tax credits.

VIRGINIA

School Choice Catching on in Virginia

Five years ago, Edward L. Kelly, superintendent of Virginia's Prince William County School District, instituted specialty programs in different high schools and allowed students to transfer to out-of-boundary schools. This year, 3,209 district students took advantage of the transfer policy, up from 2,484 last year.

Specialties offered by different county schools include programs that focus on the arts, math and science, computer technology, and foreign languages. These are provided as additions to the standard curriculum. All of the programs are offered to students on a space-available basis, with no screening test for enrollment. Seats are awarded by lottery.

“We've gone past the point where you can say everybody's got to get the same education,” Kelly told the *Washington Post*. “It's almost to the point where high schools are small universities.”

The Porter School is the county's newest elementary school and it offers yet another choice to parents: A school with a restrictive dress code for students and a volunteer work requirement not only for students but also for parents. Principal Darci Whitehead told the *Washington Post* there are waiting lists in every grade except fifth, and she continues to receive calls from interested parents.

Washington Post
November 14, 2004

Teacher Unions Fail to Spread the Blues in 2004 Election

commentary by Mike Antonucci

Rhetorically, the teacher unions framed the 2004 election as the “most important election of our lifetime.” They swore they wouldn’t allow the 2000 Florida debacle to happen again. Whatever you say about the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), you can’t accuse them of being half-hearted. They put aside their qualms about the Democratic presidential candidate, Senator John Kerry (D-MA), and gave their ultimate effort.

And they lost. Decisively.

By tying their fortunes to a single political party, NEA and AFT share that party’s fate. The unions reaped the political benefits of the Clinton years, and now they will pay the political price of the Bush years. NEA and AFT will have to face internally what the Democratic Party is facing electorally. The teacher unions themselves will be divided into red and blue states.

Look at the list of red states: Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Wyoming, etc. What kind of growth prospects do NEA and AFT have in states where the unions spent mounds of members’ money on a candidate those states rejected by double digits? What’s worse, President George W. Bush carved out narrow wins

in the strong union states of Nevada and Ohio and made headway in places like Michigan, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania.

Places of NEA strength and Kerry strength are one and the same: California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, et al. As for AFT, look at the big-city vote for Kerry in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco.

The 2004 election was the Battle of the Bulge for the teacher unions. They threw the sum total of their resources into a

money from a smaller and smaller base.

Unlike the Democratic Party itself, there is no prospect of NEA and AFT “moving to the center,” nor should we wish to see teacher union money flowing in large quantities to Republicans. Since there is no hope of NEA and AFT altering their ideology, the only agreeable outcome for all parties is for an improvement in their “competence.”

Union leaders in red states may come to question the relevance of the national unions’ ideology in their states. They may

Charters Crushed in Washington State

On the bright side for the teacher unions, the charter school initiative in Washington state was crushed 58 to 42 percent, helped along by NEA money. The NEA contributed \$500,000 to the committee opposing Referendum 55, which would have established charter schools in Washington State. The NEA contribution made up more than half of the committee’s \$856,000 war chest.

The Washington Education Association (WEA) chipped in another \$200,000 and the AFT gave \$55,000. Other cash and in-kind contributions came from WEA local affiliates, members, and staff. Indeed, it is difficult to find any contributors to the referendum campaign not linked to organized labor or school administrators.

Referendum 55 supporters raised \$3.8 million, the bulk of it from Bill Gates, John Walton, and Donald Fisher, cofounder of The Gap stores.

“[T]he teacher unions ... threw the sum total of their resources into a quixotic attempt to regain national relevance. Now that the battle is lost, the unions have nothing left in reserve.”

quixotic attempt to regain national relevance. Now that the battle is lost, the unions have nothing left in reserve. They will spend the next four years and beyond fighting to defend a dwindling number of blue areas. As they lose members in red states, they will demand more and more resources from members in blue states—look at the industrial unions for the road map ahead. NEA and AFT will have to extract more and more political

create their own “triangulation” strategies à la Bill Clinton. Some may simply desert, à la Zell Miller. In either event, we may finally come to see something in NEA and AFT that simply does not exist right now—organized internal opposition.

The old way of doing things is so entrenched that only a major crisis will bring about such a change. But whether they know it or not, the 2004 election was just such a crisis for NEA and AFT.

Mike Antonucci (educationintel@aol.com) is director of the Education Intelligence Agency, which conducts public education research, analysis, and investigations. This material first appeared in his weekly Communiqué on teacher union activities, available at <http://www.eiaonline.com>.

Any Child Can Succeed.

Freedom to choose a school that matches your child's needs. . . not everyone else's.

Freedom to choose a school that meets your standards. . . not the government's.

Freedom to choose a school based on its quality. . . not your address.

**This is freedom.
This is school choice.**

MILTON & ROSE D. FRIEDMAN
FOUNDATION
*Educational
Choice*

One American Square, Suite 1750 | Indianapolis, IN 46282
Phone: 317-681-0745 | Fax: 317-681-0945 | www.FriedmanFoundation.org



Three Cheers for Rod Paige

commentary by Chester E. Finn, Jr.

Outgoing Education Secretary Rod Paige is a great education reformer and distinguished public servant who leaves office after four years of accomplishment, candor, nonstop dedication to America's children, and loyal service to the Bush administration.

With Cabinet members exiting in droves, it's difficult to know for sure who's being nudged out the door and who is leaving on their own volition. Paige had signaled that he was game to stick around a while longer, but the White House reportedly wanted a four-year commitment, which is a lot to ask of a 71-year-old. So as he packs to return to Texas, let us dwell not on the circumstances of his departure but on his achievements, his legacy, and his character.

"We all serve at the pleasure of the President," he told his staff, "and it is perfectly appropriate that I leave now."

Rod Paige wasn't perfect in this role. He is not, for example, a great public speaker when working off a prepared text. (He is wonderfully eloquent, sometimes thrilling, when he speaks from the heart.) He tends to voice the truth as he sees it, even when it upsets folks. One can scarcely forget his apt—if politically incorrect—comparison of the NEA to a "terrorist organization" or his terrific *Wall Street Journal* critique of the NAACP leadership.

What he was, however, what he is, is a dedicated educator of children and crusader for better breaks for the poorest and neediest among them. A black man who rose from the humblest start in Jim Crow's Mississippi, a product of segre-

gated schools, he became a teacher, coach, administrator, counselor, dean, school board member, and, in time, the reforming superintendent of the largest school system in Texas.

He left that post to travel to Washington at Bush's behest, and there he led the U.S. Department of Education for four eventful years. He didn't always have the leeway he should have to lead it as well as he could. The White House tether was shorter than in previous administrations, far shorter than when I worked there with Bill Bennett in the late 1980s. Paige had limited authority to pick his team and less to pick his policy targets.

The Power of School Choice

Paige is, for example, a stalwart believer in the power of school choice, both to create opportunities for children and to put transformative pressure on "the system." But, save for the new DC voucher project and the valiant efforts of the Department's small "innovation and improvement" office, this has not been a choice-minded administration.

Indeed, the person named to be Paige's successor, White House policy maestro Margaret Spellings, is a standards-testing-accountability booster who can be counted upon to defend and extend the No Child Left Behind Act, but who has signaled that the only way to fix American K-12 education is to lean on "the system" from above, not to empower its clients. A smart woman, Bush loyalist, and skilled staffer, perhaps Spellings will demonstrate in her highly visible new role that she has more than one policy gun in her arsenal and the

personal attributes that will cause people to want to follow where she leads. We wish her well.

Back to Paige. A short tether, yes, but he made the most of his position. He tirelessly barnstormed the country, talking of the need to boost achievement and leave no child behind. He implemented NCLB with conviction and steadfastness, occasionally nudging it toward a bit more flexibility and reasonableness. That epochal statute is now, in Paige's words, "indelibly launched. A culture of accountability is gripping the American educational landscape."

Teacher Training, Clean Audit

The Secretary also did his best, despite yawns at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, to revamp teacher training and certification; to reform the special ed program (which showed some results in November when the Congressional conference committee finished work on it); and to make overdue changes in higher ed and vocational ed. He invested the Education Department's skimpy discretionary dollars in boldly reformist initiatives, such as the American Board for Certification of Teaching Excellence. He oversaw a wholesale revamp of the Department's research and evaluation functions, including wider use of experimental designs (even control groups!) in most federal studies.

Though scarcely noted by the press, Paige also shaped up the Education Department's tattered management and accounting systems. (He was helped in this venture by such able colleagues as Bill Hansen, Gene Hickok, and John

Danielson.) The agency is, for example, getting its third consecutive "clean audit," which may not sound like much but is a lot better than the alternative—and tons better than what he inherited from the Clinton team.

Rigorous Appraisals

Some of his other accomplishments will bear fruit after his departure, such as rigorous appraisals of curricula and instructional programs by the new "What Works Clearinghouse," regulations that open the door for single-sex schools, and Washington's most successful outreach effort to community- and faith-based organizations.

Along the way, Paige showed himself to be a good boss, effective leader, friend to many, and thoroughly decent human being. But he never let the grown-ups get in the kids' way. He is a children's educator, not a panderer to adult interests.

And time and again he used his bully pulpit to address the moral imperative of gap-closing and to frame civil rights correctly for the twenty-first century. Read, for example, his superb Harvard address on the 50th anniversary of the *Brown* decision. In fact, while you're at it, read a selection of Paige's speeches and statements (see below). This isn't just the *oeuvre* of a dutiful federal official. It's the work of a dedicated educator, a serious reformer, a rigorous thinker, and a courageous man.

I'm going to miss Rod Paige. So will America's children.

Chester E. Finn, Jr. (cefinnjr@aol.com) is president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Thomas B. Fordham Institute, senior editor of *Education Next*, senior fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution, and chairman of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education. This article originally appeared in the November 18, 2004 issue of *The Education Gadfly*.

INTERNET INFO

U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige's speeches and statements are available online at <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/latest/index.html?src=gu>.

His Harvard address on the 50th anniversary of the *Brown* decision is at <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2004/04/04222004.html>.

His *Wall Street Journal* critique of NAACP leadership is at <http://www.ed.gov/news/press/releases/2004/07/07152004.html>.

A June 2003 *School Reform News* interview with Rod Paige, "Right Man for the Job," is available online at <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=12233>.

The Education Gadfly, a weekly bulletin of news and analysis from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, is available online at <http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/gadfly>.

**You have courageously
risked everything to
challenge the school
system; now you deserve
better textbooks that work!**



Inspire your students to desire *virtue* and high *academic* achievement through America's new design for textbooks:
Paradigm Accelerated Curriculum

www.pacworks.com learn@pacworks.com Ph: 254-445-4272

“Lifting the Veil of Ignorance”

an interview with Lee H. Walker

by George A. Clowes

Lee H. Walker, president of The New Coalition for Economic and Social Change, knows how important it is for children from limited environments to have a teacher or role model who can open their eyes to the breadth and freedom of opportunity available to them here in the United States.

That's because Walker has lived the experience himself, growing up as a black child in the segregated Deep South of the 1940s and being inspired by the example of Booker T. Washington to pursue a successful career as a corporate executive in New York and Chicago.

Walker's own educational experiences also underlie his support for school choice, for giving children from all backgrounds the opportunity for an education to prepare them for pursuing their dreams. “Get an education,” the old people used to tell him. Although the 1954 *Brown* decision was supposed to make that easier for blacks to achieve, Walker's views on the ruling are mixed because he sees so much effort was wasted in pursuing integration at the expense of educational excellence.

Before becoming president of The New Coalition in 1993, Walker was in corporate America for 33 years, starting with a shopping center management company in New York, where he rose from office boy to director of labor relations. He worked for Sears, Roebuck, and Company for 23 years, the first 10 in the New York buying office and the next 13 in the national headquarters in Chicago.

In October 2002, Walker's New Coalition became partners with The Heartland Institute to develop and promote a conservative multicultural perspective on economic and social policies. In 2004, he organized and moderated a panel on black conservatism at The Heritage Foundation's 2004 Resource Bank Meeting and plans to publish the proceedings as a book, titled *The Conscience of Conservative Blacks*.

Walker is involved in a number of civic and professional organizations, including Sigma Pi Phi, Delta Alpha Boule (Northern Illinois), and the Chicago Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. He is a director of the Black United Fund of Illinois and a trustee of the Foundation Board for the University of the Orange Free State (South Africa). He is a former member of the Illinois State Board of Higher Education.

Walker graduated from Fordham University, New York City, where he majored in economics. A member of the editorial board and an editorial writer for the *Chicago Defender*, he also writes a monthly column for *Crain's Chicago Business*. He is a frequent guest on local and national TV and radio programs. Walker recently spoke with *School Reform News* Managing Editor George Clowes.

Clowes: *What was it like growing up in the South before Brown v. Board of Education?*

Walker: I grew up in a legally segregated South, but in a conservative section of the Deep South, about 40 miles from Tuskegee University. I mention that because all around Tuskegee, even as late as the 1940s and 1950s, the influence of the Booker T. Washington philosophy was still out there.

In both black and white schools, the curriculum was the same, but not the quality. Both black and white boys took agriculture and shop, and black and white girls went to home economics, but at different schools. The white boys in the ninth grade were called Future Farmers of America, and the black boys were called New Farmers of America. We couldn't even have the same darn name.

Now, *Plessy v. Ferguson* said “Separate but equal.” In reality, it was “Separate but never equal.” So when *Brown* came along on May 17, 1954, everybody said *Brown* had overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*. It didn't. It may have had the law right, but not the facts.

What *Brown* really did was to end segregation in public facilities. It didn't do anything with respect to segregated schools. The *Brown* decision was made in 1954 but no schools in the South integrated before 1964—and only then because the Supreme Court made another decision that called for integration “with all deliberate speed.”

Clowes: *You've made the point that the Brown ruling was based on the assumption that school facilities for blacks and whites were equal.*

Walker: And they were not. We were well aware that our schools were not equal. We would get our books from the white school—when they got new books, we got their old ones.

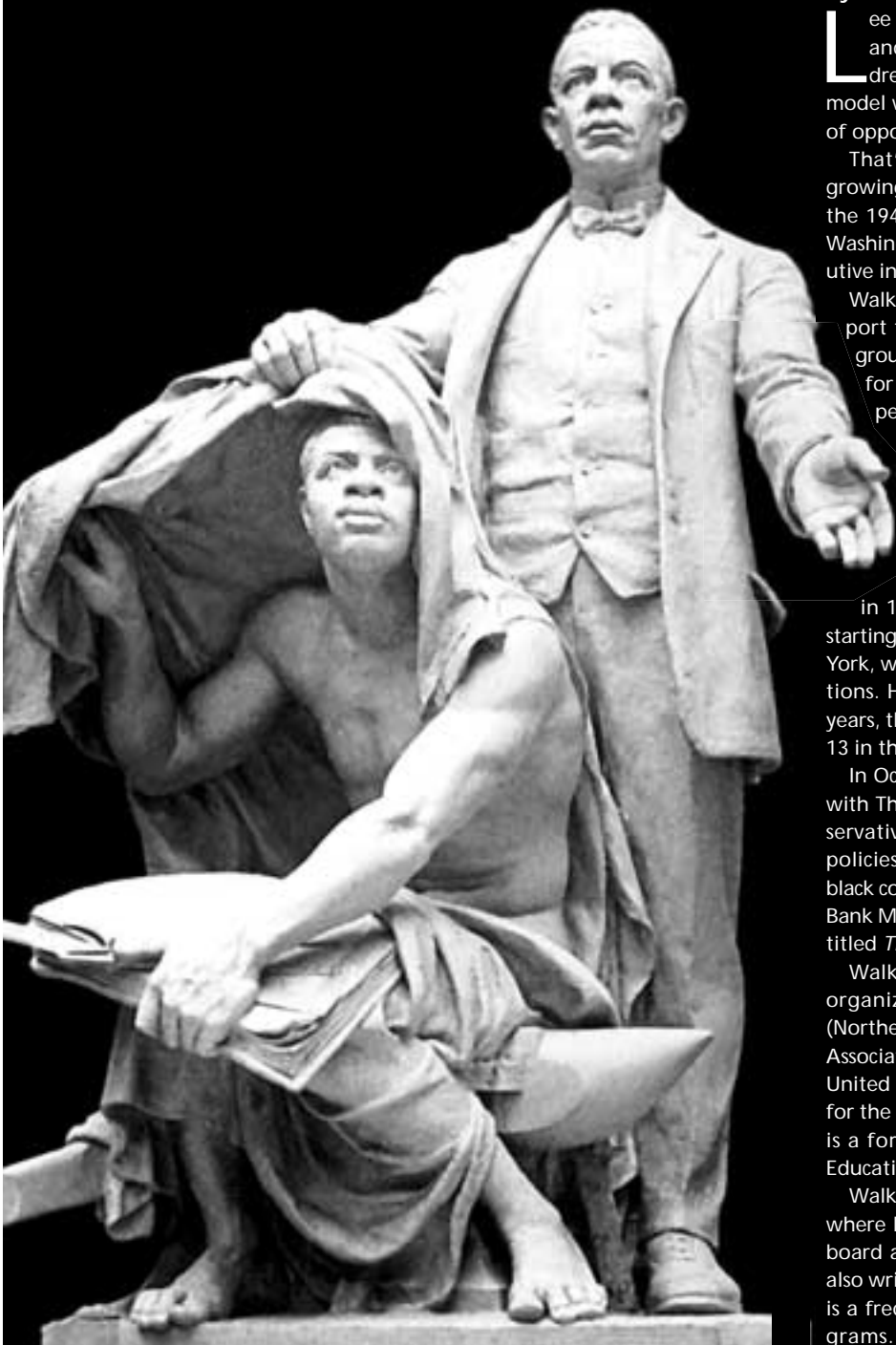
“Integration isn't really the goal. A nice neighborhood is. A decent salary is. A good school is.”

The schools became half-equal when they integrated, with blacks sitting in the same classroom as white students. That didn't last too long, and they soon had segregated classrooms, even in the North. There would be a 7A class for all the smart kids, and a 7B for the others. All the whites and maybe one or two blacks were in 7A.

My whole argument with *Brown* is that integration never should have been a goal, it should have been a result. A quality education should have been the goal. If it had been, we would not still be dealing with the achievement gap 40 years on. Integration isn't really the goal. A nice neighborhood is. A decent salary is. A good school is.

A field trip changed my life more than *Brown* did. When I was in the ninth grade, the boys went on a field trip to visit the campus of Tuskegee University, where

WALKER continued at right



WALKER continued

there is a statue of Booker T. Washington. I was mesmerized when I saw that statue. I had never seen a life-size—let alone a giant-size—statue of a black man. All giant-sized statues I had seen until then were white males, like Robert E. Lee. But here was a giant-sized black man, dressed up in fine clothes, with one hand pointing out to the future and the other “lifting the veil of ignorance” from a black boy in raggedy clothes.

When I saw that statue, I said, “I’m in good shape now. I don’t have to prove anything. Booker has already taken care of it for me.” He was born a slave but he became world-famous as an educator, entrepreneur, and black leader. He became my personal hero, like a black Horatio Alger. Horatio Alger was an excellent inspirational story for poor white boys to be somebody. If you were black, you understood the story but you knew you couldn’t do what the white boy could.

Normally, all the black heroes were killed for standing up against a white man. But here was a man who had the respect of white Southerners and white Northerners as well as blacks. He had made it. His book, *Up from Slavery*, became a guide for me. I said, “If Booker could leave home to better himself, I could leave home to better myself, too.” If he had done it, I could.

“The New Coalition is an extension of the philosophical views of Booker T. Washington—economic independence and social advancement for blacks and for all Americans.”

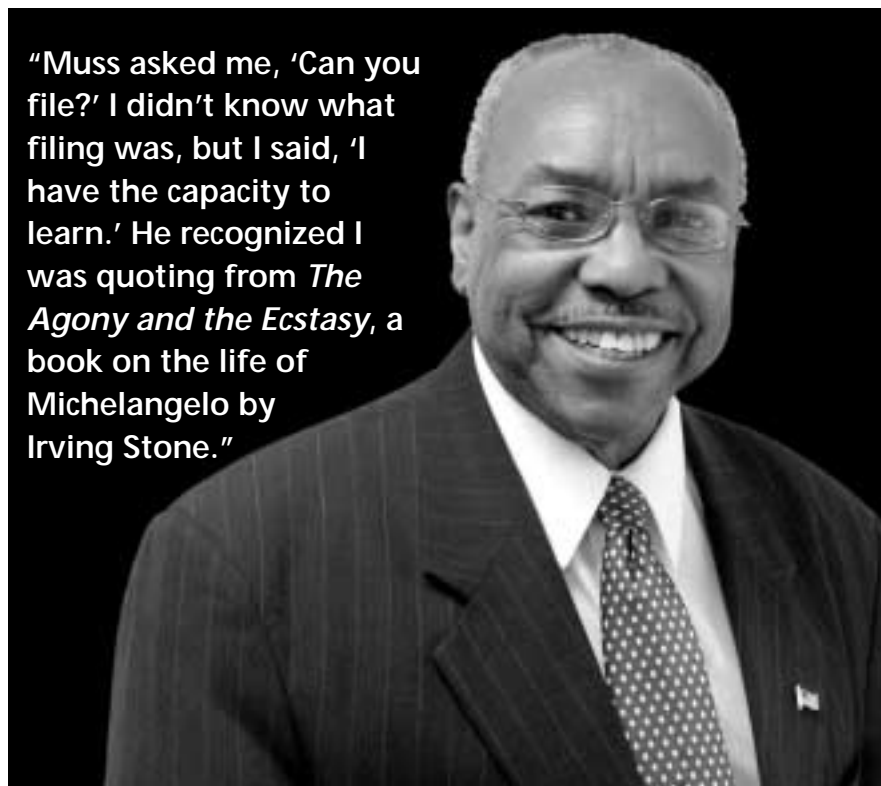
Clowes: *How did you get from the Deep South to corporate America in New York City?*

Walker: I chose corporate America in New York. Normally, where blacks went to in the North depended on what part of the South they were in, because of the way the trains ran. The train coming out of Mississippi ran up the middle of the country to Chicago. The train over my way rode up east of the Mississippi to Ohio, and so all of my folks in Alabama went to Akron, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan.

The way I broke that mold was because of television. I had no guidance counselor. Television was my guidance counselor.

Watching television—and the movies—I saw that all of the successful white men lived in New York, and they worked as executives in two places: in Rockefeller Center or on Wall Street. I saw that and I said, “I want to be an executive.” I didn’t know what the heck an executive was. All I knew was they had white shirts and attaché cases. But I followed the Booker model. I left home, went to New York,

“Muss asked me, ‘Can you file?’ I didn’t know what filing was, but I said, ‘I have the capacity to learn.’ He recognized I was quoting from *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, a book on the life of Michelangelo by Irving Stone.”



and enrolled at a city college.

Then I discovered corporate America didn’t choose their important employees from the city colleges, and so I left Brooklyn College and went to New York University. But when I got to NYU, they tested me and told me I needed to take six months of reading and writing comprehension, and six months of college algebra.

Now, before 1964, no one was talking about diversity at NYU. If you didn’t score high enough, you had to take remedial courses whether you were black or white. But after taking the courses, as I did, you entered the regular program. Everybody in the regular program knew you had to pass the test to get in and so you didn’t go in with any stigma, as blacks do now with affirmative action.

When NYU became too expensive for me, I transferred to Fordham University, where I graduated with a degree in economics.

After Fordham, I got a job just by knocking on doors on Wall Street and in Rockefeller Center. I’ll never forget one person at a Wall Street bank telling me, “Do you think we just take people off the street and make them tellers?” Heck, I didn’t know, but I wasn’t discouraged.

I looked in the paper and saw some office boy jobs in Rockefeller Center for \$50 a week. One of them was with the Winston-Muss Corporation. David Muss was a South African Jew from Capetown and Norman K. Winston was a Russian Jew. I went to apply for a job with them.

Muss asked me, “Can you file?” I didn’t know what filing was, but I said, “I have the capacity to learn.” He recognized I was quoting from *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, a book on the life of Michelangelo by Irving Stone. Because I had read that book, this Jewish lawyer in a Jewish firm said, “Lee Walker, I’m going to give you a chance.” He did, and he mentored me, telling me how to talk, how to handle situations, where to get a three-piece suit, and so on. That’s how I got a job in Rockefeller Center.

I had asked for \$50 a week, but at the end of the first week, I got \$55. The next week, I got \$65. The following week, I went up another \$5. In 10 years, I went from office boy to an officer in the company.

Clowes: *And you then went on to Sears?*

Walker: Winston-Muss was a \$50 million-to-\$75 million firm and after 10 years, I wanted to work for a larger corporation. That’s how I ended up at Sears, Roebuck, and Company. By this point, I also had become head of a group of young black executives. In addition, affirmative action had come into play, but I didn’t see that it was going to change anything much. At Sears, I saw it wasn’t working.

Then, in 1980, about a month after Ronald Reagan was elected, I went to a national meeting of black conservatives at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco to discuss alternative policies and strategies to the welfare state and affirmative action. It was the first national gathering of conservative blacks since Booker T. Washington died in 1915. Henry Lucas, Jr. and Thomas Sowell called the meeting. Clarence Thomas was there, and Walter Williams, Randolph Bromery, and Clarence Pendleton. Milton Friedman and Ed Meese were there, too.

What came out of that conference was a book called *The Fairmont Papers*. What also came out of it was The New Coalition for Economic and Social Change. Clarence Pendleton was the first director. After I took early retirement from Sears in 1993, I took over The New Coalition and moved it to Illinois.

The New Coalition is an extension of the philosophical views of Booker T. Washington—economic independence and social advancement for blacks and for all Americans. Our mission is to encourage the pursuit of alternative public policies that promote economic independence and strengthen the institutions of families, churches, and communities. The New Coalition is about free markets. It’s about self-reliance. It’s about self-

determination.

Blacks like Marcus Garvey had talked about having a black nation or going back to Africa, but Washington didn’t advocate going anywhere. He said: Learn to do something well here in the United States and the Negro will prosper. Booker always said blacks should be proud of working because it builds character and is part of being self-reliant.

I think blacks are finally looking at what Booker was emphasizing almost 100 years ago: the economic side. He argued, “Take care of the economics, and the political side will fall into line.” We went the political route rather than the economic route and so we haven’t had the wealth development that we could have had in the black community.

One thing that hurts the black movement right now is the lack of diversity in political views. Ninety percent of blacks vote with the Democratic Party. Hispanics, on the other hand, are not a group you can put in your back pocket. Forty percent of the Hispanic vote went to George Bush in November, and I think that had a lot to do with the recent nomination of a Hispanic for Attorney General and another Hispanic for Secretary of Commerce.

Clowes: *Is school choice one of The New Coalition’s alternative public policies to promote economic independence?*

Walker: It is. I held my first meeting on school vouchers here in Chicago in 1984 with the help of Sears and The Heritage Foundation. We had a seminar on vouchers and Marva Collins was the keynote speaker.

I’m for school choice for two reasons. Number one, the present system is failing. Number two, school choice would give parents the opportunity to put their

“We went the political route rather than the economic route and so we haven’t had the wealth development that we could have had in the black community.”

children in an environment that is better than the one they’ve been assigned to by the school district. I don’t think choice is a panacea, but you have to be out of your mind to want to stay in a burning house. With choice, at least you can get out.

I think the system itself is the problem. It’s not a school system, it’s a bureaucracy. And for low-income children, this bureaucracy perpetuates low expectations. Teachers need to broaden the horizons of opportunity for students and encourage self-sufficiency. One way to do that would be to give families some say in where their children go to school. The money should follow the child.

Education has always meant a lot to black folks. Black Americans understand the true value of education because they know their individual freedom depends on it.

Florida

Continued from page 1

the Universal Pre-K program, and the McKay Scholarship Program.”

Since it was approved by the Florida legislature and signed by Gov. Jeb Bush (R) in 1999, the Opportunity Scholarship program has given parents with children in failing public schools the option of choosing to transfer their children, together with funds for tuition, to a better-performing public or private school. A coalition of school choice opponents—the NAACP, state teacher union, state PTA, state League of Women Voters, and others—has fought to overturn the program since its inception.

The court decision, the third ruling against the program, was handed down in an 8-5-1 ruling (8 majority, 5 dissent, and 1 completely separate opinion). Judge William Van Nortwick’s majority opinion declared that Opportunity Scholarships violate the Blaine Amendment in the Florida Constitution by providing “aid” to religious schools—an opinion that covered essentially the same ground as the one he wrote last August when a three-judge panel of the same court struck down the program. (See “Appeals Court Strikes Down Florida Vouchers,” *School Reform News*, October 2004.)

Using *Locke* as a Guide

The Appeals Court acknowledged the U.S. Supreme Court precedent in the Cleveland voucher *Zelman* (2002) case—where parents could choose to direct neutrally available aid to religious or non-religious schools—but said *Zelman* did not apply in this case. Instead, the Appeals Court took its lead from the U.S. Supreme Court’s recent ruling in *Locke v. Davey* (2004), where state funds were denied to a college student training to be a minister but were otherwise made available to students for a wide range of religious classes at religious schools.

Despite *Locke* being a very narrow ruling on what the Supreme Court called “the play in the joints” of the First Amendment, the Appeals Court applied *Locke* very broadly to deny the use of any state funds for any purpose at religious schools. Although the Florida Constitution clearly bars aid to “religious

institutions,” the court claimed the provision was intended to apply only to religious K-12 schools.

Five judges dissented in a strongly worded opinion written by Judge Ricky Polston. The dissent pointed out there was nothing in the historical record to indicate the “no aid” provision should apply only to K-12 schools and warned that the majority’s ruling could jeopardize a wide range of state programs.

“There is no distinction between this Opportunity Scholarship Program and the state Medicaid program that funds religiously affiliated or operated health care institutions providing free or subsidized medical care (e.g., St. Mary’s Hospital in West Palm Beach and Baptist Medical Center in Jacksonville),” Polston wrote.

“We are saddened to see Florida’s 1st District Court of Appeals rule against low-income parents choosing the best schools for their children. We also are very concerned about the impact a negative State Supreme Court ruling will have on other state educational programs ...”

**JOHN KIRTLEY, CHAIRMAN
FLORIDA EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION**

“Why wouldn’t the holding be applied to other programs?” asked Polston. “There is no meaningful difference.”

The dissent listed a range of publicly funded programs that have permitted people to freely select religious providers as well as non-religious ones. Those programs include state-subsidized childcare,



McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities, and the Bright Futures college scholarship program. The Institute for Justice, which is representing parents using Opportunity Scholarships, estimates the educational choices of nearly 200,000 Florida students in 11 grant and scholarship programs may be at risk with the Appeals Court ruling. (See table.)

Discrimination Against Religion

By broadening the *Locke* ruling from a “relatively minor burden” to one that would have “a dramatic, devastating effect on colleges, students and their families, health care providers, and patients throughout Florida,” the majority ruling “discriminates against religion,” argued the dissent.

In reaching the *Locke* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court had stated the Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause “are frequently in tension,” and that “there is room for play in the joints between them.” But the effect of “the majority’s broad-sweeping interpretation of Florida’s Constitution” is “too large—there is not enough play,” argued the dissent.

“This is not the same as the narrowly written Washington statute that fits within the narrow ‘play between the joints’ as addressed in *Locke*,” wrote Polston. “Rather, the majority is trying to fit its ruling, the size of a semi-truck, through the small window of the ‘play between the joints.’”

The dissent also pointed out the majority had discriminated against religion by focusing exclusively on the “no-aid” modification to Florida’s First Amendment protections and ignoring a second modification that adds protection against “penalizing” the free exercise of religion.

The Power of Choice

In reviewing the application of *Zelman* to the Opportunity Scholarship program, Polston concluded there was “no meaningful difference” between the two programs and faulted the majority for not addressing the effect of parental choice on who was the beneficiary of the aid.

“Because parents and guardians have a choice, their children, who would otherwise attend failing schools, rather than sectarian institutions, are aided by the program,” explained Polston.

Consequently, he argued, the program does not violate the “no-aid” provision of the Florida Constitution.

Ironically, one of the clearest statements of how choice affects the constitutionality of state aid going to religious schools was presented to U.S. Supreme Court Justices in January 2002 by teacher union legal counsel Robert H. Chanin, arguing against school vouchers.

“If public money that is reasonably attributable to the State is used to pay for a religious education, it violates the Constitution,” explained Chanin.

“The only way in which it’s not attributable to the State is if it doesn’t go there by virtue of a State action or a State decision, but the circuit is broken,” he continued. “[A]nd the circuit is broken because in between, standing between the State and standing between the schools, is an independent party with decisionmaking to divert it away.”

George A. Clowes (clowes@heartland.org) is managing editor of *School Reform News*.

INTERNET INFO

The November 12, 2004 ruling of the full 1st District Court of Appeals in *Holmes v. Bush* is available online at <http://www.1dca.org/opinion/opinions2004/11-12-04/02-3160rh.pdf>.

The August 16, 2004 panel decision of the 1st District Court of Appeals in the case of *Holmes v. Bush* is covered in the article, “Appeals Court Strikes Down Florida Vouchers,” *School Reform News*, October 2004, available online at <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=15697>. The decision is available at <http://www.1dca.org/opinion/opinions2004/8-16-04/02-3160.pdf>.

Robert Holland’s summary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Locke v. Davey* ruling, “Davey Ruling Leaves Vouchers in Play,” is available online at <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=14655>.

Enrollment in Florida Educational Choice Programs

732	K-12 Opportunity Scholarships
13,790	McKay Scholarships for Children with Disabilities
12,000	Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships
112,000	Post-Secondary Bright Futures Scholarships
35,462	Florida Resident Access Grants
11,477	Private Student Assistance Grants
10,714	Florida Post-Secondary Student Assistance Grants
58	Jose Marti Scholarship Challenge Grants
238	Mary McLeod Bethune Scholarships
2,106	Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness
937	Minority Teacher Education Scholars
199,514	Total

Source: Institute for Justice

Note: Data are for 2003-04 except for Opportunity Scholarships and McKay Scholarships, which are for 2004-05.

Fordham Foundation Honors Brandl, Joseph, and Moe as "Education Change Agents"

by George A. Clowes

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation has named John E. Brandl, Marion Joseph, and Terry M. Moe as recipients of its third annual Fordham Prizes for Excellence in Education. Two prizes, for valor and for scholarship, are given annually and each carries an award for \$25,000. The awards will be formally presented in February.

"Each [award-winner] is a far-sighted and tireless crusader for the interests of children, an indomitable individual who rejected conventional thinking, pointed to needed changes, suffered plenty of abuse from protectors of the status quo, and hugely advanced the cause of school reform," said Foundation President Chester E. Finn, Jr., calling the winners "three great education change agents."

This year's Prize for Valor, awarded to a leader who has made noteworthy accomplishments in education reform, is shared by "two self-styled 'liberal Democrats,'" according to Finn.

The first recipient, John Brandl, is now a professor at the University of Minnesota. He formerly served as a Democratic member of the Minnesota legislature, where he became known as the state's "godfather of school choice." Brandl was instrumental in establishing many of Minnesota's pioneering educational choice reforms, including statewide open enrollment in public schools and post-secondary options for low-income families. His 1998 book, *Money and Good Intentions Are Not Enough*, argues for choice and competition in education.

The second recipient, Marion Joseph, is a former state education official who realized California's K-12 curriculum was defective when she saw her grandson struggling to learn to read with the state's whole-language method. She came out of retirement in 1997 to serve on the State Board of Education, where she spearheaded the return of phonics-based reading instruction, becoming known as the "Paul Revere of Phonics."

Joseph also helped establish new academic standards and standards-aligned curricula for California. A lifelong Democrat, she believes all children can achieve when given the right tools and opportunity.

This year's Prize for Distinguished Scholarship was awarded to Hoover Institution senior fellow Terry Moe, who "has helped us understand the functioning—and dysfunctioning—of the K-12 'delivery system' as well as the attitudes, dynamics, and interest groups that shape it," said Finn.

Moe, who also is a professor of political science at Stanford University, has focused his research on the interplay of politics and education, with particular regard to school choice. He is the coauthor, with John Chubb, of the groundbreaking book, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* (1990), which explained the dynamics of the public school system. In a subsequent work, *Schools, Vouchers, and the American*

Public (2000), he examined public attitudes toward schools and vouchers.

The work encompassed by Moe's two books has helped Americans to better understand the shortcomings of the present public education system and to appreciate why a market-based alterna-

tive is necessary to make the education enterprise attentive to the needs of children and families.

George A. Clowes (clowes@heartland.org) is managing editor of School Reform News.

INTERNET INFO

Further information about this year's prize winners, together with the procedure for nominating candidates for next year's prizes, is available by clicking on "Fordham Prizes" at the Fordham Foundation's Web site at <http://www.edexcellence.net>.

Hillsdale College Announces the Ninth Recipient of the



\$25,000 Henry Salvatori Prize FOR "EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING"

"We are proud to say that the **PRINCIPLES** and **PROCESSES** learned through Hillsdale Academy have consistently **IMPROVED STUDENT PERFORMANCE** at Hale Academy."

DAREN JOHNSON
2004 Henry Salvatori
Prize Recipient



EACH FALL, Hillsdale College seeks nominations for the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching." This prize honors teachers in grades K-12 who are committed to rigorous standards and to a traditional, time-tested approach to education. Endowed by the late businessman and philanthropist Henry Salvatori, this competition is open to teachers in non-profit private and public schools who have employed the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide*. Winners receive a \$25,000 cash award payable to their school.

Daren Johnson, of Hale Academy in Ocala, Florida, is hereby named the recipient of the 2004 Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching."

The *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide* is an invaluable resource for teachers, administrators and parents who seek to educate their children in a well-balanced core of essential subjects. Based on the daily operation of Hillsdale Academy, the K-12 model school of Hillsdale College, the *Guide* contains information on curricula, supplementary reading, school culture and administrative policies. It is already in use at more than 450 schools in all 50 states, as well as by countless home-schooling parents.

To learn more about the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching" or the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide*, call (800) 989-7323 or log on to www.hillsdale.edu/academy.



33 EAST COLLEGE ST. • HILLSDALE, MICHIGAN 49242 • WWW.HILLSDALE.EDU

Does Public Education Need a Witness Protection Program?

by David W. Kirkpatrick

In Spring 2004, the Texas office of Americans for Prosperity initiated the Educators Witness Protection Program Web site to allow individual educators,

"One parent reported his district had spent \$1 million for storing obsolete computers. Several teachers reported their district had spent \$4 million for a discipline management training program that was quickly dropped by many schools."

taxpayers, and others to report instances of alleged wasteful spending in the public school system without being subject to harassment or reprisals. The need for some kind of protection for witnesses to school excesses was highlighted recently in Casselberry, Florida by reports of how a parent who complained about the cruelty of a special education teacher was intimidated into silence by a threatening letter from the teacher union.

The special education teacher, Kathleen Garrett, was arrested in November on nine counts of child abuse, four years after the parent's complaint was muzzled.

"Casselberry police say Garrett, 48, beat and humiliated students, sat on some, knocked one child's teeth out when

she slammed her head on a desk, and pushed another's face into vomit," reported *The Orlando Sentinel's* Dave Weber. "They say she also took children into the bathroom, where sounds of screaming could be heard."

Early reports from the Texas Web site on financial abuse are wide-ranging. One parent reported his district had spent \$1 million for storing obsolete computers. Several teachers reported their district had spent \$4 million for a discipline management training program that was quickly dropped by many schools. Another teacher revealed a one-school district had spent \$1.6 million on administrator leadership training.

Fraud and waste exist in the education system nationwide. *Education Week* regularly reports such incidents, often more than one in a single issue, as do other education publications, such as *Teacher Magazine*, and the general press, such as *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Just from regular but casual reading, it would be possible to gather enough material to write a regular weekly column on waste and fraud in the education system. Yet there is little public outrage over incidents like the following:

■ A state study of Camden, New Jersey schools in 1996 reported the district, with a budget of \$197 million, was wasting at least \$32 million because of a bloated

bureaucracy and the hiring of friends and relatives of school officials.

■ In 1997, 55 small and medium-sized Pennsylvania school districts lost \$71 million because of the alleged actions of an investment advisor to whom they had entrusted hundreds of millions of dollars.

■ A 2004 audit of the Topeka, Kansas school district revealed the district was defrauded of more than \$554,000 over a 17-month period because of poor accounting practices.

■ A recent audit of the Miami-Dade school district in Florida indicated taxpayers were out more than \$100 million because of corruption and mismanagement.

■ Started in 1989 but still unfinished is a 2,600-pupil learning center in California's Los Angeles Unified School District. Its \$60 million initial estimated cost has soared to \$265 million because it was built on the environmentally hazardous site of an abandoned oil field.

■ In November, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported the federal indictment of former Georgia School Superintendent Linda Schrenko on 18 charges of conspiracy, wire fraud, and theft of public funds totaling more than \$500,000. According to the indictment, half of the funds were diverted to

Schrenko's failed attempt to win the 2002 Republican gubernatorial primary.

After administrators and bookkeepers in 10 Michigan school districts had been caught or accused of embezzling money two years ago, T.J. Bucholz, spokesman

"Just from regular but casual reading, it would be possible to gather enough material to write a regular weekly column on waste and fraud in the education system. Yet there is little public outrage ..."

for the Michigan Department of Education, was quoted by *Teacher Magazine* as saying, "It's a culture that does not put children first, a culture that's more concerned about power and control and making sure the adults get paid."

David W. Kirkpatrick (kirkdw@aol.com) is a senior education fellow with the U.S. Freedom Foundation and also with the Buckeye Institute in Columbus, Ohio.

INTERNET INFO

The Educators Witness Protection Program is located at <http://www.educatorswitnessprotectionprogram.com>.

Also, "Horror Stories from the Public Schools," by George A. Clowes, published in the Summer 2000 issue of *Wisconsin Interest*, is available online at <http://www.wpri.org/WIInterest/Vol9no2/Clowes9.2.pdf>.

Answers to problems on page 7

1. 1,571
Low elevation = -294
High elevation = 1,277
Difference = 1,571

2. e) 29

3. e) L - 3

4. 8
 $X + Y = 14$
 $.20X + .33Y = 3.84$
Therefore,
 $.20X + .33(14 - X) = 3.84$
Solving,
 $X = 6$ and $Y = 8$

5. d) 29



by George A. Clowes

The current issue of *School Reform News*—the 87th since Heartland first started monthly publication in January 1997—is my last as managing editor. As I approached the ninth year in this position, I concluded I needed to pay more attention to priorities I have been neglecting for several years. My future

Thanks for the Front-Row Seat!

role will be that of a contributing editor.

Heartland Institute President Joseph Bast and I had known each other from the pre-Heartland meetings of the Loop Libertarian League, but in Fall of 1996 I happened to be looking for another career change and he happened to be looking for someone to write a monthly newspaper on school choice.

I'd first like to thank Joe for taking a chance on giving me the job, since I had no experience as a journalist. Second, I'd like to thank him for giving me what I later realized was a front row seat to the battle to complete the unfinished work of the mid-20th century civil rights movement. The battle is still going on but it has shifted so much closer to victory than it was in late 1996 when Issue No. 1 of *School Reform News* was put together.

Thanks also to the *School Reform News* contributing editors, without whom it would not be possible to cover the huge variety of stories spun off by the workings of a half-trillion-dollar-a-year indus-

try. Thanks to my editor Diane Bast for improving my writing style and for ensuring the final copy was clear, accurate, and unambiguous. And thanks to Heartland's outstanding art department—Kevin Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Ow—for making the final product look superb. I just think we have the best-looking newspaper in the business.

When we started *School Reform News*, Joe's aim was to make it the newspaper of record of the school choice movement, delivering timely, accurate, concise, and relevant information about choice-based school reform. I believe we succeeded in doing that and I look forward to the newspaper continuing to earn the support of its readers under new leadership.

George A. Clowes (clowes@heartland.org) has served as managing editor of *School Reform News* since its launch in 1997. A successor will be named for the February 2005 issue.

Attack on Milwaukee Voucher Research Comes Up Short

by George A. Clowes

An attempt by a self-described “non-partisan” organization to discredit a voucher researcher’s results showing higher graduation rates for voucher students came up short recently when it was pointed out that not only was the criticism unfounded, but the critic’s organization was not a neutral observer on the issue of school choice. Graduation rates are important because they are a readily understood measure of the value of an education system or program.

Although the school voucher program in Milwaukee—the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP)—has been in place for 14 years, the Wisconsin legislature has not yet established an official procedure for evaluating the program on an ongoing basis by a non-partisan group like the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau. Pro-school choice groups and individuals, such as School Choice Wisconsin and Howard Fuller, have called for such an evaluation, which is strongly opposed by the state teacher union. Governor James Doyle (D) recently vetoed a bill establishing a voucher evaluation procedure.

“Using a method widely accepted by education researchers, [researcher Jay] Greene found a 64 percent graduation rate for MPCP students in 2003, compared to 36 percent in the Milwaukee Public Schools.”

To get some measure of the long-term value of school vouchers, School Choice Wisconsin retained researcher Jay Greene in 2004 to study graduation rates of MPCP students. Greene is a widely recognized education scholar whose work was cited in the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2002 *Zelman* ruling on Cleveland vouchers. The Education Trust calls Greene “one of the most widely cited ... experts. His state-level graduation rate calculations are used by such policy organizations as the Education Commission of the States and the Alliance for Excellent Education.”

Using a method widely accepted by education researchers, Greene found a 64 percent graduation rate for MPCP students in 2003, compared to 36 percent in the Milwaukee Public Schools. He obtained similar results using a different approach developed by the Harvard Civil Rights Project and Urban Institute. (See “Milwaukee Voucher Students Have Higher Graduation Rates,” *School Reform News*, November 2004.)

On November 13, Public Policy Forum (PPF) researcher Anneliese Dickman published a critique of Greene’s graduation rate study, saying his method for estimating graduation rates did not prop-

erly reflect student transfers in and out of the voucher schools. To evaluate the performance of voucher students, she called for placing the same strict accountability measures on choice schools as on public schools, something PPF has long recommended.

Characterizing her organization as “dedicated to non-partisan analysis,” Dickman dismissed Greene’s study as “propaganda,” “unsound,” “reckless,” and not “mature.” After completing her attack, she immediately called for a “truce” in the “war” between the two sides of the voucher debate.

Responding to what he called Dickman’s only substantive but “mistaken” criticism, Greene noted his report had in fact described the concern she raised about student transfers as “the primary source of uncertainty in these estimates.” To address them, he had used the Harvard/Urban Institute method to see if it produced different results, and it did not.

“This check should dismiss objections that the results are significantly biased by the transfer of students,” noted Greene, “because the Harvard/Urban Institute method is much less sensitive to the transfer of students since it looks only at the movement of students in a one-year period.”

Responding to Dickman’s accusation that Greene’s work was “propaganda posing as research,” School Choice Wisconsin President Susan Mitchell noted Greene’s respected standing as a researcher and pointed out that his method for estimating graduation rates is used by the national publication *Education Week* for its annual “Quality Counts” report.

Besides, added Mitchell, Dickman’s organization “is hardly an adequate arbiter of research quality,” citing a December 2002 PPF study that touted the superior performance of one group of students over another without using any controls—a no-no taught in Research 101.

Nor is PPF “non-partisan” when it comes to school choice issues, said Mitchell, noting PPF strongly supports a position that was rejected by the Wisconsin Supreme Court—putting rigid accountability systems in place for choice schools and treating them like public schools.

“While the PPF is entitled to this view,

it makes the PPF a participant in the debate, not an objective observer,” said Mitchell. “Indeed, major opponents of school choice believe more regulation will undermine the program by discouraging good private schools from participating.”

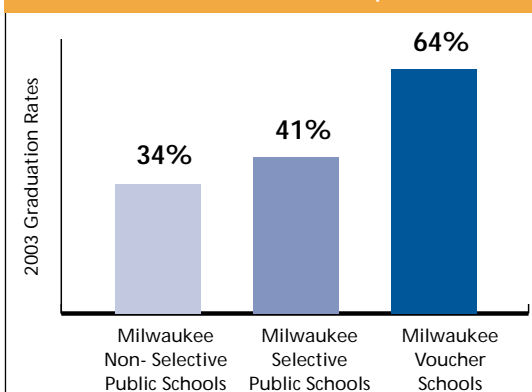
One of the nation’s leading education scholars, Paul Hill of the University of Washington, pulled out of a PPF project when he found its view was biased on this issue. He said, “[a]s the [PPF] reports were being drafted it became clear that the dominant people on the study ... had adopted a clear position in favor of using the same oversight processes for schools of choice as for conventional public schools.”

George A. Clowes (clowes@heartland.org) is managing editor of *School Reform News*.



“School Choice Wisconsin President Susan Mitchell noted Greene’s respected standing as a researcher and pointed out that his method for estimating graduation rates is used by the national publication *Education Week* for its annual ‘Quality Counts’ report.”

Milwaukee voucher students graduate at a higher rate than students at Milwaukee’s public schools



Source: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research

INTERNET INFO

The School Choice Wisconsin Web site at <http://www.schoolchoiceinfo.org> offers not only a link to Jay Greene’s study of graduation rates but also a wealth of information on school choice programs, school choice research, and ongoing school choice news.

Greene Disputes Florida’s Increased Graduation Rate

Just because Manhattan Institute researcher Jay Greene agrees with Gov. Jeb Bush (R) on the value of school choice doesn’t mean Greene endorses everything Bush says.

Greene recently questioned Bush’s statement that high school graduation rates in the Sunshine State had increased for the fifth consecutive year, rising to 71.6 percent in 2004 compared to 60.4 percent in 1999.

A *Miami Herald* analysis showed the 2004 graduation rate was the same 66 percent figure that was reported to the federal government in 2003 for students who received a standard high school diploma. The 71.6 percent graduation rate from the Florida Department of Education includes students who received special education diplomas and students who received a GED after dropping out of regular high school. Greene

said GED recipients shouldn’t be counted as high school graduates.

“It would be a little like counting a patient as a cure for a doctor when the patient left a doctor’s care,” Greene told the *Orlando Sentinel*. “We wouldn’t want to do that if we’re interested in how our high schools are doing or how our doctors are doing.”

— G.C.



A CHILD IS MISSING ALERT™

When a child goes missing in the U.S., the sooner people know, the better the chance for survival. A Child Is Missing Alert™ is helping to save lives of children, the elderly (often with Alzheimer's), and the mentally challenged by deploying a rapid notification program that generates 1,000 automated calls to local residents and businesses within minutes of police verification of a missing person.

Free to law enforcement, and complementing Amber Alert, this successful program is available nationwide. To make sure your school is prepared to respond, call **1-888-US5-ACIM** or visit **www.achildismissing.org** today.

Because failing them is not an option.