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**BEYOND THE
LOOKING GLASS**

PAPERS FROM A NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
TEACHER EDUCATION POLICIES, PRACTICES & RESEARCH

SHIRLEY M. HORD
SHARON F. O'NEAL
MARTHA L. SMITH
EDITORS

A NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM HOSTED BY
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TEACHER EDUCATION: OF THE PEOPLE,
BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Education Standards Committee, Arkansas

Teacher education, both preparatory and during service, will continue to be affected by the education renewal movement that is sweeping the country. That movement, largely inspired by forces outside the existing public education system, demands more public participation in and accountability from our public schools. Community involvement in the public schools is a welcome change from the decreasing public support for education that we have seen in recent years and should be applauded by teachers, administrators, and university professors. And, although much of the reform thus far has focused on raising standards for curricular offerings and student achievement as a first step toward reversing lowered expectations about student capacity for learning, the winds of reform are also upsetting the status quo in teacher education.

In Arkansas, we have worked to (1) require greater accountability from all elements within the public education system, (2) focus more attention and targeted assistance on each individual student, and (3) increase the rigor of the courses required and the performance expected of our students. In addition, a committee appointed by Governor Clinton, which will be making its report within the next two months, is addressing changes needed in teacher education, certification, and evaluation. Its chairman, Ann Henry, was present at this conference and served remarkably well in the difficult undertaking of presiding over the diverse interests and points of view represented on the committee addressing those subjects.

We recognize in Arkansas that the effectiveness of the reforms passed by our legislature and adopted by our state board of education will be determined largely by the teachers and administrators already in our schools. One of the keys to insuring that the reforms are implemented is a good inservice education program tied both to the goals of the education system and to the needs of educators.

There are, in my opinion, six basic policy assumptions about the kind of inservice education program we need in public education. First, the content of teacher education, either before or during service, cannot and should not be solely determined by educators. Second, inservice education programs must be related to furthering a state's, school district's, and individual school's educational goals. Third, inservice education programs should address both the needs expressed by educators for further education in particular areas and the deficiencies in functioning revealed by needs assessments participated in by teachers, administrators, outside evaluators, patrons, and, when appropriate, students. Fourth, assessment and evaluation are critical components in any inservice education program. Fifth, the state should require each district to have ongoing inservice programs and should provide financial support to assist districts in designing, conducting, and evaluating them. And sixth, statewide programs for career ladders, master teachers, or merit pay should be tied to functioning and effective inservice programs. I want to discuss these policy assumptions and my reasons for each.

The first assumption concerns the role of persons other than educators in the design and conduct of inservice education programs. I believe strongly in the widest possible support for and participation in the public education system. That belief is founded on my understanding of the dependence of a democratic form of government (especially in a pluralistic society) on its public schools and my common-sense political experience that the surest way to ensure broad community support for a policy is to work toward broad-based community involvement. For example, when we began our effort in Arkansas to reach a consensus on quality education standards, we worked very hard and spent an enormous amount of time to involve as many people as possible. We held a public hearing in every one of the 75 counties, invited representatives of education organizations and experts to our meetings, and used the media extensively to create a two-way channel of communication about education issues. People came forward with all sorts of ideas, some meritorious, others not, but all expressing real concerns. When we sifted through the recommendations to arrive at our own conclusions, we had the benefit of many ideas and the confidence that our views did not arise in a vacuum.

The model is not so different for involving noneducators with inservice education. The new Arkansas Education Standards for Accrediting Public Schools require each district and school to set educational goals and adopt strategies for achieving those goals, using processes that require public involvement. One of

the strategies for achieving goals should be a program of continuing inservice education, and another strategy should be evaluation of the effectiveness of inservice education. The public should be involved through committees in formulating both the program and the evaluation measures.

The public should also be involved in ongoing efforts to assess the needs of local school districts. I reject the view held by some within our schools that persons on the outside neither know nor care about the problems faced every day in the classroom. In fact, I believe that often an outside perspective can be useful in identifying needs which may not even be perceived by teachers and administrators.

Once needs are identified, noneducators may also be very useful in conducting programs that address those needs. There are, for example, communications experts who could assist educators in improving their abilities to communicate effectively. Private businesses use such assistance all the time in their continuing education--why not schools? Social workers and child psychologists could provide valuable information about children's problems and development. Management and motivation seminars used by businesses could also assist administrators in learning more effective means of management and personnel motivation than are usually practiced within our schools. These are just three ways that noneducators could assist in the design and delivery of inservice education to educators. A policy that assumes the legitimacy of such involvement and requires educators to seek outside assistance would result in more effective and better supported inservice programs.

The second policy assumption, that inservice education programs should further state, school district, and individual school educational goals, may seem obvious and not worth mentioning. However, I have often observed that programs labeled "inservice education" do little to address district or school problems or to further their educational objectives. A well-designed inservice education program should be part of a strategy adopted to meet particular educational goals. Although the goals of school districts and of individual schools within a district may differ depending upon the instructional leadership available, the student population, and other characteristics, it is essential that inservice education be tied to meeting each one's goals, whatever they might be.

For example, a state might adopt a goal that all its students will meet certain levels of achievement on standardized tests by a specified date. If that is the goal, then inservice education ought to address the various ways educators

can assist students to improve their performance toward meeting that goal. A school district with a high population of disadvantaged students might have a goal of enabling a certain percentage of all its students to read at their grade level. Certainly, that district's inservice education program should focus on training teachers to help slower students improve their reading and on assisting administrators in providing instructional leadership that will support teachers in their efforts. A school with an affluent population might have a goal of providing a more challenging curriculum for its students, and its inservice education program would focus on curriculum innovation. In other words, inservice education must be married to educational goals or it risks being irrelevant both to the individual educator and to the setting in which it occurs.

Third, I assume that inservice education programs should address both the needs that educators themselves express and their needs as perceived by others. The question about who should define needs is a variation of the old "chicken and egg" problem. We often do not know what we do not know, and so have difficulty articulating what our needs might be. I am confident that educators understand many of their needs and can design programs that address those needs, but I also believe that certain deficiencies or problems within a district may not be well perceived by educators themselves and may best be articulated by persons other than teachers. For example, teachers may well perceive that they need training in techniques of classroom management or discipline, but they may not perceive that enhanced collegiality within the teaching corps and improved lines of communication between teachers and administrators would assist them in enforcing school discipline policies. Teachers may also recognize that they need alternative methods of reading instruction but may not perceive that more effective communication between school personnel and parents would resolve some of the problems associated with poor reading achievement. An inservice education program that provides a comprehensive approach to school needs must be designed with the input of both those who will participate in the program and those who will benefit from it.

My fourth policy assumption concerns the critical importance of assessment and evaluation in all aspects of public education, including inservice education programs. Assessment and evaluation measures are necessary in designing a continuing education program. An assessment and evaluation process must have the confidence of those who support the public education system. Arkansas was the first state to require that administrators and teachers be tested on their basic

skills as a means for determining who needs assistance to remedy deficiencies in those skills. We consider the test to be part of an ongoing process for assessing our educators' needs and for designing inservice programs to address them. Under the law, all teachers and administrators will be tested in the spring of 1985, except for those who have obtained certification in the last four years by having successfully passed the National Teachers Examination.

The Arkansas test is being developed by a committee of teachers and administrators in cooperation with a nationally recognized testing and research firm. Teachers or administrators who do not pass the basic skills test in the spring of 1985 will have two years to upgrade their skills. They must pass the test by June 1, 1987, the date on which the new Arkansas Education Standards for Accrediting Public Schools will come into effect. Teachers who do not pass the basic skills test by this date will not be certified to teach in the Arkansas public schools. In addition to the basic skills test, the state is requiring educators either to pass a test in their principal subject area of certification or to return to an institution of higher education to take additional course credits and complete them successfully.

Why did we adopt the test? The need for assessment of basic teaching skills became apparent through public involvement in our process to reach consensus about what Arkansas needed to improve education. Therefore, the Arkansas governor and legislature decided to establish state assessment of basic skills and to set a benchmark for measuring them. The reasons for requiring the test were political and substantive.

Politically, the public is justified in requiring more accountability in return for greater investment in education, and that accountability requires assessment and evaluation which the public can understand. The people, through their legislators, voted to raise the sales tax for the first time in 26 years and to devote every penny of that raise to education. Seventy percent of the money appropriated for public schools is to be spent on increasing inadequate teacher salaries. In return for their investment, the taxpayers demanded assurances that teacher competency will be improved. The test offers part of that assurance, and will increase public support for teachers.

Substantively, the state cannot require inservice education programs in each district unless it has a statewide needs assessment of teachers' basic skills. Without such a benchmark, the state cannot design or fund a program furthering its goal of improving educational performance. If our educators have deficiencies in

basic skills, as the public widely believes, that problem must be addressed before other needs can be met; if the public's belief is not well founded, it has to be refuted so that the state can move on to address other pressing problems.

The test will not determine who is a good teacher but will identify those who need improved basic skills in order to function more effectively in the classroom. University and college as well as inservice programs are now helping to prepare educators for the test and will provide remedial assistance to any who fail. The state is currently considering other assessment and evaluation processes that will be used after the test to help educators improve communications, discipline, management, and substantive skills.

The fifth policy assumption is that the state should require continuing inservice education. The Arkansas Education Standards for Accrediting Public Schools contain the following standard on staff development and inservice training:

1. Each school district shall develop and implement a plan for professional staff development and inservice training based on local educational needs and state educational goals. The plan shall be subject to review by the state department of education. The plan shall provide education and training for school board members, school and district administrators, teachers and support staff on a continuing and regular basis throughout the school year. Teachers shall be involved in the development of the plan for their own inservice education. All programs for staff development and inservice training shall be evaluated by the participants in each program.
2. Each school district shall have flexibility in establishing plans for staff development and inservice training, provided the plans meet standards for inservice education as developed by the state department of education.

The Arkansas Education Standards Committee and the State Board of Education believe that staff development for teachers and other school personnel is essential in developing effective schools. Teachers need continuing access to new techniques and knowledge in order to do a better job in the classroom. Administrators should continue to improve their skills in management and information sharing. As instructional leaders, they must also understand the functions and content of instruction. Both teachers and administrators should know how to involve parents and the community to maintain their support for public schools. School board members should be required to take inservice training in developing policy. Support staff and other school personnel must also have

inservice education programs appropriate to their responsibilities. Each local school district is responsible under the Arkansas standards to provide appropriate ongoing education. The state does not mandate the program or subject area because inservice education should be tailored to district or school needs and goals.

I strongly support state leadership in inservice education, but I do not believe the federal government should establish inservice policies. In certain programs traditionally supported by federal funds, such as Chapter One funding for disadvantaged students, inservice training in the goals and objectives of the program may well be part of the federal government's requirements for granting funds. But otherwise, I think the state should set the ground rules for inservice education and the local district should be responsible for designing and implementing appropriate programs.

The sixth policy assumption concerns the relationship between inservice education programs and proposals for career ladders, master teachers, or merit pay for teachers. I do not believe we can have effective career ladders or fair and acceptable criteria for designating master teachers and allocating merit pay without inservice education that meets the requirements for these programs and satisfies the expectations of evaluators and peers. It is also essential that persons responsible for implementing such programs be required to obtain the necessary inservice education enabling them to evaluate their programs.

If these policy assumptions govern the design and implementation of inservice education, I am confident that both educators and the public will be pleased to make the investment of time and money necessary to do a first-rate job of educating students.