

THE WHITE HOUSE

Bruce —

I skipped out for 45 minutes the other day to hear Bob Chase speak @ THE national press club. It was quite good — attached is a draft of his speech and a copy of THEIR report. There may be some venues worth exploring. Love

"Lead, Follow, and Get Out of the Way"

Remarks by
Bob Chase, President, National Education Association

At the National Press Club

March 4, 1999
Washington, D.C.

Edw -
NEA

That was a very generous introduction. It was also a very "Washington" introduction, highlighting my official titles and duties. But I ought to ask that famous Ronald Reagan question in the movie "King's Row": "Where's the rest of me?" Yes, I am president of the nation's largest union; I have a column in *The Washington Post*; and -- like so many other public figures in this city -- I have gone on "Crossfire" and the other political shout shows.

But I am at pains to emphasize that for 25 years I had a *real* job. I was a teacher. Every day, I touched the lives of some 150 young people in ways that I considered profound and important. And, for a quarter century, *they* touched *my* life -- in ways both terrific and not so terrific. There's an old saying that "teachers are the bones on which children sharpen their teeth." Believe me, I know the meaning of that saying.

My first year in the classroom, I wasn't a member of my local teachers union. I didn't see the need. But, very quickly, the going got tough. In college, I didn't take a single geography course, and my first assignment was to teach -- you guessed it -- geography.

In short, I was floundering. I was totally on my own. And I realized that my colleagues were mostly in the same predicament -- professionally isolated, powerless, voiceless in the larger affairs of the school.

So I did the rational thing: I joined the local teachers union. And my point is this: I didn't go into teaching to become a union activist. I became a union activist in order to become a better teacher, in order to advance my profession, in order to give teachers a voice in making their schools more effective places for teaching and learning.

And I guess I'm consistent. Because that is exactly why, three years ago, I ran for president of the National Education Association. I ran because I believe in my soul that NEA can and must play *the* decisive role not just in lifting up the teaching profession, but in revitalizing public education for the children of this country.

But we cannot meet big challenges with small ideas.

Two years ago, I stood at this same podium and articulated our vision for a new NEA and a new style of unionism -- with a sharp new emphasis on quality and professionalism.

This so-called New Unionism is many things. It is about ending the head-butting between union and school management. It is about putting issues of school quality front and center

at the bargaining table. It is about insisting on a more robust role for teachers in organizing their schools for high performance.

Now, that all sounds very good. But in my speech two years ago, I challenged you in the press corps to “watch what we do, not what we say.” Today, I return to this forum to be held accountable, to report to you that the new NEA is not just concept, it is also bicep – it is a concrete reality in countless school districts all across this country.

Immediately after this luncheon, we will make available a book of some 300 of these local initiatives – by no means a comprehensive listing, but a good sampling.

I would love to use this national forum to celebrate each and every teacher, each and every innovation. I can’t do that. But I can mention NEA members in Longbeach, California, who have built a deeply collaborative partnership with management – not just at the bargaining table, but in the day-to-day management of each school in the district.

I can mention our Read Across America day this past Tuesday – a huge success. We mobilized more than a million NEA members and some 20 million children – as well as parents, business leaders, governors, President Clinton, and so many others – all to celebrate the importance of reading.

I can mention NEA members who are starting up their own charter schools in Norwich, Connecticut; Lanikai, Hawaii; Colorado Springs, San Diego, and Phoenix.

I can mention teachers in Montclair and Dumont, New Jersey, who are turning two high schools into professional development academies.

And because it takes two to tango, I can also mention the many hundreds of superintendents, principals, and school board members I have talked to who are embracing the new NEA, who are reaching out to form genuine partnerships with their local teacher associations.

It is breathtaking to me, sometimes, to think how far we have come – and how fast. Certainly, one vivid example is the issue of peer assistance and review. This is the practice of master teachers intervening to assist fellow teachers who are struggling in the classroom. In most cases, the struggling teachers improve -- their careers are saved. But in cases where a teacher is clearly not up to the job, the master teacher – *a member of our union* – counsels that teacher to leave the profession, and can even recommend dismissal.

Let me tell you, this is difficult stuff. For years, NEA slammed the door on peer review. We branded it a threat to union solidarity. And yet there were several courageous local affiliates that were not only practicing peer review, but thriving with it.

In my speech here in 1997, I went out of my way to praise one of those peer review programs, in Columbus, Ohio. I saluted the vast majority of teachers as capable and dedicated, but incurred the wrath of critics for saying (and I quote) “there are indeed *some* bad teachers in America’s schools. And it is our job as a union to improve those teachers or – that failing – to get them out of the classroom.”

That statement set off a thoughtful, passionate, sometimes bitter debate within our Association. But not half a year later, delegates to our annual Representative Assembly overturned NEA’s opposition to peer review.

And then the floodgates opened up. Today, more than a dozen locals are now doing peer review. And when the Columbus Education Association put on a peer review conference last year, it drew more than 500 participants from 30 states.

I love what the president of our Columbus affiliate said in an newspaper interview (and I quote): "First [NEA] said we couldn't do [peer review]. Then they ignored us. Then, six years later, they gave us an award."

And this is what I mean when I say that we are embracing rapid, dramatic changes. Yes, progress has not always come easily. There have been battles. But at every turn, our Association has opted for change. And the reason is obvious to me, because the fact is that those of us in NEA leadership are playing catch-up ball. Our members are way out ahead of us.

I sometimes think the motto of our new NEA should be: *Lead, follow, and get out of the way*. By all means, our Association needs to *lead* – to turn up the heat nationally for the *right* changes in public education. But just as importantly, we need to *follow* – to follow the lead of NEA members who are doing new and difficult things such as collaborative bargaining and co-management of their schools. And at the same time – let me be frank – NEA also needs to *get out of the way*. We can't allow union sacred cows to block the path of members who want to pursue their own vision of school quality and reform.

I say that as a committed unionist, with great respect for all that NEA has accomplished through the years.

Let me be clear: I believe in collective bargaining. I believe that collective bargaining is indispensable. But collective bargaining is a tool, not an altar. And right now, in most places, this tool is too narrowly focused on the terms and conditions of employment.

We need to liberate collective bargaining -- to liberate our whole way of thinking about our role and responsibility in any given school district.

When NEA's local affiliates sit down with management, we should be negotiating the future. We should be hammering out blueprints for reform and renewal in each of our public school districts. And, to that end, our colleagues on the other side of the table must be willing to join with us.

Again, let me be frank. For three decades – in the face of school systems that treated teachers in callous, abusive, arbitrary ways -- our unions defined their role defensively. We shielded our members by erecting, and fiercely defending, a great palisade of protections...protections and work rules designed to reduce flexibility, to minimize uncertainty.

Yes, in most schools and school districts, these contract restrictions continue to play a vital role in protecting employees from abuses. This is *very* important. But we also have to reckon with the costs.

A great wall of contract protections can have the unintended effect of blocking necessary changes. It's ironic, but in the name of protecting our members from dysfunctional systems, we sometimes end up helping to perpetuate those very systems!

That is why so many of our local affiliates are willing to take risks. Instead of contracts that reduce flexibility and restrict change, *we need contracts that empower and enable*. And I

hasten to add, we also need superintendents and school boards to join with us in thinking anew and acting anew.

I remind you that when we built our teacher unions three decades ago, we accepted the old labor-management premise: That management directs and the union files grievances.

Today, our new NEA rejects this old division of roles. We are saying to management – not in confrontation, but by way of invitation: Certain things you said were off limits, we insist on opening for discussion. For instance: strict entry-level standards for teachers, teacher mentoring, peer assistance, professional development, National Board certification, and – to put it broadly -- a larger role for teachers in organizing their schools for excellence. If our shared goal is a quality revolution in public education, these issues *must* be on the table.

And let me get very specific, because I want to leave no doubt about NEA's top priority. Indeed, I am tempted to suggest another motto for NEA – and for everyone else who seeks to revitalize America's public schools: It's the teachers, stupid!

A blue-ribbon report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future put it best, summing up the gist of more than 200 studies. Let me quote: “No other intervention – *no other intervention* -- can make the difference that a knowledgeable, skillful teacher can make in the learning process. Students learn more when their teacher knows more.”

And this is exactly where America's schools are hurting the most. Because there will be no quality revolution until this rich, resourceful country of ours ends the gross professional neglect of its teachers -- a neglect bordering on abandonment.

Several weeks ago, *The New York Times* reported a thoroughly depressing poll: Only one in five teachers say they feel well prepared for the modern classroom. Only one in five feels prepared to deal with new technologies, higher standards, children with disabilities, children of poverty -- the whole gamut of challenges that are dumped in teachers' laps.

Ladies and gentlemen, that poll is a cry from the heart! It is a cry for better teacher training, better support in the classroom, better professional development.

The media are full of stories about the growing teacher shortage. But there is not a teacher shortage so much as there is a respect shortage, a salary shortage, a shortage of the most basic care and feeding of teachers in their professional lives.

What does it say about our priorities when we *say* we want the best and brightest to enter teaching, and yet we pay new teachers salaries as low as \$14,000 to \$18,000?

Nationwide, more than one out of four newly hired teachers is thrust into the classroom without proper certification. And the overwhelming majority of new teachers receive no mentoring or peer support whatsoever. So is anyone surprised that 20 percent of new public school teachers drop out by the end of their first year – or that nearly half leave within five years?

And for veteran teachers, the neglect is just as bad. Professional development is totally inadequate – when it is available at all. In one Midwest district, the school board rejected a budget request for teacher training, while approving \$100,000 to renovate hot dog stands and seating at the high school football stadium.

In too many school districts, the message to teachers seems to be: the beatings will continue until morale improves. And this is crazy. Teachers deserve better. More to the point, so do the children they teach.

But we can no longer wait for *others* to address these crying needs. After all, it is *our* profession we are talking about! If teachers are going to get the support we need – in our classrooms and in our professional lives – then our unions must play an even more aggressive, assertive role in demanding it, and if necessary providing it ourselves.

Again, I refer you to the booklet of activities by hundreds of our local affiliates. It is no coincidence that the lion's share of these initiatives involve things like mentoring, peer assistance, peer review, National Board certification, professional development. In short, teachers helping teachers – teachers stepping forward to take charge of our profession.

And at the same time, we are also stepping up our resources at the national level – hiring an additional 15 respected professionals in our Teaching and Learning division, again with a sharp emphasis on teacher quality and professional development.

This is the soul of our new NEA. This is our central organizing principle: to enhance the quality and professionalism of teachers and other school employees...to give *all* of our members the skills they need to help their students succeed.

Now, I also want to make clear that there is a larger context to what we are doing at NEA. Indeed, since this is the National Press Club, let me offer you something of a scoop. We all know that newspapers and television thrive on scandal and failure – the “Fleecing of America,” as NBC Nightly News so delicately puts it. For more than a decade, stories about public schools have been a veritable parade of horrors.

And so I offer you this scoop: There are thousands of excellent, high-achieving public schools in the United States. And I will go further: public education is in the midst of a standards revolution that is lifting the quality of virtually *every* public school.

NEA is speaking a new language of standards, responsibility, and accountability. And we are by no means alone.

Thirty-eight states have already put in place tougher statewide academic standards, and another 10 states are following suit. Twenty-four states have introduced – or soon will – tests that high school seniors must pass in order to get a diploma.

The most remarkable turnaround is taking place in big inner-city school systems from Los Angeles to Chicago to Boston – and right here in Washington, D.C. Courageous school superintendents – in partnership with local teacher unions -- are shaking up failing schools, raising academic standards, ending social promotion, and making summer school mandatory for kids who don't master the basics. ✓

This is an entirely new world – and it is working. Already we have seen a huge increase in the number of high school kids taking Advanced Placement coursework. SAT mathematics scores are at their highest level in 27 years. And the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress shows that – for the first time in a decade -- reading skills are up in all three grades tested: 4th, 8th, and 12th.

So that is my scoop: public schools are coming back strong.

And there is one other seriously underreported story. Don't be distracted by the huffing and puffing from folks on the political extremes – folks who are still targeting public schools as ground zero in their “culture war.” The *real* story in public education is that – after decades of fads and turmoil – the era of big, unaccountable experiments is over.

Indeed, the most reckless experiment – tuition vouchers – is currently self-destructing in Cleveland. Student achievement among voucher students is stagnant, millions of dollars are being squandered on taxi fares, the head of the Cleveland voucher program is blaming the whole mess on state officials, and vice versa.

By contrast, if you look at the mainstream of public education, what you see is a triumph of common sense, a focus on what *works*: higher expectations, tougher academic standards, stricter accountability, smaller classes in the early grades, and – first and foremost – teacher quality.

By the way, on the topic of “what works,” last month NEA joined with the American Federation of Teachers and others to publish a “consumer guide” to proven, successful models for schoolwide reform -- for example, the “Success for All” reading program, developed at Johns Hopkins University. Once again, the accent is on proven, research-based change – the *right* kind of change.

Now, though I say we have turned the corner in public education, we obviously still face huge challenges. Right here in this city of Washington, for example, how do we meet the needs of nearly 80,000 students – many of them kids of poverty, kids who face the urban equivalent of the Ten Plagues of Egypt? Teachers and other school employees can't possibly master this challenge alone. We need help.

In Washington -- in every community -- we need a new compact that puts the *public* back into the public schools. We need every citizen involved and engaged.

To parents, this compact is very simple: Regardless of your child's challenges or special needs, we will educate your child to the best of our ability. That is our duty and responsibility as public educators. But, as parents, you can make a huge difference by sending your children to school “ready to learn” – and by that I mean children who behave, children who respect adult authority, children who are taught at home that education is important. I can't tell you what a difference this can make your child's ability to achieve in school.

To the business community, the possibilities for your engagement are limitless. But let me offer just one proposal: What about giving each of your employees 20 hours of paid leave each year for the express purpose of working as volunteers, including in their local public schools? That's what three radio stations – WTOP, WGMS, and Z-104 – do here in the Washington area. It is a program that enriches the employees – and does a world of good for our schools.

To our colleagues in higher education – many of them NEA members -- instead of complaining about some high school graduates who need remedial help their freshman year, why not get involved with your local public schools? There are at least five major universities in this city alone, including Georgetown and Howard. Think of the impact if each university had a big-sister relationship with just one or two high schools – with professors assisting teachers, and

college students mentoring and tutoring high school students. Again, this would be nothing but a win-win relationship.

And to public officials, especially elected officials, I make a special appeal: Public schools are on the right track, they are making tangible progress, and they deserve to be supported, not abandoned. Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door. We need Democrats and Republicans alike getting behind our public schools and -- specifically -- giving teachers and support staff the resources they desperately need.

I began, this afternoon, talking about teachers -- and that is how I will conclude. I cannot possibly improve on the eloquence of one of your colleagues, Colman McCarthy, writing in *The Washington Post* (and I quote): "When all the politicians end their speeches on school reform, when all the writers are through praising or damning vouchers, when all the task forces finish recommending one cure-all or another, it is the lonely elementary school teacher who, in six or seven hours a day with children, must cut through the baloney and educate."

To which I say, amen.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe in the power of teachers to transform young lives. I also believe in *our* power -- the power of the new NEA -- to transform the professional lives of teachers.

A very wise person once said that great teaching is not about filling up a pail, it is about lighting fires. And that is exactly the kind of new union we are creating -- one that lights fires, one that makes a tangible, qualitative difference in the lives of teachers and children across this country.

The match has been struck. We have begun. And we have begun strongly.

Thank you. I look forward to responding to your questions.

STEPPING FORWARD

*How NEA Members Are Revitalizing
America's Public Schools*



nea

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The idea of a professional union—one focused on the quality of teaching and the welfare of children—is an idea whose time has come. Its realization has been hastened by a wide variety of local grass roots, state and national efforts summarized here. From peer review and assistance programs that support teacher learning and professional accountability to school redesign initiatives that are creating places for more powerful learning, these efforts are slowly and surely reinventing teaching and schooling. Teachers' leadership is critical to this process and to its ultimate goals—the transformation of education in America so that it focuses on high quality teaching and learning for all students in all communities.

Linda Darling-Hammond
Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education, Stanford University
Executive Director, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

Stepping Forward provides the first evidence that 'new unionism' is more than a slogan. And it shows the great potential in achieving educational reform by using labor's traditional tools: bargaining, lobbying, and member education. It is hopeful news.

Charles Taylor Kerchner
Hollis T. Allen Professor of Education, Claremont Graduate University
Co-author, *United Mind Workers*

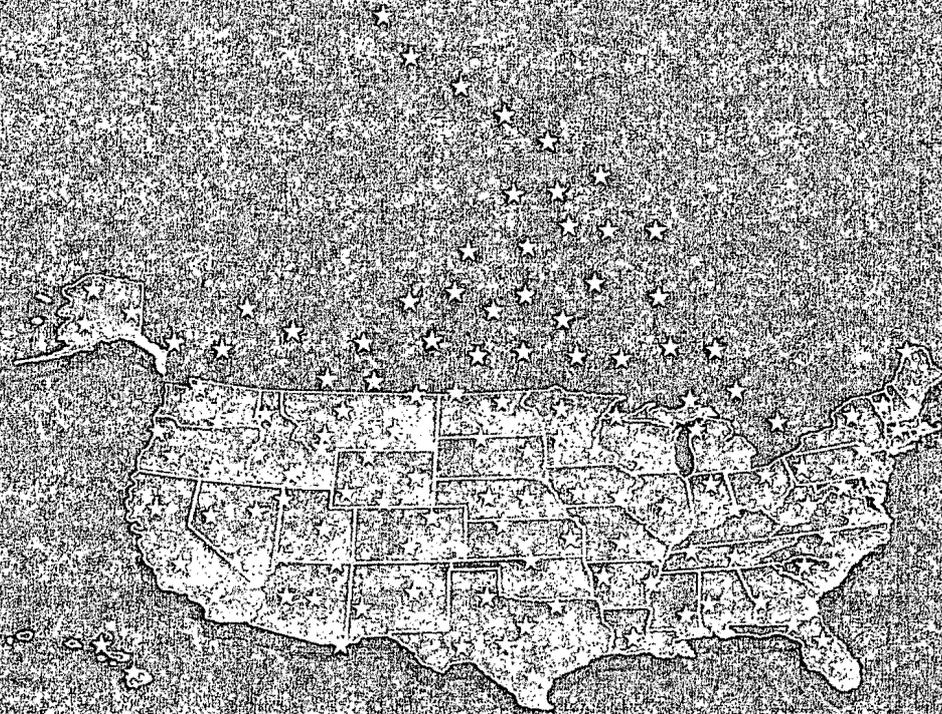
For additional information on any of the programs highlighted in *Stepping Forward* or for single copies, please contact NEA Communications at 202-822-7200.

Reproduction: No part of this report may be reproduced in any form without written permission from NEA, except by NEA affiliated associations. Any reproduction of the report materials must include the usual credit line and the copyright notice. Address queries to NEA Communications, 1201 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Copyright © March 1999 by the National Education Association
All Rights Reserved

STEPPING FORWARD

*How NEA Members Are Revitalizing
America's Public Schools*



nea

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

1201 Sixteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-3290

STEPPING FORWARD

How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

Table of Contents

Preface by Bob Chase	5
Introduction	7
Enhancing Teacher Quality	
Mentoring	16
Peer Assistance and Review	26
Professional Development	29
National Board Certification	35
Addressing the Conditions of Children	
Safety and Discipline	44
School Readiness	45
Supporting Local Solutions	46
Promoting Community and Parental Involvement	
Community Partnerships	54
Parental Involvement	63
Improving the Conditions of Schools	
Technology	70
Class Size	78
Modernization	79
Redesigning Schools	
Charter Schools	86
Bargaining for Quality	88
New Models for Decision Making	91
Reconstituting Low-Performing Schools	95
Aligning Standards with Practices	96
Index	104
Resource List	107

STEPPING FORWARD
How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

Preface

By Bob Chase, NEA President



“Watch what we do, not what we say.”

— National Press Club speech, Feb. 5, 1997

I like that bumper sticker that says, “Change is good. You go first.” It captures our natural human ambivalence about change. By the same token, I like the title of this publication, “Stepping Forward,” because it aptly describes what NEA members are doing in school districts across the United States. They are daring to go first—daring to step forward with new ideas and initiatives to revitalize the nation’s public schools.

5

In the process, they are also creating a new and revitalized National Education Association. I am the first to acknowledge that this new NEA is being born of a lopsided division of labor. The easy job was mine: I applied the New Unionism label. The hard job has fallen to our members, who are creating the substance and the practical models. Above all, credit goes to the many courageous leaders who have been pioneers in putting issues of professionalism and school quality at the forefront of their state and local associations’ advocacy.

When I gave that National Press Club speech in 1997, no one could have anticipated how powerfully the call to reinvent NEA would seize the imagination of our members. Nor could anyone have anticipated the kinds of rapid, startling changes that would be initiated and embraced by teachers and other school employees in thousands of school districts across America.

Take just one case in point: peer review. Two years ago, official opposition to this practice was codified in long-standing NEA resolutions. Only a handful of local affiliates—most prominently, the Columbus Education Association—were practicing peer review. But scarcely four months after the National Press Club speech, the 1997 NEA Representative Assembly gave the green light to local affiliates that want to pursue peer review. And last spring—responding to a groundswell of NEA affiliates that are stepping boldly into peer review—the

Columbus Education Association co-sponsored a conference that was swamped by more than 500 participants from 30 states. As Columbus Education Association president John Grossman told *Education Week*, "We've come along fast within NEA. Once that embrace happens, it's a bear hug."

Exactly. Once the 2.4 million members of NEA embrace an idea or an initiative, we do so in a big way. Let me emphasize, however, that peer review is but one of many innovations. Less visible—to the national media, anyway—are the many thousands of local initiatives and collaborations that are redefining NEA, from the bottom up, as a new kind of union. Most gratifying to me personally is the fact that, virtually wherever I travel, I meet local NEA leaders and school superintendents who are overcoming years of head-butting in order to form new, collaborative union-management relationships aimed at boosting school quality.

The strength of NEA's new style of unionism is that it is both concept and bicep. We are not just talking about change. We are flexing our organizational muscle to make change happen—to create facts on the ground.

The purpose of this publication is to document those facts. This is not intended as an exhaustive listing of every local innovation and activity. Nor is every project cited here necessarily exemplary (indeed, most are works in progress; many will succeed, some will fail). But the nearly 300 examples presented here reflect an aggressive new dynamic that is spreading to every corner of our Association. Our members are building an arsenal of strategies—including partnerships, grants, and new approaches to collective bargaining—aimed at helping children succeed.

6

William Butler Yeats said that teaching "is not filling a pail but the lighting of a fire." Likewise, our Association must not only address issues of basic dignity and fairness, we also must seek new ways to lift up our profession. We must light fires. That is what our new NEA is all about.

Introduction

When the National Education Association began collecting examples of what we call “new unionism” a year ago, we expected we would find enough to fill a nice-sized brochure. Instead, we have filled nearly 100 pages with examples from every state.

And there are many more that could have been included. Our goal was to provide a representative list of innovative programs NEA members have initiated and are involved in all across the United States.

This booklet illustrates the many ways NEA members are working to create more effective public schools in communities throughout America. Whether a particular school is good, bad, or average, you can be certain that NEA members are working to make it better – stepping up to the plate and taking more personal responsibility for school quality.

Stepping Forward is an invitation to look more closely at the real world of our nation’s public schools and the people who work there.

What is ‘New Unionism’?

The concept of “new unionism” took root and flowered in 1997. With NEA President Bob Chase as the catalyst for change in the way our union operates, local teachers and school employees throughout the nation put into place the nuts-and-bolts practice of new unionism. New unionism is about taking responsibility for the quality of education—and using our advocacy tools to make things better for children, our students. It is also about taking risks and acting in creative, unconventional ways to address some serious challenges. And it is about collaboration—working with businesses, parents, school boards, school administrators, and the community—to advance teacher quality and student achievement.

The National Education Association recognizes that even the best schools must make changes to meet the challenges that lie ahead for America. NEA leaders, affiliates, and members want to take part in shaping that change. And so, from Montclair, New Jersey, to Puyallup, Washington, the Association is working to change schools for the better.

Addressing Key Needs

NEA members' initiatives and innovations fall into several broad categories that sometimes overlap:

- Enhancing teacher quality
- Addressing the conditions of children
- Promoting community and parental involvement in education
- Improving the conditions of schools
- Redesigning schools.

Enhancing teacher quality begins with a prospective teacher's undergraduate preparation and culminates in elite certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. NEA affiliates are working at different points along this continuum, based on the standards and practices in their state or locality. In many areas and at the national level, the Association works to make sure that high-quality candidates are recruited into teaching. That means ensuring that colleges of education have rigorous standards for entry and graduation. Elsewhere, local Associations are pioneering teacher induction and mentoring programs at the school district level. Many of these initiatives were developed and conducted by Association members long before it became popular to espouse such assistance. The Association is also working to ensure that teachers are evaluated effectively and provided professional development programs throughout their careers. Too often, teaching can be a revolving door, with new teachers leaving within a few years because they did not receive the support they needed to be successful. Support is also there for veteran teachers, where a number of NEA affiliates are helping more experienced teachers navigate the National Board certification process.

8

Addressing the needs of children has long been a top Association priority. Educators and social scientists have documented the relationship between poverty and poor academic achievement, and a number of NEA affiliates have embarked on programs to help parents meet their children's nutrition and health needs.

NEA members know how vital it is to engage parents and other community members in the process of changing and improving their local public schools. Many NEA state and local affiliates are taking bold new steps to reopen the conversation between school and parent, and to build bridges **promoting parental and community involvement**. Association members work to involve parents and other citizens as volunteers in the classroom, as tutors, as mentors, and in other capacities that offer children positive adult role models.

Americans are concerned about safety and order in America's public schools. NEA members are looking at a variety of strategies for making sure every child is safe, every classroom is orderly, and every school building is well equipped and structurally sound. The programs cited in this booklet under **improving the conditions of schools** include efforts to enhance student safety, modernize facilities, and reduce class size to improve student learning.

Most parents expect teachers to play a key role in determining curriculum and teaching methods. While some teachers and school support employees do play significant roles in setting budgets and designing programs, many are still laboring under the weight of excessive bureaucracies and top-down decision-making structures that were long ago discarded by corporate America. Under the rubric of **redesigning schools** are listed a variety of efforts to change and improve the way schools are run, to make them better suited to preparing today's students for the future.

NEA Members Are Taking the Lead

NEA members are taking risks, assuming responsibility for quality, and building new partnerships. They are using collective bargaining and legislative lobbying to improve the quality of America's public schools. Over the past two years, the Association has increased its support for members who dare to challenge entrenched school systems, to experiment with new ideas, and to advocate dramatic changes aimed at improving teaching and learning. Many examples of these groundbreaking efforts are described here.

In every state, NEA affiliates have played a leadership and partnership role in comprehensive education reform. In Colorado, Florida, Washington, Missouri, Virginia, Maryland, and elsewhere, state Associations have worked with legislators and governors of both parties to establish more rigorous academic standards and assessments. State and local Association leaders are now working to translate those standards into curriculum and classroom practices that enable children to achieve at more demanding levels.

What do these efforts have in common? They are centered on accountability. They call for collaboration and partnerships among all stakeholders. And they are compelling all of us to focus on factors that directly impact the quality of teaching and learning: better teacher preparation, rigorous academic standards, high expectations, and parental involvement.

NEA Programs Designed To Promote Education Quality

The National Education Association is in the midst of a major organizational "reinvention" in support of its mission to improve the quality of teaching and learning in public schools. Ongoing advocacy programs, including federal lobbying, seek to direct more resources to the classroom and to strengthen support for nutrition, health care, and developmental child care.

At the same time, NEA is focusing on the professional needs of its members. Reading experts and authorities on teacher education are joining the NEA staff so that the Association can better help teachers put into practice the latest research about

how children learn. The national staff is working with local leaders in their efforts to enhance all the factors that affect teacher quality, including teacher preparation programs, mentoring for new and veteran teachers, and teacher evaluation systems.

Following are just a few examples of how NEA is working with its members and affiliates to meet the changing needs of the teaching profession.

- **Teacher Education Initiative**—NEA is searching for new and better ways to prepare America's future teachers. Through the Teacher Education Initiative, NEA is working in partnership with professional development schools at seven universities: Southern Maine, Memphis, South Carolina; Wyoming, George Mason, Montclair State, and Texas A & M. Already, young teachers are benefiting from the program.
- **Family/School/Community Partnerships**—Restoring strong linkages between schools and the communities they serve is the focus of a major training program NEA is conducting around the country. Groups of people in every state have received this training, and more formal cadres of partners have formed in almost a dozen states to facilitate additional outreach. The program aims to find innovative ways to increase parents' involvement in their children's schools. In New Jersey, for example, elementary school teachers combined an evening Halloween party for students with parent-teacher meetings, relieving adults of the need for child care.
- **Association Advocacy for Student Success**—In cooperation with the University of Memphis, NEA is researching effective models for aligning new statewide academic standards with local curriculum, materials, and classroom practices. The project will provide guidance for local associations working with school districts to foster high expectations and meet high standards.
- **Peer Assistance and Review**—A broad array of NEA leaders and staff were brought together to help state and local affiliates with the planning and implementation of peer assistance and peer review programs. NEA provides interested affiliates with information to help deal with legal, political, and practical considerations.

Many other NEA programs and activities address other needs of America's schools—and NEA's members. School safety and discipline issues are under study, to learn and disseminate effective models for schools. Another NEA initiative is providing technical assistance to five charter schools around the country, to assess and document the potential of charters as vehicles for systemic reform. We continue with our traditional statistical research, tracking working conditions of teachers

and education support personnel to better understand the realities of their daily jobs in the schools. And we are looking at all these issues in connection with collective bargaining, to better understand its essential role in advancing improvements in public education.

We are proud of NEA's 142-year tradition. Through our union, we fought for and won equity and dignity, due process and respect for America's teachers. More recently, we have fought for the same rights for school bus drivers, classroom assistants, cafeteria and maintenance employees, and others who work hard every day in America's schools. We have advocated for and won programs to help children succeed, such as school breakfast, health care, and after-school programs. And we are not about to stop fighting for any of these things. But now it is time to do more, to take on additional responsibility, to find powerful new solutions to new challenges.

In these pages echoes the drumbeat of success from localities across the nation. The sound is growing into a national march. It is the sound of helping every single student. It is the sound of whole communities working together and trying new ideas. It is the sound of aiming higher and getting there.

It is the sound of stepping forward.

STEPPING FORWARD
How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

ENHANCING TEACHER QUALITY

Mentoring

Peer Assistance
and Review

Professional
Development

National Board
Certification



Welcome Aboard!

On her first day as a classroom teacher, with a slight case of stage fright, Jennifer Curtis stood front and center before 18 kindergartners.

"There was a bit of nervous panic," says the 24-year-old. "I thought, 'Wow, this is it! They're looking at me to teach them everything they need to know!' I realized then and there that this job is just as important as a doctor's. You can't afford to make a mistake."

That's a heavy load—but one Curtis didn't have to carry alone. Her local NEA affiliate, the Weymouth Teachers Association in Massachusetts, runs a mentoring program that matched her with veteran teachers. Lori Goodine was a mentor to Curtis at the Ralph Talbot School.

"I didn't know about pacing, how long to stay on a topic, and which activities were developmentally appropriate," Curtis explains. "Lori and I would sit with our lesson plans to see if I was on the right track. She shared tons of curriculum materials with me."

As a result, Curtis had a successful year in the classroom. That's good for students, Curtis—and the profession.

In the next 10 years, NEA Research estimates that hundreds of thousands of teachers will retire. Add to that dramatic increases in the student population, and experts say schools across the country may need to hire as many as two million new teachers by the year 2007.

It's one thing to hire that many teachers—and another to keep them. Right now, between one-third and one-half of all new teachers leave the profession within their first five years.



Photo: A. S. Wolfe/NEA

That's one reason Weymouth NEA members created their "Share the Wealth" mentoring program in 1995. By providing one-on-one mentoring and monthly workshops on professional development topics, they hope to support new teachers, end classroom isolation, and improve the quality of teaching districtwide.

"Many new teachers have little knowledge of the curriculum," says WTA President Ellie Hanlon, "and they don't know some of the basics that we take for granted—like how to take a personal day or even how to order supplies."

One-on-one mentors who work in the same building with their novice partner carry most of the mentoring load. But they get help from "theme mentors," who help teachers grasp particular subjects such as technology, assessment, science, or math.

Loretta Patterson, a ninth grade teacher at Weymouth Junior High, is a computer mentor.

"I answer questions from other teachers, such as 'What do you do when computers aren't working?' Or, 'How do you set up the room to allow each student ample time with the computers and printers?'"

The mentoring and sharing continue during monthly workshops, held at a local steakhouse after school.

Over soft drinks and Buffalo wings, Weymouth teachers exchange ideas and information on resolving conflict in the classroom; working effectively with parents; or planning school field trips. One well-attended session was devoted to swapping lesson plans.

The most popular workshop by far: "Everything You Always Wanted to Know But Were Afraid To Ask."

Questions flew fast and furious as new teachers got the inside scoop on everything from getting substitutes to satisfying requirements for recertification.

Share the Wealth has only been operating for two years, but the benefits from the program and efforts like it are clear.

Better teaching

The advice and counsel from veterans has helped new teachers become more knowledgeable and confident in the classroom.

Novice Heather Murphy, a 23-year-old hired the year her school launched a new language arts curriculum and portfolio assessment system, can attest to that.

"I wasn't sure what was expected of me," Murphy says. "But my mentor, Kathy Woodward, helped me create lesson plans to meet the new curriculum requirements—and that saved me."

A chance for veteran teachers to leave their mark on the profession

As a result of the mentoring program, teachers, administrators, and the public increasingly see the Association promoting high teaching standards and professionalism.

Says veteran and mentor Erma LaPierre: "It serves our purpose to make sure we help our new teachers be the very best. We're showing the public that we have high standards for teaching."

"Many of us are slated to retire within the next 10 years," Hanlon says. "Without a program like this, the things we've all learned and done will just leave with us."

Reprinted from NEA Today, September 1997

Enhancing Teacher Quality Mentoring

★Alabama

Statewide. Eight years ago, the Alabama Education Association (AEA) developed and piloted a peer assistance program that was used by the state department of education to build the beginning teacher assistance program. AEA's "formative assistance" program—developed by teachers, principals, and superintendents—established a model for helping teachers become better prepared. The assistance program's name—TIP-TOP (Teacher In-Service Program—Targeting Optimum Practice) signifies the quality of the service and the quality of teacher growth and development. AEA provided staff to train mentors and project consultants to help teachers become better organized, and improve their student evaluation, discipline, and classroom management skills.

★Alaska

Anchorage. In 1998, the University of Alaska-Anchorage—in partnership with the Anchorage Education Association, the Anchorage PTA, the school board and the administrators association—established a two-year mentoring program for beginning teachers. Courses include school safety, new teacher orientation, and leadership.

Lower Kuskokwim. NEA-Alaska, its local affiliate in Lower Kuskokwim, the Lower Kuskokwim School District, the Alaska Staff Development Network, and the Alaska Distance Delivery Consortium are working together in a mentoring program for beginning teachers, funded in part by a grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. The program helps new teachers (85 percent of the district's teaching force is non-Alaskan native) understand the local Yup'ik language and traditions.

16

★Arizona

Flagstaff. Flagstaff Education Association members are working to boost student success by assisting teachers who need extra help. Since the 1991-92 school year, the district has implemented a teacher-driven peer assistance program that helps educators stay on track—through mentoring, coaching, help with lesson planning, and if needed, a performance improvement plan.

Lake Havasu City. The Lake Havasu City Education Association has had a peer mentoring program for new teachers for three years. Initiated by local Association leaders, the program is designed to help reduce the high attrition rate for new teachers. Beginning teachers receive formal training and help with lesson plans—and are given release time to meet with mentor teachers.

Paradise Valley. In 1998, the Paradise Valley Education Association and the Paradise Valley United School District received an NEA Urban Grant for the second phase of their Teacher Mentor Project. Phase II involves developing and monitoring a selection and training process for mentors. The peer assistance program will provide instructional help for first-year teachers, and will later be expanded to include peer assistance and review for more veteran staff.

★California

Burlingame. The Burlingame Education Association recently negotiated peer assistance provisions into its contract. The peer assistance is at the option of the teacher. The program can help *all* teachers through a process of self-evaluation. Those who need extra help will be provided inservice education and counseling.

Chula Vista. An NEA Urban Grant enabled the Chula Vista Educators to develop a training and assistance program for new teachers. The Chula Vista Assistance Team (CHAT) includes both local Association and school district representatives. It provides all non-tenured teachers with ongoing mentoring, monitoring, and coaching. CHAT seeks to improve student learning by ensuring that new teachers have the knowledge and skills to be effective in the classroom.

In partnership with the district and three local colleges, the Sweetwater Education Association in Chula Vista developed a two-year peer assistance program in 1995. All new teachers participate in their first year; participation is optional in the second year. Students in the colleges' teacher preparation programs serve as interns.

Concord. The Mt. Diablo Education Association in Concord has established a program of intensive peer assistance for teachers who are new to the district and have taught less than two years. A union-management panel consisting of four Association members and four administrators makes recommendations about progressing to the second year of probation. The University of California-Santa Cruz and St. Mary's of Orinda are university partners in the program.

17

Fairfield-Suisun. Provisions of the contract between the Association and the district call for a teacher support team to assist individuals who receive an unsatisfactory evaluation. The support team consults with the teacher and an evaluator, who can be either a principal or supervisor, and then determines what help the individual needs to improve.

Hayward, Concord (Mt. Diablo), Santa Clara County, Vallejo. Four local Associations formed a partnership to develop and implement a peer assistance program to rejuvenate veteran teachers. The four California Teachers Association affiliates will share resources to create a curriculum, engage and motivate members, and improve teaching and learning. An NEA Urban Grant award helped teachers develop the program.

Menlo Park. The Menlo Park Teachers Association negotiated a contract with its school district that includes provisions for a voluntary peer assistance program. The program encourages self-evaluation and professional growth—and ensures extra help for new and probationary teachers who need it.

Santa Clara County. The Oak Grove Education Association in Santa Clara County and the local school district have negotiated a peer assistance program.

The Saddleback Valley Education Association and Saddleback Valley school district are working together on a mentoring program for new teachers and teachers who are changing grade levels or subject areas. There are now 65 mentors who assist peers with content, curriculum, and practical issues such as classroom management.

San Bernardino. The San Bernardino Teachers Association is part of a consortium of community and business groups that is working on new teacher induction and a "survive and thrive" program for veteran teachers. The district will fund the program for new teachers, and the California Teachers Association and the county will help fund the program for veteran teachers.

San Diego. The San Diego Teachers Association has negotiated peer coaching and an additional stipend for mentor teachers who agree to work with new teachers at hard-to-staff schools. A joint teacher-district committee makes decisions about the program.

★Colorado

Arapahoe County. The Cherry Creek school district's Staff Training Assistance and Renewal (S.T.A.R.) mentoring program began in 1994-95 during negotiations with the Cherry Creek Education Association. Start-up funding came from the former sabbatical leave program, which was ended. Based on the philosophy that a consistent high-quality performance by every teacher in every classroom is key to improving student achievement, the S.T.A.R. program provides assistance to all first-year teachers and also aids the growth and development of experienced teachers who need extra short-term support, as well as those who might need remediation. Full-time released teachers serve as S.T.A.R. mentors, who conduct classroom observations and conferences with beginning teachers at least once a week during their first year. The program is supervised and evaluated by a panel composed of three administrators and four teachers who select and evaluate mentors.

18

Loveland. Since 1993, the Thompson Education Association in Loveland has worked with administrators to provide both initial and ongoing help to teachers. The Association assigns a mentor to each new teacher to help the person understand district procedures and expectations. And the Association runs a resource bank of teachers who share their ideas and experience. The resource bank provides a series of professional development programs. Teachers with no previous experience are expected to complete all eight of the courses offered. Experienced teachers new to the district are expected to complete four of the eight.

★Connecticut

Bridgeport. The Bridgeport Education Association is using an NEA Urban Grant to establish a New Teachers Cadre. Cadre members will provide new teachers with comprehensive guidance in lesson planning, classroom management, and student assessment. At the beginning of the school year, the Association hosts a session for new teachers to acquaint them with resources and find out their needs. The program includes workshops and seminars during and after the school day.

★Delaware

Statewide. The Delaware State Education Association and Performance Learning Systems have teamed up to help teachers during their first years of teaching. The partners will train mentor coordinators for each school district, conduct two statewide conferences, and help districts build their own mentor programs. DSEA is putting

together a database to conduct an evaluation and recommend improvements in new teacher induction and mentoring programs.

★Idaho

Bonneville. In the Bonneville school district, remediation teams made up of mentor teachers, an Association advocate, a supervisor, and a learning specialist work with struggling teachers to help them improve their teaching skills. The program, which began in the district about 16 years ago and was revised four years ago, kicks in during the period between an unsatisfactory evaluation and probation.

Idaho Falls. For 10 years, the Idaho Falls Education Association has provided help to teachers who are having difficulties in the classroom. Mentor teachers observe teachers who have been identified as needing help and work with them to improve their skills. The district supports the program, and participants report that the process has improved their instructional skills and made them more responsive to student needs.

Southwest Idaho (10 Districts). Since March 1997, local Association leaders and local school administrators have been participating in a network to improve student learning. The 10 school districts in the peer assistance/problem-solving network have created joint advisory teams that include an Association member and an administrator. The teams go to schools where a problem exists and offer assistance. They observe the situation and assess the problem in an effort to fix it, not to affix blame. If the problem is with a teacher or an administrator, the team offers suggestions. If job performance is the issue, then a peer assistant is recommended for either party or both parties. At the end of the process, a sealed report is issued, reviewed, and then destroyed. The network strives to build trust by involving both the Association and the administration. The 10 districts involved in the network are Boise, Caldwell, Middleton, Marsing, Wilder, Fruitland, Meridian, Gem County, Vallivue, and McCall.

19

★Kansas

Olathe. For the past five years, a collaborative agreement between the Olathe Education Association and the school district has allowed the Association president to work full time on Association business. Part of that business consists of providing intensive assistance to teachers identified by the district as needing help. Typically, teachers requiring assistance are a few veterans who have had difficulty revising their instructional techniques to meet the needs of today's students. The teacher meets with the principal, a district representative, and the Association president to develop a Growth and Improvement Plan that is signed by all parties. The Association president observes the struggling teachers and provides assistance; the principal does the formal evaluations. The process continues until everyone agrees that the teacher has successfully completed the plan or that the teacher should switch careers. The Olathe Education Association is now using a grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to support the development of a formal plan for integrating teacher evaluation, intensive assistance, and staff development into the collective bargaining agreement.

★Kentucky

Statewide. The Kentucky Teacher Internship Program creates teams at each school to evaluate and help new teachers. Each team is made up of the building principal, a resource teacher, and a teacher educator from a state-approved teacher training institution. The teams use the Kentucky Performance Measurement System to evaluate intern-teachers. The Kentucky Education Association conducts an orientation each fall for teacher interns and their mentors—and provides professional development, publications, and a statewide electronic network for interns and mentors to communicate and share ideas. The Appalachia Educational Laboratory is also a partner in the program.

★Maine

Statewide. The state of Maine mandates a program to assist beginning teachers for at least two years. A partnership between the Maine Education Association and the University of Maine helps mentors get the skills they need to be effective through training in peer assistance. Local districts that have committed the resources to support a quality mentor program have been successful.

★Maryland

Frederick County. A task force was formed last year to look at developing a peer assistance program. Concerned that fully half the current teaching force has been hired in the past five years, the Frederick County Teachers Association wants to help these new teachers. Language was negotiated into the contract in support of a peer assistance plan, and a recommendation on how to implement the plan is moving forward.

Prince George's County. The Prince George's County Educators' Association is using a 1998-99 NEA Urban Grant to help beginning teachers gain skills in classroom management, parental involvement, and meeting school district expectations. Workshops are held in conjunction with Bowie State University, the University of Maryland, and Prince George's County Community College. Teams of experienced teachers are gaining new skills in delivering new teacher orientation workshops, recruiting community participants, and disseminating information about new teacher programs.

★Massachusetts

Weymouth. "Sharing the Wealth," a pre K-12 mentoring program created by the Weymouth Teachers Association in 1995, provides assistance and support to new teachers and gives veteran teachers the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with each other, as well as with those they mentor. The program pairs new teachers with mentors in the same building, which allows daily contact and support. Mentors who have expertise in specific content are available as needed. There are also monthly town-wide sessions on topics of concern to all teachers. The program continues to evolve. Recent additions include an "Everything You've Always Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask" session, workshops on conflict resolution, and on mainstreaming non-English speaking students into the regular classroom, and an ongoing lesson exchange among teachers from the district's 13 schools.

★Michigan

Ann Arbor. Ann Arbor administrators and Association leaders worked together to develop a mentor program beginning in the 1997-98 school year. All beginning teachers in the district are assigned mentors for their first three years of classroom teaching. Teachers selected as mentors make a three-year commitment to the task. They are accountable to the district for their mentor responsibilities, and they participate in ongoing professional development activities to help them be effective as mentors.

★Minnesota

Minneapolis. Local affiliates of Education Minnesota negotiated new contract language in the 1997-1999 contract, allowing up to 10 probationary teachers in Minneapolis to share a position with a tenured teacher who has at least 25 years of experience teaching in the area. The senior teacher becomes a mentor and participates in the probationary teacher's professional development/professional support team. The mentor and the probationary teacher must attend all staff meetings and professional development activities of the school, program, and district.

Worthington. The Worthington Education Association and the school district have developed a peer assistance program for new staff. Mentors commit to help new teachers for two years. The program, which started in the 1992-93 school year and is coordinated with the district's staff development program, aims to provide new teachers with tips, instructional ideas, and support.

21

★Missouri

Statewide. Using a grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, the Missouri NEA and the state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are working to improve teacher education. They established a Beginning Teacher Advisory Board and joined in the work of the Missouri Commission on the Future of Teaching, which seeks to improve teacher preparation, induction, and ongoing professional growth. They also plan to establish standards and guidelines for mentor programs and develop a mentor training and support program in conjunction with Missouri's nine university-based regional professional development centers.

★Nebraska

Statewide. Since 1995, the Nebraska State Education Association has worked in collaboration with two state educational service units to provide peer support to new teachers through a year-long mentoring program. This training program has helped nearly 10 percent of all beginning teachers in Nebraska, and in May 1998 the NSEA successfully lobbied the state legislature to expand the mentoring program to every new teacher in the state.

★ Nevada

Clark County. To help the nearly 2,000 new teachers hired each year in the Las Vegas area, the Clark County Education Association offers a "New Hire Orientation." Teachers are given the opportunity to interact with veteran teachers, who help walk beginning teachers through the system—from filling out forms to finding housing to what to expect on the first day of class. At these sessions, held in August, new teachers are given the curriculum they will be expected to follow. The Association also helps veteran teachers who come from out of state by providing workshops on how to comply with Nevada licensing requirements.

★ New Jersey

Passaic. The Education Association of Passaic will use a 1998-99 NEA Urban Grant Award to match each first-year teacher with an experienced mentor. A program called "Secrets They Never Told Me" provides training for both new teachers and mentors. The grant will also help first-year educators develop a handbook for future use by beginning teachers.

★ New Mexico

Los Lunas. In 1998, NEA-Los Lunas and the local school district developed a New Teacher Staff Development program designed to better prepare beginning teachers and improve instruction for students. NEA-New Mexico provided training for the mentor coordinators. All teachers new to the Los Lunas schools will be matched with mentors for their first year.

22

★ North Dakota

Statewide. In 1997, the North Dakota Education Association developed a peer coaching program to help new and veteran teachers. The two dozen staff and leaders trained in peer coaching provide training to other teachers around the state who want to be mentor teachers. The mentors are then available to their colleagues on a one-on-one basis. To date, more than 500 of the state's 9,000 teachers have taken part in this training.

★ Ohio

Brunswick. The Brunswick Education Association is running the school district's entry-year program for new teachers and the district's professional development committee. A member of the Association's board of directors receives one-half paid leave from the classroom to carry out those responsibilities.

★ Oregon

Hood River County. A voluntary peer assistance program, developed by the school district in consultation with the Association, has been in place since 1985. The process calls for peer observation, conferences, and peer coaching—all aimed at assisting teachers so that they can provide students with the skills they need to

succeed in whatever endeavor they embark on at the end of their schooling. All staff are involved in the ongoing improvement of the program and its implementation.

★ Pennsylvania

Erie. The Erie Education Association will use an NEA Urban Grant to launch a new teacher mentor and support project. "Project New House" will provide new teachers with the skills they need to improve teaching and learning in their urban classrooms. A bank of training materials will also be developed to serve as a resource for all district teachers.

★ Rhode Island

Newport. Newport teachers put together "Intensive Assistance," an evaluation document that contains a peer mentor and assistance phase for teachers who are experiencing difficulties. The concept was suggested in 1991 and has been incorporated into the master contract since 1995. All nine schools in the Newport system are involved.

★ Tennessee

Clarksville-Montgomery County. The Clarksville-Montgomery County Education Association and the Austin Peay State University Education Association received an NEA Urban Grant to implement a mentoring and internship program called "The Best of the Best." The two local Associations have begun work with the Clarksville-Montgomery County school system to provide college students entering the teaching profession with a mentor and the opportunity to spend three or four semesters in K-5 classrooms as they transition into teaching. The program began in the summer of 1998. Initially, 35 students will work with mentor teachers for two years. Already participants are reacting positively. The student teachers feel empowered to affect the teaching process, and the mentor teachers are reevaluating their classroom practices. School administrators like the program because it gives them a chance to see student teachers in a classroom setting before they are hired.

Memphis. In 1997, the Memphis Education Association, the University of Memphis, and the Memphis City Schools began a peer assistance program to address the problem of 10 percent annual turnover, with the attrition rate highest among new teachers. The partnership program provides a \$2,000 stipend to experienced teachers who become certified in peer assistance training and work with "interns" and "pathways teachers." Interns are university students who have met all the requirements for a master's degree in education except student teaching. "Pathways teachers" have degrees in other areas and are pursuing degrees in education. Earning 85 percent of the base teacher salary, they are assigned to schools where they work with certified "induction specialists" (retired teachers who have received peer assistance training)—and receive help from Peer Assistance Teachers throughout the school year. Peer Assistance Teachers also work with colleagues who may be struggling or suffering from burnout. The program has provided nearly half the Memphis schools with a certified Peer Assistance Teacher. The goal is to have five to ten mentors in each school.

Nashville. The Metropolitan Nashville Education Association and the school district have worked together on a peer assistance program for classroom teachers since 1995. A

group of outstanding teachers who are selected as Peer Assistance Leaders (PALS) work full-time with all new teachers—and with those experienced teachers who are struggling. The program's goal is to ensure that all teachers experience success in the classroom by receiving the support and assistance needed. A panel of metro educators, appointed by the school board and the Association, governs the program, which is funded and supported by the board of education.

★Texas

Statewide. The Texas State Teachers Association is working closely with the State Board for Certification to help with the implementation of new regulations that will require two years of mentoring for new teachers. TSTA is developing programs for its members to help them be effective mentors and to assist school districts in implementing peer assistance programs. The regulations are scheduled to begin in Fall 2000.

★Utah

Statewide. Utah's 1987 teacher evaluation law, written by the Utah Education Association, opened the door for school district evaluation systems to include peer assistance and/or peer review. The law requires that each district's evaluation committee reflects parity between teachers and administrators, and that all new teachers have mentors or "consulting educators" assigned to them. As a result of the law, almost all Utah school districts have peer assistance programs.

24

Murray. The Jordan Education Association and the local school district have jointly developed a remediation program that involves peer coaching, and have provided for it in the collective bargaining agreement. Principals recommend teachers for the remediation program; a broad-based pool of experienced educators helps them improve their teaching skills. The program began in 1994.

★Vermont

Woodstock. Trained peer coaches are part of the evaluation system at the Woodstock Union Middle/High School. Teachers who have worked at the school for three or more years develop a three-year plan in which they identify areas of desired professional growth, establish goals for each area, specify plans to reach those goals, and spell out how they will assess their efforts. At least one year's plan is developed in collaboration with an administrator. Plans for the other years can be developed with a person selected from among the trained peer coaches at the high school. This goal-setting activity is an addition to the traditional supervisory evaluation of teachers by the administration.

★Virginia

Richmond. A 1998-99 NEA Urban Grant is helping the Richmond Education Association sponsor a new mentoring program, "Makin' It: Surviving Your First Year in the Richmond Public Schools." Forty new teachers were matched with mentors, and the Association held a fall conference that included workshops on the culture and climate

of Richmond's school system, the urban classroom, and interacting with parents. The mentoring program will also give teachers the opportunity to participate in an evening follow-up session in the spring of 2000.

★ Wisconsin

Appleton. Support teams of administrators and teachers help professional educators in Appleton who are identified by the district as needing special assistance. Retired teachers also can be part of the team.

Milwaukee. The Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association has had a peer assistance program, known as Teacher Evaluation and Mentoring (TEAM), since 1996. The program began with two TEAM teachers; today there are seven. Teachers who have worked in the district for more than three years may be referred to the program by a supervisor or colleague, or they may refer themselves. Participation is voluntary. Participants work with a TEAM teacher for two semesters to expand their skills and knowledge. The program also helps teachers analyze whether they're in the right school environment for their teaching style—and offers career counseling for those who feel they should leave the field.

Enhancing Teacher Quality Peer Assistance and Review

★California

Statewide. The California Teachers Association adopted a new policy in October 1998 that will allow members to participate in peer review programs. Although CTA supported peer assistance programs in the past, this marks a new direction for the Association. CTA guidelines specify that where peer review programs exist, they may not be mandatory, and they must operate in conjunction with a peer assistance program. Under peer review, consulting teachers may recommend that teachers who are not improving leave the classroom. Peer assistance programs are designed to provide ongoing support and mentoring.

★Florida

Palm Beach County. A collective bargaining agreement between the local Association and the school board paved the way for the district's Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program, designed to ensure quality instruction for all students. The primary emphasis is on helping veteran teachers who need to improve their skills. Consulting teachers, who provide the help and are the core of the program, must be recommended by their principal and the CTA school representative, have three consecutive evaluations at the highest rating, and have at least five years teaching experience in county schools. Teachers who need help may refer themselves to the program or be referred by another teacher or the principal. Program participation is voluntary and assistance generally is provided for a semester, but can be extended to a year if necessary. The PAR program involves development of an outline of the areas of concern, followed by assistance and support to the participating teacher. A consulting teacher observes the veteran teacher and then meets with the teacher and administrator to discuss strategies for improvement.

26

★Kansas

Statewide. Peer assistance and review are part of Kansas NEA's plan for strengthening the teaching profession. A major effort is underway among local presidents, bargaining team members, instructional advocates, and Association staff. Teams of teachers, administrators, and higher education partners have formed a peer assistance and review network and are designing programs for mentoring new staff and assisting peers. Each district will design and implement its own program, using the network for common training and mutual learning experiences. Partners include Blue Valley, Olathe, Emporia, Ottawa, Manhattan, Lawrence, Emporia State University, Kansas State University, and the University of Kansas. Kansas NEA helps facilitate the discussions, and hosted a meeting where network participants could learn more about the peer assistance and professional development programs in other states. During the 1999 legislative session, the Association plans to introduce a comprehensive package that includes peer assistance and review.

★ **Massachusetts**

Cambridge. The Cambridge Teachers Association's agreement with the city public schools includes peer review. The district's Evaluation and Professional Growth Cycle calls for peer collaboration through the establishment of peer review committees, the voluntary development of teacher portfolios, voluntary participation in student surveys, and ongoing professional growth and collaboration.

★ **New Hampshire**

Manchester. The Manchester Education Association is using a 1998-99 NEA Urban Grant to establish and implement the first phase of a peer assistance and review program. The initial phase will include selection of mentor teachers and training of the peer assistance and review panel. In September, mentors will be assigned to all new teachers for the 1999-2000 school year.

★ **Ohio**

Columbus. The Columbus Education Association, the Ohio State University, and the Columbus Public Schools have formed a three-way partnership to develop and sustain a nationally recognized peer assistance and review program. Now 13 years old, the program is designed to provide Columbus educators—both new teachers and struggling veterans—the help they need to succeed in the classroom. The partnership has also worked in other ways to support the professional development of teachers, including helping teachers prepare for National Board certification.

27

★ **Oklahoma**

Statewide. A statewide peer assistance and review program for beginning teachers has been in place in Oklahoma since 1982. State law mandates that all Oklahoma teachers are considered resident teachers during the first year, and will not be fully certified to teach until they successfully complete that year. During that time, new teachers are observed and evaluated by a committee comprised of a teacher mentor, a principal and a higher education faculty member. The mentor teacher spends an additional 70 hours with the new teacher in observation, demonstration, and consultation. At year's end, the committee decides whether the teacher will be certified. If the committee determines the candidate should not be certified, the person has a chance to repeat the process for one more year with a new committee. This program has worked well to provide beginning teachers with intensive support, as well as to weed out weak teaching candidates.

★ **Utah**

Davis. The Davis Education Association and Davis School District jointly developed an educator assessment system that includes peer assistance and review. The remediation process kicks in if an educator gets an unsatisfactory rating on an administrator's evaluation report. A team of administrators and teachers is assigned to help the educators improve in areas of concern. The final team evaluation report can include the principal's recommendation for dismissal if the remediation team determines that the individual has not made satisfactory improvement.

Salt Lake City. The Salt Lake City schools have had a peer evaluation and remediation process since 1979. After an unfavorable evaluation, the principal can provide direct assistance or request that the Association provide peer coaching. Informal coaching can go on for up to 60 days. If the problem still isn't resolved, a remediation team—comprised of two association-appointed peers, the principal, and a district administrator—develops a growth and improvement plan that is implemented for 30 to 60 days, after which the team makes a recommendation.

★ Washington

Bellevue. In 1997, the Bellevue Education Association and the Bellevue school district established a peer assistance and review process to help new teachers refine their skills, orient them to the district's goals, curriculum and structure, and assist longer-term employees who have performance difficulties. The program involves experienced Consulting Peer Educators who spend a number of hours each week with every new teacher. Currently there are only three Consulting Peer Educators—one each for elementary, middle, and high school. But the reaction has been so positive that additional mentor teachers are expected to be hired in the coming years. During this school year, the Consulting Peer Educators worked with some 80 new teachers out of a teaching population of 900. Intervention assistance occurs when a principal or supervisor believes that an employee is experiencing difficulty, and a Consulting Peer Educator is assigned to work with the teacher and make an assessment. The program will be evaluated in the summer of 1999.

28

Edmonds. In some schools, teacher evaluation means an annual visit from a supervisor and a resulting checklist. In Edmonds, the local Association is working with the school district and the state Association to develop a peer assistance and review program designed to make good teachers better, help those who are struggling, and counsel those who are not succeeding out of the profession. A three-year grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education is helping the school district assure that professional development is a part of each teacher's job.

Spokane. The Spokane Education Association developed a peer assistance and review program in 1993 that assigns a mentor to teachers who are having difficulties. After several months of working together, the teacher is reevaluated.

Enhancing Teacher Quality Professional Development

★ Arizona

Payson. The Payson Education Association and the school district are working together to provide professional development opportunities for area educators. Workshop topics include Working with Parents, Getting a Good Evaluation, Multiple Intelligences, and Special Education Issues. The workshops are presented by PEA staff and are recognized for district salary credit and recertification credit.

Tucson. In 1985, the Sunnyside Education Association worked with the school district to establish a career ladder program that's still in operation today. All schools in the district participate, and teachers are heavily involved in program evaluation and implementation.

★ California

Statewide. California Teachers Association members have developed training programs for new and veteran teachers. The program to help beginning teachers is called "I Can Do It!" The other is a survive-and-thrive program developed for mid- to late-career teachers. Both are offered by CTA, endorsed by local districts, and delivered by Association staff or a cadre of member instructors.

Concord. The Mt. Diablo Education Association in Concord has established a Professional Development Academy to help teachers improve their knowledge and skills. Participants can earn up to 15 hours, the equivalent of a half semester of college credit.

Los Angeles. The United Teachers of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the University of California at Los Angeles are developing a professional development center to improve teaching and learning in the city's public schools. The center will comprise several academies. For example, the Academy for Integrating Standards, Curricula, and Assessments will help teachers, parents, administrators, and university faculty draft standards-based curricula and assessments in various academic disciplines. The Professional Growth Program will help teachers seeking national board certification.

★ Colorado

Colorado Springs. The Colorado Springs Education Association and the school district recently created a task force that led to a dramatic redesign of the teacher compensation system. The task force recommended a new salary schedule that encourages teachers to gain new skills and knowledge, including incentives for teachers at the top of the salary scale. It also called for each school to designate someone to coordinate staff development. Coordinators will be active teachers who are paid a stipend. The new system links incentives in the courses of teacher study with state and district standards and with individual school improvement plans.

Loveland. Since 1995, the Thompson Education Association has participated in a Professional Development Center program that is overseen by the district administration. Teachers are invited to spend a week in the summer working on the development of new curriculum with their colleagues. Participation is voluntary, but teachers who participate receive hourly pay or credits that allow them to advance on the salary schedule.

★ Delaware

Statewide. The MBNA Education Foundation (Maryland Bank, NA) awarded a grant to the Delaware State Education Association to establish the Delaware Professional Development Center for Schools. The goal of the center will be to enhance teaching and learning in Delaware schools and to assist school personnel in meeting this challenge. The Center has hired a director and is currently conducting a statewide assessment of teachers' and other staff's professional development needs.

★ Illinois

Decatur, Springfield. The Decatur and Springfield Education Associations used an NEA Urban Grant to continue their "Partnerships for Power" program, which provides beginning teachers with ongoing professional support activities through their first five years. In 1997-98, the program added instruction on nonviolent crisis intervention and on recognizing gang activity.

30

Rockford. The Rockford Education Association used an NEA Urban Grant to begin a program to alleviate on-the-job stress experienced by teachers and education support personnel. Rising insurance costs due to stress-related illnesses were one impetus for the program. Participants will identify the kinds of stress that affect educators and develop programs to reduce stress in cooperation with a local wellness center. The results of the study will be shared with all local Association members.

★ Indiana

Statewide. The Indiana State Teachers Association sponsors a number of professional development activities to promote higher academic standards and improved student learning. Some of those activities include: summer academies that provide teachers with research-based information on how to improve instruction; and the preparation of expert practitioners who can serve as resources for local affiliates and school districts. ISTA has also been a founding partner of a number of regional and statewide professional development partnerships, which include an early childhood education consortium, a literacy project at Indiana University, a rural schools high standards consortium, and a parents-as-partners project.

★ Kentucky

Statewide. The Kentucky Education Association assembled a task force of 10 special education teachers to assist regular education teachers with special needs students in their classes. The task force members developed a three-hour seminar, and teachers who attend this training receive professional development credit.

Jefferson County. The Jefferson County Teachers Association is working with the Jefferson County Public Schools, Gheens Academy, the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative, and the University of Louisville Center for the Collaborative Advancement of the Teaching Profession to redesign the university's advanced teacher degree program. The new program will help assure that all partners are more responsive to needs, issues, and priorities of the county's public schools. The 1993 Kentucky Education Reform Act established new standards for beginning and experienced teachers, and the Jefferson County project is one community's response.

★Michigan

Ann Arbor. Beginning in the 1994-95 school year, the Ann Arbor Education Association and the school district agreed to a revised teacher evaluation system based on the standards of excellence set by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. New performance-based criteria stress teachers as active participants in the learning process—not just lecturers. Teachers at all levels, administrators, Association leaders, and central office staff all are active participants in the Ann Arbor Public Schools Professional Staff Evaluation System.

★Montana

Statewide. In 1996, the Montana Education Association and the Montana Federation of Teachers formed the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation to help teachers improve teaching and learning. The Foundation sponsors an annual Teacher of the Year event, which spotlights and promotes excellence in teaching. And the Foundation puts together an annual Teacher Forum to provide an opportunity for educators, policymakers, school administrators, and others to discuss education issues and seek solutions. Policymakers are given the chance to hear from those in the classroom, and teachers benefit by sharing their expertise with each other.

31

★Nebraska

Omaha. In a joint project, the Omaha Education Association, Omaha Public Schools, Nebraska State Education Association, and NEA have provided Professional Organizational Enhancement Training (POET) to OEA and OPS staff. POET's goal is to improve learning by enhancing the working environment in schools and departments. A POET training team works with the staff in a school or department to help improve communication and cooperation. The training builds a permanent, flexible cadre of trainers from the OPS teaching and administrative staff. In three years, more than 60 people have become trainers; they now work with staff throughout the district.

★New Hampshire

Statewide. The Discovery Learning Fund and the Share Your Day Program are two projects of the New Hampshire Foundation for Teaching and Learning. The Discovery Learning Fund helps teachers provide students with learning experiences in science, math, and technology through field trips and other off-site activities. It also offers teachers workshops on how to facilitate hands-on learning. The Share Your Day Program, sponsored by Northeast Delta Dental, enables teachers to visit

outstanding classrooms or programs in other districts by helping fund substitute teachers, transportation, meals, and other costs.

★New Jersey

Statewide. The New Jersey Education Association worked with Gov. Christine Todd Whitman's administration to develop the new state Continuing Education Program for Teachers, which will require teachers to complete 100 hours of approved professional development every five years, beginning in January 2000. The policy is being implemented by the state board of education, the state department of education, and NJEA. The new program will be governed by a state professional standards board made up of practicing teachers, school administrators, and school board members, all appointed by the state commissioner of education. Teachers represent a majority on the board. Local boards of district teaching staff, principals, administrators, and school board members will direct professional development activities tailored to local needs.

Montclair-Dumont. The Montclair Education Association, the Dumont Education Association, the two school districts, and Montclair State University are shaping the way student teachers are trained by turning Montclair and Dumont High Schools into professional development schools. The university sends students to the schools to observe professional practice in action. In turn, teachers give the university feedback on how to structure its teacher education program. The Association is also able to provide ongoing inservice training to teachers using university resources and staff.

New Brunswick. The New Brunswick Education Association has established a partnership with the school district and Rutgers University to adopt the professional development school model established in Montclair and Dumont.

Piscataway. The New Jersey Education Association, Piscataway Township Education Association, and Piscataway Board of Education launched a collaborative program in 1998 to make inservice training programs more accessible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of staff. Training programs are also open to educators from other New Jersey school districts.

South Orange-Maplewood. Teachers and support staff of the South Orange-Maplewood Education Association will learn how to communicate better across cultures, thanks to an NEA Urban Grant. The Learning and Growing in a Multi-Cultural Community project includes bimonthly sessions that expose educators and support staff to the latest research on communicating across cultures. The project was developed in response to the changing demographics of the community.

★North Carolina

Statewide. The North Carolina Teacher Academy is a state agency that has provided peer instruction to more than 13,300 teachers and principals since 1994. The vision and lobbying efforts of the North Carolina Association of Educators led to the reality of the Academy, and today NCAE teachers comprise the majority of the Academy's

trustees. The Academy's programs include residential summer sessions on college campuses, training by veteran classroom teachers, and hands-on instruction. With an operating budget of more than \$4 million and a support staff of only five people, the lion's share of Academy money goes directly to educators in the field—for everything from \$500 stipends to summer session participants to salaries for the more than 275 certified teachers who teach them.

★ Ohio

Statewide. The Ohio Education Association lobbied successfully for legislation that took effect in 1998 to improve professional development for educators. The improvements span the teacher quality continuum, not only strengthening teacher education and providing an entry-year program, but also creating teacher-majority committees to set standards for continuing education and to review and approve all professional development activities. The new law also provides for full payment of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards fees for 40 applicants a year—as well as a \$2,500 annual stipend for 10 years to Ohio teachers who achieve National Certification. In 1998, at the Ohio Education Association's summer leadership academy, 80 teachers were trained to become Pathwise observers (mentors to new teachers, part of the entry-year program).

★ Oklahoma

Statewide. The Oklahoma Education Association supported legislation, enacted in 1997, that establishes a series of Professional Development Institutes throughout the state. One of the Institutes helps prepare mentor teachers to work in the peer assistance and review program for new teachers. Only two entities in the state were selected as qualified to prepare mentor teachers, Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Education Association. OEA worked with the Education Testing Service to develop the education program.

Tulsa. Spearheaded by a 1997-98 NEA Urban Grant, the Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association's "Teacher as Researcher" project identified and developed methods for improving teaching through research. Tulsa teachers studied, created, and implemented new teaching strategies and developed networks for professional support.

★ Virginia

Arlington. In a pilot program to improve student learning by providing teachers with opportunities for individualized professional growth, the Arlington County school district lets teachers choose the professional development area they wish to pursue and design a plan for achievement in collaboration with an administrator. To assist in the process, the local Association researched professional development options, prepared draft plans, and participated in the development of the professional development cycle. Each Arlington County school has also named a lead teacher to participate in a course on Best Teaching Practices during 1999. Lead teachers who have successfully completed the course will provide inservice instruction in their schools and receive an annual stipend of \$600 for two years.

★ Washington

Bellevue. The Lake Washington Education Association and the Bellevue school district have created a staff development program that is linked with student achievement. The plan covers all district employees, who get 11 release days annually to participate in professional development activities offered by the district. The kinds of courses offered are determined by an annual staff survey and by a student profile that details strengths and weaknesses of the district's students.

The Bellevue school district has given all 900 teachers access to the Internet at school and, in some cases, at home. The district's technology budget bundles training costs with capital costs to make funds consistently available for professional development. This policy helps advance the district's goal of making sure teachers are effective technology coaches. The district and teachers also maintain a website that can be used for ongoing professional development.

Enhancing Teacher Quality National Board Certification

★Alabama

Statewide. The Alabama Education Association successfully lobbied for legislation to pay the fees for 100 Alabama teachers to seek National Board certification. A committee made up of board certified teachers and other professionals screens all applications and selects those candidates the committee thinks are most likely to succeed. Teachers not selected are given information on problem areas and encouraged to reapply. National Board certified teachers receive an additional \$1,500 per year as long as they are teaching in Alabama. Teachers participating in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification process may defer evaluation for up to two years.

★Alaska

Anchorage. Since 1997, the Anchorage Education Association has had language in its contract with the school district that provides an annual stipend of \$1,000 to any teacher who becomes National Board certified.

★Arizona

Statewide. Thanks to efforts by the Arizona Education Association, National Board certification now is recognized as meeting the requirements for a standard teaching certificate in the state. National Board certification is also recognized as meeting the professional growth requirement that teachers need to renew their state certificates. A coalition that includes AEA, Arizona State University, Bank of America, and State Farm Insurance is now working to advance legislation to provide additional incentives to encourage National Board certification by Arizona teachers. The Association has established a foundation that offers scholarships to National Board candidates. And Arizona State University has offered two summer institutes to help candidates prepare for National Board certification—with support from AEA and financial assistance from the Bank of America.

35

Paradise Valley. The Paradise Valley Education Association worked with the school district to provide teachers who complete the National Board certification process with a one-time 4.5 percent bonus, plus a 4.5 percent increase in base salary for the life of the certificate. The district provides release time for teachers involved in the National Board certification process.

Phoenix. In 1998, the Madison Classroom Teachers Association and the Madison school district bargained language to provide support for teachers who go through the National Board certification process. Up to five candidates per year are eligible for three to five leave days plus financial support. A district-based support team helps each candidate prepare for the process. Successful candidates receive a \$1,000 stipend plus \$1,100 annually for the 10-year life of the certificate.

★ Arkansas

Statewide. The Arkansas Education Association initiated legislation that appropriated \$10,000 in 1997-98 to pay half the \$2,000 fee for candidates seeking National Board certification. The same law allows three days of release time for teachers to prepare.

★ California

Glendale. The contract between the Glendale Teachers Association and the school district provides for a one-time \$7,000 stipend to teachers who achieve National Board certification.

Los Angeles. The contract between the United Teachers of Los Angeles and the school district provides teachers who attain National Board certification with a 15 percent increase in pay over the base rate during the 10-year life of the certificate. In addition, the district, UTLA, and the University of California at Los Angeles support programs as part of the joint professional development center to help more teachers gain National Board certification.

San Diego. Teachers who are National Board certified are nominated for mentor teacher status and are not subject to the ranking process normally used for selecting mentor teachers. Mentor teachers receive a \$4,312 stipend annually.

★ Connecticut

36

Tolland. The Tolland Education Association and the school district have negotiated contract provisions to help teachers attain National Board certification. The school district established a pool of \$6,000 to pay at least half the \$2,000 certification fee, and possibly the whole fee, depending on the number of applicants. This funding pool may also be used to reimburse teachers for other types of professional development, including college courses or workshops.

★ Delaware

Statewide. Recent state legislation initiated and supported by the Delaware State Education Association provides \$30,000 in the state budget to cover the fees of teachers seeking National Board certification in 1998-99. The state will also fund an additional \$1,500 in salary for each year that a teacher remains National Board certified.

★ Florida

Statewide. The Florida Teaching Profession-NEA is hosting regional support seminars for National Board certification candidates. The state's Excellent Teaching Program Act provides certified teachers a 10 percent salary increase for the life of the certificate. Those National Board certified teachers who mentor newly hired candidates or serve as support mentors for candidates receive an additional 10 percent bonus.

★ Georgia

Statewide. The Georgia Association of Educators was a leader in lobbying for legislation aimed at increasing the state's number of National Board certified teachers. The new law requires that newly certified teachers receive at least a 5 percent one-time rate increase in state salary. It also provides two days of release time for candidates to work on their portfolios and prepare for assessment. GAE currently offers fee scholarships to members applying for National Board certification and conducts preparatory workshops. The state reimburses the fee for any Georgia teacher who achieves National Board certification.

★ Iowa

Statewide. The Iowa State Education Association has teamed up with the University of Northern Iowa to provide a statewide system of support for National Board certification candidates, through interactive teleconferencing and regional meetings.

★ Kentucky

Fayette County. The Fayette County Education Association has formed a partnership with the Fayette County public schools and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, an independent nonpartisan organization of Kentucky parents and citizens. The partnership provides help with the certification fees, substitute pay, professional leave, and consultants for FCEA members who are pursuing National Board certification.

37

★ Maine

Bangor. In an agreement negotiated with the Bangor Education Association in 1996, the school district now pays the full National Board certification application fee for up to three teachers per year. In further support of teacher candidates, the district provides up to three days paid leave for candidates to prepare portfolios for submission. If a teacher does not complete the National Board certification process, he or she will reimburse the school for the application costs.

★ Maryland

Statewide. The Maryland State Teachers Association strongly supported legislation that created a three-year State and Local Aid Pilot Program. The state will pay two-thirds of the \$2,000 National Board certification fee for a maximum of 48 teachers annually.

★ Michigan

Statewide. Candidate fees for teachers seeking National Board certification are subsidized by the Michigan Education Association, which also conducts training for National Board candidates.

Farmington. The Farmington Education Association and the school district provide \$1,250 a year to teachers who become National Board certified, for the life of the certificate. The district pays half the cost of the application process, and the state Association provides a \$500 grant to reduce out-of-pocket costs. The district provides release time for teachers seeking national certification, and has developed a support system that puts teachers who have been certified in touch with those working for certification.

★Minnesota

Minnetonka. The local Association and school district identified and supported five National Board candidates in the 1997-98 school year and are supporting an additional 10 teachers during 1998-99.

Mounds View. In 1997, the district and the Mounds View Education Association together decided to set aside \$45,000 for those teachers seeking National Board certification. Candidates who pursue certification are given up to \$2,000 to cover the cost of the application.

★Mississippi

Statewide. The Mississippi Association of Educators initiated legislation that provides an annual salary supplement of \$6,000 to National Board certified teachers for the life of the certificate. The state has recognized National Board certification as an alternative to teacher license renewal. Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Southern Mississippi have established programs to support teachers throughout the state who are involved in the National Board certification process.

38

★Montana

Statewide. The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation, a joint project of the Montana Education Association and the Montana Federation of Teachers, provides scholarships and technical assistance to candidates for National Board certification. Each candidate is linked via e-mail with a National Board certified teacher from out of state, who shares advice, expertise, and encouragement. The Foundation also makes meeting space and video equipment available to candidates during the certification process.

★North Carolina

Statewide. The North Carolina Association of Educators was instrumental in the passage of legislation that provides a 12 percent salary increase to teachers who achieve National Board certification. The 1996 Excellent Schools Act increases the overall pay scale for teachers, gives extra increases based on knowledge and skills, and provides extra pay for extra work. NCAE assists members seeking to achieve National Board certification in various ways. It used an NEA grant to share application information, conduct workshops on the process, hold monthly video conferences on issues related to certification, and create an electronic network of successful and aspiring candidates.

Pitt County. The support of a 1998-99 NEA Urban Grant will allow the local Association and the school district in Pitt County to conduct monthly work sessions to help candidates for National Board certification develop portfolios of their work. The goal is to create a resource center that will provide technical support, mentor support, and sample portfolios.

★Oklahoma

Statewide. The Oklahoma Education Association was instrumental in the enactment of legislation to help candidates for National Board certification. The state paid the full \$2,000 fee for 100 candidates in 1997 and 200 in 1998; it will pay the fee for 400 annually in future years. The Oklahoma Education Leadership Act of 1997 provides additional support for expenses and two professional days for preparation. In partnership with the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, the Association provides four training sessions each year for candidates for National Board certification.

★Rhode Island

Newport. Teachers bargained for and won half payment for the cost of the National Board certification process; plus a \$2,000 stipend to successful candidates.

★Tennessee

Statewide. The Tennessee Education Association collaborated with the state board of education to adopt a resolution encouraging teachers to seek National Board certification. In addition, TEA supported successful efforts to incorporate the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards into the teacher licensure requirements, covering teacher candidate competency in subject matter, teaching knowledge, and teaching skill.

39

★Vermont

Wells River. The Blue Mountain Teachers Association and the local school district in Wells River negotiated a provision that pays \$1,000 per year to National Board certified teachers for the duration of the three-year collective bargaining agreement.

★Virginia

Statewide. The Virginia Education Association successfully lobbied for legislation that provides \$75,000 in 1998-99 as incentive grants of \$1,000 to help pay the \$2,000 assessment fee for candidates for National Board certification. In addition, VEA and the Virginia Department of Education co-hosted a certification seminar for nearly 100 educators in 1998, where National Board certified teachers conducted training on the process for prospective candidates.

Virginia Beach. The Virginia Beach Education Association and the school district together provide any teacher achieving National Board certification \$850 annually for the life of the certificate.

STEPPING FORWARD
How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

ADDRESSING THE CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN

Safety and
Discipline

School
Readiness

Supporting
Local Solutions



Voices Against the Violence



Photo: John Beale/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

42

Prompted by school shootings, a Senate panel in the fall of 1998 solicited advice on how to keep kids and teachers safe.

But English teacher Shannon Wright and science teacher John Gillette never got a chance to address members of Congress.

In the spring of 1998, they were both shot and killed by middle school students—Wright in a school yard in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and Gillette at a graduation dance in Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

Soon after the shootings, the U.S. Senate Democratic Strike Force for Kids convened a panel of experts to seek advice on ways to stem

youth violence. Speaking for Wright and Gillette—and all the educators who survive them—was David Gondak, president of the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

Gondak recommended that every school district devise a comprehensive plan with elements like “a curriculum piece, peer mediation, and a crisis plan for counseling.” “There’s no one solution,” Gondak said.

“District needs vary tremendously, right up to metal detectors.” While only 10 percent of public schools reported any instance of serious crime in a 1997 federal study, Gondak said, it’s still best to plan for the worst.

Those at the panel discussed the many factors behind juvenile violence and potential solutions to it, including:

★ **Partnerships with police**, like one in New Haven, Connecticut, that limited violence to just one serious act among 19,500 kids last year.

“We have six police officers doing housecalls,” reported Assistant Police Chief Douglas McDonald, “referring children to tutoring, probation, and other activities, and reporting the results of home visits to teachers.”

★ **Restriction of child access to guns** through legislation requiring gunlocks and safe storage of weapons.

★ **Early intervention in a child's life** to address such needs as health care and a violence-free home. “We've got to look at a child's life as a whole and provide all the building blocks,” said Attorney General Janet Reno.

★ **More after-school activities and adult mentoring programs** that get kids off the streets.

★ **Adding a fourth R—Respect to the curriculum.** Said Betty Stockton, a psychologist now working with survivors of the Jonesboro shootings: “When students demonstrate little or no ability to get along with each other, social skills must be taught. It's easier to build kids than repair adults.”

★ **Conflict resolution and peer mediation.** Connecticut teenager Kurt Brothers, whose best friend died in a January stabbing, told the lawmakers, “Kids feel more comfortable talking to other kids about punishment, instead of a school principal. Detention will not solve problems.”

Reprinted from NEA Today, September 1998

Addressing the Conditions of Children
Safety and Discipline

★ Arkansas

Pine Bluff. The Pine Bluff Community Partnership for Safety in Public Schools is a coalition that formed following the March 1998 tragedy at a school when two disturbed students turned guns on teachers and other students. Educators, parents, school administrators, community members, and business leaders make up the partnership, which currently is researching and evaluating existing school safety programs. The Arkansas Education Association is providing training for the partnership in group dynamics, consensus building, and conflict resolution and is surveying national and local safety programs that merit coalition consideration.

★ Kentucky

Statewide. A representative of P.E.A.C.E. Skills, Inc. provided a cadre of 30 Kentucky Education Association members and staff with 12 hours of intensive training in nonviolent conflict resolution and other school safety issues. These task force members now are equipped to present a three-hour seminar entitled "Safety is Everyone's Responsibility." Teachers who attend may receive three hours of professional development credit.

44

★ Maryland

Howard County. The Howard County Education Association and the local PTA worked together to develop a code of student behavior. A Maryland State Teachers Association grant supported their efforts. MSTA also lobbied the legislature to appoint a task force of parents, teachers, and administrators to come up with a set of maximum and minimum consequences for infractions of the behavior code.

★ Virginia

Richmond. The Richmond Education Association was instrumental in creating a community-based organization called FANS—Friends Advocating Nurturing Schools. The district, the Association, and the Richmond Council of PTAs, working through FANS, have sponsored a Safe Schools Month featuring bus advertisements, banners, community forums, and safety and discipline leaflets distributed door-to-door.

★ Washington

Statewide. The Washington Education Association has established a Safe Schools Program, effective enough to serve as a national model. Association members have been working with parents, local law enforcement, clergy, and the community to provide schools with a host of made-to-order safety programs, including strategies for ending gang activity, intervention training for teachers, and peer mediation for students.

Addressing the Conditions of Children School Readiness

★ Kentucky

Statewide. The 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act established an array of child-centered, family-centered school readiness programs, including 700 comprehensive family resource and youth service centers statewide. KEA strongly supported provisions to connect families that need help with appropriate child care, health care, adult literacy, and family counseling services.

★ Nebraska

Statewide. The Nebraska State Education Association was closely involved in the Nebraska Good Beginnings initiative, which enhances early childhood development and education programs. In addition, NSEA backed a new program of competitive grants to support various local education priorities, including parental involvement.

★ New Hampshire

Statewide. The Children's Fund, a program of the New Hampshire Foundation for Teaching and Learning, helps children get immediate attention for things they may need in order to be successful in school. The Fund provides clothes, food, medical care, transportation, and other services quickly and confidentially. The Foundation, which was created by NEA-New Hampshire in 1996, supports public education and helps improve student achievement. Children's Fund services are available to any public school educator or student.

45

★ Rhode Island

Statewide. To assist needy children in public schools, NEA Rhode Island established the NEARI Children's Fund in 1985. It has become the model for several child-centered programs in other state and local Associations. The Fund regularly supports students who might need financial help to attend a field trip or a prom, to participate in a school competition in another state, or rent a musical instrument. The Fund's annual Gingerbread Express is a school bus filled with volunteers who give children holiday presents. Last year, the Express delivered more than \$131,000 in new clothing, toys, and gifts to more than 2,500 children.

★ Utah

Statewide. In 1989, the Utah Education Association House of Delegates created the Utah Education Association Children at Risk Foundation, to provide resources to teachers, parents, students and community groups which serve children in need. Contributions from UEA members and corporations fund scholarships and grants to Utah children and teachers. UEA picks up the administrative and staff costs of this program.

Addressing the Conditions of Children Supporting Local Solutions

★Louisiana

Statewide. In 1997 and 1998, the Louisiana Association of Educators successfully lobbied for legislation to assure that teachers have the tools in the classroom to help students achieve. The Teacher Supplies Fund gave each professional educator about \$200 to spend individually—or pool together as a school—for computers, video equipment, software, books, science and math equipment, or other classroom needs. At least 75 percent of the funds must be spent for materials and supplies that are not used within a single year. Those eligible to receive the funds are teachers, librarians, counselors, and other professional employees who work directly with children.

★Nevada

Statewide. For the past decade the Nevada State Education Association has been offering 10 grants each year of up to \$1,000 each to teacher members for ideas they wish to implement in their schools. These Good Ideas Grants have been used for supplementary reading materials, educational technology, and a variety of activities ranging from growing tadpoles into frogs to staging a production of *Where the Wild Things Are*. The grants are intended to improve the quality of education in Nevada and to support the efforts of NSEA members.

46

★New Jersey

Statewide. In 1993, the New Jersey Education Association established the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education to support innovative education programs. In its first five years, the Foundation has given nearly \$300,000 to local Associations to develop and implement programs to improve teaching and learning. Fund recipients' projects often encourage parental involvement, connect classrooms with advanced technology, or address issues of multiculturalism and diversity.

★South Dakota

Statewide. Members of the South Dakota Education Association are using grants of \$500 to \$1,000 from SDEA's Educational Foundation Awards program to bring their innovative ideas and student-oriented projects to life. The grants have helped middle school students in Rapid City learn about the Badlands through still cameras, video, and computer technology. Middle school teachers in Madison are using their grant to show students the importance of local and national government through interactive CDs.

* West Virginia

Statewide. The West Virginia Foundation for the Improvement of Education provides grants to educators and organizations to support at-risk children. Funds for the program come from an annual \$2 assessment of WVEA members. The Foundation has awarded more than \$25,000 in grants over the past three years and expects to give four grants of \$1,000 and one of \$5,000 next year. Funded projects have focused on parental involvement and student literacy, including programs to give children books.

STEPPING FORWARD
How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

**PROMOTING
COMMUNITY
AND PARENTAL
INVOLVEMENT**

**Community
Partnerships**

Parental Involvement



Make It Happen! Five Strategies for Reaching the Hard-to-Reach Parent



Photo: Ellen Banner/NEA

50

In Pennsylvania, some public school moms are paid \$250 for every 100 hours they volunteer in the classroom. Other parents get free product samples including soap and cereal in exchange for participating in school activities.

At one school in Richmond, Virginia, teachers hold report cards hostage until parents pay ransom in the form of attendance at parent-teacher conferences. In other parts of the country, educators are using weekly dinners and bingo games as parent magnets.

Call them bribes, hooks, gimmicks, or just plain ol' creative ideas. The fact remains: Educators are getting desperate when it comes to involving some parents in their child's education.

Hard-to-reach families don't fall into any race or class. It's a matter of circumstance. It may be the family that doesn't have a phone or the single mom who doesn't have anyone to watch her baby while she visits a classroom.

It may be the professional parents who work such long hours. Or the parents too embarrassed by their speech or dress to walk through the school doors. Or the parents who don't understand much English.

While there are no magic solutions and no tricks that will work with all the people all the time, there are a number of effective strategies that can be incorporated into any school's overall action plan for getting hard-to-reach parents on board.

Here are just five strategies that NEA members are using as part of comprehensive school action plans:

1. Meet parents on their turf. Gregory Gilliam's beige van is a common sight in the Whitcomb Court public housing projects, home to most of the 450 kids who attend Whitcomb Model school, a pre-K through grade five school in Richmond, Virginia. Gilliam, the school's parent coordinator, often swings through the neighborhood, dropping by the recreation center for hoops or ping pong with residents. More often, Gilliam goes door-to-door, inviting parents to attend upcoming school meetings and social events. Sometimes Gilliam brings a student home to discuss discipline problems. Typically, he comes by to talk to parents and keep them informed about what's going on at school.

A lot of our parents have phones that are disconnected, and this is the only way to reach them," says Gilliam, who served as a parent volunteer before joining the school staff. Ten years ago, you could count the number of parent volunteers at Whitcomb on one hand. Today, dozens of parents are active members of the PTA and solicit resources for the school through a parent-formed community action organization. The difference, a strategy based on home visits, trust, and ongoing relationships with parents.

"You have to show sensitivity to parents' needs and not make judgments about whatever negative circumstances you find in the household," Gilliam says. And, he says, you have to avoid presenting yourself as an authority figure. "I don't go in and preach to parents, telling them what they need to do," he says. "I tell parents, 'I'm here to be a partner with you.'"

Gilliam then presents them with various opportunities to be involved in school issues. "The key is to show them how much their involvement benefits their child," he says. "That's the bottom line."

The bottom line for Whitcomb Model school? Fewer behavior problems and vastly improved test scores.

2. Make schools parent friendly. Karen Mahurin can spot a nervous parent a mile away.

As secretary at Sears Elementary School on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska, Mahurin is often the first point of contact between parents and the school.

"When parents walk through our door to register kids or meet with teachers, they are so overwhelmed by the entire process," Mahurin says, "they have no idea what they need to do, and it's very intimidating."

That's why it's so important to establish a welcoming atmosphere in the school office," she adds. "There has to be a tone set among all school staff that says, we want you here."

Parent involvement is largely about comfort level, so staff members at Sears Elementary have gone out of their way to make their school inviting. When parents enter the school's brightly colored office, they find comfortable couches, stuffed animals, puzzles, and books.

"I even try to dress as casually and comfortably as possible on school registration day," Mahurin says. "If parents perceive school workers as dressing better or making more money, that just puts a barrier there."

Another key to comfort, parent resource rooms that provide a cozy space for parents to meet and greet each other or work on volunteer projects without getting in the way.

"Parents are too uncomfortable hanging out in the staff lounge," says Mahurin. "When you create a place for parents, you send the message that they really belong here."

And once you get parents to school, Sears staffers learned, you don't rush them out

"We switched from 15-minute slots for parent-teacher conferences to half-hour meetings," Mahurin says. "Before, a bell would ring to signal time was up, and parents felt rushed." Now, she adds, "We stretch the conferences out over three-and-a-half days so we can spend more time."

3. Bridge the language gap. When parents call Phantom Lake Elementary School in Bellevue, Washington, they can listen to school announcements in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Laotian, or Vietnamese. With help from a special software program, they can get regular messages from school in their native language. And they can register their kids with help from how-to videotapes in six languages.

Phantom Lake is one of a growing number of schools that aren't allowing language differences to broaden the rift between parents and school staff. To deal with the increasing numbers of immigrant children, schools across the country are searching for ways to connect with non-English-speaking families. Some send materials home in several languages. Others make sure report cards and materials that explain grades are sent home in a family's native language.

Most hire more support staff who can reach out to families and serve as translators.

Cuong Truong, a Vietnamese immigrant and instructional assistant at Alderwood Elementary School in Bellingham, Washington, translates report cards and parent-teacher conferences for almost 30 Vietnamese families in the city's 12 elementary schools.

"Parents want to talk to teachers about their children and come to school, but the language barrier makes it difficult," says Truong. "They don't know how to express their ideas. They want to, but they can't. If the school wants to

do the best job for the students," he says, "it must have the best communication between school and parents—and that includes parents who don't speak English well."

4. Involve parents in decision making. When James Comer first began his pioneering work in parent-school partnerships in 1968, educators told him, "The parents should raise them. We will teach them."

Some 30 years later, Comer marvels, "There's so much more recognition that parents have an important role in the work of the school."

Hundreds of schools across the country are successfully getting parent input on important school decisions using what has become known as "the Comer model."

The approach encourages schools to create governance management teams composed of parents, teachers, support staff, and mental health officials.

Together, team members develop a comprehensive plan for the school that sets goals for academic and social standards.

When parents are involved in crucial decisions that affect how their children learn, students thrive academically, mentally, and socially, says Comer, now director of the Yale Child Study Center School Development Program.

When it works well, he says, "there should be no fault and no blame in the process. The main focus should be on what's good for the children."

But involving parents only works, he cautions, when parents have real roles and real responsibilities in the decisions that affect their child's learning. It can't be make-work.

So how do you get parents involved on these teams to begin with?

"You can't go directly to parents who are overwhelmed and just talk to them about being involved," Comer says. "The entire school staff must be working in a way that fosters trust."

"Then, the parents who are most distrustful and overwhelmed will begin to come in."

5. Help parents help their children. "The number one thing we hear from parents," says Warlene Gary, of NEA's Urban Initiatives program, "is they want to know how to help their kids do homework and become better learners."

So, for the past three years, Urban Initiatives staff have been providing hundreds of parents around the country with training in how to create effective learning environments in the home.

Through NEA's Family-School-Community Partnership program, parents in public housing projects in Nashville, Tennessee, are learning how to help their children with homework.

And in Broward County, Florida, NEA has trained parents in how to resolve conflict in the home.

There are literally thousands of ways schools can help parents help their children.

At Mauphin Elementary in Louisville, Kentucky, teachers like Judy Elmer use the MegaSkills program to help children develop confidence, motivation, and self-esteem. After school, teachers train parents in how to teach MegaSkills at home.

"When children find consistency in what is being taught and expected at home and in school, their performance improves," Elmer says.

To make it easy for parents to come, Mauphin offers evening workshops and provides workshop materials in several languages. Other schools provide transportation to make workshops even more accessible.

Reprinted from NEA Today, October 1997

Promoting Community and Parental Involvement Community Partnerships

★ Alabama

Statewide. Since 1991, the Alabama Education Association has promoted space education and careers in math and science through its celebration of Alabama Aerospace Week. Sponsored by AEA with co-sponsors Delta Airlines, Boeing, U.S. Air Force/Civil Air Patrol, NASA, the U.S. Space Camp and others, Alabama Aerospace Week encourages science and technology literacy and sparks community interest in and support of educational goals. AEA sponsors several contests during the observance, and awards include scholarships to U.S. Space Camp/Academy and field trips and classes at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. Delta Airlines flies students and teachers to its headquarters in Atlanta, where they can experience flight simulation. Civil Air Patrol and aerospace specialists from NASA present space education programs at local schools.

Birmingham. The Birmingham Education Association and Birmingham Public Schools are using an NEA Urban Grant to sponsor a monthly dialogue on the local public access cable television channel that addresses community concerns. The program's guests include school district officials, community leaders, and Association representatives. Aimed at building a stronger coalition of parents and educators, the dialogues reinforce the importance of education within the community.

54

★ Alaska

Statewide. NEA-Alaska and the Alaska PTA are sponsoring parent-school-community partnership training across the state.

Anchorage. Business people, community activists, educators, school board members, and law enforcement representatives make up Alaska's Public Engagement Project, which was started by the Anchorage Education Association and the Alaska PTA in 1998. The project will host three "Public Conversations About the Public Schools" that explore how families, schools, and the community can work together to help students achieve more in school. The public forums are being co-sponsored by the Anchorage Education Association, the school district, the local chamber of commerce, Phi Delta Kappa, major corporations, and the University of Alaska-Anchorage. NEA and the National PTA have provided financial support for these forums.

★ Arizona

Mesa. The Mesa Education Association used an NEA Urban Grant to sponsor a community-wide conference aimed at expanding parental involvement beyond school bake sales. The conference, focusing on children as the foundation of a community's well-being, is intended as the first step toward building teams of parents, community members, and school staff who will work together to revitalize Mesa public schools.

Phoenix. The Arizona Education Association was a key player in the development of a new site-based, collaboratively planned public school—Cesar Chavez High School, scheduled to open for the 1999-2000 school year. A team of teachers, administrators, business representatives, and parents will run the school. After a visit to the Saturn plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee, the team partners decided to use the Saturn approach in planning and operating school programs.

The Dysart Education Association in metropolitan Phoenix has led the way in a four-year effort to bring together community, business, and school representatives to plan a positive future for this ethnically divided, financially troubled community. The group has developed action and growth plans that address the needs of students, the community, and school employees.

★California

Statewide. The California Teachers Association (CTA) is working with local Association leaders on a number of projects to increase involvement of parents and other community members in their local schools. CTA holds conferences that bring together teachers and community members to discuss problems and share ideas for solutions. A recent conference focused on breaking the cycle of violence in the community. Teachers and parents are given tips on working together to improve a school's effectiveness. In addition, CTA launched an exciting television program in 1998 called Quest for Excellence. The 30-minute program, aired in Spanish and English, gives parents and the public a chance to hear from teachers and other education employees about various educational topics. CTA has also taken on the most far-reaching public engagement effort ever mounted by an Association. Over the past year, CTA has conducted interviews with at least 1,600 parents and community members, 109 focus groups involving many more parents and teachers, and surveys of some 140,000 teachers. The information will be used to help education employees, parents, and the community work together better to meet common educational goals.

55

Hayward. In partnership with the Association and the school district, the Panasonic Corporation Foundation provides technical assistance to improve public education in Hayward. Panasonic interviewed educators, administrators, and parents to determine district needs, evaluate what the foundation could provide, and assist in the preparation of a blueprint for action. The blueprint and the partnership are ongoing ventures.

Long Beach. The Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College, California State University, Long Beach, and the Teachers Association of Long Beach are working together in an eight-year plan to improve educational quality in the community. The partnership involves bringing together teachers, administrators, and teacher educators at the post secondary level to set standards and then design strategies to help students meet the new, higher standards. At the middle school level, the partners provide tutors and conduct safety awareness and other violence prevention workshops. At the high school level, the partners help line up opportunities for students to participate in school-to-work activities, and help college-bound students make sure they have the preparation they need. After just two years, the partnership reports improved test scores and a declining dropout rate.

San Bernardino. In San Bernardino County, local California Teachers Association affiliates and the various school districts are collaborating with business groups, law enforcement agencies, and parents to focus on six key areas for improvement: early literacy, technology, school safety, student assessment, public information, and high schools with a focus. The coalition has formed task forces to deal with these issues. The San Bernardino Early Literacy Teams Program, for example, is committed to having every child reading fluently by the third grade. To achieve that goal, 147 elementary schools have jointly developed a strong primary language arts curriculum. The Safe Schools Project's task force includes the district attorney's office, the sheriff's department, and others. Among the workshops this team offers is "Verbal Judo," which helps students redirect behavior with words.

San Rafael, Santa Rosa. Students at Davidson Middle School in San Rafael and Piner High School in Santa Rosa are conducting sophisticated environmental research on Davidson Creek, a polluted stream that runs through the Davidson school grounds. NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education helps support the project, as do Trout Unlimited, the San Rafael Public Works Department, the San Rafael Parks and Recreation Department, and the California Water Quality Control Board. Students at the two schools collect and analyze data and are developing a multimedia report that will be circulated electronically for use by the cooperating agencies.

★Colorado

56

Aurora and Littleton. The Aurora Education Association and the Littleton Education Association were jointly awarded a 1997-98 NEA Urban Grant to continue their work in building partnerships and community involvement in the local schools. The grant supported the training of teachers, parents, and community members. The grant also supported the development of a community resource center at Littleton's Centennial Elementary School.

Denver. An NEA Urban Grant will allow the Denver Classroom Teachers Association and the High Plains News Service to work together to spread the word about quality teaching and learning. "Sound Exposure for Quality Education" is a partnership project to produce and distribute stories about excellence in teaching and innovative education programs in the Denver area. The pieces will air on radio stations in Colorado, Montana, and New Mexico.

★Connecticut

New London, Enfield, Stamford, Thomaston, Windsor. In 1988, in collaboration with boards of education, city councils, offices of the mayor, PTAs, business organizations, and police departments, five local Associations launched home/school/community partnerships aimed at increasing understanding of the schools' needs and ways that diverse groups, working together, can help to meet them. The programs are being implemented by the Enfield Teachers Association, the Stamford Education Association, the New London Education Association, the Thomaston Education Association, and the Windsor Education Association.

Stamford. Stamford was chosen by the National Commission on Teaching and Learning as one of the districts in its Urban Initiative, which is an intensive effort to improve teaching in urban and poor rural schools. The project works with a network of school districts committed to improving teacher quality. The Commission provides districts with technical assistance in teacher recruitment, preparation, hiring, induction, support, and professional development practices. It documents and disseminates information about successful strategies and practices and provides networking resources for groups that rarely have the opportunity to learn from each other. The Urban Initiative works closely with the Urban League, the Council of Great City Schools, the National School Boards Association, NEA, AFT, and others.

Florida

Broward, Dade, Palm Beach Counties. School employees, community members, and law enforcement agents forged a partnership five years ago to enhance safety in eight area schools. The effort is funded in part by NEA's Urban Initiatives program. The partnership emphasizes solving problems and resolving conflicts for children and, in some cases, their families. The program is credited with helping reduce the number of suspension and discipline cases by 10 percent. The partnership involves cooperative efforts by Broward teachers, who belong to the American Federation of Teachers, and education support staff, who belong to the NEA. In 1997, the Broward alliance helped organize the successful South Florida Safe Schools Summit, drawing more than 1,200 people from Dade, Palm Beach, and Broward counties to discuss how to improve the safety of their schools. Plans are underway for a South Florida Safety Summit 2000.

57

St. Petersburg. Student achievement is the goal of a Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association initiative that began in 1997. "St. Petersburg Reads" is a successful and ongoing partnership between PCTA, the City of St. Petersburg, and the school system, aimed at improving reading and math skills of low-achieving students. PCTA provides a staff person to coordinate the program, plus materials and trainers for the tutors. Tutors are drawn from the ranks of city employees, teachers, education support paraprofessionals, and community volunteers. Thanks to a grant from a local business, the program will be expanded to additional sites.

Illinois

Statewide. The Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, and area universities established a series of regional learning networks in East Central Illinois, Chicago, Lake County, Southern Illinois, and Iroquois-Kankakee in 1997 and 1998. Participants share information about topics ranging from effective professional development activities to the impact of school change on student achievement.

Indiana

Mishawaka. A 10-year partnership between the school board and the Mishawaka Education Association has dramatically increased participation in the public schools by parents and other members of the community. Shared decision-making and a sense of community ownership of the schools have resulted in higher student achievement as well as stronger links between school and home.

★Kentucky

Statewide. The Kentucky Education Association has initiated "Kids and Community Day," a project designed to bring together Association members, the community, and children. Among the project's highlights: book drives, tree plantings, read-a-thons, community clean-ups, food drives, and Salvation Army Angel Tree sponsorships.

★Maryland

Frederick County. The Frederick County Teachers Association was a driving force behind the 1997 creation of "Voice for Kids," a countywide coalition of community members who work with children. Teachers, law enforcement officers, daycare workers, social workers, parents, and others come together each month to talk about issues of importance to kids. General meetings address specific community concerns as well as more general topics, such as the new brain research and what it reveals about the way children learn.

★Michigan

Flint. Faculty, staff, and administrators are involved in joint decision-making on issues ranging from course offerings to budget preparation, thanks to a partnership among Mott Community College, the Michigan Education Association, the United Auto Workers, and the Service Employees International Union. The new working relationships in Flint have brought better staff morale, new programs, and a wider selection of courses.

58

Lansing. "Project Team" is a school improvement partnership among the Michigan Education Association, the Lansing-NEA, the Lansing school district, United Auto Workers, General Motors, United Way, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and 15 other local agencies. Volunteers—including six skilled autoworkers who draw full pay and benefits from the GM/UAW job bank for laid-off workers—assist teachers in classrooms as reading tutors and discipline helpers. Project Team also funds before-and-after-school activities, as well as parental involvement efforts. Education support personnel, counselors, nurses, speech therapists, and teachers are all key members of Project Team.

★Minnesota

Morris. Thanks to a grant from the "Road Ahead" program of NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, members of an elementary through middle school environmental club worked with the Scandia Woods Environmental Learning Lab and the Stevens County Historical Society to study the Morris community's history and ecology. High school and community volunteers helped club members gather and analyze the scientific data and compare historical information. They also shared their findings with students at School #93 in Chelyabinsk, Russia, via the Internet.

Mississippi

Jackson. The Jackson Association of Educators, Jackson Public Schools, and the Jackson Council PTA have begun a formal partnership aimed at increasing community and parental involvement in neighborhood schools. Some 30 teachers, parents, federal school program employees, and community members have received training in team building as the first step toward working more collaboratively on school improvement and increased student achievement. This core group will recruit and train other stakeholders in education to become active members in the partnership for quality schools.

Montana

Billings. Education stories are filling the airwaves, thanks to a partnership between the Billings Education Association, the Montana Education Association, and the High Plains News Service. Using an NEA Urban Grant, the partnership produces and distributes stories on innovative education programs in Billings to nearly 50 radio stations in 19 states, as well as over the Internet.

Nebraska

Statewide. The Nebraska State Education Association, Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and Nebraska Association of School Boards have created a formal partnership to work on common issues and concerns. In 1998 they hosted a workshop for their members, parents, and community leaders to work on local funding issues.

59

Lincoln. To help boost student achievement and build strong ties to the community, the Lincoln Public Schools and the Lincoln Education Association created "Ventures in Partnership," a grassroots collaboration, in 1987. Through this collaboration and through school-to-work programs, LEA members, administrators, and members of Lincoln's business community work cooperatively. The partnership has grown from 14 members to more than 800 companies, organizations, and agencies. Volunteers from the community have contributed more than 30,000 hours during a single school semester.

Omaha. Omaha parents, educators, and the community are working more closely than ever on the shared priorities of children and public education. The Omaha Education Association and the Omaha school superintendent have joined forces to control those things they can control: the profession, professionalism, and the school climate. To build a successful collaborative relationship, the OEA and district administrators hosted training sessions for teachers and principals on making presentations, building trust, and building teams. The partners held forums on open communication between parents, the schools, and the community.

★North Carolina

Charlotte. When the state department of education identified several Charlotte schools as among the lowest performing in North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Association expanded its parental involvement efforts and created new partnerships to address student needs. The Association launched a book drive with business partners Ryland Homes and Scholastic, Inc. Ryland Homes supported an Association-led campaign to urge more parental and community involvement in schools. And it set up collection sites for books and school supplies—giving contributors a credit on home improvements. Scholastic, Inc. more than matched donations to purchase new books. The combined efforts netted more than 1,200 books for students. The success of the book drive and related activities led to the formation of a steering committee that includes association members, the education department at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, media representatives, business leaders, and others to work together to seek ways to improve area schools.

★North Dakota

Statewide. The North Dakota Education Association, North Dakota School Boards Association, and North Dakota Association of Administrators work together in coalition to encourage parent and community involvement. The three groups also work together on common concerns, such as attracting and retaining quality teachers.

★Oklahoma

60

Statewide. The Oklahoma Education Association works in partnership with representatives of school boards, administrators, parent groups, higher education, and others as part of the Oklahoma Education Coalition. The Coalition held a conference in February 1999 to help spread the cooperative spirit at the local level, providing practical advice on setting up local partnerships aimed at promoting student achievement.

★Pennsylvania

Statewide. Seven communities in Pennsylvania are involved in Public Engagement Projects (PEP), a partnership with NEA to open and sustain dialogues among schools, parents, and community members. In Adams County, for example, six local associations use a variety of methods to showcase student work in the community. Teachers in Elizabethtown are working with the NAACP, the Freedom to Learn Network, the Alliance for Democracy and others to create a forum for local people to talk about and address community concerns about the schools. Other PEP participants in the state are Clearfield, Southern Huntingdon, Warwick, and Weatherly.

Glen Mills. Advocates for educational quality in the Garnet Valley district frequently call on the local Association's resources to help conduct training in group decision-making, building school improvement teams, and other interpersonal skills. Teachers, administrators, school board members, and parents share a clear purpose and common goals through open and ongoing communication.

★ Tennessee

Memphis. A partnership between the Memphis Education Association and Memphis City Schools that began with a single school in 1989 has expanded to include joint decision-making at all 161 school sites in the district. In addition, the partners have armed a dozen schools with the NEA KEYS diagnostic tool for schools to identify strengths and weaknesses. Working jointly with the district has allowed teachers to solve problems that adversely affect their students.

Nashville. In 1995, nine schools in metropolitan Nashville joined forces with business leaders, parents, and others in the community to improve opportunities for urban children. With a grant from NEA's Urban Initiative to the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, the partnership concentrates on leadership development in the schools and the community, conflict resolution, and after-school services. The schools are working to help students and their families access tutoring, job placement, health care, adult literacy programs, and other services. Among the payoffs: school attendance is up, discipline is improved, and a greater number of parents—inspired by their children's success—are coming back to school to earn their GED (high school equivalency degree).

★ Texas

Queen City. State legislation supported by the Texas State Teachers Association requires every school district to establish councils to ensure greater teacher and parental involvement in decisions at each school site. The Queen City Independent School District and the Queen City Educators Association created a committee of staff, parents, businesses, and members of the community that uses site-based decision making for budget, hiring, and instructional strategies. Two of the Queen City schools have been recognized by the state for outstanding achievement on the state's standardized test. Queen City now scores 20 points above the state average, attendance has improved, and the curriculum has expanded.

61

★ Utah

Statewide. In 1998, the Utah Education Association (UEA) created a "Partnership Board" of business executives from throughout the state who work with UEA to identify new corporate sponsors for programs aimed at helping at-risk youth, providing technology in the classroom, and encouraging children to read. "It's an Up Thing to Read," for example, is a student literacy program that has offered 225,000 elementary students and 12,000 teachers rewards for reading. A partnership among UEA, Radio Disney, the Seven-Up Corporation, and local retail stores, the campaign runs annually between September and December. Teachers offer each student a UEA-supplied "library card" and add a sticker to the card every time the student finishes another book. Cards with three stickers can be exchanged for free 7-Up at participating retailers. A lottery is held at the end of the program, and the grand prize winner's school receives an Apple computer. Individual winners receive \$200 shopping sprees, their teachers receive money for school supplies, and their whole class gets a pizza party.

★ Virginia

Chesapeake. The Chesapeake Education Association, school board members, parents, a citywide planning team, and seven action teams developed a six-year plan for school improvement in 1996—the Chesapeake Public Schools' School Improvement Plan. It consists of 178 recommendations in seven areas that represent the strategic goals of the school division—school safety, rigorous educational standards, effectiveness and efficiency, strengthened staff development, technology, community involvement, and adequate school facilities. The plan's recommendations are being carried out in five phases, with completion anticipated in the 2000-01 school year.

Culpeper. The Culpeper Education Association has been instrumental in the development of a "communications council," which works on improving communication between the school system and the community and among the seven schools in the district. Building level administrators, the superintendent, and association leaders participate in the council.

Promoting Community and Parental Involvement

Parental Involvement

★ Georgia

DeKalb County. The Organization of DeKalb Educators has started a Parents as Partners Academy to help build stronger relationships among parents, schools, and the community. Academy participants meet once a month to share information and give parents a chance to talk with teachers on topics ranging from how to help boost academic skills to how to talk to children about drugs. The Academy also presents a session on pending legislation involving education. The Academy's goal is to create an environment where parents and educators can work together to make schools successful for all students.

★ Illinois

Schaumburg. The Schaumburg Education Association and the Schaumburg Education Employees Organization are using back-to-back NEA Urban Grants to reach out to families right from the start as they begin the process of raising a child. Parents of newborns are given parent-child education packets at local hospitals, with information about parenting resources in the community, certificates to community bookstores, and a recommended reading list for parents and children.

★ Michigan

63

Saginaw. The Saginaw Education Association has begun a new pilot partnership program to help students achieve. The Parent Writing Project involves weekly workshops where teachers help parents learn how to create a positive learning environment in the home, as well as tips to help make learning more fun. The program has increased parental and community involvement in the school and opened doors to greater interchange between families and schools.

Ypsilanti. An NEA Urban Grant will be used by the Ypsilanti Education Association, the Ypsilanti Support Staff Association, the local school board, and school administrators to reach out to parents and the community. YEA is giving parents activity booklets—Home Buddy Backpacks—to promote family activities that encourage learning at home. In addition, the school district is working to encourage parental involvement by offering workshops, changing schedules to accommodate parents' needs, and providing parents with transportation to school events.

★ Nevada

Clark County. The Clark County Education Association and Education Support Employees Association are conducting programs to increase parental and community involvement in local schools. CCEA and ESEA host meetings with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members at school sites, provide parents with tips and strategies for more meaningful involvement in schools, and recruit parents to join neighborhood school "Learning Improvement Teams." The two organizations have worked together to establish parent resource centers and library nights, as well as to bring parents into schools during and after the school day.

★ New Jersey

Statewide. Dozens of local affiliates across the state participate in a New Jersey Education Association outreach program called "Together We Can." The project includes activities to break down barriers that prevent parents and community members from getting involved in their local public schools. Most local programs include workshops for parents and other family members, as well as fun activities to attract families and community members to the school. Participating local associations include the Education Association of Passaic, Florence Township Education Association, Lakewood Education Association, Manalapan-Englishtown Education Association, Montclair Education Association, and Toms River Education Association.

Franklin Township. Thanks to an NEA Urban Grant, the Franklin Township school district will help parents boost the performances of their children on state standardized exams. The district is producing a set of videos—"Video in Education—We Respond (VIEWER)"—that focus on study skills, test-taking skills, and students and parents reading together. The videos will air on a local cable TV station and be promoted by the local Association.

Montclair. The Montclair Education Association is using a grant from the New Jersey Education Association to build stronger ties and greater collaboration between parents and teachers. In a pilot partnership at Glenfield Middle School, teachers are gaining skills to help them reach out to parents more effectively. The Association provides parents with materials on how to help with homework and how to get the most out of parent-teacher conferences.

64

★ Oregon

Portland. To encourage parents to get into the habit of reading with their children, and to build stronger ties between parents and the school, teachers at the Marysville Elementary School in Portland began the "Muffins for Mom and Donuts for Dad" program in 1997. Once a month, the school opens early so that parents and adult friends have the opportunity to read together with children. Local businesses support the effort by providing morning refreshments.

★ Wisconsin

Appleton. A 1997-98 NEA Urban Grant helped the Appleton Education Association implement a program of outreach to new parents. Hoping to develop bonds and build relationships with them, the Association provides parents of newborns with information designed to help them make sure their kids enter school ready to learn.

★ Wyoming

Natrona County. An NEA Urban Grant helped build a partnership between the Natrona County Education Association and a community group called Parents Pulling Together. Together, the two organizations have increased communication between parents and teachers, deepened parental involvement in the schools, and recognized that they share a common goal: student achievement. Both teachers and parents have come to understand each other better.

IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF SCHOOLS

Technology

Class Size

Modernization



Techno Hype or Help?



Photo: NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

66

Some critics say cramming schools with computers just wastes taxpayer dollars. NEA members in one innovative urban school beg to differ. "What's wrong with education cannot be fixed with technology," says Apple Computer founder Steve Jobs. "Lincoln did not have a website at the log cabin where his parents home-schooled him." Critics of public education like Jobs want public tax dollars spent on private school tuition. They consider any moves to place computers in public school classrooms as distractions from the task at hand. But even some thoughtful supporters of public education, like New York University's Neil Postman, feel computers are incredibly overhyped.

Are they right? Can computing and new technology really help kids learn? Or is all this talk about classrooms and cyberspace just another educational fad? At Maxwell Middle School in Tucson, Arizona, you'll find plenty of NEA members eager to answer these questions. Maxwell is one of the few schools in America where "classroom" and "computing" now go together as seamlessly as blackboard and chalk.

Maxwell currently hosts 600 students and 423 computers. Seventh and eighth grade classrooms each contain some 20 PCs, networked with a full range of workplace and educational software.

All this hardware and software is now built into Maxwell's staff-driven curriculum—heavy on reading and writing, thematic instruction, and cooperative learning—and the results are impressive. In the 1995-96 school year, Maxwell seventh graders—of all abilities—registered an impressive four-year boost in their Iowa Test scores, averaging 8 percent gains in English, 10 percent in reading, and 12 percent in math.

"If we don't make learning relevant to kids, we'll lose them," notes seventh grade language arts teacher Lynda Cesare. "There are too many other things going on in their lives. We show them that they have the skills to keep on moving, to be lifelong learners."

"Computers help enhance what students learn in class—reading, writing, math, and so on—and enable them to see the bigger picture quickly, how it all fits together," adds seventh grade social studies teacher Brandon Hall.

How exactly does classroom computing make a difference? The new technology, Maxwell teachers agree, helps:

★ **Assemble the pieces.** Seventh and eighth grade teams at Maxwell—each led by a math, language arts, social studies, and science teacher—often collaborate on themes, assign students "jobs," and then put together a product through technology.

In one recent project, students created a "conflict resolution package" to "sell" to nations like Israel and Bosnia. In the process,

they used computers to research each country's economy and political scene, create statistical spreadsheets and graphs, and create a multimedia marketing presentation.

★ **Foster teamwork.** With computers, cooperation is contagious. When she's in the Mac lab, sixth grader Eliana Diaz calls out, "Anybody need help?" and flits around the room to assist other kids, sometimes almost bumping them out of their seats. In science class, a seventh grade gang member pulls up a chair to help other kids learn the PowerPoint presentation program.

★ **Build self-confidence.** The computer lets students quickly revise their work, making them "feel more confident that they can make a mistake and erase it easily," says special education teacher Susan Oylar. "That builds self-esteem—it's a real ego booster."

"Kids who know a little about computers, but aren't in gangs or sports, have a lot of status," adds seventh grade science teacher Tom Kaigler. "They're seen as valuable people."

★ **Help bilingual kids learn.** When English as a Second Language student Carmen Verdugo started at Maxwell, she was "petrified," notes Lynda Cesare. "But the technology gave her confidence in her skills, and now she's really proficient in English."

Verdugo herself says that it's "due to computers that I've improved in spelling, English, pronunciation, and math."

★ **Get students organized.** "Students are really into machines!" emphasizes sixth grade language arts teacher Jan Dungan, and they "stick to task a lot longer on computer, as opposed to pencil and paper."

"Students also become more independent learners with resources like the spell checker at their fingertips," Dungan adds. "They don't need to run to teachers as much. These computer applications organize their thought processes."

Explains eighth grader Brian Sheridan: "You have to know what you're doing and think ahead—if you push a button, will it kill the system or help you?"

★ **Broaden horizons.** Maxwell staff used to rely on Title I funding to take disadvantaged students on field trips to San Diego. Tight budget times make frequent field trips difficult to arrange. But, through the Internet, computers can move students far beyond classroom walls.

Eighth grade history teacher Steve Andre is planning a unit on the Holocaust and "working with a local rabbi to get E-mail pen pals in Israel for my students." Students in John Moritz's class have found four business sponsors for their upcoming school website—"Maxwell.org"—providing the school with its own domain on the Internet.

★ **Prepare students for the hi-tech workplace.** Seventh grade science teacher David Goodkin's students "are using the same software program to make presentations as my father, who works at Hughes Aircraft." These kids, he insists, "are at least as proficient as most business office staff in knowing where to go for information and how to find things."

"Some of the kids I taught last year wouldn't make it in a traditional pen-and-pencil school setting," adds Steve Andre, who left behind the business world for a second career in teaching. "But now they can go to the bounds of their imagination and have pride in a finished product. The potential is just phenomenal."

Realizing that potential is, of course, never easy. At Maxwell, for instance, too many computers are awaiting repair, and that can create aggravating delays.

But thousands of other schools would love to face these sort of repair problems. Most schools aren't repairing computers because they don't have many to begin with.

Nor do most schools have enough resources to access the Internet or offer faculty the training they need to make computers more than expensive doorstops.

Maxwell owes its computing infrastructure, which began taking serious shape in 1992, to partnerships—still ongoing—with two companies, Microsoft and Compaq. Both have contributed significant products and services to the school.

Additional support has come through a \$40 million district-wide technology bond issue, Title I and desegregation funding (allowing smaller classes), and a state technology grant for interactive television—to be spent this year.

Without this combined effort, few of the students at Maxwell would have any computing in their lives. Some 83 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

"If my students couldn't use technology at school, they'd probably never touch a

computer," points out John Moritz, a seventh grade science teacher.

But they are touching computers, and that interaction, notes immediate past president of the Tucson Education Association, Frieda Baker, is "helping at-risk kids work their way out of less-than-desirable situations and fulfill their hopes."

Making sure all kids get this opportunity, in all communities, is the challenge America now faces.

Reprinted from NEA Today, November 1996

Improving the Conditions of Schools

Technology

★ Alaska

Anchorage. Students at Romig Junior High School used a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to explore uses of technology. The unique partnership among the school, the Alaska Pioneers Home (a care-giving institution for the elderly), and the Anchorage Museum, connects students, parents, and residents through cyberspace. An electronic bulletin board provides the equivalent of a full-service regional library—with teachers' areas, exhibit areas, and areas for posting and critiquing literary work. Using take-home laptop computers and modems, parents can communicate with each other and with teachers via the bulletin board. Students use the board's Homework Help-line, and have access to the Anchorage Museum and the Internet. One project involves Romig students using advanced technology to create videotaped oral histories with electronic pen pals at the Pioneers Home. The program has resulted in more parental involvement in the school. Senior citizens enjoy their contact with students and their discovery that they themselves aren't "too old to use computers."

★ Arizona

Statewide. The Arizona Education Association is part of a partnership with state universities and high-tech firms including AT&T, Bull, Worldwide Information Systems, Microsoft, Apple, and NIC to develop, coordinate, and support statewide efforts to integrate educational technology into Arizona schools. This year, the Arizona Learning Technology Partnership is proposing legislation that will provide the resources needed to make every Arizona public school classroom technology-effective. The bill will address teacher professional development, technology-curriculum integration, school-level technical support, and a 20-year study that will be used to maintain and improve the use of technology in Arizona schools.

Phoenix. Teachers at South Mountain High School are using a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to transform the school into a vital community center for the residents of inner city Phoenix. Working with the Phoenix Sister Cities Commission, the program provides students access to multimedia technologies that they use to research, design, and produce state-of-the-art travelogues on countries and regions of the world. The travelogues are made available to Phoenix visitors, Youth Ambassadors, and the general public. The program exposes students to the geography, history, literature, laws, and social customs of various countries. Educators credit the program with boosting student initiative, improving class discipline and social skills, and increasing test scores. Its success helped spur two new developments: the Phoenix Union High School District created a position of Technology Educator to help teachers better integrate technology in the classroom, and the U.S. Department of Education awarded the school district a five-year \$6.9 million Technology Innovation Challenge Grant.

★ California

Menlo Park. At the Willow Oaks School, where every student qualifies for the free or reduced-rate lunch program, students operate a school-wide micro-society with a student-run government, postal service, and judicial system. With a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, Willow Oaks students use the same technology that phone and cable companies provide to real city governments. Student government meetings can be seen on computer screens in school and at a local community center. Student government officers and leaders communicate by e-mail and post reports on electronic bulletin boards. Students conduct public opinion polls online and report results via video conferences. Student operators manage the entire system, including the related website.

Sonora. Teachers at Sonora Elementary are using a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to better serve the school's increasingly diverse student population. Children in grades 4 through 8 learn history by interacting with the community electronically—developing their own multimedia electronic family trees and helping to produce a cable TV segment on local history. Students gain knowledge and insights from senior citizens, as they help teach them how to use computers. An after-school computer club for "at-risk" 7th and 8th graders also reaches parents by inviting them to attend technology training sessions.

South Lake Tahoe. Students at the Bijou Community School are learning electronic communications the same way they learn to read and write—by using their new skills every day. The NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, Boys and Girls Club of South Lake Tahoe, and Sierra Nevada College help support the program. Students gather information and prepare presentations online. After school, they take extra classes in multi-media technology taught by Boys and Girls Club staff and student teachers from the college. Their parents can learn or upgrade computer skills in the same classes. Program benefits include increased parental participation in the after-school program, better prepared student teachers with real classroom involvement, and an improvement in student writing skills.

Union City. Students at Alvarado Elementary are using an NEA National Foundation for the Improvement of Education "Road Ahead" grant to become high-tech scientists. Using skills learned in the school's new Science Discovery Museum, children record, analyze, and report on data from student-initiated experiments or from "virtual" field trips on the Internet, where they talk with scientists taking part in actual expeditions to remote sites. Students' reports involve a variety of media—text, audio, photos, and video—and they are exhibited at the school's Discovery Museum. An after-school computer academy produces publications to share information about the Discovery Museum, and other school activities and achievements with the community. Program benefits include more parental involvement, the development of student experts who help younger children, and an increase in hands-on learning.

★Colorado

Sedalia. A "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education helped bring a moveable technology lab to children at Sedalia Elementary. Students used the portable lab—which included laptop computers, a camcorder, a large TV screen, and a camera—to create multimedia presentations and to link to such resources as the Denver Art Museum.

★Kansas

Atchison. At Atchison Middle School, girls have been identified as needing special encouragement to pursue science, mathematics, and technology careers. Using a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, the school has developed a program to encourage girls to use computer and multi-media technologies. A new Keypal Club, which meets before and after school, involves students in researching historical landmarks for a multi-media presentation on America Online and e-World's Educational Student Center, and gives them the opportunity to use and explore existing electronic networks. Keypal Club participants share their skills with senior citizens at the Shepherd Center and help them develop word processing and desktop publishing skills so they can compile their memories in an online booklet.

★Kentucky

72 *Louisville.* Students at Roosevelt-Perry Elementary School are using a grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to develop innovative portfolios of their schoolwork. Written work is scanned into a computer, project presentations and field trips are videotaped, and grades and other school data are recorded as part of the student's work file, which is shared with parents. Students also developed electronic histories of local neighborhoods for Louisville's Portland Museum, interviewing and photographing notable residents.

★Massachusetts

Springfield. Using a grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, the faculty at Middle College High School are using technology to re-engage students. The school is an alternative school located on the campus of Springfield Technical Community College. Middle College High students are drawn from area schools based on their records of poor grades and high absenteeism. Through the Learning Tomorrow program, students develop computer literacy by building on real-life experiences and answering real-life questions. The practical technology skills they are developing can be applied in internships at local businesses.

★Michigan

Garden City. As a "Road Ahead" site established by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, students at Lathers Elementary School communicate with students across the country and around the world through National Geographic Kids Online and other electronic network programs. They meet online with

scientists, mathematicians, authors and other experts and tell their own stories by keeping computer journals. Fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders teach computer skills to younger classmates. Students also have access to online activities in after-school programs offered through the Garden City Community Education program.

Manistique. Students at Lakeside Elementary School in Manistique, an isolated area on the northern shore of Lake Michigan, have had their classrooms opened up to the world with help from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. Using advanced technology, children collect and organize data on the quality of water in Manistique Harbor and Lake Michigan. They work online with interns at the Michigan State University Fish and Wildlife Department, and produce multi-media reports that provide valuable information to community and state agencies. After school and during the summer, students improve their computer skills by working with the local 4-H program and the School Craft County Extension Office. Program benefits include an increase in Michigan Educational Assessment Program reading scores, more motivated students, increased computer knowledge, and the establishment of a family technology center at the school.

★Minnesota

Statewide. The US West/NEA Minnesota Teacher Network was launched in 1997, after a year of planning by a partnership that included the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Technology and Information Educational Services, Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning, Mankato State University, and US West Foundation. US West provided more than 550 educators with laptop computers, a year of home and school Internet access, and training to help them better use computers in the classroom. Each teacher then trained at least 10 peers, spreading the effort to more than 5,000 educators. Teachers involved in the project are also teaching others about how to improve curriculum and implement the state's new graduation standards.

73

St. Cloud. The Area Learning Center in central Minnesota serves students over the age of 16 who are at risk of dropping out or who have previously dropped out of school. To make learning relevant and to prepare students for the workplace, teachers are using a "Learning Tomorrow" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to construct a thematic, technology-based framework of instruction that connects students' learning to real life experience, and promotes collaboration and critical thinking. Because many "alternative" students resist working collaboratively—a necessary skill in the real world—students at the Area Learning Center are grouped into triads, where they design and complete projects together, using computers, video, CD-ROM, and other multi-media technologies.

★New York

Greece. Teaching students how to tackle real-world problems was one goal of the "Road Ahead" project funded by the NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education at Greece's Odyssey School. Students chose an engineering project that involved designing and building a fitness trail on school grounds, which served as a prototype for an overall instructional program using information technologies. Working with a local engineering company and the Greece town planning board,

students used computer-assisted design programs to produce engineering drawings, survey the site, record topography, and present three-dimensional models of the plan.

Ithaca. Enfield Elementary School students' garden projects are teaching them more than the elements of life science. The children are learning to record their observations on video, digital weather stations, and computer databases. In after-school and summer programs, students use technology to analyze their data for trends, predict future outcomes, and test hypotheses. This program, sponsored by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, is conducted in cooperation with the Cornell University Department of Soil, Crop and Atmospheric Sciences.

★North Carolina

Elizabeth City. The Elizabeth City Middle School is nationally recognized for its use of technology in its unique interdisciplinary studies and alternate scheduling programs. A grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education is providing support for these efforts, as well as helping spread access to education technology beyond the school walls. The grant is funding a "Gateways" program in which county public library staff train teachers and the after-school program staff of Support Our Students and the Boys and Girls Club to use technology to develop interdisciplinary curriculums.

★Oregon

74

Statewide. In 1995, the Oregon Education Association received a \$1 million grant from US West/NEA to develop a project to provide computers and help educate 300 teachers who would pledge to train 10 colleagues, thus reaching some 10 percent of the state's teaching population. OEA's partners in the project include the Oregon University System, Oregon Department of Education, Lane Education Service District, and a number of state universities. Participating teachers created a website to disseminate curriculum ideas to effectively incorporate technology into learning. The Teacher Network also used an Eisenhower Professional Development grant for math and science education to establish a team of mentors to help beginning and veteran teachers.

★Pennsylvania

Abington. With a faculty and staff of 180 and a student body of 1,600, Abington Junior High School in suburban Philadelphia is integrating technology into the curriculum to improve student learning. The school is using a grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to support professional development for faculty and staff throughout the school. Partners in the project include the school district, Pennsylvania State University, the Abington Education Association, the Abington Secretaries/Aides Association, and the Abington PTA. All school employees, including support personnel, will play a part in supporting academic standards and using technology to achieve those standards. The school is also active in outreach efforts to build community support integrating technology into learning.

Bethlehem. Nearly half the students at Freemansburg Elementary School live in poverty, and a quarter of them speak English as a second language. To promote literacy and reduce the risk of school failure among these children, the school is using a Learning Tomorrow grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to introduce a family heritage curriculum for third graders. Students study their family heritage, culture, and traditions as they write and publish autobiographies. Each class also links with a "sister" class through telecommunications and explores other cultures through distance learning. A unique feature of this program is a cooperative relationship between the school and nearby Moravian College. Moravian education students participate in the technology training that the third grade teachers and students receive, and in exchange provide one-on-one tutoring services.

Erie. Using a 1998-99 NEA Urban Grant, the Erie Education Association will implement a literature and technology reading program in an urban fifth-grade classroom. In this "Accelerated Reader" program, students choose novels from a selected list and read at their own level and pace. Once the reading is completed, the children are tested, using the Accelerated Reader software, which enables the teacher to know that the book has been read and at what level the child is reading.

★South Carolina

Columbia. At Rice Creek Elementary, a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education enables students at all levels to use technology to reach outside the school walls and work with experts at the South Carolina State Museum. Children research, record, and analyze data and present their findings using an electronic bulletin board system established by the museum. Students strengthen their academic skills by participating in special interest clubs sponsored by the museum, including music composition, video, and telecommunications. Students in the after-school clubs become technology leaders in their regular classrooms.

75

★South Dakota

Statewide. The South Dakota Education Association, US West, and Dakota State University teamed up to bring technology education to one out of 10 South Dakota teachers. The project began with team members from 10 school districts and has grown to 33 districts. Participants receive a laptop computer from US West and information on how to access the Internet. Every teacher who receives the education makes a commitment to teach 10 other teachers in inservice programs in other districts. Throughout the state, teachers are discovering that the new technology is a great classroom tool and are integrating it into the curriculum—across the board. In Sisseton, teachers are guiding students through a web design project, and in Colman-Egan schools, students are using the new technology to build links with each other so they can complete classroom projects together.

★Tennessee

Franklin. Students at the Fred J. Page Middle School are using a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to access the Internet from home computers for information they need for a study of water quality along the Harpeth River. They communicate with staff of the Cumberland Science

Museum on questions arising from their study, and post messages on an electronic bulletin board. Students use the grant to produce a multi-media report to post on the bulletin board or the Web, as well as a video for the community, explaining the importance of the river environment to nesting birds. Participating students are able to teach their peers about computer skills and water standards.

★ Texas

Austin. Fulmore Middle School students are immersed in an electronic learning environment, thanks to a grant from the NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. In a classroom simulating NASA's Mission Control, children learn to make the kind of emergency decisions that scientists make in the real world. Using laser discs, computers, CD-ROMs, and more, students break down challenges into questions, find the data they need, and make decisions about the best solutions to the problems. Findings are organized into multimedia presentations, which are defended before panels of teachers, parents, and community members. A partnership with Interfaith After-School and the Communities in Schools programs extends the technology learning for kids even after the school day ends.

★ Vermont

South Burlington. The South Burlington school district is working with Vermont-NEA, the Vermont Institute for Science, Mathematics and Technology, the University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services, and the South Burlington Recreation Department to expand students' use of learning technologies. The district is establishing a new policy pertaining to the use of technology, creating new roles for teachers skilled in technology, and providing courses and technical assistance. Using a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, students at South Burlington High School and Tuttle Middle School learned how to make technology work for them. They are using computers to produce professional quality multi-media presentations. They produce their ideas graphically, animate their designs with 3-D software, reproduce their presentations as videos, and transmit them to other schools. Students sell their animations and videos, and the revenue is used to maintain the program.

★ Washington

Statewide. A 1996 grant from the US West/NEA Teacher Network to the Washington Education Association helped launch The Learning Space, an online learning community. The grant provided laptop computers and training to teachers across the state, who were assisted in the creation of the technology program by representatives of US West, the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Education Association, two state universities, three school districts, and others. The Learning Space is a repository of the best work of staff and students, as well as an organized link to the global networks that can enrich teaching and learning. Teachers who complete the technology training become a part of The Learning Space. In 1996, 70 teachers completed the training. The next year, 500 teachers participated. Each teacher is expected to train nine peers; so more than 5,000 teachers will gain new skills through the program.

Bellevue. While Spanish and Russian are the dominant languages at Phantom Lake Elementary School in Bellevue, students here speak nearly 20 other languages. Educators are using a "Learning Tomorrow" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to help students learn English through the use of technology. Students in the "Newcomers Club," the English-as-a-Second Language learning lab, use computers, CD-ROM, video equipment, and laser disc players to expand their English language skills. With the help of Alpha Smart laptop computers, children are able to take their work from class to club and back again, continuing their progress in English and core subjects.

Renton. Nelson Middle School teachers and staff used a "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to bring training in technology into their classrooms. Both educators and students participated in after-school clubs to become more proficient using computers and multi-media technologies.

★ Wisconsin

Augusta. Augusta High School in rural Wisconsin serves a large number of economically disadvantaged students. To meet students' needs, educators are using a "Learning Tomorrow" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to develop a school-to-work program for high school seniors. Students expand business and communications skills in evening courses and work with mentors, which include business and community leaders. Many students also work as interns or employees during the day. As part of their course work, the seniors create products for community service organizations and businesses, including brochures, video presentations, magazines, pamphlets, and computer-generated slide presentations. Through this program, students become proficient users of technology, experienced workers, and more responsible adults.

Eau Claire. A "Road Ahead" grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education helped elementary students at Longfellow School—especially the one in four who are Southeast Asian Hmong immigrants—use technology to learn more about themselves and their community. Via the Internet, students conducted research at the Chippewa Valley Museum and exchanged stories online with senior citizens at the L.E. Phillips Senior Center. Students used digital cameras, scanners, and other communications technologies to produce multimedia presentations that were shared with community members via a local public broadcasting station.

Improving the Conditions of Schools

Class Size

★California

Statewide. The California Teachers Association led the fight for smaller class sizes in elementary schools across the state. The legislation to provide state resources to reduce class size had strong bipartisan support, including then-Gov. Pete Wilson. The class size reduction measure put the Association's influence squarely behind a proposal strongly supported by parents and teachers—and with demonstrable impact on student achievement. Reportedly hundreds of parents have decided to place their children back into neighborhood public schools as a result of the new law.

★Utah

Statewide. The Utah Education Association lobbied successfully in 1998 for sufficient funding to school districts to reduce class size by two students per class in the middle schools. In the first year, the legislature allocated about \$9 million. The class size reductions at the middle school level follows UEA's successful efforts in 1990 to reduce class sizes in kindergarten through sixth grade. Class sizes in kindergarten through third grade now average about 22 to 25 students per teacher, compared to 32 to 35 students per teacher a decade ago.

★Wisconsin

Statewide. The Wisconsin Education Association Council led the fight for state aid to significantly reduce class sizes in early grades in low-income communities. The program provided aid for 30 schools to reduce class size in kindergarten and first grade in the first year, and expanded to 80 schools the second. The second-year evaluation, released in January 1999, showed continued academic improvement for participating students.

Improving the Conditions of Schools Modernization

★ Arizona

Statewide. In 1998, five years after the Arizona Supreme Court declared its school construction formula inadequate and inequitable, the Arizona legislature passed "Students First." The Arizona Education Association worked closely with lawmakers and the governor to win passage of this bipartisan agreement that places the responsibility for the repair, maintenance and building of schools directly on the state. To apply for funding, districts contact a state-level capital facilities board, which includes school officials and school building experts, as well as the vice president of the Arizona Education Association. The measure is funded at \$374 million for the first several years to repair and improve long-neglected buildings.

★ California

Statewide. Thanks to two years of work by the California Teachers Association and its allies, voters last November got a chance to address the school facilities crises in their state—approving a measure authorizing \$9.2 billion to build new schools and repair the state's deteriorating school facilities. The bond measure will provide \$6.7 billion for K-12 schools and \$2.5 billion for higher education over a four-year period. A compromise agreement between CTA and the California Building Industry Association (CBIA) allowed the measure to reach the ballot.

79

★ Florida

Statewide. The Florida Teaching Profession-NEA collaborated with the Governor's Commission on Education, and persuaded the legislature to pass \$2.7 billion in bond funding for new school construction in 1997.

STEPPING FORWARD

How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

REDESIGNING SCHOOLS

Charter Schools

Bargaining
for Quality

New Models for
Decision Making

Reconstituting
Low-Performing
Schools

Aligning Standards
and Practices



NEA Charter Schools Take Initiative

In September of 1997, the new CIVA School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, opened its doors to 140 students.

With its staff of 10, the CIVA School (CIVA stands for Character, Integrity, Vision, and the Arts) works on individual character development through intense family involvement and an interdisciplinary curriculum.

The CIVA School is a charter school—by definition, an autonomous, publicly funded, performance-based school that's free from many of the state and local rules governing other public schools.

And one of its main backers is the Colorado Springs Education Association.

Does NEA support charter schools?

NEA is interested in learning firsthand what it takes to make a successful charter school. What better way to lead in one of the hottest areas of school reform?

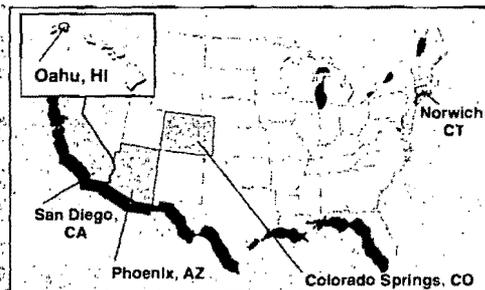
As for the law: NEA supports charter school legislation that's consistent with this country's commitment to free, universal public schools. The Association opposes charter school laws that promote the privatization of education.

So what's NEA doing in the area of charter schools?

In 1995, NEA launched its Charter School Initiative. Designed to assist members interested in working with their communities to create new public schools, the program has three schools now in operation—in Hawaii, Colorado, and Connecticut. Schools in Arizona and California are expected to open in the Fall of 1999.

The sites run the gamut, from elementary to high school, with programs that emphasize family involvement, interdisciplinary instruction, school-to-work components, and business and university partnerships.

The schools are open to all students, space permitting, including children in need of special education services.



What makes NEA-supported charter schools unique?

All NEA charter school sites focus on a commitment to strengthen public schools. And every site:

- ★ Can rely on NEA for technical assistance with everything from curriculum development and fund-raising to setting up the governance process.
- ★ Recognizes the union and builds contractual rights into its charter. Typically, there are site-specific waivers, such as flexibility in working hours or differences in the evaluation process—all developed by charter staff.
- ★ Places a high priority on time and opportunity for staff development and on sharing what's learned with other educators. To enhance the learning potential, NEA has hired a team of researchers from the Graduate School of Education at UCLA to assess the progress of all the charters.

How can a union support charter schools?

It might be better to ask: How can a union *not* take the lead?

This is a chance for educators "to use energy and innovation to get the taxpayers on our side," says Jan Noble, immediate past president of the Colorado Springs Education Association. "We have to prove public education is the best game in town."

With millions of federal dollars now available for charters, teachers need to be part of the action—to have a hand in defining educational reform.

This also fits with NEA's goal of creating school climates that make student achievement top priority.

Other unions are getting into the act. In California, the San Diego Labor Council has partnered with the local NEA Charter School Initiative site to offer apprenticeships and other opportunities for career exploration.

Who funds these schools—NEA or taxpayers?

Charters are publicly funded, but there's a continual search for additional funds to allow more than a bare-bones program.

NEA doesn't provide the money to start up these schools or keep them running. What the NEA Charter School Initiative program does do is help teachers learn entrepreneurial skills—that is, look at creative ways to market and fund their schools.

Careful budgeting, snagging grants, and searching for corporate sponsors become necessities.

Realistically, what else does it take to start a charter school?

The NEA Charter School Initiative has shown that a charter's "founding group" needs to have the ability and the time—sometimes more than two years—to create the kind of charter school that meets its community's needs.

In most cases, the members of the founding group—which can include teachers, parents, and business and labor representatives—have full-time jobs. They have to grab spare time for charter planning.

At the Connecticut site, for example, teachers taught in their old school through June 1997, while working to get their charter ready to open in a renovated former factory by August.

What stumbling blocks have NEA members encountered?

The process of creating a governing board can hit pitfalls as a charter moves from a less-structured founding group into a more formal setup.

Issues of parental control, community input, and the roles of teachers and administrators must be resolved:

And deciphering each state's particular maze of charter school regulations can be aggravating. At least 29 states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, now have laws that allow for the creation of charter schools. During the process, local school boards have shown themselves to be both a help and a hindrance.

Are NEA charter schools worth all the headaches?

Educators at all five sites have been reinvigorated by the prospect of creating schools with the learning models and partnerships that they've always wanted to incorporate.

Neil Pettigrew, CIVA's math teacher, left his former high school because of deteriorating student behavior. At the other school, says Pettigrew, "I didn't see how things could get better. At CIVA, we are solving the problems together."

What's next?

NEA's immediate objectives are to sustain its five current charter school sites, make sure participants learn from one another, and train others in the best practices that emerge.

As part of a two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, NEA—through its National Foundation for the Improvement of Education and SRI Inc.—is beginning a "cross-fertilization" project that will eventually involve collaboration between charter schools and other public schools. Such collaboration can ensure that the promise of charter schools to improve all of public education is fulfilled.

Marc Knapp, president of the San Diego Teachers Association, is active in launching the charter school there. He's clear about what needs to happen next.

"Charter schools can help us learn to do three things well," says Knapp. "Improve learning for all students, improve teaching, and more fully engage parents and the community."

Reprinted from NEA Today, April 1998

Can Reconstitution Fix Failing Schools?

Fueled by a widespread get-tough attitude toward chronically low-performing schools, states and districts across the country are taking a drastic step in an attempt to turn these schools around. It's called "reconstitution."

A definition.

At its most drastic, "reconstitution" means disbanding a school's faculty and reopening the building with a new staff, structure, and curriculum. This final, radical step is often—but not always—preceded by a phased-in process that offers time and resources for improvement.

Reconstitution is typically introduced through three stages. First, a low-performing school is given notice that it's eligible for reconstitution. At the second stage, a school is given a warning, with consequences, and a deadline for improvement. The third stage is reconstitution, and a school district or state decides to disband a school and replace all staff. Most often, when schools reach the last stage, teachers can reapply for their jobs or seek positions elsewhere in the district.

At least 23 states have policies for intervening and requiring major changes in low-performing schools. Seventeen states have handed down this authority to the districts.

How is a school targeted for reconstitution?

Policies differ from state to state, but schools are usually targeted based on poor student performance on large-scale assessment tests.

An NEA survey of educators in the midst of reconstitution indicates strong sentiment for the criteria to include "multiple measures of school performance, not a single test score." Survey results also show that criteria should be well defined and communicated to staff, students, and parents far in advance of any state or district action.

What's the verdict on reconstitution?

In the NEA survey, the majority of educators felt that reconstitution could help ailing schools under some circumstances. But just as many were angry with its implementation.

More than one-quarter of the educators surveyed who've experienced reconstitution were unaware their schools had been pinpointed as low-performing, and 22 percent said their school shake-up came as "a complete shock."

Teachers in schools reconstituted by districts, as opposed to states, were much more likely to characterize the process as "arbitrary, chaotic, and irrational."

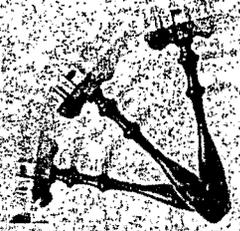
Cay Spitzer, a third-grade teacher at John Adams Elementary in Colorado Springs, Colorado, would agree with that assessment. The staff at Adams had developed a school improvement plan and had just returned from a productive day-long writing workshop in 1997 when word came from district officials that all staff—from the crossing guards to the principal—had to reapply for their jobs.

"None of us had quarrels with the fact that there needed to be changes," says Spitzer. "But I'd have thought the district would have found out what we were doing before they came in and said, 'You're doing it wrong and we're going to change it.'"

Only three out of 30 staff members returned to Adams. Most didn't even bother to reapply.

So what's a good alternative to reconstitution?

In Kentucky, the process for improving schools concentrates on building the "capacity" for success among teachers, students, and administrators.



The state has allocated millions to make this work. And the money and expert guidance that have flowed into schools can make a dramatic difference, says Steve Moats, a veteran teacher and Kentucky Education Association board member.

For two years, Moats has worked as a "distinguished educator," trained to help schools in crisis put themselves back on the road to success.

These schools get at least two years of full-time assistance and as much as \$100,000. And all teachers and administrators undergo extensive evaluations.

"No one has ever lost their job because of their evaluation," says Moats, and Kentucky hasn't resorted to completely restaffing any school.

"It's punitive to split up a staff," Moats adds. "It makes more sense to work with what you've got and improve the teaching."

Moats has found that "in most schools, the problem is a lack of focus." He helps staff develop strategies and long-term plans to figure out how to get where they want to be.

One key is "making sure teachers are teaching what the kids are being tested on," says Moats. This means emphasizing writing skills—critical to success on the open-ended questions on state assessments.

What are the results so far?

In Kentucky, test scores are improving—a success that Moats attributes to the state's alternative approach to low-performing schools.

In the NEA survey, most members reported that reconstitution brought extra assistance and professional development opportunities. But only 46 percent said their schools saw improvement in achievement.

In Colorado Springs, reconstitution hasn't brought lots of resources, new programs, or even benchmark goals from the district, says Cay Spitzer. She believes student achievement is on the rise—but credits a "determined" staff and a community that became more involved

after being shut out of the reconstitution decision.

According to the Education Commission of the States, evidence is definitely lacking on the effects of reconstitution. One study calls academic progress—at least as measured by standardized test scores—"uneven" in reconstituted schools.

But reconstitution "can send a message that state and district policy makers will not tolerate chronic student failure," the study notes. "In so doing, reconstitutions may put pressure on educators to re-evaluate their efforts."

Where does NEA stand?

"Educators want to be sure that the process has validity—that there's some chance of helping the schools to improve," says NEA staffer Jacques Nacson.

NEA's approach includes focusing on resources and programs to keep low-performing schools from sinking to the point of total reconstitution.

Nacson adds that states need to set benchmarks that recognize a school's steady and continuous improvement. "If the benchmarks aren't realistic," he notes, "what's the point?"

Some states and districts consider reconstitution a "magic bullet," he warns. "They say, 'just get tough, and education is going to improve.'

"Reconstitution won't work unless the process is used judiciously—as a way to offer technical and other assistance—to improve schools," says Nacson. "It's not a matter of passing the legislation and then moving on to something else."

Reprinted from NEA Today, January 1999

Redesigning Schools Charter Schools

★Arizona

Phoenix. The Arizona Education Association Charter School in Phoenix, opening Fall 1999, is a collaboration among AEA, Arizona State University, a Phoenix school district, and Bank of America. The school will enroll approximately 200 inner-city students in grades 7-9. The academic program will integrate core subjects with life skills through school-to-work and community service requirements. In addition, the new charter school will involve students' families to assure emotional and social support for high academic achievement. As part of the partnership with Arizona State, the Phoenix charter school will also operate as a professional development school.

★California

San Diego. The San Diego school district, San Diego Education Association, and San Diego State University's College of Education are working together to establish the San Diego Education Association Charter School, scheduled to open in September 1999. Initially it will serve students in grades 1-2 and 6-7. Enrollment will be expanded over a three-year period to include kindergarten through high school. The school will be open to all students in the district and will mirror the diversity of the city. Each student will be matched with a mentor and will agree to a compact that outlines the responsibilities of parents (or mentoring adults), students, and teachers or other school representatives in meeting educational goals. Families will play a key role in the design of the school, and influence school decisions. In collaboration with San Diego State, the charter school will also function as a professional development school and will help interested teachers prepare for National Board certification.

★Colorado

Colorado Springs. The CIVA (Character, Integrity, Vision, and the Arts) Charter School opened its doors in September 1997. The school's charter, developed by the Colorado Springs Education Association in collaboration with the Colorado Education Association, is grounded in the fundamental belief that every student is capable of high quality work. Students, families, and teachers are expected to give their best in all areas of the program. The school sets high expectations for academic achievement and character development. At least one family member of each student must commit to the CIVA School program, including family weekends, parent seminars, and retreats with students.

★Connecticut

Norwich. The Integrated Day Charter School, supported by the Connecticut Education Association, opened in September 1997. Founders are a diverse group of teachers, parents, and community members. Teachers in the K-6 school were supported by CEA, which negotiated a contract that reflects the needs of the charter. Integrated Day's school day is one hour longer than other schools in the district, and students are organized into mixed-age classes. As early as kindergarten, they conduct research and present information to their peers, make choices about tasks they are expected to complete, and take part in community service projects. Families help set academic and nonacademic goals for their children, and the school maintains standards for parental involvement.

★Hawaii

Lanikai. At the Lanikai Charter School, which opened in 1996, teachers are developing a school from the ground up—with an interdisciplinary and intercultural curriculum. Working with the Hawaii State Teachers Association and the Hawaii State Department of Education, the school organizes classrooms around ability rather than age. Foreign language instruction is integrated into the curriculum, and accountability measures follow the precepts of Total Quality Learning.

Redesigning Schools Bargaining for Quality

★Arizona

Phoenix. The Creighton Education Association and Creighton School Board in Phoenix are engaged in a three-year program to go beyond battling over salary increases and work together to redesign employee compensation. The Association conducted a job analysis for classified (education support) employees with help from the NEA, and the partners will proceed to examine salary structures for certified and administrative employees. Employees and employers are using an interest-based approach in their negotiations, which has led to a more collaborative working arrangement on a host of issues.

★California

Garden Grove. The Garden Grove Education Association is using an advisory committee, as defined by California's collective bargaining law, to work with the Garden Grove Unified School District to decide—and evaluate—what school reforms will take place and how they will be implemented. The committee is made up of teachers chosen by GGEA and administrators selected by the district. In September 1997, the Association initiated discussions with the district on standards, accountability, and upcoming trends. GGEA's position was that raising standards was the right thing to do for the area's students. Many hours were spent discussing how to raise the expectations for students, teachers, and administrators. The following May, teachers worked many extra hours to align state standards with local practices and helped students prepare for the state's first required achievement test. Hard work paid off for students, teachers, and the district. The district wound up with no low-performing schools.

San Diego. The San Diego Education Association and the school district used Conflict Management, Inc., a consulting firm from Cambridge, Mass., to help them establish the successful co-management structure that is now in place. Teachers, parents, administrators, the school board, community members, central office staff, and students are all held accountable for the quality of San Diego's public schools.

★Connecticut

Waterbury. As part of the 1999-2002 contract negotiated by the Waterbury Teachers Association with its school board, teams of teachers will determine how to spend resources provided by the Fund for Improvement and Excellence. The fund is made up of teacher contributions (through payroll withholding) matched by school district dollars. The bulk of the money will go for supplies, equipment, and other classroom needs. Part of the fund will be set aside to reward schools that show the greatest performance improvement over the previous year.

★Florida

Pinellas County. Teachers, school support staff, and administrators have transformed their district using Total Quality Management. The partners, which represent 113,000 students and 140 school sites, developed a collaborative bargaining process that includes all employees—union and nonunion. Parents also participate in the process. A bargaining leadership team is made up of the leaders of the employee groups. The partnership is a year-round process and focuses on working together to reach solutions to every challenge affecting student achievement and a high-performing workforce.

★Idaho

Boise. After undergoing joint training by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the school district and the Boise Education Association have become strong believers in the importance of bargaining skills. A core cadre of teachers, administrators, principals, and specialists took responsibility for training site-based teams in each school, and now all parties focus on the problems rather than the people, and work together to find solutions.

★Louisiana

Bogalusa. Collective bargaining rights were won recently by the Bogalusa Association of Educators. BAE's first contract calls for smaller class sizes and new technology, as well as additional time for teachers to prepare lessons. BAE members are using their new clout to win better classroom conditions for students and teachers.

89

★Maryland

Montgomery County. Moving to interest-based bargaining involved enormous risks for both the 8,000-member Montgomery County Education Association and the board of education. In 1996, MCEA, the school board, the PTA, and a local business leader planned a "Future Search" conference to identify goals for negotiation, identify stakeholders, and decide logistics. Conferees included all associate superintendents, the entire school board, the unions, representatives of the religious community, county health and human services, the county executive, members of the county council, minority group representatives, parents, and students. Work groups were appointed to further explore key issues: life-long learning, academic achievement, resources, staff investment and development, individualized learning, multipurpose use of schools, and collaboration and participation. Today the Association is involved in the kind of collaboration the conferees called for. Top-down school management has ended, and union leadership and management have begun to develop a relationship of trust. The landmark 1998-2001 agreement gives teachers a say in school decisions—from how books and supplies are purchased to the most effective ways to discipline students. MCEA members will create their own professional development programs and play a key role in hiring new teachers.

★Minnesota

Bloomington. In a recent contract negotiation with the school district, Education Minnesota's Bloomington affiliate traded resources set aside for three sabbaticals—approximately \$180,000—for provisions to give a teacher-run committee authority over the staff development program. Individuals or groups of district employees may submit proposals to the committee for approval. Most of the requests are for short-term seminars or workshops.

★New York

Greece. The Greece Teachers Association began using interest-based bargaining in 1997 in an effort to come to an agreement with the school district more quickly and productively. Negotiators on both sides were trained by staff from Harvard's Conflict Management Institute. The program has improved the working relationship between the two groups, and teacher morale is higher. A year after this new direction, a quality agreement was negotiated on time for the first time in many years.

★Ohio

Dayton. The Dayton Education Association and the school board negotiated an agreement that sets aside a pool of money for programs and materials to improve student achievement. The funds, \$125 per student, are allocated at the discretion of school site-based committees. Since 1991, each school committee has developed its own plan and set goals for the student body. Oversight committees approve plans and evaluate results, and the district has shown an overall increase in student scores on state tests.

90

★Washington

Seattle. The Seattle Education Association's contract with the district, ratified in 1997, gives teachers direct involvement in hiring, budgeting, and academic decisions at the school level. The new expanded role for the Association builds on SEA's previous agreements, establishing a mechanism that allocates funds to schools based on student academic needs, and directing more funds away from central office budgets to increase money for the classroom.

★Wisconsin

Madison. The contract between the Madison Education Association and the school district allows teachers to create staff development courses for other district teachers, rather than requiring everyone to take courses at a college. The result, participants agree, has been the transmission of skills and knowledge more relevant to the unique needs of the Madison community.

Redesigning Schools

New Models for Decision Making

★ Arizona

Phoenix. Adversity among stakeholders in the Deer Valley school district six years ago triggered a search for better ways to work together, conducted jointly by the school board, local teacher and support personnel associations, and parents. They met with people with expertise in interest-based negotiations to learn collaborative approaches to problem solving. As a result, parent representatives have become active participants in bargaining—along with administrators, association leaders, and school board members. The parties are committed to developing the capacity of people in every school to use interest-based bargaining approaches with their site councils and among their staffs. The Deer Valley Education Association and district trainers lead workshops in interest-based bargaining for school teams.

Flagstaff. Each of Flagstaff's 17 schools has a strong site council of parents, employees, and community members headed by an elected chair. If an administrator tries to override the shared decision-making process, any stakeholder can appeal to a "district support team" for mediation. Association leaders meet regularly with school board members and the superintendent to settle policy and personnel matters.

Marana. Three years ago, relations between the Marana Unified School Board and the local association were adversarial and strained. But now with an interest-based approach to negotiations, discussions are more centered on what's right for students. Each week, the superintendent and Association president meet with teachers and education support personnel to share information, discuss problems, and propose solutions. Morale among teachers and support staff is higher, and there is greater community support and involvement in the local schools.

91

★ California

Hayward. The Hayward Education Association and the Hayward Unified School District have collaborated to develop a blueprint for the district's future. The blueprint specifies funding for various school-based projects to improve teaching and learning. A joint association/management team evaluates the results to guide future investments. At least 28 of the 35 schools in Hayward have voted to engage in site-based decision making. Teams of teachers, administrators, and parents work together to solve problems and make joint decisions regarding the curriculum and budget.

San Diego. Successful co-management of the San Diego public schools depends on a new accountability system. Parents, principals, teachers, the school board, central office staff, the community, and classified employees are all graded on their performance. The San Diego Education Association and the district, with matching funds from local businesses, paid for extensive training in school system co-management for all participants. Teachers, district officials, and the community are now all working together to improve the city's schools.

Santa Maria. Members of the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District and the local Association have created a partnership that involves site-based management, shared decision making, and interest-based bargaining. Over the last seven years, daily attendance, tutoring, grade point averages, and number of credits earned by students have all increased, while suspensions have decreased by 40 percent.

★Colorado

Aurora, Colorado Springs, Denver, Pueblo, Loveland (Thompson). Five of Colorado's largest school systems form the Colorado Public Schools Network, a project supported by the Colorado Education Association and NEA. Teams of school staff work with Patrick Dolan and other experts on shared decision making skills, focusing on student achievement and improving parent and community involvement.

Jefferson County. Beginning in 1996, the Jefferson County Education Association and the school district set aside traditional animosities with a new approach to bargaining. NEA staff conducted training in collaborative bargaining for team members from JCEA and the school district. Since then, the superintendent, school board members, and association representatives—called the “anchor group”—have met regularly to discuss labor-management issues and work on school improvement.

Loveland. Since 1988, the Thompson Education Association and the school district have been co-managing the schools. The success of this collaborative effort rests on each party's participation in and responsibility for all aspects of school policy, and decision-making by consensus. The Association has representatives on all district committees, including those that deal with curriculum and budget. The committees work for one or two years to handle specific issues.

92

★Florida

Escambia County. In 1994, the school superintendent sought the Escambia Education Association's help and appointed an EEA leader to his cabinet to assist in the district's strategic planning initiative. Other players include assistant superintendents, the presidents of four of the city's five NEA affiliates, the directors of elementary and secondary education, PTA representatives, and students. Successful EEA outreach programs that led to the evolving partnership include a multicultural education training project and an NEA Urban Grant that provided funds for the purchase of computers to train parents and students in technology. Training sessions, taught by EEA members, give parents and other community members the opportunity to see the Association as a partner in school improvement.

★Illinois

Statewide. The Illinois Consortium for Educational Change is a network of schools and local Associations working to redesign public schools to enhance student achievement. Association leaders are working together with school boards, administrators, and community leaders to apply new developments in cognitive psychology, sociology, systems analysis, and educational theory. Projects included in Consortium schools are site-based decision making, shared decision making, peer

mediation, intervention in the lives of students at risk, and engaged learning—where students take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Glenview. The Glenview Education Association and Glenview School District 34 have a relationship modeled on a living piece of history—the U.S. Constitution. Their partnership agreement is based on a shared goal: promoting student achievement. Administrators and teaching staff participate in school decisions, and both are responsible for the results. Today, teachers in Glenview are serving on committees that determine curriculum, personnel, and staff development decisions.

★Indiana

New Albany. The New Albany-Floyd County Education Association bargained a contract in 1997 that gives teachers joint decision-making power over 72 percent of the school district's budget. Through the Association, members set their own salaries, make key curriculum decisions, and determine working conditions—including class size. The Association and the administration work hand-in-hand to set policy and solve problems by consensus. The contract runs through 2002.

★Iowa

Eastern Iowa. In 1994, after 20 years of traditional bargaining, local associations in Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott counties began moving toward interest-based bargaining. In an effort to reach consensus more quickly and effectively, improve decision making skills, and build relationships, teachers, support personnel, school board members, and administrators in 7 of the 13 districts have participated in joint Association-district sponsored three-day training sessions. The use of interest-based bargaining has resulted in a move from a non-communicative, adversarial process to a communicative and collaborative one.

93

★Ohio

Middletown. The Middletown Teachers Association and the school board negotiated an agreement that extends the school day by 45 minutes. The extra time is used for curriculum and professional development as part of site-based decision making. Teachers are making other decisions on the best ways to boost student achievement at their particular schools and are exploring which approaches to teaching and accelerated learning work best for their students.

★Rhode Island

Westerly. The Westerly school district was one of the first four NEA "Learning Labs" a decade ago. Since then it has used shared decision making successfully to make lasting systemic changes. Westerly Education Association members, administrators, parents, business leaders, students, and classified staff have participated in symposiums and training sessions on systemwide school change. More than 75 percent of district staff have been trained in consensus building and team building. Contract negotiations are ongoing: when a problem arises, the union and the school board get together and talk about what's good for students. Ongoing staff development includes five in-service training days, a two-day offsite conference,

credit hours for training, a coordinator, contract language that protects the program, and an investment of about \$100,000 a year. Today, three of the city's five elementary schools are being led successfully by teachers rather than principals.

★Utah

Ogden. Ogden community members, the local school board, and the Ogden Education Association are taking steps to expand participation, raise standards, and improve teaching and learning in every school. The superintendent formed a strategic planning committee that gathered input from 400 citizens. The school system encourages participation in governance and policy decisions and has given greater autonomy to local schools. The community is much more aware of what is happening in the schools and what help is needed.

★Virginia

Prince William County. An advisory committee made up of parents, teachers, and principals is responsible for planning, budgeting, and evaluating each school's educational plan. Advisory committee members get training in school-based management and what their roles and responsibilities are. Each advisory council strives to involve the many constituents of the school community early in the annual planning process and to ensure that school goals and objectives reflect the needs of students, staff, parents, and others in the school community.

Virginia Beach. The Virginia Beach Education Association has used back-to-back NEA Urban Grants to sustain the school district as an NEA "Learning Lab." The schools' stakeholders—parents, teachers, principals, administrators, community members—have successfully made the transition from an autocratically controlled school system to one in which shared decision making is the norm.

94

★Washington

Edmonds. Since 1988 the Edmonds Education Association and the local school district have had a joint Labor-Management Issues Committee. In 1995, the parties adopted a trust agreement to outline common goals. The agreement commits both parties to make maximum use of the personal, creative, and academic potential of each person in the school system and holds teachers, students and parents accountable for student performance. All work together to make sure the community provides resources necessary to meet student needs.

Seattle. In 1997, the Seattle Education Association and the Seattle Public Schools formalized a long history of collaboration by entering into a partnership designed to achieve the best possible learning environment for students. A formal trust agreement, based on key components of the UAW/Saturn contract, is guiding their work at the school site and district levels. Armed with the joint agreement, the partners sought the support of Seattle's business leaders, who responded by creating the Seattle Alliance for Education. The City of Seattle, under the leadership of the mayor, is providing \$70 million for schools and focusing city services on this student-centered learning system.

Redesigning Schools
Reconstituting Low-Performing Schools

★ Arkansas

Statewide. The Arkansas Education Association's Academic Distress Task Force is preparing a workshop and other materials to help teachers understand the school reconstitution process. Focusing on student achievement and teacher quality, the task force aims to help educators recognize the warning signs so they can help prevent their school from becoming a reconstitution target.

★ California

San Diego. The San Diego Education Association helped create a district accountability report to assess school performance. The system identifies low-performing schools and establishes procedures and resources to help them improve. The report covers all levels and all schools. Teachers appointed by the Association and administrators named by the district developed the criteria for judging school performance. They are both involved in evaluations and recommendations.

★ Colorado

Colorado Springs. In 1996, the Colorado Springs Education Association joined with the school district in reconstituting two local elementary schools with poor academic performance. District officials closed the schools, then reopened them with a new staff and a new focus on student achievement. Teachers at the two schools were given the option of reapplying for their jobs or transferring to another school in the district. To ensure student success at the reconstituted schools, CSEA is working with the school district to provide funding, supplies, and additional staff.

95

Denver. The Denver Classroom Teachers Association is working alongside the school district to set up a reconstitution process for struggling schools. The two groups have formed an Effective Schools Committee to identify schools that need help—and are working together to find the best ways to phase in a redesign and improvement plan. Two elementary schools in Denver already have undergone the process; a report on their progress is due in March 1999.

★ North Carolina

Statewide. The North Carolina Association of Educators' Center for Teaching and Learning works with assistance teams assigned to 11 low-performing schools in the state. Each team is made up of a liaison from the state department of public instruction and NCAE members from the area. Each team helps its school conduct appraisals and needs assessments, then works with local teachers, administrators, and school boards to recommend, help implement, and monitor improvement plans covering everything from discipline to school-based management.

Redesigning Schools

Aligning Standards and Practices

★Colorado

Statewide. The Colorado Education Association worked closely with former Gov. Roy Romer and legislators in both parties to enact and implement statewide standards, bring focus and clarity to the curriculum, demand greater effort from each student, and establish a statewide student assessment system. At the same time, CEA supported provisions to encourage greater teacher and community involvement in school-site decisions. CEA is also part of the Colorado Public School Network, a statewide partnership that includes the Colorado Association of School Executives, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado-PTA, and Colorado Association of School Boards. With a goal of improving student achievement in the state, the network supports long-term systemic educational and organizational change by sharing information, experience, and expertise, promoting communication among school districts engaged in planned change activities, and establishing an ongoing dialogue between schools and communities.

★Delaware

Newark. The Christina Education Association and the Christina school district received a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts to provide teachers with the materials and tools, professional development opportunities, leadership, and community support necessary to translate high teaching standards into teaching practice. In October 1998, the Association and the school district hosted a national meeting for the Pew Network for Standards-Based Reform. The thrust of the meeting was how school districts' central offices can support schools and teachers as they implement district-wide standards-based reform. Discussion focused on such issues as encouraging more student analysis and helping students make connections between concept and practice.

★Florida

Statewide. When the Florida legislature was considering the School Improvement and Educational Accountability Act, classroom teachers helped to shape the plan. Their involvement helped make sure that new student tests and school evaluation criteria reflect the realities of today's classrooms. As part of the new school assessment process, 33 schools statewide were identified as critically low-achieving. After two years of concerted effort, all 33 schools are off the list. Now the benchmark has been set higher, and more schools will have to reevaluate and re-energize their programs.

★Hawaii

Wai'anae. The Leeward affiliate of the Hawaii State Teachers Association is using a grant from HSTA and NEA to develop and implement a course to train high school teachers in how to identify and help students who still have reading difficulties. Reading teachers will begin training in the spring of 1999. The program also includes staff development for teachers and a partnership with a community-based senior citizen literacy program.

★Illinois

Statewide. The Illinois Education Association's strategic plan to renew public education, RISE—or Renewal for Illinois Schools and Education—calls for major changes in the state's public schools. The plan proposes a 50 percent increase in pre-school and kindergarten programs, significant changes in teacher education, and a restructuring of staff development to link theory and practice. The plan also calls for greater parental involvement, resources to communities for developing local blueprints for change, and teacher manuals that identify innovative teaching and learning methods. The new governor has set schools and job preparation efforts as his top priorities—and has named the IEA president to chair his Transition Committee on Education and Workforce Training. The governor also created the Office of Deputy Governor for Education, and named IEA's top education specialist to the position.

★Indiana

Statewide. The Indiana State Teachers Association was closely involved in developing new state standards and assessments, and the adoption of the Indiana Core 40—the graduation requirements expected of students planning to go to college. The Association also backed increased state support for developmental education programs in early childhood, to help make sure all Indiana children are ready for school.

97

★Iowa

Statewide. For the past decade the Iowa State Education Association has played a leading role in the New Iowa Schools Development Corporation, a partnership to help individual schools implement locally based school improvement initiatives. More than 100 of ISEA's 367 local Associations are engaged in formal programs with their school administrations in support of school quality through NISDC. The corporation operates with a \$1.25 million grant from the Iowa state legislature.

★Kentucky

Statewide. For almost a decade, the Kentucky Education Association has been engaged in one of the nation's most comprehensive statewide school improvement efforts. Since passage of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act, KEA members have been partnering with key businesses and other organizations to create high standards for both students and the teaching profession. The Association has implemented site-

based decision making at all schools and created a mentoring program for all new teachers. Kentucky continues to work on an assessment and accountability system called Commonwealth Accountability Testing System.

Jefferson County. Too many of Jefferson County's 100,000 students have reading scores at the bottom of the scale. To help boost the reading skills of low-income children in area schools, the Jefferson County Teachers Association—partnering with the school district, community activists, and religious leaders—lobbied for and won \$600,000 from the state legislature to implement the Direct Instruction reading program in three elementary schools serving at-risk students. Like Success for All, Direct Instruction is a program proven to help improve reading skills—and scores—of low-income children.

★Missouri

Statewide. In response to a state supreme court's ruling on school funding inequities, the governor and legislature enacted the 1995 Outstanding Schools Act. Missouri NEA strongly supported provisions for class size reductions, full-day kindergarten, and early childhood development. Missouri NEA also helped develop new higher academic standards, voluntary curriculum frameworks, and a statewide system of student assessment.

★Montana

98

Statewide. The Montana Education Association is working with state leaders as they update and strengthen the state's school accreditation standards. MEA is part of a team charged with setting world-class performance and content standards in all subject areas. The team also includes the state board of public education, the state office of public instruction, and parents from communities across the state.

★New Jersey

Montclair. To better integrate academics and the arts, the Montclair school district has organized the curriculum around the theme of tribes. The program uses the humanities, performance arts, and visual arts to explore ideas about tribalism, factionalism, and universal experiences to help bring a diverse student body together.

★North Carolina

Statewide. With the leadership of 1998 NEA Friend of Education Gov. James Hunt Jr. and the strong support of the North Carolina Association of Educators, North Carolina has recently made landmark changes in its system of teacher preparation, standards and assessments, and teacher certification. For example, North Carolina provided state resources to give a 12 percent salary increase to teachers who earn National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification. In addition, North Carolina developed a comprehensive system for identifying low-performing schools and providing assistance from successful schools in the area to help them improve student achievement.

★ Ohio

Statewide. The Ohio Education Association spearheaded a gathering of key statewide education groups to plan and sponsor a recent conference on continuous improvement planning in local school districts. Conferees attended in local teams (the superintendent, one school board member, one teacher leader, one school support leader, one administrator or school business official, and one parent or community leader). Host groups included the OEA, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, and the PTA.

Perry. The Perry Classroom Teachers Association is working collaboratively with school administrators on professional development activities, technology training, student assessment, and curriculum realignment. Teachers and administrators are also creating surveys to measure student attitudes toward school.

★ Oregon

Portland. When the number of Spanish-speaking students at Alder Elementary School in the Reynolds School District outside Portland began increasing a few years ago, NEA members created a dual language program that teaches all children to read in their native language until third grade, then moves to instruction for all in both English and Spanish. The school also offers free evening language and parenting classes for both parents and students. Similar programs are underway at Atkinson and Ainsworth Schools in Portland, and at the Barnes School in Beaverton.

★ Rhode Island

99

Westerly. Staff development was a key element in successfully integrating special education students in grades 8-12 into regular English and reading classrooms. The district's ongoing efforts have helped all students. Special needs students and others are doing much better in important classes like English. Everyone in the system agrees that Westerly educators are teaching differently, and students are spending more time on task and succeeding.

★ South Carolina

Beaufort. The Beaufort County Schools and Beaufort Education Association are working with NEA to share information about strategies for implementing higher standards and accountability measures. The Beaufort schools are operating on a five-year strategic improvement plan developed by school partners, parents, and community members. The group, working in teams, set forth benchmarks for student performance and is now in the process of reviewing instructional strategies to help teachers and students meet the new higher standards.

Charleston. At the invitation of the new superintendent of schools, the NEA is coordinating several programs to support school improvement efforts in Charleston. As a first step, the NEA KEYS diagnostic tool is being used in several schools. In addition, NEA and its state and local affiliate will work closely with school district

officials, board members, and parents to provide resources and technical assistance in professional development, systemic school change, and community and parental involvement.

Spartanburg. Using an NEA Urban Grant, the Spartanburg Association of Educators has developed an innovative curriculum aimed at revitalizing an inner-city school. Cleveland Elementary School uses the DramaWorks curriculum, which emphasizes creative drama to address language, creative problem solving, and multiple-intelligence learning.

★ Washington

Statewide. The Washington Education Association was a leader in the development of the 1993 Education Reform Act, which set new higher expectations for students and schools. WEA is active in the ongoing process of aligning standards with classroom practices. WEA is also working with representatives of school boards, school administrators, and others to recommend ways to strengthen teacher evaluation procedures.

Eastern Region. Seven school districts and local Associations in eastern Washington are working together to create community and school-based solutions to involving parents and raising student achievement. The Eastern Washington Restructuring Network was established in 1994 to bring about needed changes in schools, establish a framework for change using research about what works best in schools and classrooms, and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children and decisions about the schools. Key elements of the Network include the Parent Organizing Project and the Washington State League of Schools, an alliance of schools that establishes community covenants and uses research data to improve instruction. The Network also works in partnership with the Washington Education Association and Washington State University.

Puyallup. The Bethel Public Schools and the Bethel Education Association in Puyallup have entered a partnership to create a 10-year strategic plan, develop learning standards, and align curriculum to improve student achievement. As the Association has moved toward collaboration, union-management relations have improved, and today the union plays a greater role than ever before in budget decisions and other school district issues. There is new emphasis on professional development, which has moved from a "one-size-fits all" model to training tied to the strategic plan. Teachers are now paid for 70 hours of structured professional development beyond the base workday.

Seattle. As part of the Trust Agreement between the Seattle Education Association and the school district, the two partners are working to bring together evaluation, professional development, and school design to improve instruction. The evaluation procedures have been refocused on helping all teachers improve. Professional development programs are selected based on what local teachers really need. SEA and the district are working together on school organization elements, including the assessment tools used to identify strengths and weaknesses.

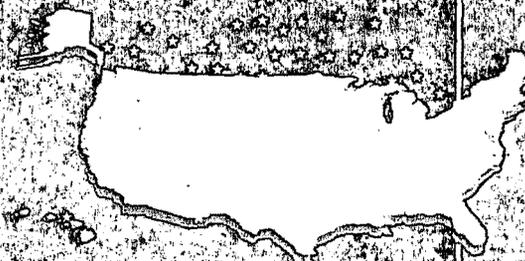
★ Wisconsin

Statewide. The Wisconsin Education Association Council was involved in the development of model academic standards. Nearly every local Association and school district are involved in setting academic standards in all core curriculum areas that meet or exceed the state models. In addition, WEAC is working with the state department of public instruction to restructure teacher licensure.

STEPPING FORWARD
How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

INDEX

**RESOURCE
GUIDE**



Index

Alabama

Statewide, p.16,35,54
Birmingham, p.54

Alaska

Statewide, p.54
Anchorage, p.16,35,54,70
Kenai Peninsula, p.51
Lower Kuskokwim, p.16

Arizona

Statewide, p.35,70,79
Flagstaff, p.16,91
Lake Havasu City, p.16
Marana, p.91
Mesa, p.54
Paradise Valley, p.16,35
Payson, p.29
Phoenix, p.35,55,70,86,88,91
Tucson, p.29,66

Arkansas

Statewide, p.36,95
Pine Bluff, p.44

104

California

Statewide, p.26,29,55,78,79
Burlingame, p.17
Chula Vista, p.17
Concord, p.17,29
Fairfield, p.17
Garden Grove, p.88
Glendale, p.36
Hayward, p.17,55,91
Long Beach, p.55
Los Angeles, p.29,36
Menlo Park, p.17,71
Santa Clara County, p.17
San Bernadino, p.18,56
San Diego, p.18,36,83,86,88,
91,95
Santa Maria, p.92
San Rafael, p.56
Santa Rosa, p.56
Sonora, p.71
South Lake Tahoe, p.71
Suisun, p.17
Union City, p.71
Vallejo, p.17

Colorado

Statewide, p.96
Arapahoe County, p.18
Aurora, p.56,92
Colorado Springs, p.29,82,84,
86,92,95

Denver, p.56,92,95
Jefferson County, p.92
Littleton, p.56
Loveland, p.18,30,92
Pueblo, p.92
Sedalia, p.72

Connecticut

Bridgeport, p.18
Enfield, p.56
New London, p.56
Norwich, p.87
Stamford, p.56,57
Tolland, p.36
Thomaston, p.56
Waterbury, p.88
Windsor, p.56

Delaware

Statewide, p.18, 30,36
Newark, p.96

Florida

Statewide, p.36,79,96
Broward County, p.53,57
Dade County, p.57
Escambia County, p.92
Palm Beach County, p.26,57
Pinellas County, p.89
St. Petersburg, p.57

Georgia

Statewide, p.37
DeKalb County, p.63

Hawaii

Lanikai, p.87,97
Wai'anae, p.97

Idaho

Boise, p.19,89
Bonneville, p.19
Caldwell, p.19
Fruitland, p.19
Gem County, p.19
Idaho Falls, p.19
Marsing, p.19
McCall, p.19
Meridian, p.19
Middleton, p.19
Wilder, p.19

Illinois

Statewide, p.57,92,97
Chicago, p.57
Decatur, p.30

Glenview, p.93
Iroquois, p.57
Kankakee, p.57
Rockford, p.30
Schaumburg, p.63
Springfield, p.30

Indiana

Statewide, p.30,97
Floyd County, p.93
Mishawaka, p.57
New Albany, p.93

Iowa

Statewide, p.37,97
Clinton County, p. 93
Muscatine County, p. 93
Scott County, p. 93

Kansas

Statewide, p.26
Atchison, p.72
Olathe, p.19

Kentucky

Statewide, p.20,30,44,45,58,97
Fayette County, p.37
Jefferson County, p.31,98
Louisville, p.53,72

Louisiana

Statewide, p.46
Bogalusa, p.89

Maine

Statewide, p.20
Bangor, p.37

Maryland

Statewide, p.37
Frederick County, p.20,58
Howard County, p.44
Montgomery County, p.89
Prince George's County, p.20

Massachusetts

Cambridge, p.27
Springfield, p.72
Weymouth, p.14,20

Michigan

Statewide, p.37
Ann Arbor, p.21,31
Farmington, p.38
Flint, p.58
Garden City, p.72

- Lansing, p.58
 Manistique, p.73
 Saginaw, p.63
 Ypsilanti, p.63
- Minnesota**
 Statewide, p.73
 Bloomington, p.90
 Minnetonka, p.38
 Minneapolis, p.21
 Morris, p.58
 Mounds View, p.38
 St. Cloud, p.73
 Worthington, p.21
- Mississippi**
 Statewide, p.38
 Jackson, p.59
- Missouri**
 Statewide, p.21,98
- Montana**
 Statewide, p.31,38,98
 Billings, p.59
- Nebraska**
 Statewide, p.21,45,59
 Lincoln, p.59
 Omaha, p.31,59
- Nevada**
 Statewide, p.46
 Clark County, p.22,63
- New Hampshire**
 Statewide, p.31,45
 Manchester, p.27
- New Jersey**
 Statewide, p.32,46,64
 Dumont, p.32
 Englishtown, p.64
 Florence, p.64
 Franklin Township, p.64
 Lakewood, p.64
 Maplewood, p.32
 Montclair, p.32,64,98
 New Brunswick, p.32
 Passaic, p.22
 Piscataway, p.32
 South Orange, p.32
 Toms River, p.64
- New Mexico**
 Los Lunas, p.22
- New York**
 Greece, p.73,90
 Ithaca, p.74
- North Carolina**
 Statewide, p.32,38,95,98
 Charlotte, p.60
 Elizabeth City, p.74
 Pitt County, p.39
- North Dakota**
 Statewide, p.22,60
- Ohio**
 Statewide, p.33,99
 Brunswick, p.22
 Columbus, p.27
 Dayton, p.90
 Middletown, p.93
 Perry, p.99
- Oklahoma**
 Statewide, p.27,33,39,60
 Tulsa, p.33
- Oregon**
 Statewide, p.74
 Beaverton, p.73
 Portland, p.64,99
 Hood River County, p.22
- Pennsylvania**
 Statewide, p.60
 Abington, p.74
 Bethlehem, p.75
 Erie, p.23,75
 Glen Mills, p.60
- Rhode Island**
 Statewide, p.45
 Newport, p.23,39
 Westerly, p.93,99
- South Carolina**
 Beaufort, p.99
 Charleston, p.99
 Columbia, p.75
 Spartanburg, p.100
- South Dakota**
 Statewide, p.46,75
 Colman, p.75
 Egan, p.75
 Madison, p.46
 Rapid City, p.46
 Sisseton, p.75
- Tennessee**
 Statewide, p.39
 Clarksville, p.23
 Franklin, p.75
 Memphis, p.23,61
 Montgomery County, p.23
 Nashville, p.23,61
- Texas**
 Statewide, p.24
 Austin, p.76
 Queen City, p.61
- Utah**
 Statewide, p.24,45,61,78
 Davis, p.27
 Murray, p.24
 Ogden, p.94
 Salt Lake City, p.28
- Vermont**
 South Burlington, p.76
 Wells River, p.39
 Woodstock, p.24
- Virginia**
 Statewide, p.39
 Arlington, p.33
 Chesapeake, p.62
 Culpeper, p.62
 Prince William County, p.94
 Richmond, p.24,44,50
 Virginia Beach, p.39,94
- Washington**
 Statewide, p.44,76,100
 Eastern Region, p.100
 Bellevue, p.28,34,52,77
 Bellingham, p.52
 Edmonds, p.28,94
 Puyallup, p.100
 Renton, p.77
 Seattle, p.90,94,100
 Spokane, p.28
- West Virginia**
 Statewide, p.47
- Wisconsin**
 Statewide, p.78,101
 Appleton, p.25,64
 Augusta, p.77
 Eau Claire, p.77
 Madison, p.90
 Milwaukee, p.25
- Wyoming**
 Natrona County, p.64

STEPPING FORWARD
How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools

Resources

Bundy, Andrew. *Rethinking Advocacy: One Union's Story: Building a Stronger Union Through System-wide School Reform*. The story of how the Pinellas County [Florida] Classroom Teachers and Education Support Personnel Associations joined forces with district management to transform this large school system through the application of Total Quality Management. National Education Association, 1997. 43 pages. Available by writing Christine McMillin, NEA Teaching and Learning, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, calling 202-822-7907, or E-mailing 11network@aol.com.

Chase, Bob. "The New NEA: Reinventing Teacher Unions for a New Era." Speech before the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., Feb. 5, 1997. Available on the Web at www.nea.org/whatsnew/newunion.html, or by writing NEA Communications, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, calling 202-822-7200, or E-mailing KLyons@nea.org.

Kerchner, Charles; Koppich, Julia; Weeres, Joseph. *United Mind Workers*. Jossey-Bass Inc., 1997. \$29.95. Argues for shifting the focus of teacher unions from issues of job control and work rules to issues of quality and improved productivity. Available from 1-800-956-7339.

Models of Change. Papers presented by NEA members and staff from local and state affiliates at the Models of Change symposium, Santa Fe, June 1998. Available from NEA Training and Organization Development, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, 202-822-7174.

107

National Board Certification: A Guide for Candidates. Practical advice about approaching and completing the National Board's certification assessments. American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association, 1998. 61 pages, \$5. Available on the Web at www.nea.org or order from NEA Teaching & Learning, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036, 202-822-7907.

"New Unionism." Cover story, *NEA Today*, May 1998, pp. 4-6. Available on the Web at www.nea.org/neatoday/9805/cover.html, or by calling or writing Dan Lunaria, *NEA Today*, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, 202-822-7282.

New Unionism Website. Profiles of state and local associations involved in union-led efforts to improve school quality through the collaboration of education employees, management, parents, and the community. www.nea.org/newunion/

Peer Support: Teachers Mentoring Teachers. NEA Professional Library, 1998. 96 pages, \$9.95 for NEA members, \$12.95 for nonmembers. Available from NEA Professional Library Distribution Center, P. O. Box 2035, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701-2035, 1-800-229-4200.

STEPPING FORWARD

How NEA Members Are Revitalizing America's Public Schools



NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
1201 Sixteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-3290

THE QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AGENDA

Introduction

The Agenda in the Context of the Historic Federal Role in Education

This nation has a rich tradition of support and commitment to public education for all children. Americans recognize that education is critical to our economic and national security, as well as our civic well-being. As we move into the twenty-first century, our nation must renew this promise with a strong bipartisan effort to ensure that all American children receive a quality public education to prepare them for the challenges ahead. This historic effort will depend on a strong partnership between the national, state and local governments as well as parents and communities.

Americans know that educational opportunities will dictate our individual and nation's future. They recognize that we are in a unique period of economic and social change, brought on in part by the new Information Age and a global economy. Commentator Peter Drucker recently wrote that "Education will become the center of the knowledge society, and the school its key institution." The high wage jobs of the future will require skills and knowledge that exceed the basics of the past.

In the 1996 election, the American public clearly identified public education as a top priority for national concern and action. Poll after poll showed that the American people, regardless of party affiliation, support increased federal investment in education. The American people support a strong national-state-local partnership in support of children and education.

As a nation, we have risen to this challenge before. Historically, the national interest in education has been promoted by the federal government during times of significant economic change. More than a century ago, the federal government created the land grant college system to support public higher education. During the industrial growth of the early part of this century, the federal government helped to support vocational education. After World War II, Congress helped power an economic boom by passing the GI Bill that allowed thousands of veterans to pursue a college education. And during the early years of the Cold War, the National Defense Education Act was enacted to address concerns that American math and science training lagged behind the then-Soviet Union. More recently, the civil rights movement spurred support for federal elementary and secondary education to provide equity in educational opportunities for every child.

Between 1948 and 1973, one-fifth of our nation's Gross National Product was related to educational opportunities, a connection between education and economic health that continues today. In 1992, the average yearly earnings for persons with a bachelor's degree was almost twice that of persons with a high school diploma, and more than two and a half times greater than persons who did not graduate from high school. In the 1990's, 89 percent of the jobs being created will require some form of post-secondary

learning and training. In addition, the mobility of modern American society poses new challenges to our education system.. Roughly one in ten Americans will move across state lines every five years. The local quality of education -- and the assurance that it will be a quality education regardless of locality -- has national implications.

The Impact to Education of Devolving More Responsibilities to the States

It is anticipated that the 105th Congress will continue to pursue ways to devolve current federal responsibilities in terms of programs and funding to the states and localities. In the 104th Congress, the welfare system as we knew it was repealed and replaced with a program that devolved much of the former federal responsibilities to the states and significantly reduced federal funding. There is serious discussion of devolving other large entitlement programs to the states. When this devolution occurs, it places greater burdens on states and localities to raise revenue or makes cuts in state and local budgets for other services, notably, education.

The American public has clearly stated in polls and in election analysis that it believes that the Federal government should maintain or increase its fiscal investment in education. (See DiVall poll) Government at every level must share in the fiscal responsibility for meeting the nation's needs for its students and public schools to succeed in the 21st century.

An Agenda to Meet the Fundamental Challenges Facing Students and Schools

To meet the national challenges in education, the federal government must work with states, localities and communities to ensure a quality public education that every American child deserves. Toward this end, the National Education Association (NEA) calls on the 105th Congress and the Administration to enact the Quality Public Schools Agenda. The Agenda is a set of national initiatives designed to help strengthen public schools and the relationship between schools and their communities. While asking this commitment from the federal government, NEA is pursuing its own independent national initiative to promote enhanced parental and community support to help every child succeed in school.

The Agenda does not supplant or supersede the broader NEA Legislative Agenda. Nor does it signal support or opposition to other education policy proposals that have been put forward by the Clinton Administration or Members of Congress. Our goal is to focus in on key objectives that meet the most urgent needs of schools and students.

The Quality Public Schools Agenda includes four specific federal legislative actions to ensure for every American child:

- **Every school building in good condition;**
- **Every classroom connected to new technologies;**
- **A qualified teacher in every classroom, and**

- **Safety and order in every school.**

The legislative initiatives called for in the Quality Public Schools Agenda fall within the historic federal as well as national role in education. In establishing the federal Department of Education, Congress defined as its purpose "to supplement and complement the efforts of states, the local school systems, and other instrumentalities of the States.... to improve the quality of public education." The Quality Public Schools Agenda does not create any federal intrusion into classroom decisions. It does provide the basic foundations that will enable states and localities to succeed in their distinct school reform efforts.

This Agenda's ultimate goal is to strengthen public education in America so that every child has the opportunity to attend a quality public school. Meeting this goal for students, especially those in urban and rural school districts that serve a high proportion of low-income children, will require a renewed commitment from all levels of government and from all institutions in our society. Accordingly, the NEA has undertaken a challenge to provide leadership to ensure for America's children:

- **Parental and community support for every child's success in school.**

Making the elements of the Quality Public Schools Agenda a reality for every child will require new investments at the federal, state and local levels. The Agenda will ensure that any new investment in quality public education is based on these guiding principles:

- **Local control and federal partnership.** The Agenda is designed to provide state and local governments with federal assistance that is targeted on the most fundamental needs of our public schools. Enactment of this Agenda will empower decision-makers in school districts and state houses to take the necessary steps to provide a level playing field for all children, without imposing a federal blueprint on education.
- **Accountability for excellence.** Federal investments in education must be accompanied by measurable benchmarks of progress. The Agenda ties federal funds to concrete needs of our schools, children and youth. Without safe and healthy school buildings, qualified teachers, and access to technology as a reality for every child in public schools, the federal, state and local benchmarks of progress will be meaningless.
- **Equity of educational opportunity.** The Agenda represents the belief that every child in America, regardless of income level, background, or region, deserves to receive a quality public education. Because of inequities in education financing, and administrative shortcomings, too many children do not receive the education they deserve. Enactment of this Agenda would mark significant progress toward meeting the federal government's historic responsibility for assuring equity of educational opportunity in every public school.

- **Complementing, not replacing, existing programs and proposals.** Many excellent federal education programs are now in place, which this Agenda does not supplant. Where possible, the Agenda utilizes existing legislative vehicles (such as the reauthorization of key pieces of education legislation, which are scheduled for next year).

The Quality Public Schools Agenda

Challenges for Congress and the Administration¹

AMERICA'S CHILDREN DESERVE—

EVERY SCHOOL BUILDING IN GOOD CONDITION: According to a 1995 study by the General Accounting Office, it will cost \$112 billion to upgrade schools to an overall safe condition. About 30 percent of students (12 million children) attend public schools that have at least one structural problem as well as an environmental hazard. In addition, school infrastructure needs will be increased by the growth in school enrollment over the next decade and the use of schools as community centers beyond regular school hours. President Clinton's proposal of a \$5 billion bond interest reduction plan (that leverages \$20 million) is a good first step, but clearly does not, in itself, resolve the infrastructure crisis, especially in low-income communities.

At this time, the federal government does provide very limited funding for school construction and renovation in Impact Aid districts and guarantees loans for higher education infrastructure. There is, therefore, precedent, for a federal role in supporting school infrastructure projects, especially in low income localities. The 105th Congress and the Administration should:

- * Provide funding for Title XII of the Improving America's Schools Act that provides grants to districts for public school infrastructure needs, targeted to poor districts. (annual appropriations bills)
- * Ensure in any federal infrastructure or job creation legislation a designation of funds for public school renovation, repair and construction.
- * Provide resources to help school districts make every public school building healthy and safe, such as renovations for asbestos, lead paint and lead pipes, and other environmental and industrial hazards.

EVERY CLASSROOM CONNECTED TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES:

For technology to be effective in schools and in public community colleges, certain elements must be in place: (1) hardware; (2) educational software; (3) teacher training in

¹ When a reauthorization bill has been scheduled for the 105th Congress that provides an appropriate legislative vehicle for a specific Agenda item, it is noted in parentheses at the end of the paragraph.

the use of educational technologies to improve teaching and learning; and (4) affordable rates and access to classroom connections. The recently enacted Telecommunications Act addresses the fourth component in schools and libraries. But reduced cost will only be meaningful if schools have the physical capacity to connect to new technologies. The 105th Congress and the Administration should:

* Provide resources for public schools and public higher education institutions to obtain hardware and educational software to support the curriculum and assessment tools and to provide training to teachers and other school employees in the use of educational technologies. (Higher Education Act reauthorization)

* Create or designate resources to school districts to make technology connectivity possible and affordable in every public school classroom and community colleges.

A QUALIFIED TEACHER IN EVERY CLASSROOM: The preparation and on-going professional development of public school teachers is critical to success of any education reform initiatives at the local, state or federal levels. In addition, the school population boom will require more energy to attract young people to the teaching profession. Taking into account the school enrollment increase and the retirements of teachers, it is estimated that at least 100,000 new teachers will be needed over the next ten years.

While there will be a need for people to become teachers, it will be important to maintain high standards for those entering the profession. the September 1996 Report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, which based its suggestions on three premises: "1. What teacher know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn. 2. Recruiting, preparing and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools. 3. School reform cannot succeed unless it focuses on creating the conditions in which teachers can teach, and teach well." Teacher recruitment, preparation, and ongoing professional development should maximize the talents of retired teachers, education support personnel, and experienced teachers with demonstrated excellence, in addition to colleges of education. The 105th Congress and Administration should:

* Promote recruitment to the teaching profession through loan forgiveness and other higher education financial aid incentives for students who agree to become teachers in public schools. (Higher Education Act reauthorization)

* Provide grants/loans for the costs of coursework to meet state teacher licensure and certification requirements for (1) education support personnel and (2) professionals leaving corporations and the military due to downsizing, with a commitment in return to teach in public schools with a shortage of qualified teachers in their subject areas. (Higher Education Act reauthorization)

* Provide incentives/grants for experienced teachers to mentor beginning teachers in the first and second years of teaching in public schools. (Higher Education Act reauthorization)

* Provide appropriate training through teacher preparation and continuing professional development programs to facilitate the collaboration between general and special education teachers for teaching students with disabilities that are included in the regular classroom part or all of the school day. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act reauthorization)

SAFETY AND ORDER IN EVERY SCHOOL: Many school employees and students feel unsafe. In many communities, parents, students and teachers complain about a lack of order and civility in the classroom that hinders the ability of students to learn and undermines respect for school employees and other students. For public schools and campuses to be conducive environments to learning, there must be safety and order. The Safe and Drug Free Schools Act provides some resources for schools to purchase safety equipment and to conduct violence and substance abuse prevention education in schools. Yet the program's efforts need to be bolstered by other efforts at safety and order in the classroom and in the community. The 105th Congress and the Administration should:

* Provide grants to youth development organizations and schools to focus on prevention through an initial intake screening process to determine (1) school problems (2) substance abuse problems and (3) gang problems to determine appropriate action for a youth facing a state or federal proceeding for a criminal offense or juvenile delinquency. Recommendations by the specialist may include tutors, mentoring, substance abuse treatment, etc. (Juvenile Justice reauthorization)(funding may be appropriated from the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund)

* Where appropriate, require a general education as well as special education teacher to participate in the development of an IEP for students with disabilities and include behavior management as part of the IEP for students whose disability is related to behavior issues. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) (no funding required)

* Provide funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, authorized but not funded in the Improving America's Schools Act, that provides grants to rural and urban elementary and secondary public schools to expand projects that benefit the community at the school site.

* Provide grants for before and after-school and summer enrichment and extended learning activities at schools that are targeted for children who would otherwise be "home alone". Such programs can and should utilize the experience and talents of involve education support personnel and retired teachers and school employees.

- * Expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow time off for parents to be involved in their children's school activities. (no funding required)

A NEA Challenge

PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR EVERY CHILD'S SUCCESS IN SCHOOL: Increasingly, public school teachers -- especially in urban and rural schools with high concentrations of low income students -- are finding themselves at the center of a vast web of interconnected social problems that obstruct teaching and learning. While public schools and teachers can not provide many of the social services themselves, schools can play a role in helping to coordinate the delivery of services and partnerships with the community. Retired teachers and school employees can provide valuable assistance in community-based programs. Further, policies and programs that improve economic opportunities in rural and urban communities enhance the support for and strength of public schools.

- * Help coordinate human services for students and families at the public school site, including use of the school site as a community center during non-school hours, such as educational enrichment programs, parent programs and adult literacy skills.

Current NEA Activities that support the principles of the Quality Public Schools Agenda and the NEA Challenge:

The NEA Emergency Commission on Urban Children brings together a variety of educators, public officials, business leaders, clergy, community activists and advocacy organizations to foster collaboration across political and social lines to improve the lives of urban children. The Commission will implement strategies, programs and proposals to maximize learning for children in urban communities, including an examination of smaller and more effective classrooms in the lower grades, high standards for academic achievement and student conduct, and ways to address the social and health needs of urban children.

The NEA Charter School Initiative is a five-year experimental public charter schools effort in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii and Connecticut. This NEA initiative will explore and assess the use of publicly funded, publicly accountable charter schools as vehicles for the systemic reform of public education.

The NEA Center for the Revitalization of Urban Education (CRUE) is involved in several education community collaboratives among school employees, students, parents, community leaders, human services providers, policy makers, and business to meet the challenges of urban education. Projects deal with issues such as parental, family involvement, school safety, site-based decision making, school restructuring, community outreach, conflict resolution, and team building. Projects are located in Milwaukee, WI, Nashville, TN, Richmond, VA, Trenton, NJ, and Broward County, FL.

The NEA's School Restructuring Investment, begun in 1984, has invested over \$70 million in efforts to restructure America's public schools to produce quality teaching and higher achievement students. The projects that support the school restructuring agenda include:

Mastery In Learning Project, which ended in 1995, enhanced learning through public school-based reform of teaching and curriculum.

Learning Laboratories is a national network of public school districts -- now numbering 28 communities -- engaged in how to make schools become learning organizations and to use quality principles and practices that are more commonly applied in business and industry in improving learning for students and educators.

Teacher Education Initiative is a national collaboration among the NEA, 17 colleges of education and pre-kindergarten through high schools to accelerate the pace of change and renewal in teacher preparation and practice to produce high performing students.

KEYS Initiative is a program based on a ten-year NEA research study on the question, What makes a quality school? KEYS research provides schools across the nation with a yardstick to measure their organization health against specific quality factors that will yield higher student achievement.

National Foundation for the Improvement of Education established by the NEA in 1969 supports educator exploration into the art and science of teaching to improve student learning. NFIE supports grants to teachers to test their innovative approaches to professional development.



NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Robert F. Chase, President
Reg Weaver, Vice President
Marilyn Monahan, Secretary-Treasurer

Don Cameron, Executive Director

1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-3290
(202) 822-7300 Fax (202) 822-7741

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
Mary Elizabeth Teasley, Director

April 24, 1997

Mr. Bruce Reed
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed: *Bruce*

It is my pleasure to inform you of an important change in our Government Relations office at the National Education Association. Jack Pacheco, formerly head of NEA Government Relations Field Operations in the eastern states, has taken on new responsibilities as NEA's Manager of Political Affairs.

Jack brings to this post a lifelong commitment to public education and the seasoned leadership and strategic vision needed to advance the Association's political agenda for children and public schools. He will lead NEA's efforts in the 1998 election cycle and oversee the continued growth of our political action committee, NEA-PAC. His experience as a lobbyist, campaign manager, pollster, fundraiser, and educator make him eminently qualified to lead NEA's political operations.

For further information or assistance, please feel free to call on Jack directly at 202/822-7575.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Teasley

Mary Elizabeth Teasley
Director of Government Relations