

## Lack of Incentives a Fundamental Problem in Education?

An interview with Dr. Eric A. Hanushek

By George A. Clowes

**S**ome of the questions that economist Eric A. Hanushek raises about public policy initiatives for improving student achievement bring to mind the Mullah Nasrudin's questions when he observed a group of people who were searching under a street lamp, trying to help a confused man find his key. When the Mullah asked the man where he thought his key might be, the man pointed to a dark area away from the street lamp. "Then why are you looking here?" asked the Mullah. "Because the light is better here," said the man.

Currently Professor of Economics and of Public Policy at the University of Rochester, Hanushek has been asking tough questions about the effect of school resources on student performance since the 1960s, when he did research for his Ph.D. at MIT on issues raised by the first Coleman Report. A Distinguished Graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, Hanushek had academic appointments at the U.S. Air Force Academy and Yale University before joining the Rochester faculty in 1978.



Eric A. Hanushek

Hanushek has published numerous articles in professional journals and is the author of several books on topics ranging from public policy on education and retirement income to statistical methods and information gathering for decision-makers.

A frequent source of testimony on education issues for Congressional committees, Hanushek was a senior economist at the Cost of Living Council during 1973-74 and served as deputy director of the Congressional Budget Office in 1983-1985. He was president of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management in 1988-89. In 1997, he was selected to be a member of the International Academy of Education. Hanushek spoke recently with *School Reform News* Managing Editor George Clowes.

**Clowes:** How did you become involved in research in education?

**Hanushek:** The first Coleman Report on the impact of schools on student performance came out in 1966 and caused quite an uproar. There was a large seminar organized by Pat Moynihan and Fred Mosteller at Harvard to try to figure out what this report said and how to interpret it. I got invited to participate in that seminar, and that led to me doing a thesis on the effects of school resources and other things on student performance. It was an exciting time.

No one quite believed the Coleman Report. In fact, I don't think it was interpreted correctly for a long time. The common interpretation of the Coleman Report was that schools don't matter. I think that the right interpretation—that has held up subsequently with lots of later work—is that the measured aspects of schools don't seem to be systematically related to performance, but that there are huge differences across schools.

**Clowes:** So we're not measuring the resources that do account for these differences?

**Hanushek:** Right. It's how you measure features in schools. What we found is that what makes a big difference—as all parents know—is which teacher your child gets. But it's just that you can't predict who's going to be a good teacher by looking at whether they've got a master's degree, or if they're experienced, or what have you. That's what's come out of all the subsequent work.

What I've come to believe pretty strongly is that the most important aspect is the teacher and teacher quality. This comes partly from some of the more recent work I've been doing, which has been concentrating on the basic question, "What determines student achievement?" or "How do teacher differences, teacher salaries, and other factors affect student achievement?"

What we're finding is that there's a lot of heterogeneity of teachers within any one given school. That means it doesn't appear as if it's all a matter of having good and bad principals, with good principals collecting a set of good teachers and bad principals collecting a set of bad teachers. It seems to be much, much more complicated than that, and it doesn't seem to be systematic at all.

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We've been doing a large study of school performance in Texas, where they have annual testing of all students in basic subjects. We've been able to follow the performance of individual students as they progress through fourth to seventh grade, and of different cohorts as they go through the same grades in the same school. That's allowed us to sort out a lot of these questions.

One of our fundamental findings is that there are huge differences in teacher quality, even within individual schools. When we look at the measured attributes of schools, we find a small class-size effect in the earlier grades—in fourth grade—but not in later grades. That class-size effect is much, much, much smaller than the variation in teacher quality. It was just dwarfed by teacher quality differences.

We also find that there is an impact of having a first-year teacher. The first year of teaching is kind of rocky, but after that, teacher experience doesn't seem to make much difference. Whether teachers have master's degrees doesn't make any systematic differences in performance either.

**Clowes:** So a teacher's first year of teaching is critical for the students?

**Hanushek:** Yes. That comes into play with class-size reduction programs like the one in California. What they did there was to try to hire a whole lot of new teachers immediately.

*Continued on page 7,  
See "Lack of Incentives a Fundamental Problem"*



## Letters To The Editor

Dear AAE,

During the first week in September, I called your office and spoke to a staff member. I explained my situation, and what has transpired is nothing short of a miracle. Without the help of your organization, I would have had nowhere else to turn. Thank you for being there, not only to listen but also to take immediate action. Words cannot express my gratitude.

I have been a classroom teacher and administrator for the past thirty years. For the past two decades, I have not been a member of the union. I appreciate the work of the Association of American Educators, and look forward to receiving *Education Matters*. Keep up the outstanding work.

If you have an occasion to use the following letter, I would consider it an honor.

Dear Fellow AAE Members,

*If you are being harassed, intimidated, or treated unfairly by your school administration, I want to encourage you to persevere and seek help from the Association of American Educators (AAE) and/or another organization that will defend your constitutional rights as an educator.*

*During the first week of school of this current school year, I was written up for reading from Dr. William Bennett's *The Book of Virtues*, as part of my Character Education program. A letter from the attorney representing my school district, and a letter from the assistant superintendent were placed into my personnel file, even though I did not violate any school policy and no complaint was filed against me by a student or parent.*

*The complaint registered against me was the reference made to "Lord" in the poem "Washing" from Dr. Bennett's book. The first verse of that poem states, "Dear Lord, sometimes my hair gets quite untidy, rough, and mussed; And when my Mother makes it right, I'm apt to think she's fussy." Because the poem addresses "Dear Lord," it was interpreted as a prayer and my principal feared that I was praying with my students. He then sought and received a legal opinion from the district's attorney that supported his authority to prevent me from reading anything from Dr. Bennett's book. Dr. William Bennett is a former Secretary of Education, and the book is an anthology of some of the finest American literature for young people ever compiled.*



**"If you find yourself  
in a similar situation,  
I encourage you to not  
resign your position or  
to give up your cause."**

*When I was initially confronted by my principal, he told me that he had a concern for any atheist parent who might walk by my classroom and hear the Lord's name mentioned. He also told me that he was aware of my religious involvement in my church and the community. A fellow Christian teacher had a similar encounter with this principal the previous year, and chose to transfer to another school rather than to fight the issue.*

*It was a Friday afternoon of the following week that my principal informed me that I was to appear on Tuesday before the assistant superintendent, and should therefore be represented by counsel from the local affiliate of NEA. This, I believe, was an intimidation factor on the part of my principal, knowing that I was not a member of NEA. I went home and immediately called my association. That same evening, the Association of American Educators had its attorney in touch with me. The following Monday my principal and the attorney for the district both received phone calls from an attorney representing me. Surprise!*

*My principal was very adamant about retaining the records in my personnel file despite personal pleas to have them removed. The AAE recommended other legal organizations that might be helpful, including American Center for Law and Justice. With letters from them to the district's attorney as well as letters to my district superintendent, and a letter from Dr. Bennett himself, my superintendent ordered my principal to remove the letters from my personnel file.*

*It was only because of the encouragement and perseverance of the Association of American Educators that the issue turned out in my favor.*

*If you find yourself in a similar situation, I encourage you to not resign your position or to give up your cause. Your association is there to help you and it can do so effectively. Stand firm and let others help you defend yourself in whatever situation you may be encountering.*

*As educators, we have cowered too often to a very liberal mindset. Tough times may be ahead, but if we all stand firmly for what we believe, our students will benefit and our educational standards and America will be better.*

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,  
Doug Eriksmoen  
Grand Forks, North Dakota

## Preparing Future Teachers

Dear AAE,

Thank you so much for including my article in the January 2003 issue of *Education Matters*. I am glad that you found it to be worth reprinting, and I am very much honored that you decided to feature it on the front page.

I continue to let the future teachers at Hillsdale College know about the Association of American Educators, especially when we study teacher unions and their impact on children and teachers alike.

If I can be of assistance to the Association of American Educators again, please do let me know.

Sincerely yours,  
Robert C. Hanna  
Associate Professor of Education  
Hillsdale, MI

# The Schools and Red Tape

By David W. Kirkpatrick



David Kirkpatrick

**L**ike the weather, the burden of mandates affecting public schools is something many talk about but few do anything about. A classic example came a few years ago at a legislative education committee hearing during an

unstructured discussion about public schools. A committee member asked a testifying superintendent what regulation or mandate he would have repealed. The superintendent couldn't think of one. The question might have caught him by surprise, but when the next four to testify, all district superintendents, were asked the same question, they had no suggestions either.

More recently some leading education experts and reformers were asked about studies on regulatory burdens. They were unaware of any such work, and one said he not only knew of no such study but that even raising the question was novel.

President Bill Clinton once said we should stop funding projects that don't work. The current administration has indicated a willingness to do the same. No argument about that. But how do we know what does or doesn't work if no studies are done? It has been estimated that the federal government alone has 760 or more education programs—not all of which are in the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE)—yet President Clinton never identified even one that should receive no more funding or even be substantially modified. To date, it doesn't appear as if President Bush has identified one either.

A school superintendent in suburban Philadelphia once said he had to comply with 1,027 mandates, 70 percent of which were unfunded. Ohio Governor, now U.S. Senator, George Voinovich estimated that school administrators in that state spent 50 percent of their time filling out federal forms, which accounted for only 6 percent of education funding there. The USDOE's own Paper Reduction Act has estimated that department requirements necessitate 48.6 million hours of paper work, the equivalent of 25,000 fulltime employees. Arizona's former chief school officer, Lisa Graham Keegan, said it took 165 of her staff, 45 percent of the total, to manage federal programs, which comprised only 6 percent of her budget. There is no reason to believe Ohio and Arizona are not typical in this regard.

There is also the problem of the federal government not delivering on a promise, whether the program involved is justified. For example, a 1976 federal statute that requires districts to provide "a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment" for all disabled students ages 3 to 21 was accompanied by a promise the federal government would pay

40 percent of the excess costs by 1982. That has never happened. The latest proposal from the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce authorizes up to 19 percent in federal funding for IDEA. However, that's still less than half of the original authorization, and this new special education bill has not yet been passed.

Those who want the federal government to institute even more programs, such as hiring more teachers (which no one has said the feds will pay for over their possible 30- to 35-year careers), or give billions of dollars for school repair to the same school boards that have allowed the buildings to deteriorate in the first place, might consider more effective alternatives. At the very least, if the federal government has billions of dollars to spend, it could begin by first paying for existing mandates it promised to support, freeing local money for other needs.

Better yet, the reduction or elimination of many of the unnecessary, unworkable, ineffective, or inefficient mandates now in place would save local districts billions of dollars with no additional expenditures at all.

Many states do no better. The California school code grew to more than 6,000 pages. Indiana's code at that time was "only" 1,250 pages, but then that's a smaller state. Pennsylvania's code is only about 600 pages. In Washington State the school code was one volume, roughly the size of the Seattle telephone book, yet regulations for nonpublic schools occupied two pages.

This raises a interesting question. If no two states have the same school code, whether in length or detail, how important or necessary are requirements that only one or a few states have while the rest do very nicely without them? Why does California need ten times as many laws, mandates, and regulations for its schools as Pennsylvania? Is the latter missing something? Is the former cluttered up with irrelevancies, nitpicking, etc?

This brings up a point often overlooked: mandates do not come out of the blue. However unnecessary or ineffective they may be or appear, someone (plural) proposed them, someone supported their establishment, and someone subsequently objects to their repeal, if for no other reason that, once in place, they at least benefit those who are employed in their application, whatever the effect may be on those whom they were anticipated to serve.

Possible questions to consider include:

If only one mandate could be abolished, what should it be?

What mandate seems to be the most unnecessary?

What mandates are redundant, and cover, or confuse, the same topic?

What mandate is reasonable in concept but faulty in design; that is, how could it be amended to better achieve its intended goal?

What mandate is the most needlessly expensive? Or ineffective? Or inefficient?

All school mandates, at the national, state, and local levels, total in the unknown thousands. Much has been written on this subject. One Internet search listed 1,707 items, while another, with a slightly different identification, listed 1,413. Even allowing for some degree of overlap for the two lists, it might be expected that the distinct number of items might be somewhere between 2,000-2,500.

There is no shortage of words. It's action that is lacking. **EM**

*David W. Kirkpatrick, a former public school teacher who has been actively and extensively involved in education reform, previously served as the editor-in-chief of SchoolReformers news. Dave has just been appointed senior education fellow at U.S. Freedom Foundation in Washington, D.C., 202-547-2200.*

## Thought of the Month

"I hope I die during an inservice, because the transition from life to death would be so subtle."

—Anonymous



## Secretary Paige Criticized for 'Christian' Comments

In an interview printed by the *Baptist Press*, the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, Education Secretary Rod Paige was quoted as saying, "The reason that Christian schools and Christian universities are growing is a result of a strong value system." He added, "In a religious environment the value system is set. That's not the case in a public school, where there are so many different kids with different values."

In a separate interview at Union University, a Baptist school in Tennessee, Paige was quoted, "All things equal, I would prefer to have a child in a school that has a strong appreciation for the values of the Christian community...where a child is taught that, there is a source of strength greater than themselves."

It didn't take long for Barry Lynn, Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, to respond. In a press release criticizing Secretary Paige, Lynn said, "He seems to have forgotten that he's not the Secretary of Christian Education, but rather the education leader for all children."

Lynn suggested that Paige should apologize for his remarks or resign his office.

Secretary Paige indicated that he would "pray" for his critics. **EM**

## California Charter School Teachers Targeted

Wayne Johnson's tenure as president of the California Teachers Association (CTA) ends in June, but his March 29 speech to the CTA State Council showed no signs that the bellicose leader plans to go quietly into the night.

While lambasting his perceived adversaries (including the California affiliate of the AFT), he shot himself in the foot once again.

Johnson cited statistics that in 1960-61, California teacher salaries averaged 57 percent of school districts' budgets, but today that average had dropped to 36.7 percent. That's an interesting choice of year, because it happens to be the last school year in which no teachers in the entire United States bargained collectively. In 1961, the United Federation of Teachers won collective bargaining rights in New York City, ushering in the modern teacher union movement. California passed a collective bargaining law in 1975. If Johnson believes what he says, why should California teachers get him \$500 [CTA annual state dues] of their pay each year for a smaller slice of the pie?

CTA's gravy train is slowing down. The class size reduction membership spike is fading, as is the spike from the new statewide agency fee law that forces teachers from nearly every district to pay union dues. Budget cuts are leading to massive layoffs and therefore lost CTA revenue. Who will pick up the slack? CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett gave the first hint. Noting that there are now more than 500 charter schools in the state, Doggett announced CTA will seek a financial grant from NEA to begin organizing charter school teachers. **EM**

Source—*The Education Intelligence Agency's (EIA) Communiqué*. You may find more information about EIA at [www.eiaonline.com](http://www.eiaonline.com).

## English-only Pupils Learn More English

Just five years after California voters approved Proposition 227, which replaced bilingual education with English-only programs for most California LEP students, the number of English learners who scored "proficient" on the state's language test has risen significantly. Such scores among youngsters enrolled in English-only programs rose from 9 to 30 percent between 2001 and 2002, while students who remained in bilingual programs (because their parents sought a waiver from the new regulations) went from 3 to 16 percent proficient. **EM**

Source—*Education Gadfly News and Analysis from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation*.

## Final Hispanic Report

Hosted by Hialeah Senior High School near Miami, Florida, President Bush's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans released its final report. "From Risk to Opportunity: Fulfilling the Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century" is the result of an 18-month review and represents, to date, the most comprehensive plan aimed at closing the educational achievement gap for the nation's largest minority group. The report sets forth recommendations for parents, educators, and leaders in business, faith-based institutions, government, and local communities, and advocates six specific strategies, from supporting and enforcing No Child Left Behind to launching a research agenda to support Hispanic American children. Currently, one in every three Hispanic Americans fails to finish high school, and only 10 percent graduate from four-year colleges and universities. For more information, go to <http://www.yesican.gov/>. **EM**

## Textbooks Said to 'Hide' Problems with Islam

World history textbooks in U.S. classrooms sanitize the problematic parts of Islam when compared to how they often treat Western civilization, a review of seven widely used texts reported.

The study, released by the American Textbook Council, said a rosy treatment of Islam may arise from the lobbying of the Council on Islamic Education on national publishers.

"When any dark side [of Islam] surfaces, textbooks run and hide," said the report, "Islam and the Textbooks," by Gilbert Sewall, a former professor who directs the Council.

"Subjects such as jihad and the advocacy of violence among militant Islamists to attain worldly ends, the imposition of [Shariah] law, the record of Muslim enslavement, and the brutal subjection of women are glossed over," the 35-page study says.

This contrasts, the report suggested, with the candor in textbooks over such events of Western history as the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery, imperialism, Christian fundamentalism, and women's suffrage.

Without solid facts about Islam, the study said, "instructors fall back on themes of tolerance and apology [and] skirt the reality of international affairs and threats to world peace."

Many topics in history textbooks are reduced to a few paragraphs and require elaboration by teachers or supplementary materials. But Islam is so exotic that a few textbook sentences can have an inordinate impact, Mr. Sewall said in an interview.

"Few teachers are comfortable with the subject," he said. "They are generally ignorant of Islam, so they depend on the textbooks for guidance." The textbook council, formed in 1988 in New York as an independent group researching social studies and history texts, advocates factual knowledge and appreciation of Western values. **EM**

Source—*Larry Witham, The Washington Times*

## Snowmen, Huts, Yachts Banned from Textbooks by Language Police

You won't see any references to bookworms, busybodies, craftsmanship, cults, dialects, dogma, extremists, fairies, heroines, huts, jungles, lumberjacks, limping, Navajos, one-man bands, slaves, snowmen, straw men, or yachts in today's textbooks. That's because these terms are among the hundreds that turn up in lists of banned words and phrases, lists now widely used by writers, editors, and illustrators when preparing textbooks or tests. They've all been banished as sexist, ethnocentric, offensive to the handicapped, inauthentic, elitist, or otherwise troublesome. *The Atlantic Monthly* has published a short glossary of banned words compiled by Diane Ravitch; the list is an abridgement of a longer list that appears in her new book, *The Language Police*, published in April by Knopf. **EM**

Source—*The Language Police* by Diane Ravitch, *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 2003 (not available online).

## Threat of Lawsuits Retards Classroom Learning

Teachers around the country have been reporting frustration with administrators' responses to unruly students who curse, cheat, and even strike classmates. Often such students are simply sent back into the classrooms that they have been disrupting, undermining the teacher's authority and eroding the attention of the other students. While many teachers blame unsupportive administrators, experts say that the problem can be traced to the threat of litigation, a threat that has been fomented by Supreme Court decisions.

According to NYU Education professor Richard Arum: "Teachers rightly perceive that administrators aren't backing them up, but the reason...is students were extended rudimentary due process rights for even minor sanctions." In recent years, students have used their access to the courts to sue for grade-reversals, for reinstatement after expulsions, and even for monetary damages after being denied valedictorian status.

Perhaps when we are naming reasons for teacher shortages, this problem may need to be on the short list. **EM**

Source—*Teacher Quality Bulletin*, a publication of National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org), 1225 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C., 20036. Phone: 202-223-1823.

## New Study on National Board Certification

**No** one can deny that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has achieved national prominence. Between 1994 and autumn 2002, the National Board had collected over \$100 million in public money and just as much in private money. The number of certified teachers has gone from under 100 in 1995 to over 22,000 in 2002. Whenever there is such a large outlay, the natural question is: What are we getting for our money?

In a first-of-its-kind study, Professor Dan Goldhaber, and David Perry and Emily Anthony of the Washington, D.C.-based Urban Institute have just released a paper that analyzed the characteristics of teachers who apply for and teachers who are awarded National Board Certification. The study reports that teachers who work in more affluent districts are more likely to apply than teachers in poorer districts. Females, blacks, those with master's degrees and, not surprisingly, those in districts that paid a bonus tied to certification are all more likely to apply.

But who is awarded certification? The study shows that the single most prevalent characteristic of a Board-certified teacher is the same characteristic that has been identified in a myriad of other teacher quality studies: NBPTS-certified teachers have significantly higher test scores, e.g., Praxis, SAT. The correlation between NBPTS awards and teachers' general academic ability may be both good news and bad news for NBPTS and its applicants, confirming that these teachers do in fact seem to be above the norm, but also leading to some questions about all the extraneous and expensive hoops teachers have to jump through to achieve National Board certification.

Other findings are disturbing as well. Regression analysis shows that after controlling for all other factors including test scores, blacks are still 68 percent less likely to be certified than whites. Only slightly less dramatically, males are 30 percent less likely than females to be certified, after controlling for all other factors. There's no question that NBPTS will be compelled to examine and account for these results. **EM**

For more information, see "NBPTS Certification: Who Applies and What Factors are Associated with Success?" Dan Goldhaber, University of Washington and Urban Institute; David Perry and Emily Anthony, Urban Institute, March 2003. [http://www.evansuw.org/FAC/Goldhaber/pdf/NBPTS\\_A-S.pdf](http://www.evansuw.org/FAC/Goldhaber/pdf/NBPTS_A-S.pdf)

Source—National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org), 1225 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C., 20036. Phone: 202-223-1823.

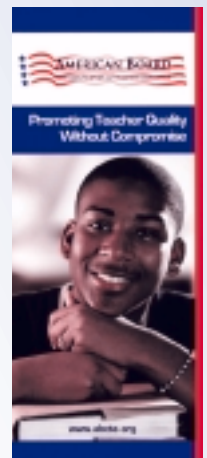
## Secretary Paige Endorses New Certification Board

**On** March 18, Secretary Paige headlined a briefing at the National Press Club regarding the quality and value of the new American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (American Board). Authorized in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the American Board:

- offers a cost-effective route to earn a teaching credential based on subject area mastery and professional teaching knowledge as demonstrated by testing standards
- encourages young professionals and midcareer-changers to become teachers by reducing the barriers
- provides a teaching credential that is nationally recognized and portable from state to state

In turn, states that adopt the American Board route would gain an increased pool of highly qualified teaching candidates; a reduction in the number of out-of-field teachers by providing schools with educators for hire in their specific area of need; and a new tool to meet the requirements of placing a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom. "Some people will argue that this change is too radical," the Secretary said, "that it's too risky, that we should maintain the status quo. Well, I agree that it's radically better than the system we have now, a system that drives thousands of talented people away from our classrooms. The American Board will not replace current systems of teacher certification, but it can supplement these systems and provide a rigorous route into the classroom for thousands of candidates." **EM**

For more information, go to <http://www.abcte.org/>. The Secretary's remarks are available at <http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/03-2003/03182003.html>.



## New Report Helps Bring Clarity to Teaching about Christianity in Public Schools

“**T**he more common form of bias: teachers aren’t prohibited from referencing Christianity; they merely ignore it.”

*Gateways to Better Education* is launching a national campaign to inform public school educators and parents that schools have the educational obligation to teach students about the Bible and the contributions Christianity has made to America.

The nonprofit organization recently released a 14-page report, entitled “The Case for Christianity.” It provides documentation to support its conclusion that public schools can and should teach about Christianity in a less restrictive way—restrictions that have been mostly self-imposed over the years.

“Many people are surprised to discover that state governments expect students to learn about the Bible and Christianity,” says Gateways president Eric Buehrer. For example, California’s state academic standards expect students to “read and discuss” the biblical stories of Creation, Moses, and the giving of the Ten Commandments.

Colorado state officials expect students to “describe religious developments in United States history.” In Florida, students are expected to know “the significant ideas” of Christianity.

The report also shows that education groups such as the PTA and the NEA support objective teaching about religion. For instance, it quotes the National Education Association’s resolution stating that it “believes that educational materials should accurately portray the influence of religion in our nation and throughout the world.”

“People need to know it is a myth that public school teachers can’t fully teach the tenants of Christianity in their classrooms,” says Buehrer. **EM**

For more information on how to obtain a copy of the full report, contact Gateways to Better Education at 1-888-706-5601, or visit [www.gtbe.org](http://www.gtbe.org).

## New Video Study on Math Instruction

**M**ore interesting data from the TIMSS project comparing U.S. performance in math and science with students from other nations. The latest findings were gleaned from videotapes of math teachers from seven countries while presenting their math lessons. All six of the other countries studied—Japan, Hong Kong, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Australia—had outperformed the United States on the TIMSS assessment.

By videotaping lessons, researchers from LessonLab, an educational research company under contract with the Department of Education, were able to get the qualitative research that can be so elusive to social scientists. The study concludes that

American teachers spend less time than their higher-achieving counterparts on “conceptual foundations of math.”

“They’re more focused on getting the answers, and less focused on giving students the opportunities to really engage in serious mathematical work,” said James Stigler, chief executive officer for LessonLab. **EM**

“Study: Teachers Should Emphasize Math Concepts”  
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/EDUCATION/03/26/math.countries.ap/index.html>  
TIMMS 1999 Video Study, LessonLab, Inc.  
<http://www.lessonlab.com/research/curProj.htm>

Source—Teacher Quality Bulletin, a publication of National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org), 1225 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C., 20036. Phone: 202-223-1823.

## New EIA Report Ranks Per-Pupil Spending in Over 14,000 School Districts

**L**ast month, the U.S. Census Bureau released *Public Education Finances 2001*, a 99-page report that highlighted school revenues and expenditures for the 2000-01 year. The report is a treasure trove of information, providing not only statewide averages for various spending but also extensive tables for the largest school districts. The report’s statistics received substantial media attention nationwide.

But if the Census Bureau report itself is overflowing with numbers, imagine the sheer bulk of the source data it used for the report. To compute statewide average expenditures, the Census Bureau gathered financial information from each of America’s nearly 15,000 local school districts. Armed with this source data, Education Intelligence Agency (EIA) has constructed a report of its own, *What Price They Will: Per-Pupil Spending & Labor Costs for More Than 14,000 Public School Districts*.

The report ranks school districts within each state on their 2000-01 per-pupil spending, and includes the percentages of that total they spent on instruction, total employee compensation, and compensation for classroom personnel only. The tables also include the enrollment figures for each district, so that comparisons with districts of similar size can be made. Each page also contains the state and national averages in each of the above categories for easy reference.

Links to each state’s table can be found at <http://www.eiaonline.com/districts.htm>. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view, print, or download the tables. Your download time will depend of the number of districts in that state. **EM**



### A Tip of the Hat

**T**he president of the Kansas affiliate of the AAE receives a deserving tip of the hat.

Doug Barnett, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Pioneer Trail Junior High School in Olathe, Kansas, won the Kansas competition in the Daughters of the

American Revolution’s 2003 Outstanding Teacher of American History contest.

Doug gratefully received the award at the DAR’s state conference last month. He will now be in competition with the other state winners. The national winner will be announced at DAR’s Continental Congress during July in Washington, D.C.

Doug has taught in the Olathe School District for twenty-four years. He also coaches the boys and girls basketball teams at Pioneer Trail. In addition to his teaching and coaching duties, Doug has served as the President of the Kansas Association of American Educators for the past three years.

**Congratulations Doug Barnett! EM**

#### Editor’s Note—

If you or a fellow AAE member has received an award or honor in the past year that you would like us to know about, please drop us a note. We would love to share more success stories with our colleagues.



## Lack of Incentives a Fundamental Problem in Education?

Continued from page 1

The richer, wealthier suburban districts hired experienced teachers from the inner-city schools, and the inner-city schools went out and hired all inexperienced teachers. And so you can infer that it's likely that inner-city children got hurt by the class-size reduction program in California, which is just the opposite of what people want to tell you.

**Clowes:** So we need to look at how education is organized as well as the way it's funded?

**Hanushek:** Right. We also look at differences in teacher salaries across districts, and we ask: What happens if one district pays more than other districts for teachers? We find that there is some effect of salaries on movement, but it's much less than the effect of the student body characteristics on movements.

Basically, teachers are moving to teach higher-achieving higher-income white children. Teachers seem to be following the characteristics of the student body more than following higher salaries.

The other thing we find is that salary differences aren't very related to student achievement. What that says is that if you raise salaries you can in fact usually get a larger pool of teachers to choose from, but that schools don't systematically choose the better teachers.

**Clowes:** Is that because of the teacher pay structure?

**Hanushek:** It's because of teacher compensation and the structure of management in schools; neither is really paying attention to student performance.

**Clowes:** If we hire more teachers to do the same amount of work, wouldn't teacher productivity go down?

**Hanushek:** That's another complicated issue. Education output has essentially been constant for twenty-five years, as far as we can tell from the data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. So what you've had is roughly constant performance, but you've had rapidly increasing expenditures. From that, it looks as if productivity is going down, and it looks as if it's going down more than in other service sectors where you think that they have the same problems of labor intensity and so forth.

But it's not entirely surprising that we don't see student performance going up when we spend more because none of our policies and organization in schools pays attention to output or performance.

The fundamental problem in education is that there aren't any incentives to increase student performance. Nobody's career is really dependent upon the children doing well. Pay, hiring, and everything else is essentially independent of how well somebody does teaching and how well the school does at increasing student performance.

**Clowes:** Would spending more money improve performance?

**Hanushek:** In my view, there's not a very close relationship between spending and student performance, and so we have no way of saying what we can expect if we put any amount of spending into a school. We know that some schools will spend money well, we know that others will spend it badly, and we know that on average, we don't get much effect.

**Clowes:** What other strategies should policy-makers pursue to improve student achievement?

**Hanushek:** In my opinion, we have to do better at making sure we have high-quality teachers in all classrooms. The way you're going to do that, I think, is having incentives in the system that relate to student performance.

Basically, if you want to improve student performance, you have to pay attention to student performance. Right now, we say "We want to improve student performance," but then

we pay attention to all kinds of other things but not to student performance.

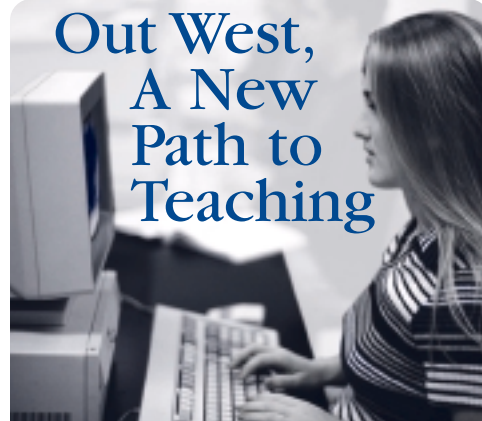
We have to get better incentives in schools to increase student performance. Now, there's an intermediate position that says along the way you also have to do much better at measuring the value added by schools and teachers. We're simply not very good at doing that. **EM**

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*Source—School Reform News, a publication of The Heartland Institute, [www.heartland.org](http://www.heartland.org).*

## Out West, A New Path to Teaching



**A** bold new experiment in teacher training is officially under way as Western Governors' University (WGU) launched its new teachers college last month.

What's most revolutionary about the program is that WGU provides a competency-based approach, meaning that degrees are awarded based on critical knowledge and skills as measured by assessments rather than number of classroom hours completed. WGU is an online consortium of nineteen Western states and forty-five universities that offers 1,200 courses. The Teachers College of WGU will provide teacher certification as well as associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees in reading, math, science, technology, and ESL. The teaching program is constructed decidedly for the nontraditional ed school student: teacher's aides, paraprofessionals, uncertified teachers, and professionals who seek to become teachers. Once students are briefed on how WGU works, they are then required to complete preassessments determining their knowledge of their given subject matter and assigned a mentor who will help design an individual program and judge when the student is ready for assessments.

The Department of Education—which helped start the program by awarding a \$10 million, five-year Star Schools grant—is betting that this experiment will work and that distance learning will open the doors to new types of people joining the teaching profession. According to Secretary of Education Paige, "The No Child Left Behind Act calls for highly qualified teachers in every classroom because that is a critical factor for ensuring student academic success. We need to open the classroom door to thousands of midcareer professionals who could make excellent teachers. The Teachers College will be invaluable in that effort because a Web-based program offers working adults the flexibility to pursue standards-based coursework at their own pace and schedule."

For more information, contact The Teachers College of WGU at <http://www.wgu.edu/tc>. **EM**

*Source—Teacher Quality Bulletin, a publication of National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org), 1225 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C., 20036. Phone: 202-223-1823.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
"Nobody's career is really dependent upon the children doing well."



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## National Endowment for the Humanities Offers New Education Website

**A** new website—EDSITEment—The Best of the Humanities on the Web—has been created as a joint project between the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Trust for the Humanities, and the MarcoPolo Education Foundation.

EDSITEment contains a variety of links to other websites and references to resources available from some of the world's great museums, libraries, and universities. The site also provides helpful hints to teachers on how to better use the Internet in the classroom.

Check it out today at  
[www.edsitement.neh.gov](http://www.edsitement.neh.gov). **EM**

# THE WORM IN THE APPLE

## How the Teacher Unions are Destroying American Education

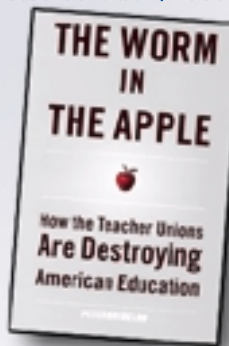
By Peter Brimelow

Publisher—HarperCollinsPublishers  
[www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com)

*"The Worm in the Apple  
is a stunning indictment."*

—John Stossel,

ABC News correspondent, 20/20



Brimelow says its agenda is not to provide better teaching in schools; it is to provide more money and benefits for teachers—and, above all, for itself. It accomplishes this through monopoly bargaining muscle and by buying special privileges from politicians. Even worse, the unions want to turn curriculum, textbooks, and grading standards into bargaining chips in labor negotiations.

*The Worm in the Apple* paints an alarming picture of a bureaucratic parasite that has taken hold of our schools. It issues a clarion call to rescue students, parents, taxpayers—and, not least, teachers—from its grip.

About the author—

Peter Brimelow, who has two children in public school, is the editor of VDARE.com, a senior fellow with the Pacific Research Institute, and a columnist for CBS MarketWatch. A financial journalist, he has written extensively about the NEA and the economics of education in Forbes and Fortune magazines. The author of Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster, he has contributed to the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and the Washington Post. **EM**

**In** this devastating critique, Peter Brimelow portrays the teacher unions as a political and economic monopoly that is choking the life out of our public education system, like the trusts that put a stranglehold on American business a hundred years ago. Brimelow makes the case that until the unions are held at least partially accountable for the thirty-year decline in U.S. K-12 education, and public schools are freed up to operate outside of restrictive union contracts, most education reform efforts are doomed to fail.

Today, the biggest labor union in the country is the National Education Association, which claims nearly three million "members."

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