

**The Future of  
PUBLIC EDUCATION  
and the  
TEACHING PROFESSION  
in Pennsylvania**



**Written by  
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**THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE  
TEACHING PROFESSION IN PENNSYLVANIA**

**By Albert Fondy, President, Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers**

This article is written to focus on some of the current trends in public education in Pennsylvania and in the nation, as well as to attempt a forecast of where these trends will lead in the future.

Any effort to write about the future of education here in our state and in the nation is a difficult and uncertain undertaking at best, but there are some things which are happening now and which will be happening in the near future that one can feel reasonably assured, indeed, will be sustained and enlarged upon over the long term.

**Top Quality Teachers—the Fundamental Ingredient for Successful Schools**

Certainly, in maintaining and striving to improve the quality and effectiveness of public education and the support for public education among the general public, there can be no question that the place to start is by assuring the availability of top quality, well prepared, competent, committed teachers. A major thrust in our state now and in the immediate future, and for the foreseeable future, will be to concentrate on trying to recruit and hold very competent persons to teach in our classrooms.

**Upcoming Teacher Shortage**

It's no secret that the demographics of the teaching profession indicate that there is going to be an enormous turnover among current teachers over the next five, to seven, to eight years. The estimates, and they are accurate, are that in excess of 50% of all the teachers currently teaching will be retired or

otherwise out of teaching inside the next ten years. That's because a great bulk of current teachers came into the profession in the 1950's and the early 1960's, and those teachers are now beginning to near, or are at, retirement age.

Of course, the factors that were present in the past to fill our teaching ranks with very many top quality people have changed. For one thing, there no longer is a draft. The draft was an inducement to young men to become teachers rather than enter military service. There is a second factor of much greater significance. The teaching profession has historically been one of the most attractive professions for women because many other professions that should have been open to women really weren't open to them, and, as a consequence, many women came into teaching. We have an enormous number of very well qualified, highly competent women in our profession today, simply because they had not too many other choices of professions to enter. That too has now changed. Women today have a diversity of attractive career choices.

Moreover, teaching now is in competition with other professions for top quality college graduates—males and females, minorities, and so on. The number of young adults coming out of our colleges and universities right now to go into all kinds of pursuits, not just teaching, is at a low level in comparison to what it normally would be, because the "baby bust" generation is now going through our high schools and entering our colleges. So we have that factor which also influences how many people are available to become teachers.

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Over the last ten to fifteen years, there were many layoffs in the teaching profession, and for young people about to enter college or in college, the perception was, "Why prepare to be a teacher, even if one likes the idea, because there aren't any teaching jobs to be had?" That perception was correct. However, that perception is no longer correct. There will be teaching jobs, so that, indeed, those who are interested in teaching would be well advised to consider it as a career.

Tough Entry Standards and Good Salaries

Attract Top Students to Teaching

When such students are talked with and informed that the standards for the teaching profession are growing stronger; that, indeed, it will require in Pennsylvania a Master's Degree for permanent certification as a teacher; that in the future there will be a rigorous test for various kinds of certification in teaching; that there already is in our state (beginning with the 1987-88 school year) a test for all entering teachers; that there will be an induction period for new teachers—when such students learn of these more rigorous requirements for the teaching profession and discuss stronger standards in the teaching profession, they are actually more attracted to consider teaching as one of the alternatives when they look at a potential career. If we can assure young people that there is going to be a job for them, one that provides a real service to society and one that will pay a very decent salary, teaching becomes all the more appealing to them as a profession.

Teacher Recruitment Program in Effect in Pittsburgh

It is interesting to note what the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, in conjunction with the Pittsburgh School District, is doing in the City of Pittsburgh right now, in terms of the recruitment of future teachers for the City School System. Pittsburgh is engaged in an effort to recruit teachers for the City School System from its own high school student body. Last school year, again this school year, and next school year at least, joint presentations—by the union and by top school administration—have been made and will be made to honor roll students in the City's high schools, as well as to some other students who may not be on the honor roll but who are recommended by their teachers as potentially very good candidates to be future teachers. Excellent high school students in Pittsburgh are being informed about the bright prospects that exist for jobs in teaching, what the needs are in teaching, what the importance of teaching is to our society, and what the standards and requirements are for entering teaching. They are virtually guaranteed a teaching position in Pittsburgh and they are guaranteed an excellent, competitive starting salary, ranging (in 1990 and 1991) from \$23,000 to \$27,000, or higher.

Professional Teaching Conditions Absolutely Essential

In order for teaching to be attractive as a profession, not only do the salaries have to be satisfactory, obviously, but conditions in the schools themselves have to be the kind that will attract able and talented people into teaching and keep them in teaching. Teachers have to be able to function in a professional way in our schools, which they have not been able to do at all in the past. The central thrust today, and in the immediate future, will be a genuine and conscious effort to recruit top quality young people into teaching and, at the same time, a strong effort to restructure teaching into a true profession.

Carnegie Forum Report and Other National Reports on Education Provide Catalyst

The energy to make that happen is coming from teachers themselves and from their teacher organizations—particularly from the American Federation of Teachers. Certainly the catalyst for all of this effort to professionalize the role of the teacher in the schools fundamentally has been the various national reports on education that have been issued over the last three years. The most important of these is the report of the "Task Force on Teaching as a Profession," a distinguished fourteen-member body assembled by the "Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy." (Al Shanker, AFT national president, was one of the members of that Task Force.) The Carnegie Forum Task Force report was issued in the spring of 1986, and the reaction to that report and the impetus from it are still being felt and are growing stronger.

National Teacher Certification Board Recommended by Carnegie Forum

One of the recommendations of the Carnegie Forum is that national teacher certification standards be developed and that a national teacher certification board be created. In order to begin to make teaching into a profession, professional entry standards that parallel some of the kinds of procedures that are followed in the medical profession, in the legal profession, and in other professions need to be adopted. For example, even though one completes the educational requirements to become a teacher, he or she still should have to pass an entry examination to actually qualify to be a teacher. A national test and related professional standards will be developed over the next three to four years. These professional standards and tests will be available for individual states to examine and, hopefully, to adopt. This is all part of the effort to strengthen the standards for entry into teaching and to improve the image and the reality of teaching as a profession.

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Broadening the Professional Role of Teachers in the Schools

So again, the second thing that we have to do in assuring that we are going to get the best people into teaching and keep them is to strengthen the professional role of the teacher in the schools. In this context, what is happening now, and will continue to happen in the immediate future, is an effort to try to have teachers assume broader roles and responsibilities in our schools—not necessarily to have teachers run the schools totally on their own, but certainly to have teachers assume the responsibility (following agreement with the school board and top school administration, as a result of joint meetings and consensus) for a host of professional tasks and functions. Examples of such added teacher professional responsibilities would be: conducting staff development programs involving teachers, handling the induction of new teachers, observing their colleagues in the classroom, having the time to interact with each other in terms of ways of improving instruction in the schools, and providing an opportunity to discuss problems in the schools and how these problems might best be solved by teachers themselves.

With Teacher Power and Influence Comes Teacher Responsibility

In other words, the objective is to create an atmosphere in the schools where teachers really have an opportunity to have a direct and meaningful influence on what happens in the school, and, as a result of having that influence, teachers are enabled to broaden their perspective and really begin to acquire major responsibility for improving the atmosphere in the schools and the educational outcomes for students in the schools. That whole effort is really necessary if we are ultimately to make teaching

into the kind of attractive profession that it really should be in our society. This is not going to be an easy goal to achieve, but we have an opportunity over the next five to ten years, perhaps it will take longer, to make teaching into one of the top collective employment professions that exist in our nation, if not the best of the collective employment professions.

**Growing Status and Respect for Teaching Profession**

We've made some real headway in terms of salaries for teachers. Certainly, with the rights that we have now under collective bargaining, teachers are no longer a powerless group at all. Teachers have strong national teacher organizations, state organizations, local bargaining organizations, and so on. The whole collective bargaining process has given teachers the power within their own school districts, and within the states and nationally as well, to have a truly strong influence on what is said about teaching, on what is said about public education, and on what various national reports recommend for education. The fact that teachers are in a powerful position means that those who would make recommendations and formulations for the future in public education have to consult with teachers and their representatives about what kinds of things ought to be done to safeguard public education and to strengthen public education in our state and in the nation.

Young college and university graduates are going to find, if they go into teaching, that teaching will be a much stronger and, hopefully, a much more respected profession in the future than, unfortunately, it is at present and has been in the immediate past.

**Focus on Entry Salaries for Teachers**

Certainly the area of salary is a key concern—especially the entering salaries for teachers. One of the trends in our state, and nationally as well, is a recognition that one cannot succeed in trying to draw people into any profession or into any occupation unless the salaries that are paid are competitive. There is a recognition that the entering salaries for teachers, which, in particular, have always been low and which are still low, have to be greatly strengthened, if, indeed, we're going to be in a position to attract the numbers and the quality of people we have to draw into teaching. Therefore, another current and continuing trend will be the drive to strengthen starting salaries for new teachers entering the profession.

**Career Teacher Salaries Always an Emphasis**

There is always a need, and that surely must and will continue, for career teacher salaries to be strengthened as well. That effort, through collective bargaining, will continue. That is a primary responsibility that organizations which represent teachers have and it's a responsibility that will be met. If entering salaries are improved, that certainly helps to build the pressure for increasing the salaries for career teachers at the same time.

**Summary of Article to this Point**

This completes the first major area being dealt with in this article—the area of who teachers will be, what their professional roles and status will be, and how they will be compensated. This is one overall major area which is changing dramatically and which is critical to the future of public education in Pennsylvania and the nation.

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Emphasis on Educational Quality and Student Achievement

There is a second major area on which this article must concentrate. That area, of course, is that schools exist—and teachers are employed in schools—because of the needs and interests of the students in our schools. Clearly, maintaining and improving the quality of education is a major concern for the public and for parents. If we're going to have public support, i.e., taxpayer support, for our schools, we have to attain educational results in the schools that are satisfactory to the public and that warrant, in the eyes of the public and the parents of school children, the continuation and expansion of the substantial expenditures of money that must go into the operation of effective and successful schools.

What is happening, and what will continue to happen, is that there is a strengthening of standards for students in the schools. We now have in our own state, as Pennsylvania teachers know, more credits required for high school graduation, more rigorous academic programs, more testing, and so on in the schools. That development and that trend really are essential components of the whole effort to try to maintain and strengthen public education. This area is parallel in significance to the makeup of the teaching staff itself.

Winning Public Support for the Schools

There is no question that, to the extent that the schools are effective, to the extent that students achieve in the schools, and to the extent that teachers are given the kind of support they need to make those things happen, a majority of the public will support our schools in the future.

So the second major thing that is happening today is a strengthening of standards in our schools, more insistence that the reason why children are in schools, and why teachers are there, is so that students learn and progress. Effective

learning cannot occur without a rigorous academic program and without satisfactory discipline conditions in the schools. There's no question that this combined factor is a key one—in where we are in education today and in where we are going. This is true in the minds of teachers and in the view of parents and the public.

Critical Need to Fund Education Adequately

Clearly, in order to operate the schools it is absolutely necessary to have adequate financing of education. Notwithstanding the dismal climate at the present time with regard to support for public education at the national level, emanating from the White House, the fact is that now and over the upcoming years—particularly if we're successful in the goal of professionalizing the role of teachers in the schools and if we're successful in strengthening educational standards and student achievement—there will be the political thrust and the public and business commitment that are necessary to maintain and to improve the levels of funding for our schools.

Inadequate Level of Federal Support for Education

Certainly there has to be a greater federal effort toward funding our schools. Right now, roughly speaking, 6% or so of all of the funds for operating our elementary and secondary schools come from the federal government. That, of course, is truly a very low and dismal level of federal support. That low level of support, frankly, has been the case, not just in this national administration but in the past as well. This administration, however, has really sought to go backward. Fortunately, its efforts to reduce drastically the already inadequate level of federal aid were resisted by others more wise than the administration, i.e., the Congress, and the situation is not as bad as it actually could have been had the President succeeded in his damaging intent.

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The recent enactment of a broad-based federal tax reform, again despite the position of the President, includes the continued full deductibility of state and local income and wage taxes and property taxes. As a consequence, the means for state and local governments, i.e., the political means, to continue to support public schools at least have been held in place, again despite the opposition of the national administration. Had the deductibility of state and local income and wage taxes and property taxes been eliminated, not only would that have eliminated the greatest level of federal support that exists right now, but it would have made it very difficult, if not impossible, for state governments and local governments to maintain the taxes that they currently levy which go to support our public schools—i.e., the state income tax, local wage taxes, and, particularly, the local property tax. If those taxes were no longer deductible, then, obviously, the political ability to maintain those taxes and, especially, to increase those taxes when it is essential to do so would be next to nil.

An underlying sentiment of public support already exists to increase the level of federal aid to public education. That support can be marshalled, if we can get someone to head the next national administration who is cognizant of the critical nature of public education in terms of the future of our nation, our society, and our economy.

#### States Continue as Key Source of Financial Support for Schools

For now, the key area for financial support for our schools will have to come from the state, and there is a trend nationally for states to assume an increasing share of the funding support that's necessary for our schools. In our state, somewhere around 40% to 41%, or so, of local school district budgets, on the average, comes from the state. That, in part, is a result of an inadequate level of state support for our schools, but it's also a result of the fact that in our state we have a reasonably high per pupil expenditure. If there is a higher level

of per pupil expenditure, then it takes more money from the state to reach a 50% level of funding. So, we're not well off, but we're not disastrously off in that whole regard. There's absolutely no question, however, that there will be a need in Pennsylvania for a much greater measure of financial effort from the state in the upcoming years.

#### Local Support for Schools in Pennsylvania

The principal level of support for our schools across the state, because the state is not at 50% state funding for education, is the local level of support—which is primarily the local property tax. That tax is not a very popular tax, as all teachers are well aware. But it is absolutely essential for the maintenance of our public schools!

Again, using the City of Pittsburgh as an example, the Pittsburgh School District has substantial property taxes, as do all other school districts, that go to support the public schools. There are City and County property taxes as well. Also in effect in the City of Pittsburgh is a 4% wage tax; 1 7/8% of that wage tax goes to the schools and 2 1/8% goes to the City of Pittsburgh. The wage tax in the City of Pittsburgh is paid only by those persons who work in the City and who are also residents of the City (as well as by City residents who work outside the City). Consequently, there exists a rather narrow population base from which to collect the wage tax.

Obviously, if there are already fairly considerable property taxes at the local level, and if there is a large number of senior citizens at the local level, and if local wage taxes are already in place, it is difficult at the local level to achieve the size of revenues that is necessary to operate our public schools. Local revenue increases, for the same reasons, are extremely tough to achieve. That's why the real solution to the problem of adequately funding our public schools has to be found primarily at the state level, but also at the national level, in the future.

## Summary of Need for Adequate Funding

Any institution or enterprise requires a number of critical ingredients in order to succeed. It requires competent people to work in it; it requires public support; but it also requires adequate funding. That clearly is an area that has always been a problem in public education and that right now is a serious problem. Hopefully, given the nature of the various national reports referred to earlier in this article and given the kind of support that's coming from the business community now for our public schools, the climate seems to be improving, at least to some extent, in terms of having the broad base of political support that is needed to provide and assure the revenues that are necessary to run the schools.

## Collective Bargaining Remains the Base; Need to Go beyond Collective Bargaining

The final point that should be made in this article is that collective bargaining, very definitely in our state but in other states as well, has been the keystone for why teacher organizations have become stronger and for why teachers are probably the best organized and the most organized professional occupation in our nation today. It is also the reason why teachers have made considerable personal progress, economic and otherwise, over the last twenty years or so. That's not going to change. However, in our relationships with school districts, while collective bargaining will certainly be maintained and built on, most of the professional and educational progress that we as teachers are going to need to accomplish in the schools will have to be achieved by going beyond collective bargaining—in terms of our continuing relationships with school boards and school administrations.

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## Pittsburgh "Teacher Professionalism Project" Exemplifies Cooperative Working Relationship

Again, an example from Pittsburgh illustrates the need to go beyond collective bargaining in the effort to professionalize teaching and to improve public education. In the summer of 1985 a contract settlement, through collective bargaining, was reached in Pittsburgh. It was a two-year extension of an existing agreement. The existing agreement was supposed to run through August of 1986. Instead, in August of 1985, a settlement was reached in Pittsburgh—a whole year early—on a two-year extension of the existing contract.

That contract extension included salary increases, fringe benefit improvements, and some language on various items of concern to teachers and their union and to the school district. But, what was most important of all, it was mutually agreed to start what was called a "Teacher Professionalism Project," that would involve a large number of teachers in the school system, the administration, and the school board. In this "Project," the many participants would talk about a host of issues that go far beyond what had ever been able to be achieved in the collective bargaining process before, issues designed to improve the schools, to broaden the role of teachers in the schools, to change the nature of the teaching profession in the schools, and so on. This would all be done through a cooperative, non-adversarial series of meetings—distinct from collective bargaining but set in motion by the Pittsburgh Collective Bargaining Agreement and relationship.



Supplanting the Historical Adversarial Relationship between Labor and Management

There is an emerging trend in the public education union movement, and it's only now starting to grow nationally, to advance beyond the adversarial relationship between labor and management and between employer and employee. This trend, to some extent, already has been underway in some segments of the private sector union movement as well. An adversarial relationship is not always a healthy way in which to maintain or to strengthen an enterprise or an institution, be it public sector or private sector.

Sometimes, adversarial relations are unavoidable and necessary, but many times they are counterproductive. Indeed, when we as teachers and as a teacher organization get into a strong position, as we have through unionization and collective bargaining, we assume a large measure of responsibility for the success of education in our schools. If we have such a responsibility, and we do, for the success and effectiveness of our schools, then many of the things that we would like to accomplish for our profession and for our students will have to be sought in mutual consultation and cooperation with school boards and school administrations. If we are to succeed, we must strive to reach general accord on the agenda and the extent of the matters that should be addressed and improved in our schools. This is not any limited or confrontational collective bargaining agenda, but a broad professional and educational agenda.

How Pittsburgh Approached Non-adversarial Relationship between Union and School District

In Pittsburgh, as alluded to earlier in this article, the union and teachers began during the 1985-86 school year and continued this school year a wide-ranging, open examination of a host of subjects affecting the profession and practice of teaching. Some of these subjects are the following: a much broader professional role for teachers in the schools; the establishment of school instructional cabinets at each school, wherein teachers would meet on a consistent basis with the school administration, jointly deal with problems, and mutually decide on how the school ought to be operated; a program for recruiting new teachers for the school system; an approach to having teachers be responsible for staff development; and instituting and increasing teacher leader positions in the schools.

The basic approach in Pittsburgh, through agreement of the school board and the school administration with the union, was that the parties should cooperate to try to make meaningful changes in the schools, with the full involvement of several hundred teachers, not just a few teachers who are on the union negotiating committee. The involvement of a broad group of teachers and administrators is the surest and best approach to finding ways to expand the professional role of teachers in the schools, to engender teacher and administrator understanding and support for such changes, and to create opportunities for teachers to advance in their profession without having to leave the classroom.

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Primary Pittsburgh Thrust—Opportunities for Teachers, but without Leaving the Classroom

That is the primary thrust in the whole Pittsburgh Teacher Professionalism Project—to find added responsibilities for teachers, some of them promotional and some of them professional in nature, but with the overriding, central requirement being that while various professional opportunities and responsibilities would be introduced and expanded for teachers, the affected teachers would still continue to teach, in some cases full-time, in other cases part-time.

Changing Teaching into a Full, Career Profession

The developing thrust within the teaching profession, and what appears to be the trend for the future in our state and nationally, is to find ways to redefine teaching into a genuine profession—by creating opportunities for career teachers that do not require the participating teachers to leave the classroom. The greatest shortcoming of all in the current structure of the teaching profession—in terms of the public's image of teaching as a career, students' image of teaching as a career, and teachers' own personal perception of teaching as a career—is that the ultimate way today for one to succeed as a teacher is to get out of teaching. That is what we as teachers must change! This is what our union, at the local, state, and national levels, must change! And that is what we are trying to change! If we look at all of the various national reports on education, and at the Carnegie Report in particular, that really is the central theme—that teaching must become, within itself, a true profession, with professional recognition, professional responsibility, and professional opportunities for career teachers!

We must find ways to create more career advancements for teachers that enable them to continue teaching. In short, we must transform teaching into a genuine professional career. In doing this, we must redesign the teaching profession so that teachers really feel that they have a fundamental role and a shared responsibility in assuring the success of our schools. That is what is being attempted in Pittsburgh. That is what the thrust will be in Pennsylvania in the next five to ten years. The Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers intends to continue to work very hard to achieve these ends—for teachers, present and future, for the profession of teaching, and for the more successful education of all of our students throughout future years.

Albert Fondy  
PaFT President  
March-April 1987

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[Supplement to this article appears on pages 10 and 11.]

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### What Are Teachers, the PaFT, and the AFT Seeking for the Teaching Profession?

The following points constitute a supplement and summary to the preceding article. They should be viewed as an optimistic, long-range overview of the future of the teaching profession:

- Teaching will become a more attractive profession, a profession that is truly competitive with other major professions.
- Talented and able college and university students will be drawn to the teaching profession. The ranks of talented future teachers will include a sound balance between male and female teachers and a solid and growing proportion of minority teachers.
- Teachers will be receiving attractive and professionally competitive salaries and fringe benefits, including pension entitlements, for their services. Professionally competitive salary parameters will apply to both entry salaries and to career salaries.
- Comprehensive examinations will be required for teachers to enter the teaching profession following their graduation from colleges and universities. (This element has already been implemented in Pennsylvania, with the first tests required for all newly certified teachers commencing with June of 1987.)
- Teacher internships will be served prior to a teacher's formal entry into the profession. Induction of new teachers will be under the direction and evaluation of especially competent, experienced, practicing classroom teachers. (Teacher induction programs in each school district are mandated in Pennsylvania, beginning with the 1987-88 school year.)
- Master's Degrees or other similar academic and experience qualifications will be required for permanent teaching certification. (This is already the case in Pennsylvania, with an earned Master's Degree being required for permanent certification beginning with June of 1987.)
- A national teaching standards and teacher certification board will develop standards, tests, and certification requirements for future teachers, which, in time, will be adopted by various states. These certification requirements will include various specialty certifications and credentials for especially able and/or highly qualified teachers. (The development of this board and the accompanying standards and procedures is underway right now, under the sponsorship and financing of the Carnegie Corporation. The majority of those engaged in this salutary and, it is to be hoped, historic process are outstanding, experienced, practicing classroom teachers.)
- Promotional and advancement opportunities will be available within the framework of teaching and the teaching profession. Advancement for teachers will not primarily be through the route of leaving teaching for administrative positions.
- Excellent teachers, while continuing to teach either full-time or part-time, will achieve positions as the instructional leaders in their schools, serving as lead teachers, department chairpersons, and in similar capacities as leaders of instruction. Such positions will be part of the faculty makeup at all school levels—elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. These positions, when fully developed, will include some professional responsibilities previously reserved to non-teaching, supervisory personnel. This will be necessary if teachers are to achieve real responsibility for the delivery and quality of instruction and truly are to be the instructional leaders in the schools.
- The number of administrative and non-teaching, supervisory positions within public education will be reduced, with teachers and principals working more closely and cooperatively and with greater autonomy and decision-making authority for teachers and for principals at the school level.

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- Paraprofessionals, secretarial/clerical personnel, and security personnel will be available in schools in sufficient numbers to handle non-professional, semi-professional, and clerical tasks in the schools. This will assure that teachers will be used efficiently and solely to teach and otherwise function in professional areas of responsibility.
- Teachers will be provided the facilities, assistance, and time to operate as professionals. This includes such fundamental necessities as clerical aid, paraprofessional help, office space, work and conference areas, telephones, duplication equipment, and so on.
- Computer, as well as video, audio, and other technical assistance to teachers, to students, and to schools will become a positive and significant contributor to effective teaching, learning, and schools.
- Talented and high quality teachers, through the medium of their professional organizations, will insist upon and earn responsibility for and control of their profession.
- Teaching will become a more genuine profession, with teachers achieving the degree of responsibility and professional autonomy that they have long been denied.
- Aspirants to enter the teaching profession will come to regard teaching as a desirable and secure profession, one that contributes profoundly and vitally to the well being of society and the economy, and one that is rewarded significantly by society in terms of its economic compensation and its status.
- The teaching profession will become more recognized and respected by the general public as a critically essential and worthy profession. The image of teachers, to themselves and to the public, will be considerably enhanced over what has historically been the case.

If many, or all, of the preceding projections are to become reality, they will not be achieved on a wide scale in any short period of time. Rather, these changes will arise in single school districts, perhaps even, at first, only in individual schools. But these kinds of goals should be our ultimate aim as teachers and our primary objective as a professional union.

Albert Fondy  
PaFT President  
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This article and the supplement to it were adapted and expanded by PaFT President Albert Fondy from a speech which he delivered on Saturday, October 25, 1986, to a symposium on education held at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Walter Wood

## Schenley School Project Features Sabbaticals

Three visitors from Pittsburgh presented a workshop on what their district is doing to revitalize the teaching profession at the high school level.

Dr. John Young, the principal of Schenley High School, Virginia Norkus an administrative assistant to Dr. Young, and John Tarka, a representative of the Western Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers made a two hour presentation to about 40 Boston personnel at the November 20 Professional Day.

From the very beginning of the Schenley Teacher Center Program, there was a great deal of cooperation between Superintendent of Schools Richard Wallace, and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers president, Al Fondy. In his segment of the presentation, John Tarka credited Al Fondy with being a major force in encouraging teachers to become involved with the program.

Because of this cooperation and commitment from both the superintendent and the Union, over 200 teachers spent a year working on committees planning the Schenley Teacher Center. Pittsburgh is very proud that Schenley Teacher Center was planned by

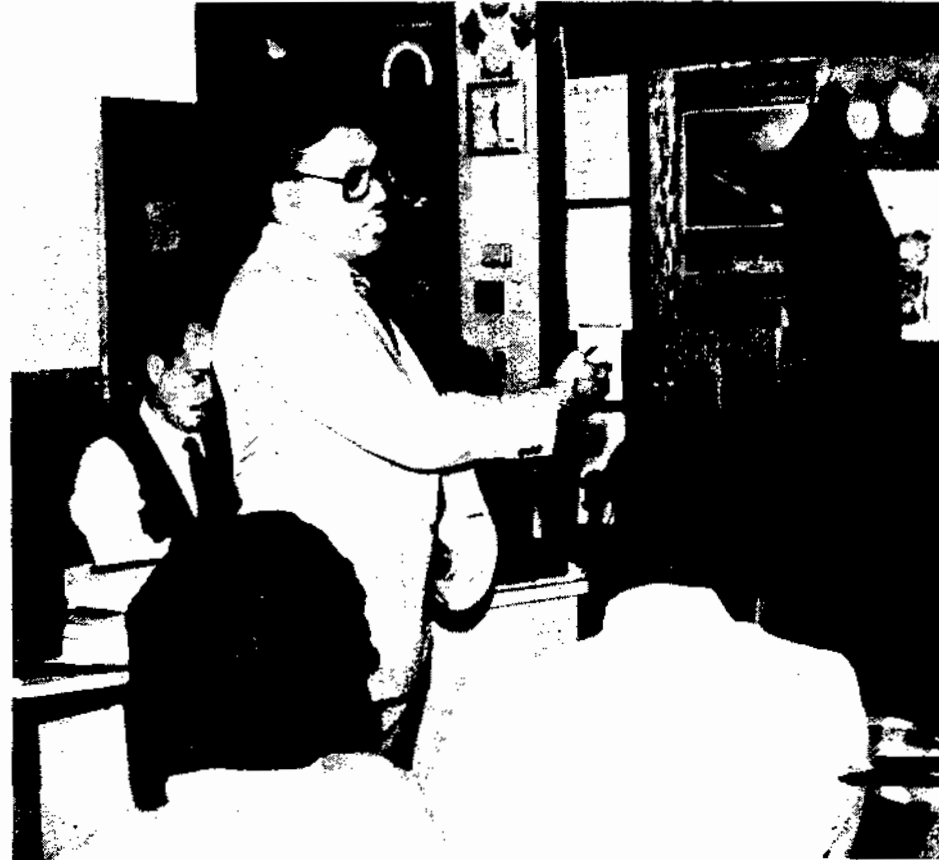


Photo by Bob Jango

teachers *for* teachers.

The program at the Schenley Teacher Center is unusual and unique in that teachers are released from their school and classroom responsibilities for a period of eight weeks to participate in the program.

While teachers are released from their home schools, replacement teachers take over. It was made clear that these teachers were *not substitute teachers* but fully qualified *experienced teachers* who had already gone through the Schenley Program

themselves. They become responsible for all classes and duties while the teachers are visiting the Schenley Teacher Center.

The visiting teachers plan their eight-week stay at Schenley with a clinical resident teacher who has a reduced teaching load of three classes a day, but is assigned two visiting teachers for each eight-week cycle.

A collegial relationship between visiting teachers and the clinical resident teachers is an important factor in the success of the Schenley Center. Observations and discussions are carried out in a non-threatening atmosphere where teachers can learn from each other.

By working with clinical resident teachers, visiting teachers can observe new techniques, receive up-dated information on curriculum, and refine skills. Also, the visiting teacher has the opportunity to develop a skill, or study an area that would not be available under an ordinary staff development program.

Pittsburgh intends to have all of its high school personnel go through the program in a four-year period. They are currently into their third year of the program at Schenley.

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# Action

## Teachers Vote for Weekly 'Ed Issues' Meetings

A new kind of weekly staff meeting to be introduced this fall in Pittsburgh's high schools may serve as a model for excellence in teaching around the country.

Thanks to an innovative idea proposed by the Pittsburgh AFT affiliate, teachers there will begin a new schedule that sets aside time each week just for discussing education and instructional issues.

The decision by Pittsburgh teachers to change their schedules slightly to permit a one-hour and 15-minute departmental meeting each week marks a growing interest by AFT affiliates in tackling a major complaint teachers have about their jobs— isolation and lack of contact with peers. The absence of a collegial atmosphere in which teachers can meet during the regular school day to talk about instructional or academic problems has been a ma-

ajor focus of both the report from the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession as well as the AFT's own policy statement, "The Revolution that is Overdue," released at last year's convention.

The special contract amendment, negotiated by the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, was approved 61 percent to 39 percent by a secret ballot vote of the PFT membership. It shortens slightly (by 10 minutes) the school day four days a week and adds the 75-minute period on Wednesdays to permit what the union calls a "teacher interaction/department planning period" in which teachers would meet within departments or between departments.

PFT leaders say the sessions, designed and run by the teachers themselves, will tackle everything from planning instruction and rescheduling classes to dealing with problems of in-

dividual students and coordinating efforts between departments. The PFT agreement specifies that the meetings will not involve additional paperwork or reporting requirements, and the agendas will be set by department chairs "without interference from central administration," notes the PFT.

These meetings are part of the PFT's ongoing Teacher Professionalism Project, an outgrowth of the local's early contract settlement in 1985 that set up a joint union/management process to improve teaching and student achievement in the city's schools.

So far, the TPP project has involved hundreds of teachers and administrators and already has resulted in selection of instructional teacher leaders (with direct involvement of teachers in the selection process); formation of school/instructional "cabinets," an induction program of new teachers using experienced, practicing classroom teachers; recruitment of honor students to choose teaching as a career.

This latest PFT project demonstrates that the union recognizes the importance of collegial activities in professionalizing teaching, notes Marilyn Rauth, assistant to the AFT president for educational issues. "Schools need to find ways for people to get together, to create built-in time for teachers to engage in their own problem solving," she says. "This kind of teacher-to-teacher discussion is far more effective in improving how we teach or how we solve school problems than being 'talked at' by an outside expert."

Pittsburgh local president Al Fondy echoed that sentiment, noting that "the only people who are going to solve the problems in the profession are teachers themselves."

## Employees May Face AIDS Tests

(Continued from page 1)

The Georgia policy is less specific about how school personnel suspected of having AIDS are identified. It says only that "if a school principal or the superintendent...has reasonable cause to believe a student or an employee is an infected student or employee," that person shall be requested to "present evidence indicating he/she has reliable negative results on testing for the serum antibody to HIV [Human Immunodeficiency Virus]." A refusal to comply is considered grounds for removal "for neglect of duty."

The Florida Education Association/United has already formed a task force on AIDS testing and other aspects of the disease and will encourage

Florida school districts to back down from policies involving dismissal of school employees who are AIDS-infected. FEA/United media coordinator Frank Ciarlo emphasizes that the union supports education and training for all school employees on AIDS.

"There is a serious problem because once you've got it [AIDS], that's it," says Ciarlo. "We want to protect students and, at the same time, make sure teachers' rights are protected. There are serious ramifications of a wrong policy, so we want to be careful."

AFT leaders who know of state or local AIDS testing policies involving school employees are encouraged to contact Lou Nayman at AFT.



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