

# NEWSCLIP BRIEFS

From the Office of Public Relations

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## Competency tests for teachers?

Incompetent teachers and administrators are major problems in high schools, a survey of top students reported this week. Actually, we didn't need a high school survey to point that out, did we?

More than half of the 22,000 youths answering the poll by "Who's Who Among American High School Students" said they have worked with up to three unqualified teachers. Thirty-seven percent said they have had from four to 10 poor teachers.

Other interesting items to come out of the survey were:

- 73 percent of the students said drugs are a major factor affecting violence in schools.
- 76 percent said school administrators should expel troublemakers.
- Students have more confidence in broadcast media, 71 percent, than in print, 58 percent. Nearly a third watch between 16 and 28 hours of television weekly.
- 44 percent believe premarital sex is not acceptable and the majority, 55 percent, do not favor abortion.
- 45 percent have a great deal of confidence in the presidency this year in contrast to 19 percent in 1980.

Those are rather astute observations by high schoolers. But there's more. A third of those participating in the 12th annual poll, focusing mainly on education, favored testing teachers regularly to determine competency. We concur.

The teaching profession is like any other.

### Viewpoint

It's necessary at times to cut away dead wood, those workers who have become complacent, who only treat their jobs as routine. However, strong teacher unions in many cases have prevented that from happening. Once a teacher gets tenure, it's difficult to cut him away.

Competency testing in the public sector is required in some circles. Why not for teachers, whose job is to teach our children? It's a little discouraging to read notes sent home to parents that are fraught with spelling errors.

The state Board of Regents has discussed the possibility of testing new teachers. But we feel the board should expand that topic to include teachers already in the ranks. For those teachers just going through the motions day after day, competency tests would certainly compel them to take more of an interest in their profession and to keep up to date on changes, especially those in teaching methods.

The fact that high school students have blown the whistle on their teachers is indication enough that some changes have to be made.