

teacher testing

Testy Teachers

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF (1984)	69	50	11
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF (1983)	66	28	42.46

The pass rate for the National Teacher Examination in the Division of Education at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff experiences a 31 point increase in 1984. The 1983 pass rate was 42%. In 1984 it had increased to 73%.

ARKANSAS' LARGEST NEWSPAPER

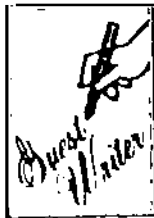
113TH YEAR

Land of Opportunity

Remain committed to improving Arkansas' education

BY GEORGE A. ANTONELLI

Gov. Bill Clinton the representatives and senators of the Arkansas Legislature and the citizens of Arkansas are attempting to make Arkansas a "land of opportunity" for its most important citizens — its children.



The scope, structure, sequence and substance of educational reform in Arkansas can be defined, delineated, developed and demonstrated by the work of three important task forces. The Arkansas Educational Standards Committee has evaluated the elementary secondary school curricula. The Arkansas Quality Higher Education Committee is evaluating the university/college curricula. The Arkansas Teacher Education, Certification and Evaluation Committee is studying pre-service, in-service training as it relates to teacher

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certification as well as program effectiveness.

It would seem that many Arkansans are attempting to establish a new and needed consensus among the public schools, universities and state Department of Education which might result in a cooperative as well as collaborative effort to reform educational practice in the "Land of Opportunity." Indeed, the theme of the Spring 1984 conference of the Arkansas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Arkansas Association of Teacher Educators was "Coalition Building." Within this context, it must be pointed out that the now famous teacher testing provision of House Bill 47 was only one element in this important and

necessary innovative movement.

Chancellor James Young of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in his address to the Teacher Education Council of the state colleges and universities in San Antonio seems to provide a rationale for the controversial testing provision.

"The major reason for the teacher testing provision was to once and for all lay to rest the contention that teachers are incompetent. Gov. Clinton of Arkansas is more perceptive than those of us in teacher education or the practicing teachers and superintendents. He recognized that until the myth of teacher incompetence is finally laid to rest, there can be no hope of making the fundamental changes in learning requirements which are necessary. He saw the immediate need to focus attention on the real issues of education and that the core of the problem lay squarely in the eroded standards and requirements for learners."

There is no question that there is some disagreement in Arkansas over the "little testing bill", however, it might be of interest to peruse the politics of the debate. The president of the Arkansas Education Association has contended that the governor "bribed" the legislators with political favors and that "we have a number of rednecks in our Arkansas Legislature." Concomitantly, the executive director of the AEA argued that any "testing of veteran teachers would discriminate against black teachers because of a peculiarly Southern phenomenon — the presumably inferior black college."

On the other hand, Chancellor Lloyd V. Hackley of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff indicated that the AEA's position on testing "defined blacks as inferior and incompetent no matter how they do on the test." In short, Chancellor Hackley considers the remarks of the AEA's executive director a "monumental insult to black people." Furthermore, Dr. H. Benjamin Williams, associate superintendent

for curriculum and instruction for the Little Rock public schools, speaking for some 35 black administrators, stipulated that "we take exception to the way in which black colleges and universities continue to be impugned during the debate over testing." It was left to John R. Starr, editor of the *Arkansas Democrat*, to conclude "Three cheers for Dr. H. Benjamin Williams and Dr. Lloyd V. Hackley for challenging the racism being practiced by the Arkansas Education Association in its self-defeating battle against teacher testing."

As a dean at a predominantly black university, I find the remarks of the president of the AEA as well as those of its executive director damaging and harmful to teacher education at UAFB in particular and in the state of Arkansas in general. It would seem that the leadership cadre of the AEA advocates racism in its highest form by stigmatizing black students and teachers as failures. Indeed, this practice of stereotyping is best described by

Jonathan Kozol's "Death at an Early Age."

As I have postulated in other places, the problem that poor people have with academic achievement results from inadequate curriculum, watered down courses, inaccurate advising and low expectation. There is no question that the future of black children is threatened and it will be destroyed if these professional inadequacies are not corrected. In short, it is not a question of color but of competence.

Many Arkansans are involved with the important work of the day, they are committed to the future of their state, and they are competent in their efforts. They will not allow the children of Arkansas to become the victims of the politics of power and panic. They are attempting to answer a fundamental question: Dare Arkansas build schools and colleges dedicated to excellence, initiated by commitment, based on involvement and founded on competence?