

*Mandating Excellence  
and Rewarding  
Initiative in Teaching*

*Ed. Reform - Fla.*

Three-Year Plan for Improving Student Performance

FT, AFL-CIO

*WJD*  
*Box 12*



*FEA/United has had a long, proud history of being on the cutting edge of educational and social issues.*

*Once again, we are taking the lead by being the first teacher/school employee union in the nation to develop and propose a comprehensive educational reform plan that includes a merit pay career ladder.*

*Mandating Excellence and Rewarding Initiative in Teaching is a comprehensive approach designed by educators to meet the needs of education in Florida. It was adopted by delegates attending our 98th Annual Convention.*

*The clear way to improve student performance is through good teachers. We believe that our Career Teaching Program, coupled with an immediate move to reach the upper quartile salary goal, will help us attract and keep the best teachers.*

*This plan will provide the framework to make our public school system the finest in the nation and we pledge to work with all segments of the community to make this objective a reality.*

*Pat L. Smiley*

## INTRODUCTION

During the past year, improvement of our public educational system has become a national priority. The report of the President's National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk," set the tone for the long overdue upgrading of our nation's schools.

Unfortunately, the single issue of merit pay for teachers has dominated the educational agenda with insufficient attention given to other more significant concerns of attracting and keeping the best teachers, providing a positive learning environment and encouraging all students to attain their fullest potential.

"Merit Pay" is a simplistic approach that in and of itself does little or nothing to improve our schools. It is obvious, however, that the public, as well as the Legislature, is concerned that additional pay for meritorious work is a threshold issue in the development of any education reform package.

The most recent attempts by the legislatively-established Florida Quality Instruction Incentives Council, where a majority of non-educators are about to make educational decisions that will impact on young people for generations to come, leave us no choice but to develop a comprehensive educational plan, not from an "ivory tower" or corporate boardroom perspective, but from the classroom by those who daily face the challenge of educating our citizens of tomorrow.

This comprehensive plan, Mandating Excellence and Rewarding Initiative in Teaching, provides the blueprint for making our educational system the finest in the nation.

Over the years, teachers have been saddled with one innovation after another, only to find that they usually were underfunded, not funded at all, or replaced by newer programs before determining if the older ones were successful.

FEA/United's comprehensive plan, Mandating Excellence and Rewarding Initiative in Teaching, seeks to meet one goal:

## TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

To attain this goal, the following three overall objectives must be reached:

1. Accomplish the State Board education goal to reach the upper quartile by 1985 in salaries and educational achievement.
2. Identify and sustain exemplary school programs.
3. Attract and retain the best teachers.

Specific programs and costs are outlined below. We urge the Florida Legislature to enact the plan at its 1984 session. Although not all the provisions may be implemented in 1984, we believe that complete implementation can be achieved within 3 years, at which time Florida would be well on its way to becoming the Number 1 educational state in the nation.

We caution, however, that our support is contingent first upon the achievement of the upper quartile salary goal, and second, funding of a comprehensive program designed to meet the real needs of education.

It should be noted that the special bi-partisan panel named by Congress to consider merit pay for teachers recently concluded that without substantial increases in basic pay for teachers, rewarding only a few with merit pay "will have little impact."

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### OBJECTIVE #1 — ACCOMPLISH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION GOAL TO REACH THE UPPER QUARTILE BY 1985 IN SALARIES AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

With great fanfare during February, 1980, the State Board of Education first adopted its upper quartile goal for the 1981-83 budget:

"In order to maintain and recruit quality teachers in our public schools in Florida, teachers' salaries on a statewide basis shall rank in the upper 25th percentile or among the top 12 states in the nation."

In 1981, the State Board of Education delayed full implementation of the salary goal so that the upper quartile would be reached by 1985, and it also set policy on student performance, when it said:

"On a statewide average, educational achievement in the State of Florida will equal that of the upper quartile of states within five years, as indicated by commonly accepted criteria of attainment."

Since the adoption of the upper quartile goals, student achievement, based upon a variety of indicators, has been steadily rising.

During the same time, salaries, unfortunately, have not enjoyed the same gain made by student achievement. In fact, Florida has actually lost ground in comparison to other states in average teacher salaries.

The latest breakdown of Florida's 476 National Merit Scholarship students show that only 5 are considering teaching as a career. The overwhelming reason given by the state's top students for bypassing teaching as a profession was long hours and low pay.

Consequently, the first order of business must be to fund the money necessary to reach the upper quartile salary goal by 1985, as set by the State Board of Education.

Salaries of Florida teachers are \$3,400 below the average teacher salary of the 12th ranked state.

**\$306 million, plus an additional \$55 million in social security and retirement matching, will be needed for the state's 90,000 teachers to reach the upper quartile salary level.**

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## **OBJECTIVE #2 — IDENTIFY AND SUSTAIN EXEMPLARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

In order to recognize outstanding school programs, it is necessary for the state to provide funds to the school districts for:

- (a) recognizing schools which develop and implement programs that promote academic excellence and improved student performance; and
- (b) rewarding school employees who participate in and contribute to such programs; and
- (c) expanding programs that have already been identified as exemplary school activities.

Programs designed to recognize exemplary programs in schools should take into consideration the special characteristics, purposes and variables affecting such schools.

The following program should be funded to implement the goal and objective outlined above:

- **Expansion of PREP to K-6** **\$60 million**
- **Enhance Math/Science/Computer Skills** **\$20 million**

- **Increase the number of teacher aides** **\$40 million**
- **Initiate pilot programs to improve alternative education** **\$20 million**
- **New exemplary programs to encourage school level excellence** **\$35 million**
- **Provide salary increases to the classified school personnel, plus social security and retirement matching** **\$118 million**

We acknowledge that upgrading the physical plant, air conditioning and other similar features are necessary to establish a positive learning environment, however, they must be dealt with separately.

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## **OBJECTIVE #3 — ATTRACT AND RETAIN THE BEST TEACHERS**

### **Career Teacher Program**

FEA/United recommends the establishment of the Career Teacher Program to provide for professional growth and development.

The Career Teacher Program contains four levels of teaching classification: Apprentice Teacher, Senior Teacher, Associate Master Teacher and Master Teacher.

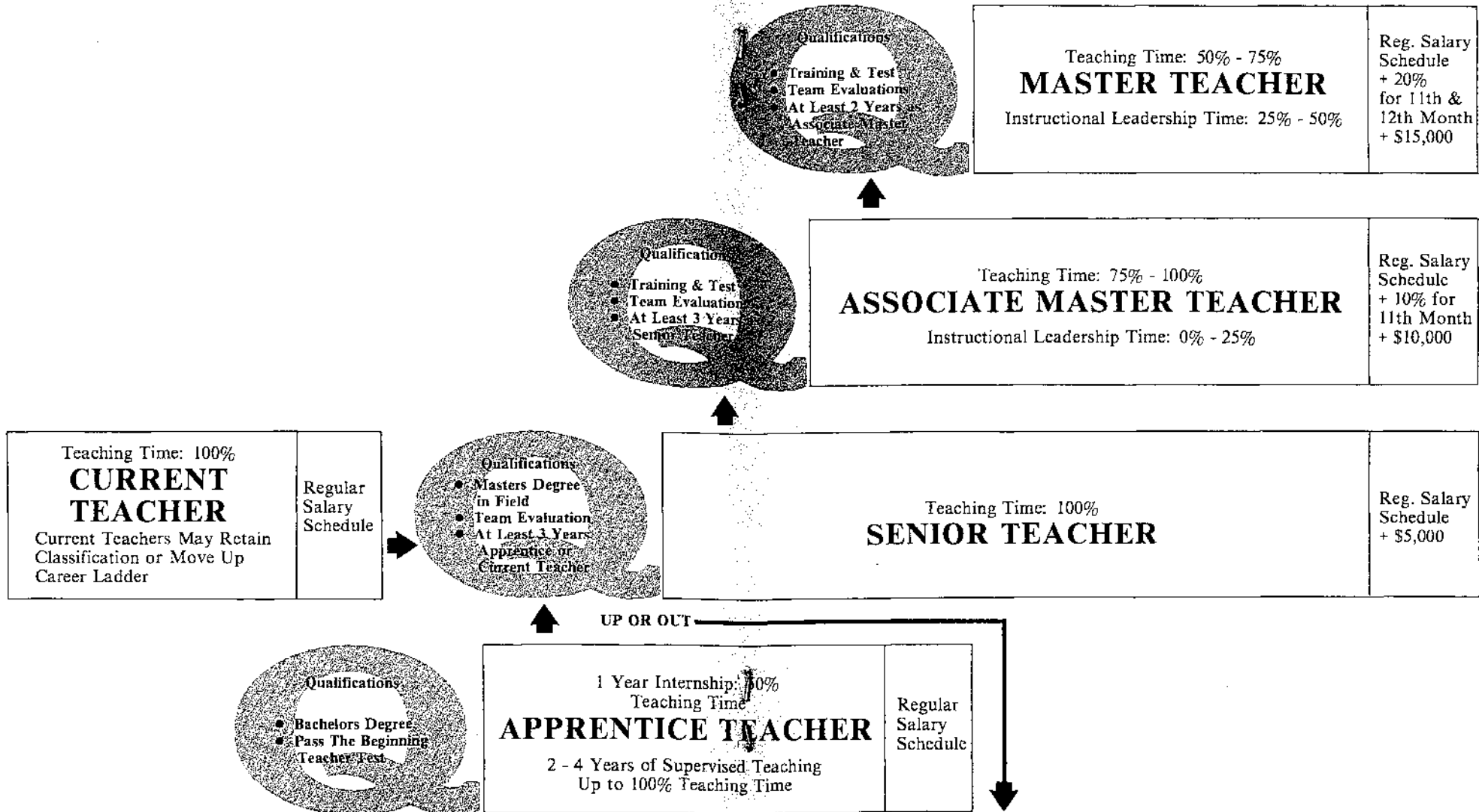
Movement on the Career Ladder from one level to another is dependent upon successful performance in the current level, additional training as part of a planned program and favorable recommendations by a team of evaluators.

Under the Career Teacher Program, employees will continue to be paid under salary schedules negotiated in collective bargaining contracts. Additional compensation for movement on the Career Ladder would be funded by the state to school districts.

There will be no limit set as to the number of teachers in each classification on the Career Ladder. If a teacher meets the qualifications, then he or she will advance.

An appeal process will need to be established for those instances where an individual feels that he/she was unfairly denied advancement on the Career Ladder.

# CAREER TEACHER PROGRAM



## "UP OR OUT"

An integral part of the Career Teacher Program will be the expansion of the Beginning Teacher Program to include a one-year internship. This will be followed by a period of two-to-four additional years of supervision and assistance.

At the end of the 5th year, teachers will be required to meet the qualifications of Senior Teacher, or they will not be permitted to continue teaching.

## MASTER'S DEGREE IN FIELD

One of the requirements of achieving Senior Teacher status will be a Master's degree in field. With the establishment of this requirement, the "Master's In Field" will have to be revamped in most universities to make the degree relevant.

Teachers will be reimbursed tuition as an additional incentive to continue training in their field of teaching.

There will need to be close cooperation with higher education in order to provide programs in locations convenient to teachers to attain Master's degree work and training needed for the Career Ladder.

## EVALUATION

A cooperative management-union training program will be developed and implemented to ensure that administrators are trained to evaluate personnel consistently, fairly and objectively.

The Team Evaluation for advancement on the Career Ladder shall be performed by personnel outside the teacher's school. The Team may consist of other school administrators, specialists in the field, university personnel, etc., but it will not include the building principal or peers.

Training programs for potential team evaluators must be initiated in ample time to provide sufficient personnel to conduct evaluations needed for experienced teachers seeking to move to senior teaching level during the first year of Career Ladder implementation.

## CURRENT TEACHER

Teachers currently teaching will be designated "Teacher" and will be paid according to their placement on the regular salary schedule. "Teachers" will have the right to retain their classification or to move along the Career Ladder to Senior Teacher, Associate Master Teacher, or Master Teacher. Those choosing to advance must meet the established qualifications for each classification.

## LEVEL I — APPRENTICE TEACHER

**Qualifications:** (1) Have achieved minimum of Bachelors Degree in an accredited school of higher learning; and (2) Successfully completed the Beginning Teacher Test.

**Compensation:** Apprentice Teachers will be paid on the regular teachers' salary schedule commensurate with educational attainment and prior experience.

**Duties:** The Beginning Teacher Program will be expanded to broaden experiences so that new teachers will be given maximum opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. Time will be allocated for observation of other teachers and assistance will be provided by Associate Master and Master Teachers.

The first year will be a full year of internship where the Apprentice Teacher teaches more than 50% of the time. The remaining years of apprentice teaching will include supervision and assistance.

By the end of the fifth year, an Apprentice Teacher must meet the qualifications of a Senior Teacher, or will no longer be permitted to teach. Normally, Apprentice Teachers will advance to Senior Teacher after the 5th year, but may apply after the 3rd year.

This "Up or Out" provision is a major feature of the Career Teaching Program. Those teachers who meet the rigorous standards of becoming a Senior Teacher will be recognized as outstanding teachers.

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## LEVEL II — SENIOR TEACHER

**Qualifications:** (1) Successful completion of at least 3 years as an Apprentice Teacher and been favorably recommended by a panel of evaluators; and (2) Received a Master's Degree in the field in which the teacher teaches.

**Compensation:** As compensation for meeting the high standards of the Level, an amount of \$5,000, in addition to their regular salary, will be awarded to Senior Teachers.

**Duties:** Teachers achieving the classification of Senior Teacher will be recognized as outstanding teachers. Senior Teachers will be employed on a ten-month contract and will be assigned teaching responsibilities 100% of the time.

### LEVEL III — ASSOCIATE MASTER TEACHER

**Qualifications:** (1) Successful completion of at least 3 years as a Senior Teacher; (2) Completion of additional training as part of a planned program and be tested on the training; and (3) Favorably recommended by a panel of evaluators.

**Compensation:** Associate Master Teachers will be compensated with \$5,000 above the Senior Teacher level, in addition to the regular salary schedule, and also receive an extra 10% of regular salary for the 11th month of employment.

**Duties:** Associate Master Teachers will continue to devote most of their time (from 75% - 100%) to teaching, but will be utilized in the development of curriculum and other instructional leadership responsibilities.

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### LEVEL IV — MASTER TEACHER

**Qualifications:** (1) Successful completion of at least 2 years as an Associate Master Teacher; (2) Completed additional training as part of a planned program and be tested on the training; and (3) Favorably recommended by a panel of evaluators.

**Compensation:** Master Teachers will receive \$5,000 above the Associate Master level in addition to the regular salary schedule. The Master Teacher will also be compensated 20% above the regular salary for 12-month employment.

**Duties:** The Master Teacher will be the highest level of attainment in terms of salary and distinction in the Career Teacher Program. The Master Teacher will spend up to one-half their time in various instructional leadership roles such as supervising new teachers, developing curriculum, reviewing textbooks and other teaching materials, etc. This will still permit the Master Teacher to teach at least 50% of the time.

### COSTS FOR THE CAREER TEACHER PROGRAM

- **Training for Principals to Evaluate Personnel** — A joint program in cooperation with the union. **\$10 million**
- **Tuition Reimbursement** — To encourage teachers to get Master's Degrees in field and thus get up-to-date training in their teaching areas. **\$4 million**
- **Outstanding Student Scholarship Plan** — Payment of full cost of college education for outstanding students to enter teaching. Costs will be repaid on a one-for-one basis with years of teaching in the public schools. **\$30 million**
- **Retirement Incentives** — To encourage early retirement to make way for newer teachers. These incentives include: Early retirement after 25 years and 50 years of age; Set retirement on the best 3 year's average salary rather than best 5 years; and establish a medical insurance program to fill the gap between early retirement and Medicare. **\$65 million**
- **Apprentice Teacher** — Year-long internship — provide for regular instruction during internship and apprentice teaching, while these teachers carry a reduced load. **\$10 million**
- **Senior Teacher** — \$5,000 plus social security and retirement matching for approximately 45,000 people. **\$265.5 million**
- **Associate Master Teacher** — \$5,000, social security and retirement matching, and funding for the 11th month, for 15,000 people. **\$212.4 million**
- **Master Teacher** — \$5,000, social security and retirement, and funding for the 11th and 12th months, for 5,000 people. **\$118 million**

## CONCLUSION

Mandating Excellence and Rewarding Initiative in Teaching is a comprehensive approach designed to meet the needs of education in Florida and will provide the framework in which to establish our public school system as the finest in the nation.

FEA/United's support, however, is contingent upon the enactment of an overall reform program, including money for upper quartile goals. Anything else will be simply a peacemeal approach and will be doomed to failure.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education concluded that, **"If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war ... We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinkable, unilateral educational disarmament."**

In light of that statement, FEA/United's Mandating Excellence and Rewarding Initiative in Teaching should be viewed as a battle plan to regain our past commitment to education and win the war over ignorance.

The Career Teacher Program, coupled with achieving the upper quartile goals and development of the Outstanding Student Scholarship Plan, will have provided the vehicle for turning around the 30-year drift away from attracting the "brightest and the best" into the ranks of teaching. It will provide the incentive for talented young people to receive a college education with the end result of getting the best minds into the classrooms.

As this overall plan is developed more fully, it will be necessary to deal with many related issues such as certification requirements. We urge that a complete review of the teacher certification law, in light of this proposal, be undertaken prior to legislative sunset in 1985.

Provisions must also be made to re-examine the traditional roles of administrative and quasi-administrative positions, where some responsibilities for instructional leadership may now shift to functions of teachers in the Career Teacher Program.

FEA/United prides itself for having been on the cutting edge of change throughout its 97-year history. Mandating Excellence and Rewarding Initiative in Teaching puts us once again at the forefront of change.

We believe that it will provide for professional growth, recognize and reward outstanding performance and inspire excellence in our classrooms.