

## ROCHESTER, NY: A CONTRACT OF GIVE AND TAKE FOR EXCELLENCE

Thirty-three thousand public school students in Rochester, New York, will be monitored closely by educators across the country as a new contract negotiated between the Rochester Teachers Association, and affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, and the Rochester Board of Education is implemented.

### *The Contract: What is Different?*

The new contract aims to provide teachers with a stimulating, professional environment, and Rochester students with an improved education. Under the Rochester contract, beginning in 1988, teachers' salaries will rise by more than 40% over the next three years. Last year, Rochester teachers started at \$18,983 and in three years a beginning teacher will start at \$28,935. This increase of 52.4 percent will mean that Rochester will be able to financially compete for the "best and brightest" college graduates.

In addition to the salary increases, the contract embodies a Career in Teaching Program, which takes teachers from the position of Intern (first year teachers working under outstanding teachers) to Resident (1-4 years of experience) to fully-licensed Professional. Movement along the ladder is not automatic, and Lead teachers will have the opportunity to earn up to \$68,500 per year. This is a voluntary program through which teachers can advance both financially and professionally.

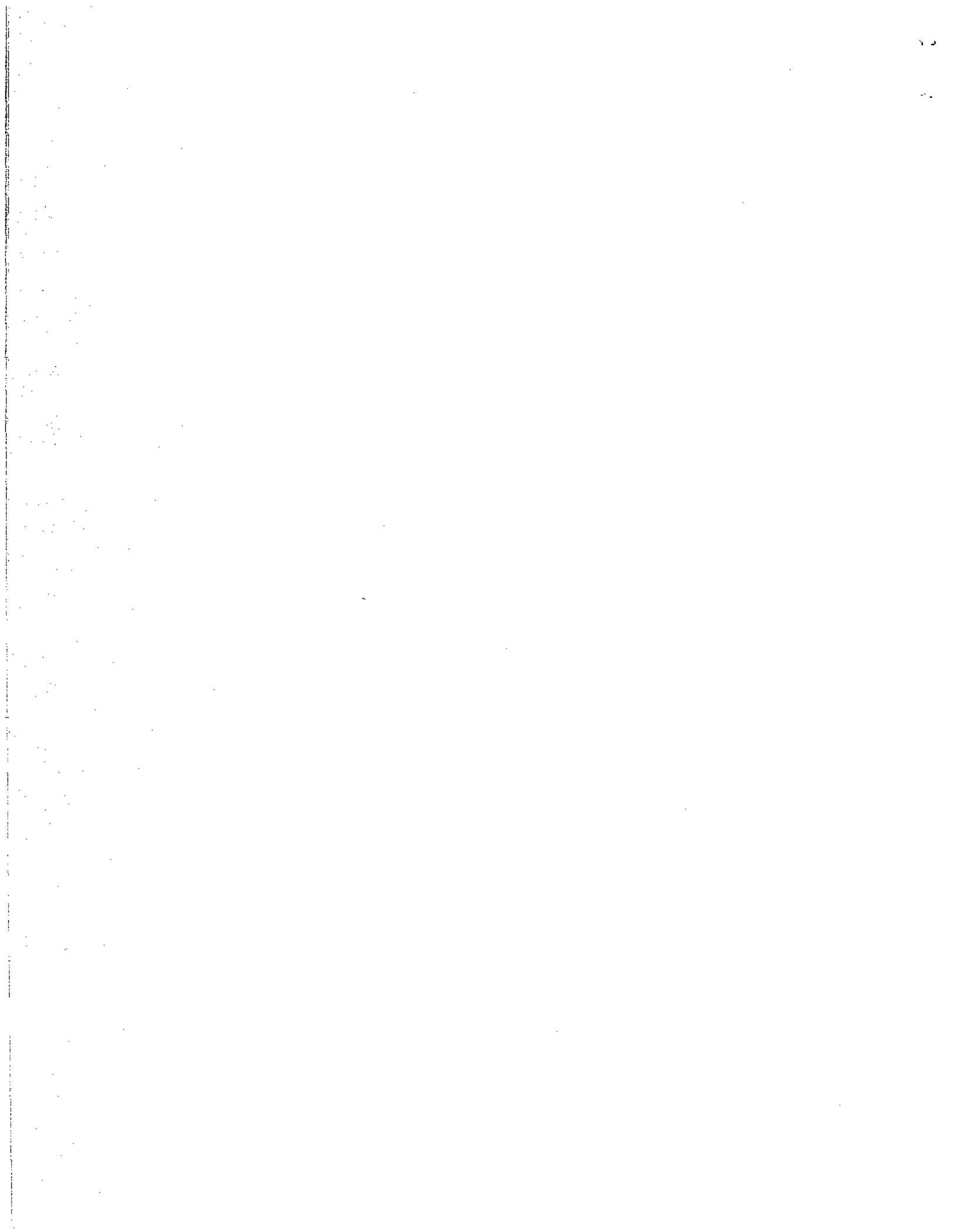
While they are serving as Lead teachers, individuals will have to agree that for two years thereafter, they will not seek supervisory or administrative posts. In other words, in exchange for the high salaries, Lead Teachers in Rochester will commit themselves to staying in the classroom. In addition, at least 50 percent of their time will be devoted to teaching, with the remaining time given to work as mentors to new teachers, as intervention teachers or other leadership roles. For the first time, teachers will have an attractive career path available to them that does not force them to leave teaching.

Lead and Professional teachers will take assignments on the basis of need; they will handle the most difficult classes. Class sizes will be smaller in lower grades and the agreement also modifies the usual system of teacher transfer through seniority. Instead of strict seniority, a faculty committee in each school will interview and examine the record of teachers who wish to transfer and make a decision on the basis of the needs of the school.

### *The Contract as a Beginning of Educational Change*

In January, 1988, the University of Rochester, along with the Rochester Teachers Association/AFT, the Rochester School Board and other leading educational agencies, has formed the Wilson Task Force to help monitor the progress of education reform in the region. The task force has since established a program to create professional development sites for teachers at individual schools.

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**COALITION ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR CITY-WIDE EDUCATION REFORM**

A coalition of business and civic leaders, school administrators and teachers, and colleges and universities will make public their recommendations for improving education in the City of Rochester, and will announce plans for implementing them at a Jan. 5 meeting at Nazareth College of Rochester.

The recommendations, contained in a report called "A Region Prepared," have been fashioned in response to both national and local calls for reform. They are the work of the Wilson Task Force, commissioned in October 1986, as a project made possible through a grant to the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester, from the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation of Rochester.

New York State Commissioner of Education Thomas Sobol will be the keynote speaker at the Wilson Task Force Meeting on Jan. 5. He will talk about the state's role in local education reform. Representatives from the Wilson Task Force also will speak briefly about their contributions to the "Region Prepared" report, and about ways they will translate proposals into action.

Task force speakers will include Dennis O'Brien, president, University of Rochester; John Van De Wetering, president, State University of New York College at Brockport; James McCuller, executive director, Action for a Better

more . . .

Community, Inc.; Adam Urbanski, president, Rochester Teachers Association; and Peter McWalters, superintendent, Rochester City School District.

The task force worked to translate and adapt national school reform initiatives to Rochester's specific needs. The recommendations address such matters as curricular reforms, greater involvement of parents in the educational process, the reprofessionalization of teachers, recruitment of a more racially and culturally diverse group of educators, and making teachers more accountable.

Their recommendations have been fashioned in response to such major national reports as the National Commission on Excellence in Education's A Nation at Risk and the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. In Rochester, the Center for Educational Development and the Rochester Urban League have helped raise the consciousness of the community to the need to improve education for city schoolchildren in their report, A Call to Action.

The Wilson Task Force will also announce on Jan. 5 an important step toward implementing their recommendations: The formation of the Rochester Education Council, which will choose the first elementary and secondary schools in Rochester where new programs are introduced and tested.

Organizations which have joined the council include: Association of School Administrators of Rochester; City School District of Rochester; Community Roundtable; Industrial Management Council; Nazareth College of Rochester; New York State Education Department; Rochester Teacher Center; the Rochester Teachers Association; the State University of New York College at Brockport; State University of New York at Geneseo; and the University of Rochester.

# # #

**SOME CURRENT INITIATIVES OF  
THE ROCHESTER EDUCATION COUNCIL**

**IN THE ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT:**

--Administrators and teachers negotiate a path-breaking contract with beginning pay at nearly \$29,000 and top pay at nearly \$70,000. Contract contains many new incentives that will "reprofessionalize" teaching as an occupation, including a four-step career ladder; peer assistance and review; teacher participation in school planning and management and staff-set goals for improved student performance.

**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER:**

--Master teachers from the Rochester City School District have faculty status as they train prospective teachers under the Adjunct Instructor in Teacher Education Program.

--Teacher Institute brings teachers and faculty together to study key educational issues such as critical thinking and literacy.

--University provides fifth-year scholarships for minority undergraduates who pursue a graduate degree in education.

**AT SUNY BROCKPORT:**

--Mentor program matches minority college students with urban high school students.

**AT NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ROCHESTER:**

--A "Stay in School Partnership Program" matches 20 graduate students with 50 ninth-graders from urban high schools who are at risk of dropping out.

**AT THE N.Y. STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:**

--Regents and education commissioner hold 14 working sessions in the fall of '87 to discuss with school administrators, teachers and community leaders how to encourage students to complete high school.

--State sponsors new programs to increase minority representation in higher education and in the professions. The Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) and the Stay in School Partnership Program are two examples.

**AT THE ROCHESTER INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL:**

--The council provides industry leaders and financial backing for the Program for Rochester to Interest Students in Science and Math (PRISM). This program identifies black and Hispanic youths who are candidates for technology-oriented careers, and assists them in getting the educational preparation they need.

--The council contributes leadership and financial backing for the Rochester Brainpower Program; goals are to "reprofessionalize" teaching; find jobs to reward educational achievement; enhance the image of education and teaching through a public relations campaign.

**SOME KEY POINTS OF WILSON TASK FORCE REPORT,  
A REGION PREPARED**

Recommendations

--Each student must have a mentor who is directly accountable for ensuring that the "system" helps that child reach full potential.

--Individual schools should have more freedom to set goals for performance and improvement, and to decide how to meet those goals.

--Educators must have greater rights and responsibilities; decision making must occur as close to the student as possible, and should be free of bureaucratic restraints.

--Teacher training programs need to be overhauled so that graduates are more competent to educate students who are currently underserved by traditional schooling.

--Effective recruitment programs to attract outstanding racially and culturally diverse candidates need to be in place.

Planned actions

--Create Rochester Education Council to implement recommendations and foster close contact between professionals in elementary and secondary schools and faculty at institutions of higher education.

--Designate some Rochester elementary and secondary schools to become exemplary models for improvements in curriculum, professional development of educators, and operational structures of schools.

# A Region Prepared

## Recommendations

1. **Each student must have an educator who acts as a "mentor" or "advocate,"** thus ensuring that each child is dealt with as an individual who has special needs. The student's "mentor" will be directly accountable for the ensuring that the "system" helps each child reach his or her full potential.
2. **We urge that the constituent community of a particular school be given greater autonomy, responsibility, and accountability for improving its school.**
3. **Each professional must have greater individual rights and responsibilities.** If educators are to be responsive to and responsible for the progress and well-being of students, decision-making must occur as close to the student as possible and be free from unnecessary bureaucratic restraints.
4. **Enhance professional development opportunities.** The existing system leads to isolation of the practitioner and to the denial of the educators' fundamental role as learner. It is important that students recognize the educator as a continuous learner.
5. **Educators need options for varied roles during their professional career.**
6. **Overhaul educator preparation programs** so that graduates are more competent to educate students who are currently underserved by traditional schooling. At the same time, ensure that schools, colleges, and universities do not function in isolation from one another.
7. **Establish professional working conditions.** Quality teaching and learning require a physical environment, cooperative interpersonal relationships, and atmosphere conducive to education.
8. **Modify internship experiences** to ensure that attention is given to the educational problems of the students who have traditionally been underserved. It is only as educators become more aware of the child's world and their community that they can assist students in making connections from schools to the larger world.
9. **Institute collaborative and effective recruitment programs** to attract outstanding racially and culturally diverse candidates.
10. **Analyze policy from the standpoint of its actual impact on underserved students.** Governmental regulation, contractual agreements, and the mores of a school or district often affect decisions and work against the effective education of children.
11. **Increase the responsibility of all educators to meet the academic/-intellectual needs of each student.** High rates of failure must be seen as unacceptable. Success for each student must be recognized as the goal of each teaching/learning interaction.
12. **Strengthen the thinking and decision-making skills of students.** The fundamental "basic" skill required for participation in our complex society is the ability to make sound decisions.

University of Rochester  
January, 1988

# A REGION PREPARED

A RESPONSE BY ROCHESTER AREA EDUCATORS TO  
The Center for Educational Development  
and the Rochester Urban League Report

## A CALL TO ACTION

"Over the last several months nearly one hundred educators from area educational institutions, as well as representatives from civic organizations and the business community, have been involved in developing a design for improving education which, in the considered judgement of the participants, has potential for achieving fundamental, lasting improvements in the way we educate Rochester's young people."

The Wilson Task Force and its report A Region Prepared was made possible by a grant to the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester, from the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation

November 1987



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**Institutions Participating in the Task Force**

Association of School Administrators of Rochester, City School District of Rochester, Community Roundtable, Industrial Management Council, Nazareth College of Rochester, New York State Education Department, Rochester Teacher Center, the Rochester Teachers Association, State University of New York College at Brockport, State University of New York College at Geneseo, and the University of Rochester.

**Special Acknowledgement**

Dr. Barbara Agor, assistant professor of education at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester, and now with the Rochester Teacher Center, coordinated the various activities of the Wilson Task Force and convened its numerous meetings. She was assisted by Jeanne Sullivan, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester.

## A Region Prepared

### Background

Two educational movements, building over the last several years, have led to this report. The first of these, national in scope, identifies major pathologies in the ways our nation's elementary and secondary schools function, in particular, the ways in which our country's schools fail to educate increasing numbers of our children. Dozens of major reports such as the National Commission on Excellence in Education's A Nation at Risk, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, the Holmes Group's Tomorrow's Teachers, and the National Governors' Association's Time for Results are the products of this movement and describe the wasteful human consequences of *not* making fundamental improvements in schooling. Recommendations for change contained in these reports have been uniformly radical, on the assumption that only major, systemic, and coordinated changes can produce the kinds of schools that educate all children to their fullest potential.

The second educational movement, regional in focus, has grown from the Center for Educational Development (CED)-Rochester Urban League report, A Call To Action, which urged all members of the Greater Rochester community to help improve educational opportunities for City school children. Since its publication many organizations and individuals, including the Rochester School District's Secondary Restructuring Study Group, have responded to A Call to Action.

The Wilson Task Force and its report, A Region Prepared, grows out of both national and local education reform movements. The national reports, while calling for fundamental, structural changes recognize that reform efforts must be adapted to local conditions if they are to be effective. The Wilson Task Force attempted to translate and adapt national school reform initiatives to Rochester's specific needs. In addition, the Wilson Task Force took very seriously the recommendations of A Call to Action which urged educators in the region's schools, colleges, and universities to find new, more effective ways to educate our young people. Thus, A Region Prepared is a response to both national and local concerns about improving the quality of education.

### The Work of the Wilson Task Force

Over the last several months nearly one hundred educators (teachers, administrators, counselors, and other professionals) from area educational institutions, as well as representatives from civic organizations and the business community, have been involved in developing designs that have potential for producing fundamental, lasting improvements in the way we educate Rochester's young people.

The goal which guides our recommendations is the improvement of schooling for all the children of our region, especially for those who have traditionally been left behind. The major means for achieving this goal is to bring about improvements in practice, institutional structures, and policies at those points where direct intervention by professional educators in elementary and secondary schools can significantly improve the educational experience and success of children. However, the Task Force recognized that in order to create schools that emphasize success, innovation, and caring, it was also important to find ways to help policy making groups understand their role in facilitating change at the "grass roots."

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The Wilson Task Force identified twelve areas in which substantial improvements can be made. While we list first those recommendations that stand the best chance to be carried out, the Task Force feels strongly that all twelve recommendations should be fully implemented. For like national and local reform reports, we feel anything less than full implementation is to adopt a band-aid approach.

### **Recommendations for Improving Education of Children**

1. Each student must have an educator who acts as a "mentor" or "advocate," thus ensuring that each child is dealt with as an individual who has special needs. The student's "mentor" will be directly accountable for the ensuring that the "system" helps each child reach his or her full potential.

#### **Possible associated actions:**

Decrease the number of students in each school by adopting a house or cluster model for large schools, and by dividing smaller elementary schools into primary and intermediate organizations.

Students need a stable environment to learn and develop. Students should not be allowed to transfer from one school to another during the school year.

Students should have a say in choosing their mentor/advisor; this is especially important when an established student - advisor relationship is not productive.

Parents should be part of a school's decision-making process. To be effective advocates parents, need to be trained in the dynamics of decision making. Positive steps should be taken to inform the community about their decision making role in schools.

Counseling and counseling networks should be expanded in schools.

Peer mentoring, home-based guidance, and case management are programs that should be fully institutionalized.

2. We urge that the constituent community of a particular school be given greater autonomy, responsibility, and accountability for improving its school.

#### **Possible associated actions:**

The School District should identify the skills and knowledge young people are expected to have acquired by the time they reach the four transitional points of schooling (primary, intermediate, middle school/junior high, and high school graduation). Schools should then be given the freedom to create programs and internal organizations to achieve these goals.

The school has always been the focus and center of a community. We urge that each school involve those who do not yet see the school as "theirs."

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Encourage community resources (churches, social service agencies, etc.) to work more closely with schools to support of students both in and out of school.

Each school has its own character and needs. Each school should therefore determine what resources it needs to fulfil its goals and make decisions regarding expenditure of funds .

It should be the responsibility of each school community to decide who will fill any vacancies that occur.

Schools should be given the flexibility of creating their own accountability procedures as long as they reflect the policies of the district.

3. Each professional must have greater individual rights and responsibilities. If educators are to be responsive to and responsible for the progress and well-being of students, decision-making must occur as close to the student as possible and be free from unnecessary bureaucratic restraints.

### **Possible associated actions:**

Those educators who are immediately responsible for a child should be given discretion in selecting curriculum, instructional strategies, and materials to be used in reaching the District's broad goals.

Clarify those areas in which educators and/or buildings do not have autonomy, as well as those areas in which autonomy exists.

Educators should take a more active role in helping students and parents make appropriate choices for the following year's class assignment(s).

Ways should be found to protect students from an educator who no longer wishes to (or is able to) work productively with young people.

4. Enhance professional development opportunities. The existing system leads to isolation of the practitioner and to the denial of the educators' fundamental role as learner. It is important that students recognize the educator as a continuous learner.

### **Possible associated actions:**

Educators should be encouraged to teach courses or units in buildings other than the one to which they are primarily assigned.

All educators should have the opportunity to develop and/or participate in conferences and workshops. Procedures should be established to encourage this participation.

All educators should have the opportunity to develop and/or participate in peer observation and support activities.

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Include within the school day regularly scheduled time for educators to consider professional issues.

Involve school-based educators in research and development activities.

Procedures should be developed which encourage educators to study and implement the best of current research and practice in the education of their students.

### 5. Educators need options for varied roles during their professional career.

#### **Possible associated actions:**

Provide for the development of new roles for teachers as specialists in a variety of educational tasks, such as media use, instructional use of computers, community liaison, parent educators, in-service/organizational development, etc.

Establish a system of different status and/or remuneration for different responsibilities.

Design staff training and development programs to accompany new responsibilities.

### 6. Overhaul educator preparation programs so that graduates are more competent to educate students who are currently underserved by traditional schooling. At the same time, ensure that schools, colleges, and universities do not function in isolation from one another.

#### **Possible associated actions:**

Redesign responsibilities in colleges and universities so that district-based educators assume roles in colleges and universities (instruction, research, curriculum development, etc.).

Create new roles in the schools for higher education faculty, including increased involvement of non-education faculty in the life of schools.

Offer new types of learning experiences in higher education, particularly those which are relevant to the world of schools.

Develop closer articulation among the various specialties of teacher, counselor, and administrator preparation programs.

Consider changes in the traditional location of educators' and students' worksites.

### 7. Establish professional working conditions. Quality teaching and learning require a physical environment, cooperative interpersonal relationships, and atmosphere conducive to education.

#### **Possible associated actions:**

More effectively use paraprofessionals, senior citizens, business, community,

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college students, K-12 students, retired educators, parents, etc.

Offer easier access to equipment and facilities.

Expand the use of technology for recordkeeping.

Make creative use of existing buildings.

Reexamine the use of time, including the teaching/learning schedule, and attendance requirements.

8. Modify internship experiences to ensure that attention is given to the educational problems of the students who have traditionally been underserved. It is only as educators become more aware of the child's world and their community that they can assist students in making connections from schools to the larger world.

### **Possible associated actions:**

Education students, counseling and administrative interns, and others should become fully involved in the life of their assigned school.

Internships should be developed for practicing educators at professional development sites and in community, business, and other non-traditional sites.

9. Institute collaborative and effective recruitment programs to attract outstanding racially and culturally diverse candidates.

### **Possible associated actions:**

Involve school-age students in pre-professional activities.

Build consortia-based recruitment arrangements which include regional colleges and universities, local school districts, business, and the community.

Provide for significant participation of all educators in the recruitment of new teachers.

10. Analyze policy from the standpoint of its actual impact on underserved students. Governmental regulation, contractual agreements, and the mores of a school or district often affect decisions and work against the effective education of children.

### **Possible associated actions:**

Identify laws, policy, and procedures both within and outside the school building and district which work against the effective education of children.

Develop and implement plans (such as seeking waivers and variances) which address these constraints.

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11. Increase the responsibility of all educators to meet the academic/intellectual needs of each student. High rates of failure must be seen as unacceptable. Success for each student must be recognized as the goal of each teaching/learning interaction.

**Possible associated actions:**

Expand purposeful and productive interaction between teachers and supporting professional personnel such as librarians, counselors, deans, psychologists, social workers, and attendance officers.

Educators should employ a variety of teaching styles to meet the variety of student learning styles.

Develop alternative curricula which reflect a variety of learning and teaching styles, and which are relevant and meaningful to students.

12. Strengthen the thinking and decision-making skills of students. The fundamental "basic" skill required for participation in our complex society is the ability to make sound decisions.

**Possible associated actions:**

Students' educational experiences should include decision-making opportunities both in school and in the larger community.

Encourage educators to be models for questioning, critical thinking, and decision-making.

Develop and employ a wide range of evaluation approaches and techniques which include opportunities for demonstrating problem-solving abilities. Coach students in order to ensure that they will be successful in these activities.

### **Translating Recommendations into Action**

Recent history is littered with reports containing numerous recommendations calling for reform or change. Unfortunately, many of these reports' recommendations, after an initial flurry of interest, are not translated into action. This is a pervasive problem and was recognized as such by the Wilson Task Force. Throughout its meetings Task Force members discussed not only what needed to be done, but how to do it in a way that would result in sustained, institutionalized reform in the education of Rochester's young people. During the course of many discussions it became clear that greater participation by all educators and interested groups was needed to help solve pressing educational problems, and that it was especially important to foster cooperation between professionals in elementary and secondary schools and faculty in institutions of higher education. The Wilson Task Force decided that two mechanisms should be created to ensure that the group's recommendations become a reality. The first is the creation of "Professional Development Sites." The second is the creation of the "Rochester Education Council."



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### **Professional Development Sites**

We recommend the creation of Professional Development Sites as a first step toward achieving the fundamental goal of educating all Rochester's young people. We have developed a set of procedures which will lead to the designation of selected Rochester area elementary and secondary schools as Professional Development Sites. This, in turn, will enable educators in the Rochester area to create schools which provide exemplary environments for the study, design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of improvements in:

1. Organizational and operational structures of schooling;
2. Curriculum, instruction, and other services for our students and their communities;
3. Professional development of present and future educators.

Initially, the first of these Professional Development Sites should be located in two or three schools in the Rochester City School District. Taken together, this initial group of sites will cover grades kindergarten through twelve, including programs serving those with handicapping conditions and those serving children of limited English proficiency. Later, additional schools, including suburban and rural schools, will be encouraged to become Professional Development Sites.

Educators at the Professional Development Sites will work with other educators from the various institutions to develop plans for their schools which will significantly improve education for their children attending that school. Professional Development Sites are the heart of our recommendations. The ultimate value of what we are proposing will be measured first and foremost by what takes place at these sites.

### **Rochester Education Council**

We propose establishing the Rochester Education Council, whose responsibility will be the identification of the first Professional Development Sites, coordination of cooperative initiatives, and the monitoring of progress. The following organizations have indicated their wish to become members of the Council: Association of School Administrators of Rochester, City School District of Rochester, Community Roundtable, Industrial Management Council, Nazareth College of Rochester, New York State Education Department, Rochester Teacher Center, the Rochester Teachers Association, State University of New York College at Brockport, State University of New York College at Geneseo, and the University of Rochester.

Each of these institutions or organizations have endorsed the principles described in this document. Membership on the Council requires a formal commitment from the governing body of each institution or organization. The chief executive officer will select an official representative to the Council. Responsibility for coordinating the work of the Council with the parent body belongs to the representatives of member institutions.

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### **Process for Identifying the Initial Professional Development Sites**

Each prospective site will develop a plan which reflects the unique needs of those schools. This process should result in schools which are more distinctive, rather than more alike. The site plan should include the following elements:

1. School portrait, in which the site describes the nature of the school as it currently exists;
2. Detailed plan of action, which describes what the Professional Development Site hopes to become;
3. An evaluation plan, which shows explicitly how it intends to demonstrate its accomplishments;
4. Active involvement of the site's educators and community in the development of its plan;
5. Outline of an outreach, dissemination, and implementation program.

### **Resource Requirements**

Two categories of resources will be needed in order to successfully carry out the design of the Wilson Project: resources of the eleven charter institutions represented on the Rochester Education Council which would be directed toward the project, and additional resources necessary to hire and support a full-time director of the project.

**Institutional Resources.** By agreeing to become a charter member of the Rochester Education Council, each of the eleven organizations agrees to make a significant commitment of resources to carrying out the project. The definition of "significant" will be determined by each organization, and will differ from organization to organization. In addition, each organization will identify an individual who will serve as that organization's representative to the Rochester Education Council.

**Additional Resources.** The Rochester Education Council will seek additional resources for the project. In cooperation with representatives from the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation, the Council will seek first to attract support from local and national foundations which have demonstrated commitment to improving elementary/secondary education. The precise financial requirements and requests will be determined by the Council.

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### Wilson Task Force Participants

The following people took an active part in the preparation of this document:

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