

FEA/UNITED PRESIDENT PAT TORNILLO'S COMMENTS  
BEFORE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
APRIL 2, 1987

THIS ISSUE BEFORE YOU TODAY IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT EDUCATION ISSUE TO COME BEFORE THIS CABINET. THE CAREER LADDER RULES YOU ARE BEING ASKED TO ADOPT ARE THE FOUNDATION BLOCKS UPON WHICH THIS STATE CAN DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE ITS EDUCATION DELIVERY SYSTEM.

23 OUT OF 29 OF OUR LOCALS HAVE NEGOTIATED A CAREER LADDER PLAN WITH THEIR SCHOOL BOARDS. THE MAJORITY OF THOSE PLANS HAVE BEEN RATIFIED. THOUSANDS OF OUR TEACHERS HAVE TAKEN UP THE CHALLENGE LAID OUT BY THE RAYMOND B. STEWART CAREER ACHIEVEMENT LEGISLATION. THEY HAVE PROVEN THEIR READINESS, WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO WORK IN A FULL PARTNERSHIP WITH THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO BRING ABOUT EFFECTIVE CHANGE.

OUR MEMBERS OVERCAME THEIR DISTRUST OF THE SYSTEM'S ABILITY TO DELIVER AND TOOK THE FIRST STEP TOWARD THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TEACHING. THERE WERE MANY HURDLES, LONG HOURS OF NEGOTIATIONS, PLANNING AND COMPROMISE THAT WENT INTO THOSE 23 PLANS.

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING THE BEST TEACHERS FOR OUR CHILDREN IS ONE STEP CLOSER TO REALITY IN THESE COUNTIES. BUT I MUST SAY HERE, THAT THIS CAREER LADDER PLAN IS NOT THE TOTAL ANSWER TO ALL

THE PROBLEMS IN THE STATE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM. TEACHER MORALE IS AT AN ALL TIME LOW. THEY ARE DISILLUSIONED AND FRUSTRATED. THEY HAVE HEARD THE CRIES FOR EDUCATION REFORM BEFORE. THEY HAVE BEEN BURNED TOO MANY TIMES BY ILL-CONCEIVED PLANS.

THEY WANT REFORM THAT IS GOING TO MAKE A CHANGE IN THEIR CLASSROOM TODAY. TEACHERS ARE BURIED UNDER A GROWING STACK OF PAPERWORK, FRUSTRATED BY RECORD-KEEPING TO JUSTIFY THEIR DAILY EFFORTS, DISTRAUGHTED BY LACK OF RESPECT FOR THOSE EFFORTS AND OVERWHELMED BY THE GROWING LACK OF PARENTAL CONCERN.

THE BUSINESS LEADERS OF THIS COUNTRY ARE SAYING THAT IMPROVING THIS NATION'S EDUCATION SYSTEM IS CRITICAL TO OUR SURVIVAL AS AN ECONOMIC POWER AND THAT TEACHERS ARE THE KEY PART OF THAT PROCESS. THEY NOW REALIZE WHAT WE IN EDUCATION HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR YEARS, THAT THE FACTORY MODEL SCHOOL SYSTEM WE PRESENTLY HAVE IS NOT GOING TO SOLVE THIS NATION'S AND THIS STATE'S PROBLEMS.

THIS CALL FOR A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE ABOUT TEACHERS AND OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM IS ECHOED BY THE BUSINESS LEADERS IN THE STATE, THE ZWICK COMMISSION, THE FLORIDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AND THE COUNCIL OF 100, AS WELL AS NUMEROUS EDITORIAL BOARDS.

THE PUBLIC WANTS ITS TEACHERS TEACHING, NOT ENGULFED IN SOME BUREAUCRATIC MAZE OF REGULATION AND SWAMPED BY PAPERWORK. THE PUBLIC IS BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT QUALITY TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IS THE ANSWER TO THIS COUNTRY'S MAJOR PROBLEMS OF ILLITERACY, DROPOUTS AND LACK OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS.

AS I HAVE SAID BEFORE, THIS CAREER ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM IS NOT PERFECT, NOR IS IT THE TOTAL ANSWER, BUT IT IS A BEGINNING AND WE HAVE KEPT OUR PART OF THE BARGAIN. IT IS NOW UP THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE LEGISLATURE TO KEEP THEIR PART OF THE BARGAIN.

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY NEEDS TO SUPPORT THE TAXES NECESSARY TO FUND THE PROPOSED TEACHER SALARY INCREASE AND THE \$90 MILLION FOR THE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM.

THE LEGISLATURE SHOULD PUT THOSE TAX REVENUES INTO SALARY INCREASES AND FULLY FUND THE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM.

IF THESE PLAYERS DO NOT KEEP THEIR WORD, THIS CAREER LADDER PLAN AND ANY FUTURE INCENTIVE PLAN WILL BE A DEAD ISSUE.

I CALL ON EACH OF YOU TO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP NECESSARY, TO USE ALL THE POLITICAL CLOUT OF YOUR OFFICE THIS SESSION AND BEYOND TO HELP TRANSFORM THIS PLAN INTO A DYNAMIC BEGINNING. I BELIEVE THAT THE QUALITY OF TEACHERS WE WILL HAVE IN OUR CLASSROOMS, TWO YEARS AND TEN YEARS FROM NOW, WILL IN LARGE PART DEPEND ON THE BEGINNING WE MAKE THIS SESSION.

