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Professionalizing Teaching in California

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Executive Summary

Since 1983, California has made substantial policy and financial investments in improving public K-12 education. Teaching remains a prime challenge within this school reform agenda due in large part to the fact that educational reforms depend crucially for their implementation upon cadres of classroom teachers. The performance, character, and commitment of California'a teaching force determines not only the short-run nature of schooling but also shapes the lives and social conditions of Californians for years to come. The purpose of this forum is to discuss the major teacher-related policy components and decision challenges facing California's public officials.

Recent legislation proposes changes in the state's systems of teacher credentialing and professional teacher preparation, including replacing the Commission on Teacher Credentialing with a California Teacher Standards Board and abolishing the emergency credential. These ideas draw on the report of the California Commission on the Teaching Profession as well as other national commissions and task forces that have generated proposals to improve teaching. Several major issues and policy challenges underlie these and related proposals, such as:

Recruitment and Preparation

1. Enhancing the quantity of able recruits while elevating the quality of professional entry standards.

2. Continuing to increase entry-level teacher salaries.

3. Eliminating the duel licensing system--one formal and rigorous, the other including emergency credentials, long-term substitutes, and assignments outside one's subject matter specialty--while ensuring that the supply of qualified teachers matches demand.

4. Intensifying professional preparation while sustaining or enlarging the pool of eligible teacher candidates.

Regulation

5. Determining an appropriate balance between program approval and individual appraisal--that is, relying primarily on an assessment of the curricula at teacher training institutions or on tests of individual candidates themselves.

6. Identifying recruitment incentives and better preservice preparation whereby the pool of minority teaching candidates can be certified rigorously *and* expanded in number.

7. Reassessing the tenure question to determine if the correct balance has yet been struct between an individual's property right to employment and the public's interest in having competent teachers.

8. Balancing lay control of public education with the growing aspirations of educators for professional parity and self-regulation in deciding who should control the licensing of teachers.

Professionalization

9. Maintaining the momentum of salary increases while balancing the awesome costs involved.

10. Correcting weaknesses in the Mentor Teacher Program and simultaneously leaving California in a posture to accommodate to national developments regarding professional speciality boards for teachers.

11. Framing incentives which simultaneously provide added professional opportunity and remuneration in exchange for teachers assuming added professional responsibility for the welfare of the state's public schools.

12. Regarding working conditions and class size reduction: fabricating a set of phase-in incentives and financing formulas which permit practical progress toward a healthier instructional climate while remaining within reasonable revenue boundaries.

Changing the way teachers are trained and credentialed, improving their working conditions, and providing professional advancement opportunities will be costly and controversial. Yet much of the important analytic groundwork and policy research has been done regarding financial impediments to professionalization. Seldom in history has greater attention been given at state and national levels to the issues involved. The objective--a fully professionalized teaching force in California--is assuredly one of the most potent answers to furthering school reform, increasing the skills and abilities of future generations of California students, and enhancing the state's position nationally and worldwide.

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Policy Analysis for California Education

Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, is a university-based research center focusing on issues of state educational policy and practice. PACE is located in the Schools of Education at the University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University. It is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and directed jointly by James W. Guthrie and Michael W. Kirst. PACE operates satellite centers in Sacramento and Southern California. These are directed by Gerald C. Hayward (Sacramento) and Allan R. Odden (University of Southern California).

PACE efforts center on five tasks: (1) collecting and distributing objective information about the conditions of education in California, (2) analyzing state educational policy issues and the policy environment, (3) evaluating school reforms and state educational practices, (4) providing technical support to policy makers, and (5) facilitating discussion of educational issues.

The PACE research agenda is developed in consultation with public officials and staff. In this way, PACE endeavors to address policy issues of immediate concern and to fill the short-term needs of decision makers for information and analysis.

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Professionalizing Teaching in California

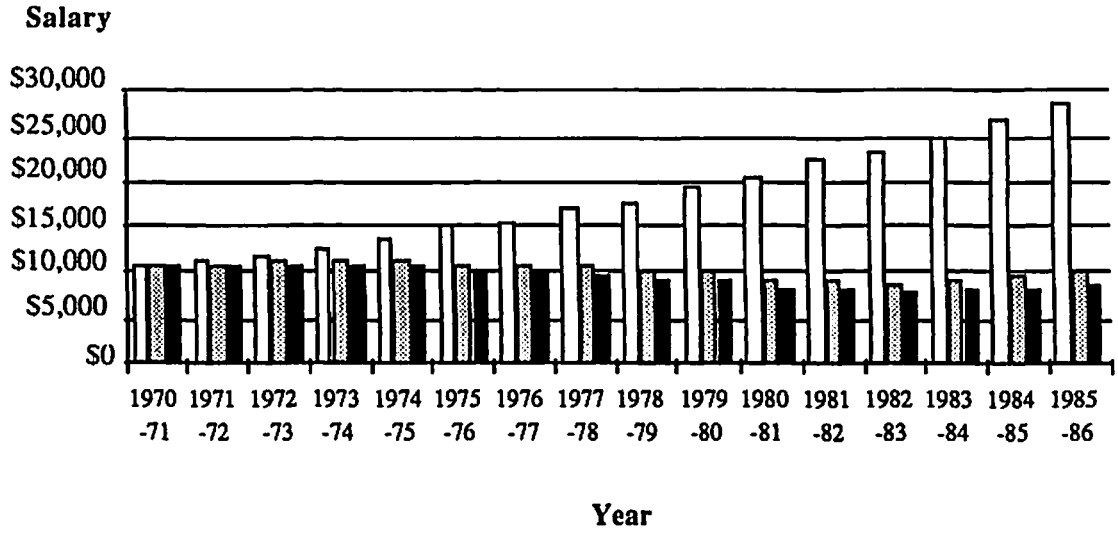
Steps to enhance teacher professionalism continue to be among the most significant items remaining on the state's public school policy agenda. Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig, state Senator Robert Presley, and Assemblyman John Vasconcellos introduced legislation (Senate Bill 1677 and Assembly Bill 2619) proposing changes in the state's systems of teacher credentialing and professional teacher preparation. Among their provisions, the bills replace the Commission on Teacher Credentialing with a California Teacher Standards Board, abolish the emergency credential, and require a teaching residency requirement for credential candidates. These ideas can be traced in part to the California Commission on the Teaching Profession's report, *Who Will Teach Our Children?* This commission, chaired by Dorman Commons, suggested more than a dozen important dimensions on which teaching in California could be improved. Moreover, this agenda item is also one that is being reinforced by a substantial wave of national interest. Major national commissions and numerous state task forces are at work on proposals to improve teaching. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the major teacher-related policy components and decision challenges facing California's public officials.

Beginning in 1978 and continuing through the early 1980s, teachers' salaries suffered badly in terms of purchasing power and relative to other occupations requiring comparable academic preparation (Figure 1 displays California teacher salaries over time adjusted for inflation and experience). Working conditions deteriorated as school districts repeatedly found higher priorities for inflation-diluted revenues. Mid 1970s' enrollment declines diminished demand for new hires and contributed to an aging teacher workforce. The advent of formalized collective bargaining frequently ignited intense labor-management conflict. Teaching was losing its appeal as a dynamic career opportunity for able individuals with professional and public service aspirations.

Teaching is a prime public policy challenge because no matter how imaginative, inspirational, and engaging the spectrum of contemporary curricular and instructional reforms, educational reform proposals depend crucially for their implementation upon cadres of classroom teachers. The present day preparation, performance, personal character, and professional commitment of the teaching force will determine not only the short-run nature of schooling but also will shape the personal lives and social conditions of Californians for decades to come. Probably no other large occupational undertaking can stake as legitimate a claim to influencing the long-run future as can classroom teachers.

FIGURE 1

Average California Teacher Salaries, 1970-1985, Adjusted for Inflation and for Increasing Experience Level of Workforce



SOURCE: James W. Guthrie, et al., *Conditions of Education in California, 1986-87* (Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, October 1986)

In 1986, California's public schools employed 223,552 licensed educators.[1] Private schools are estimated to employ over 38,000 additional teachers. It may someday be the case that new forms of interactive electronic technology will dramatically enhance teaching. Until such a time occurs, however, classroom instruction will continue as a remarkably labor intensive undertaking. Moreover, estimates suggest that California will need to employ approximately 160,000 new teachers between now and the mid 1990s in order to meet anticipated enrollment growth and attrition. The sheer numbers are staggering. However, the exciting opportunity made available to reform the system by the infusion of a large proportion of new employees should not be lost on policy makers and the public.

Recruitment and Preparation

Recruitment

PACE projections suggest a substantial demand for new teachers in California over the next decade (Figure 2). Teacher training enrollments are reported to be increasing. Consequently, the shortfall between anticipated demand and supply may be narrowing. Even so, it is unlikely that the gap will be closed. It appears, at a minimum, that the state will experience an annual shortage of fully qualified teachers approximating 4,000 to 5,000 individuals.

> *The policy challenge regarding recruitment is twofold. First, to enhance the quantity of able individuals flowing into teaching while simultaneously elevating the quality of professional entry standards. Second, to secure funds for higher entry-level teacher salaries when the state is already under financial pressure from many other sources.*

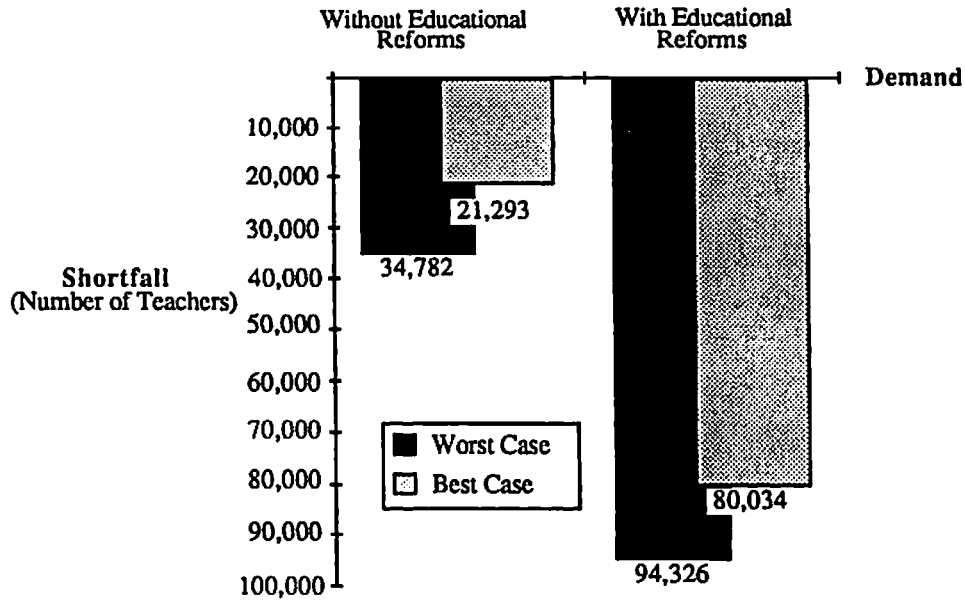
Preparation

The dynamics of public education are such that, regardless of the shortfall severity, there is seldom a classroom without an assigned teacher. *The problem of quantity almost invariably manifests itself as one of quality.* There are numerous loopholes which permit school districts to employ less than fully licensed teachers. For example, it is estimated that 26 percent of California's new teachers are presently entering their positions via so-called

[1]Includes teachers, administrators, student support services, full- and part-time. The number exceeds the total of all engineers, physicians, architects, accountants, optometrists, veterinarians, and pharmacists in the state.

FIGURE 2

Projected Shortfall in Teacher Supply through 1989-90 With and Without Educational Reforms*



*Includes three often discussed educational reforms: reducing pupil-teacher ratios to 20 to 1, eliminating emergency credentials, and requiring teachers to instruct only in their fields of expertise.

SOURCE: Helen H. Cagampang, Walter I. Garms, Todd J. Greenspan, and James W. Guthrie, *Teacher Supply and Demand in California: Is the Reserve Pool a Realistic Source of Supply?* (Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, August 1986.)

emergency credentials.[2] Another 15 to 20 percent of the state's public school instructors are presently assigned to teach classes outside their major fields of academic preparation.[3]

In effect, California has a two-tier licensing structure with dual standards for teacher preparation. The formal system appears rigorous. It requires an undergraduate college major in a field other than education, passage of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), and a fifth year of pedagogical preparation, including supervised practice teaching.

In contrast, an increasingly relied upon informal licensing system permits local districts to utilize instructors with emergency credentials and long-term substitutes, and to rely upon teachers instructing outside their subject matter strengths. Some proportion of these less than fully licensed individuals may be good instructors. Undeniably, however, they are less well trained pedagogically and perhaps academically.

There are few visible defenders of the dual system. Teacher union officials are outspoken in their opposition. School administrators acknowledge the drawbacks philosophically, but nevertheless lobby for its continuation on pragmatic grounds. In the absence of sufficient numbers of fully licensed teacher candidates, and in the face of a teacher shortage, administrators contend they have little choice but to employ stopgap measures.

Regardless of its relative merits, the dual entry system for teachers constitutes a hypocritical policy which undermines educational professionalism particularly and engenders cynicism about government generally.

> *The policy challenge is to eliminate the dual licensing system while simultaneously implementing sufficient incentives to ensure that the supply of qualified teachers matches demand.*

Preservice Preparation

There is a seemingly never ending stream of controversy regarding the proper elements and appropriate mix of preservice preparation activities for teachers. The U.S. Secretary of Education, William Bennett, has expressed a frequently voiced view that teacher training need be but minimal. "... Teachers should demonstrate competence in their subject area,

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[2]"Credential Profile, 1981-84" and "Credential Profile, 1984-85" (Sacramento: Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 1985).

[3]Helen Cagampang, *Changes and Prospective Trends Among Students and Teachers in Math, Science, and Foreign Language* (Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, forthcoming).

have good character, and have the interest and ability to communicate with young people."[4] William Bennett's pronouncement contained no reference to pedagogy.

Conversely, many educators, particularly those connected with schools of education, contend that added levels of professional preparation better enable a teacher to handle a wide range of children's learning abilities and problems. Also, they believe that more preparation for teachers would assist them in gaining the respect paid to full professions, e.g., medicine and law.

A 1984 PACE report by Stoddart, Losk, and Benson advocated two years of graduate professional preparation prior to entering teaching.[5] More recently, the Holmes Group of School of Education Deans reached a similar conclusion. California now generally requires a fifth year of schooling, one beyond the Bachelor's degree, for a full teaching license. Most states require only four years of college to become a teacher. Against this backdrop, the controversial nature of the Stoddart et al. and Holmes proposals become more evident.

Opponents fear that added amounts of preservice training risk reducing and delaying the number of teacher candidates readily available for employment. Consequently, proposals for added preparation time and rigor typically face stiff opposition during periods of teacher shortage.

Also, more intensified preparation portends higher teacher salary levels. In a state the size of California, adding even $1,000 to teachers' average salaries accrues annually to hundreds of millions of dollars statewide. Adding $5,000 to each *beginning* teacher's salary would cost an additional $80 million in the initial year. By year 10, such a plan would increase annual educational costs by approximately $1 billion.

> *The policy challenge is to intensify professional preparation while sustaining or enlarging the pool of eligible teacher candidates.*

[4]Quoted in *Education Week*, 5 (6) March 12, 1986: 15.

[5]Trish Stoddart, David J. Losk, and Charles S. Benson, *Some Reflections On The Honorable Profession Of Teaching* (Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, August 1984).

Regulation

Program Approval Versus Candidate Appraisal

College and university teacher training programs may appraise prospective public school instructors. Ironically, the state does not. Presently, if the curriculum of a California teacher training institution meets state-specified standards, the program is approved. (The state agency responsible for setting standards is the Commission for Teacher Credentialing, CTC.) Virtually all candidates successfully completing program requirements, in the eyes of an approved institution, are then granted a credential by the state. The state relies upon colleges and universities to determine professional eligibility of prospective teachers through program approval. Review teams comprised of faculty from other teacher training institutions periodically, every three to five years, visit colleges and universities to assess the fit between preparation programs and state requirements.

A credential is a license certifying that its holder meets at least minimal standards for employment in a public school setting. (Private schools are not legally required to employ credentialed individuals.) Public school agencies employ candidates from the available pool of credentialed teachers. School districts are free to establish hiring standards more rigorous than those specified by the state.

Controversy surrounds the extent to which program approval sufficiently protects the state's interest in having well prepared and able teachers. The state is unwilling to accept such a *laissez faire* process in determining the eligibility of an individual to practice in other professional fields such as medicine, law, architecture, engineering, and accounting. Candidates for entry into these other professions must pass a state authorized examination administered on an individual basis. Simply graduating from an approved institution is insufficient.

> *The policy challenge is to determine an appropriate balance between program approval and individual appraisal and to make the necessary statutory alterations.*

Testing and Licensing

State teacher certification is complicated by the presence of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST). A credential candidate must achieve an overall passing score on each of three parts of this examination: writing, reading comprehension, and mathematics. The examinations are developed and administered under contract to the state by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Most teacher training programs require that a candidate pass the test prior to admission.

Critics contend that the test bears no proven relationship to good classroom teaching. Proponents grant this point but assert in response that the examination attests to the basic literacy of the candidate, a *sina qua non* of teaching in their view.

During the initial years of CBEST, black and Hispanic credential candidates have fared worse on passing test scores than whites and Asians. Some claim this signals the racist nature of the examination. While the research on the test indicates this is unlikely, almost all parties seek productive means for redressing the discrepancy in scores.

> *The policy challenge is to identify recruitment incentives and better professional preservice preparation whereby the pool of minority teaching candidates can at once be certified as literate and expanded in number.*

The Timing of Tenure

Following an initial probationary period of successful instruction, local school districts are obliged by state law to grant teachers tenure. Realistically, this means that an individual can only be dismissed from his or her teaching position because of some serious rule infraction or because of declining enrollment.

There is a twofold historical rationale for such substantial employment security. First, to be effective, teachers must have protection when conveying ideologically controversial material. If schools are in fact to be a market place for ideas, then those who explain ideas must be free of political intimidation and the threat of economic reprisal. Second, tenure has been justified historically because of prior connections between teacher job security and partisan political outcomes. In an earlier era, when school board elections were more greatly politicized than at present, teacher positions frequently were part of a patronage system. A winning school board candidate might attempt to remove previously employed teachers and hire new ones who had been loyal to his or her campaign. Tenure was viewed as a means for eliminating this practice.

Until recently, a California teacher was on professional probation prior to three years of successful employment in a school district. Senate Bill 813, enacted as California's omnibus educational reform act in 1983, altered these rules. In exchange for provisions intended to make it easier for a school district to dismiss an allegedly incompetent probationary teacher, tenure can now be granted after only two years of employment.

There certainly exist individuals and interest groups opposed to teacher tenure altogether. However, most public officials accede to a view which contends that at least in the near future teacher tenure is not about to be abolished. Hence, the greater debate pertains to the appropriate balance between employment security for the individual and the right of school districts to dismiss incompetent instructors.

The equity and efficiency embedded in the Senate Bill 813 compromise--easier probationary dismissal for more rapidly reached job security--is now questioned. Opponents of the current arrangement contend that dismissal is not any easier than before. In their view, the legislative language of Senate Bill 813 is flawed and, consequently, courts are sometimes continuing to grant probationary teachers the same intense degree of due process protection as was the case in a prior era.[6] Their reform rallying cry has become, "It should be as difficult to acquire tenure as it is to lose it."

> *The policy challenge is to reassess the tenure question and determine if the correct balance has yet been struck between an individual's property right to employment and the public's interest in having competent teachers.*

Governance[7]

Teacher training program requirements and other matters related to educator professional standards are presently under the auspices of the Commission for Teacher Credentialing (CTC). This is an executive branch agency established by the Ryan Act in 1970. Prior to its hotly debated formation by the legislature, its functions were performed by the State Department of Education (SDE) under the jurisdiction of the superintendent of public instruction and the State Board of Education.

The 22 CTC members currently are appointed by the governor according to a complicated formula which balances lay members; several categories of professional educators (teachers, counselors, administrators); and representatives of teacher training institutions, other agencies of government (e.g., SDE), and local school boards.

Since its inception, CTC has remained a focal point of substantial controversy. Inept leadership, strained legislative relations, and bureaucratic inefficiency are among the weaknesses attributed to it by critics. However, a root problem is governance: who should control the licensing of teachers?

When credentialing was an SDE function, licensing was treated as a bureaucratic process. Teacher credentialing was governmentally regarded in a manner similar to state regulation of building contractors and barbers. The 1970s' reforms which created the relatively independent CTC were motivated, in part, by a desire to give educators a larger voice in governing their profession. Hence, education-related positions are represented on

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[6]See, for example, David Girard and Julia Koppich, *SB 813 and Teacher Dismissals* (Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, forthcoming).

[7]This issue is duscussed in greater detail in Ralph Brott, *Credentialing in California: Alternatives for Governance* (Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, August 1984)

CTC in virtual parity to public lay members. This can be considered as a mixed public/professional governance model.

Many educational interest groups contend that teaching is due parity with full professions such as medicine and law, which are substantially self-regulating. They advocate a governance model whereby educators themselves control standards for entry into the profession and sit in judgment regarding alleged violation of professional ethics.

Self regulation for teachers is an idea currently receiving widespread attention in the rhetoric of teacher unions, discussions of professional educators, and in a series of national reports. In California, several legislative proposals already have been submitted which would alter substantially the current structure of CTC. Indeed, proposals have been seriously considered which would have abolished CTC altogether and substituted other governmental mechanisms in its stead, e.g., the 1986 legislative proposal, Senate Bill 1605, and the 1987 legislation, SB 1677 and AB 2619.

> *The policy challenge is to balance the historic principle of lay control of public education with the growing aspirations of educators for professional parity and self regulation.*

Professionalization

Remuneration and Working Conditions

Figure 1 (page 2) graphically captures teacher pay comparisons in California. The figure displays statewide average teacher salary in constant dollars at yearly intervals since 1970. These numbers reveal the purchasing power loss that California's teachers experienced in the late 1970s and early 1980s. (This period not only coincides with dramatic national economic instability, inflation, and recession, but also with the height of the state's public school enrollment decline and teacher surplus.)

In the period since 1983, California's teacher salaries have begun the climb to purchasing power parity. The state's restored economic conditions and the intensified public school demand for additional instructors have begun to create more favorable conditions. By 1986, teachers' salaries had recaptured approximately 95 percent of their 1970 purchasing power. When compared with teachers in other states, experienced California instructors are well paid.

Beginning teachers' salaries have been increasing. The average entry level teacher salary in California is now $20,000. Average teacher salaries have also improved, and, generally, these salaries are paid for 10 months of work. The problem, discussed below, is one of aspiration and distribution.

The policy challenge is to maintain the momentum of salary increases while balancing the awesome costs involved. (Each one percent increase, statewide, in teacher salaries and related benefits costs approximately $60 million.)

Professional Advancement

Teacher salary schedules typically take into account only years of employment in the district and level of academic training beyond the Bachelor's degree. This two dimensional scale seldom embraces measures of added professional responsibility or any judgment regarding an individual teacher's productivity. Two teachers having been employed the same number of years in a school district and possessing similar levels of college preparation will be paid similarly, regardless of their respective performances as teachers. Current patterns do not acknowledge individual effort or professional capability. Existing economic incentives motivate individual instructors only to seek longevity in the system and accrue added units in college.

Another failing of conventional teacher salary schedules is their compacted nature. Annual salary increases for a classroom teacher can be expected for approximately 12 years. Subsequent increases are generally tied to whatever cost-of-living adjustments result from local collective bargaining agreements. An individual who begins teaching at age 22 or 23 will reach the top of the district salary schedule in his or her middle thirties. This is the mid-career point when many successful professionals in other fields find their compensation increasing dramatically. They may well have sacrificed a decade of relatively low compensation as an associate in a law firm, or as some other kind of apprentice or journeyman professional, in order thereafter to qualify for substantially greater financial rewards.

An ambitious classroom teacher reaching the top of the salary schedule is faced with but three prospects, no one of which may be particularly attractive. One is to leave teaching altogether and seek another vocation. Recent polls of former teachers reveal that large numbers have left employment as public school instructors and have found financially rewarding work in people-oriented positions such as sales, insurance, corporate training, and real estate.[8] A recent survey of California teachers by PACE and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company revealed that 51 percent of California teachers have seriously considered leaving teaching; more than one-quarter expect to leave in the next five years.[9] Contrary to conventional wisdom, those who can, do teach, and if their pay and working conditions are poor, they find something to do other than teach. Another PACE poll

[8]*The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America* (New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1986).

[9]*Survey of the California Teacher 1985* (New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in collaboration with Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, 1986).

discovered that these former teachers enjoyed instructing children, but they simply were unwilling to sacrifice materially to remain in teaching.[10]

Another alternative for the mid-career teacher is to follow the perverse incentive system which characterizes most American public schooling. For a teacher, the way to get ahead is to get out of the classroom. The greater the organizational distance between one's self and students, the greater the rewards--more pay, more prestige, more control over one's time, more interaction with adults, and the like. This upside-down reward system attracts many of the most able instructors out of the classroom and into careers such as counseling and administration, which are also important. However, classroom instruction is arguably the most important function in a school, the single most important purpose around which the institution is formed. It seems strange not to reward that function more highly. Figure 3 displays this reward system graphically in terms of California teacher and administrator salaries.

The remaining alternative for mid-career teachers is to continue as classroom instructors hoping that personal interaction with students and subject matter will somehow compensate privately for the stagnant reward system and absence of opportunity. There is little to look forward to professionally. Small wonder that an awesome proportion of teachers, approximately 40 percent, often the most able, leave the classroom after five or six years.[11] The prospect of high compensation, creative expression, and professional fulfillment is slender.

In 1983, as a provision of Senate Bill 813, the state offered $10.8 million in financial incentives to encourage districts to establish mentor teacher positions. This funding level eventually allowed districts to appoint approximately two percent of their teachers as mentors. In the 1986-87 budget, this amount was expanded to $45.75 million. These funds will enable districts to appoint 3.75 percent of California's teachers as mentors.

Mentor teachers, while having to maintain at least 60 percent of their time as classroom instructors, may utilize remaining hours for assisting new teachers, developing curriculum, working on special projects of importance to their school or district, and so on.

The procedure for nominating and selecting mentors and determining their duties depends upon a collectively bargained arrangement in a local district. Regardless of such

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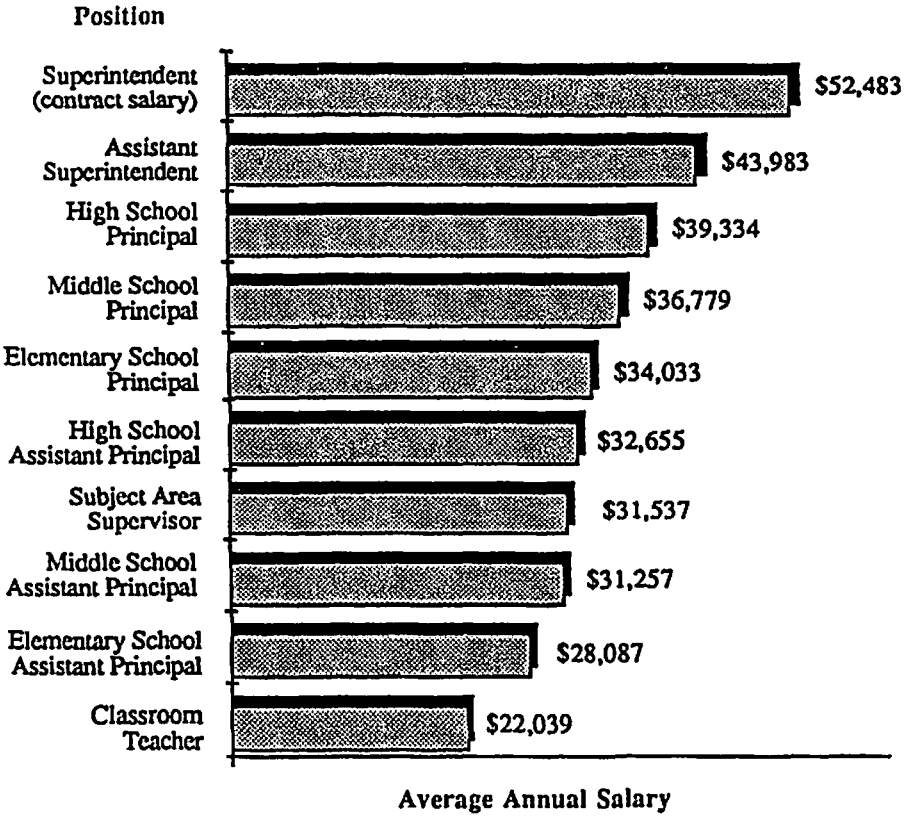
[10]Julia Koppich, William Gerritz, and James W. Guthrie, *A View From The Classroom: California Teachers' Opinions on Working Conditions and School Reform Proposals* (Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, March 1986).

[11]According to one study, 34.9 percent leave after four years, 39.7 percent after five years, 41.7 percent after six years. Philip C. Schlechty and Victor S. Vance, "Do Academically Able Teachers Leave Education? The North Carolina Case," *Kappan* 63 (2): 106-112.

FIGURE 3

Average Salaries (Mean of Mean) Paid Personel in Selected Professional Positions in All Reporting School Systems, 1983-84



SOURCE: Glen E. Robinson and Lawrence E. Estep, "Research Supplement: School Salaries 1983-84," *Principal*, 63 (65) May 1984: 55. The data is derived from a sample of 1,217 school systems nationwide.

variety, the underlying intent is to expand the career opportunity available to classroom teachers.[12]

There are criticisms made of the existing program, e.g., a true mentor teacher should be assisting new teachers, not developing curriculum. Also, many critics of the Mentor Teacher Program simply believe that it does not proceed sufficiently to overcome the stifling absence of a full professional career ladder. Advocates of expansion desire a career ladder which, in addition to acknowledging added duties, also rewards instructional performance. Merit pay proposals for teachers, which tie higher compensation to intensified classroom results, are repeatedly made. Teachers are conventionally wary of such suggestions, and few merit pay plans have ever been implemented; fewer still have lasted.

A more promising alternative may be in the form of national professional speciality board examinations for teachers. Such proposals, widely publicized in recent national reports[13] and promoted by teacher union officials, necessitate formation of a national professional agency. Such an agency would be outside of government and operated by teachers. It would certify levels of added professional preparation, subject matter knowledge, and pedagogical understanding.

National boards would be patterned after professionally operated procedures used to certify medical specialists such as surgeons and pathologists. Candidates for a speciality license would be required to meet minimum preparation and experience qualifications. Added certification, presumably, would result from both paper-and-pencil tests and through less conventional avenues such as board interviews, recommendations, and candidate responses to simulated instructional problems. A nationally certified teacher, arguably, would then be more valuable in the employment market, command a higher salary from local school districts, and thereby contribute to an expanded professional career ladder.

Substantial momentum is building for formation and use of a national professional standards board for teachers, and such an agency is likely to be created. If selected states and local school districts begin to employ nationally certified teachers, and if such teachers are widely perceived as able, then pressures will evolve to spread the procedure more widely. This could be the most significant elevation of professional teacher standards in

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[12]Added information regarding California's Mentor Teacher Program is provided by Tom Bird, "The Mentor's Dilemma: Prospects and Demands of the California Mentor Teacher Program." A report prepared for NIE, Contract #400-83-003 to the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research, 1986.

[13]*A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (New York: The Carnegie Commission on Education and the Economy, 1986).

the nation's history. Currently, greater enthusiasm for the idea appears outside California than within the state. Nevertheless, California officials cannot easily afford to be insensitive to the general trend.

> *The policy challenge is to correct weakneses in the current Mentor Teacher Program and simultaneously leave California in a posture to accommodate to whatever transpires nationally regarding professional speciality boards for teachers.*

Professional Responsibilities

Whereas there are many advocates of greater professional rewards and opportunities for teachers, a counterveiling contingent asserts that teachers must reciprocate by assuming a larger share of professional responsibility. The dimensions most frequently specified in this regard are peer evaluation, school site decision making, participation in training apprentices, and responsibility for student achievment levels. These issues create a chicken-and-egg problem. Teachers frequently contend that they will gladly assume such added responsibilities if treated and compensated in a full professional manner. Reluctant supporters of professionalization suggest that their complete advocacy awaits teachers' assuming such additional duties.

> *The policy challenge is to frame incentives which simultaneously provide added professional opportunity and remuneration in exchange for teachers assuming added professional responsibility for the welfare of the state's public schools.*

Working Conditions

Teachers repeatedly report that physical conditions in their schools impede effective instruction. Polling results reveal that teachers have to utilize out-of-date textbooks and maps; lack access to telephones, typewriters, and copying equipment; are faced with inadequate storage space for supplies and instructional materials; and have little room to use for preparation or for meeting privately with pupils and parents.[14]

Class size comprises another facet of teachers' working conditions. In California, class sizes now are among the largest in the United States. The state average is reported to be 23 students per instructor. This figure takes into account many small classes for special education students. The actual size of most classes in both elementary and secondary schools is larger than 23. Researchers have seldom been able to identify a tight link between class size and school outcomes. So many potential influences upon student

[14]Julia Koppich, et al., *A View From the Classroom.*

achievement exist that the size of a class is sometimes swamped by other variables. Identifying a statistically significant performance difference between a class size of 31 and 32 students is difficult. Consequently, proponents of smaller public school classes have had a difficult time gaining the attention of state and local school policy makers.

Advocates of smaller classes have also had difficulty because of the large costs involved. In California, a reduction of each single pupil in average class size is projected to cost $200-$250 million. Moreover, this does not take into account the relative shortage of school facilities. In many districts, smaller classes could not easily be accommodated at present because of insufficient space.

Researchers have reached something of a consensus regarding large differences in class size. Whereas a reduction of one pupil per teacher may not make a noticeable difference, a decrease of five or six pupils per class may.[15] Also, policy makers outside California have repeatedly exhibited a common-sense view that smaller class size does make a difference. The national average is 18 pupils per class. Parents, when they have the opportunity, express a preference for smaller classes. Thus, despite the large costs involved, California appears destined to continue to grapple with class size reduction issues as it has in the last two legislative sessions.

> *The policy challenge regarding working conditions and class size reductions is to fabricate a set of phase-in incentives and financing formulas which permit practical progress toward a healthier instructional climate in California's schools while remaining within reasonable revenue boundaries.*

Problems and Prognosis

What is the likelihood that these challenges can be resolved? An honest response must acknowledge the complexity and costs involved. Even one of the 11 policy challenges described here is capable of provoking prolonged political debate. More troublesome yet is the awesome interconnected nature of the professionalization issue. Everything seems connected to everything else.

Not only are the issues complex and intertwined, they also hold the prospect of costing a great deal to achieve. The California Commission on the Teaching Profession estimates that its slate of 27 reforms--changes which addresss most every challenge described above--

[15]Gene V. Glass and Mary Lee Smith, "Meta-Analysis of Research on Class Size and Achievement," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 1 (1) 1979: 1-16.

would cost approximately an additional $842 million to implement.[16] In a time when the state is reaching a revenue ceiling imposed by the 1979 Gann initiative, added funds of this magnitude will be hotly contested.

A piecemeal, patchwork policy approach is unlikely to solve problems systematically, will too easily be criticised by opponents, and will not attract sufficient political support from professional educators themselves. If solution is possible, it might best result from omnibus legislation which addresses many facets of the problem simultaneously.

On the more positive side, much of the important analytic groundwork and policy research has been done regarding fundamental impediments to professionalization. Seldom in history has greater attention been given at state and national levels to the issues involved. The Carnegie Commission report is provoking excitement for teacher reforms in many other states. There may be greater national concensus regarding solutions to teacher professionalization now than ever before. Moreover, much of the thought and publicity regarding possible solutions has been accomplished by the California Commission on the Teaching Profession. Its report, *Who Will Teach Our Children,* was issued in November 1985.

Political leadership will be crucial to fulfillment of the professionalization challenge. Important members of the business community may be available to champion reform ideas, if assured that teachers reciprocally will assume heightened levels of professional responsibility. Similarly, the superintendent of public instruction and significant legislative leaders in both houses may be persuaded of the reforms' significance. The governor will be an important actor, and here the overall financial costs of reform may become the critical issue.

The political process, however flawed, is the best available mechanism for sorting such complexity. The outcome is uncertain. The objective, however, a fully professionalized teaching force for California, is assuredly one of the most potent answers to furthering school reform, increasing the skills and abilities of future generations of California students, and enhancing the state's position nationally and worldwide.

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[16]*Who Will Teach Our Children?* (Sacramento: California Commission on the Teaching Profession, November 1985).