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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a steady decline of people selecting teaching as a career, coupled with an increase in early retirement by existing teacher personnel. Teacher shortages are reported in 37 states, and the problem is particularly acute for rural schools. To solve the problem, strategies for recruiting potential teachers are proposed in four categories: national strategies, a sample plan for a rural state, strategies for a university interested in recruiting and training teachers for work in rural area, and strategies at the local level. The real solution is not reallocation of able students, but the development of strategies to increase the potential pool of students who complete college, and to recruit from alternative pools not currently oriented to the education profession. Efforts to change student attitudes should begin at an early age. Other efforts that should be made to attract qualified people into the education profession are briefly suggested. This report contains 26 references. (GGH)

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Anticipating the 21st Century: Avoiding the Teacher Shortage

INTRODUCTION:

During the past years, the dialogue about teacher supply and demand has sparked a great deal of controversy. Both The Holmes report, Tomorrow's Teacher's and the Carnegie report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century emphasize the central role of teachers and indicate an impending nationwide shortage of teachers during the coming decade. Few educational issues have caused as much concern as those relating to teacher supply and demand.

In recent years there has been a steady decline of people entering teaching programs. Analysis of this decline reveals that the shift is away from education and social sciences into more technical fields. In many cases education loses out to other higher status, higher-paying career choices. This decline is further aggravated by the number of teachers who hold certification to teach but who elect to seek other employment. The number of recent degree recipients certified to teach but not teaching are much greater than the number electing teaching with or without certification. Furthermore, about 25% of newly prepared teachers select fields other than teaching.

The steady decline of people electing teaching is coupled with an increasing number of teachers who are taking early retirement. It is predicted that in the south 1/3 or more of the teachers are veterans with 25 or more years experience and they are rapidly approaching retirement. These unfavorable trends are compounded with other problems including low salaries, decreased job satisfaction, and lack of societal respect. All of these factors cause teachers to leave the classroom and pursue other careers. The teacher shortage is in fact a very real problem. The latest report from the National Education Association indicates that 37 states reported a critical shortage in at least one region and in at least one curricula area (N.E.A., 1986).

Across the nation, one particularly acute problem for rural schools is a personnel shortage. It is significant that one third of all students live in rural America, and that rural schools comprise 67 percent of all schools in the United States. Rural schools report the recruiting and retraining of qualified staff are significant impediments in providing services (Helge, 1983). Developing more refined recruitment strategies is critical to solving

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the problems rural schools are going to face as they compete for quality personnel. The key is to develop strategies at the local level that specifically reflects the needs and uniqueness of the local district. Recruiters could focus on positive attributes of small communities such as friendliness, potential for status, small enrollments, and administrative support. Teachers must be located who possess characteristics which are congruent with the needs of the rural school. These usually include teachers who are

- * able to adjust to the community in terms of life style
- * willingness to teach students with a wide range of abilities
- * prepared to supervise several extracurricular activities
- * and certified to teach in more than one subject matter area or grade.

RECRUITMENT IDEAS:

The purpose of this paper is to outline ideas at the national, state, university, and local level that may be used to recruit and retain teachers for work in rural areas. A search of the literature reveals successful programs that provide options or ideas that may be used to enhance recruitment efforts.

Some suggestions in use across the country for improved recruitment include:

1. Using two year colleges as a pool for potential students.
2. Providing job and scholarship assurance programs for students.
3. Bringing high school students into a tutorial situation.
4. Providing programs to welcome prospective members to the teaching fraternity at an earlier stage, as early as the middle school grades.
5. Encouraging students already in a university setting to switch or complete enough hours for certification.
6. Running television spots featuring teaching as a rewarding profession.
7. Reminding students that teaching can lead to management positions.
8. Providing a statewide support program.
9. Implementing a teacher cadre at the middle school level.
10. Constructing a high school teacher /mentor program.
11. Teaching a college university freshman and sophomore career seminar program.
12. Providing forgivable loans.

A sample plan for a rural state might include the following:

1. Creating a senior level position in the state department of education with the primary function of recruitment and retention of educators.
2. Developing a program to make the public aware of the seriousness of the problem.
3. Establishing a grant of \$2000 per year to 150 new students per year entering institutions of higher education and who plan to pursue teacher education programs. These may be renewed for a second year. Eligibility-teach rural areas, first time freshmen in teacher education, academic potential based on standardized tests and high school grades, and completion of selected courses in high school.
4. Establishing scholarship grants of \$3000 per year to 100 new students. May be renewed for a second year.

5. Funding summer enrichment programs at colleges and universities such as YOU and Upward Bound for intermediate and junior high school students.
6. Providing funding for counseling of rural students and development of a comprehensive support system for rural students while in college.
7. Providing financial assistance to enter and remain in teaching.
8. Raising salaries to regional averages.
9. Sponsoring summer teaching institutes.
10. Providing low interest loans to teachers willing to teach in rural areas.

A university that would like to recruit and train teachers for work in rural areas might consider the following:

1. Providing scholarships for incoming freshman who declare majors in education and who meet specified standards.
2. Targeting schools with high percentages of rural students.
3. Providing extensive and intensive recruiting of students in targeted schools.
4. Offering scholarships to upper level majors.
5. Providing on-campus visits of intensive and innovative experiences for prospective recruits.
6. Identifying key persons in communities with high concentration of rural students. Locate university graduates to assist.
7. Soliciting cooperation from significant groups in the communities, Greek, civic, service, and churches.
8. Soliciting cooperation from student groups.
9. Inviting representatives of targeted groups on campus for special appreciation and orientation sessions.
10. Inviting high school counselors to recommend students with potential for teaching.
11. Recruiting students from community colleges. Improve cooperation between university and community college personnel.
12. Providing opportunities for high school students to visit the campus for brief periods in order to learn about university life through first-hand experiences. During the visits, students might spend time in classes, talk to current students in the program, find out about financial aid and application procedures, and participate in campus social activities.
13. Working to ensure that students presently enrolled in teacher education on campus are successful and satisfied. Additional things that might be done for students:
 - a. provide for positive press releases of majors in hometown newspapers.
 - b. provide for regular articles to appear in campus paper about education majors.
 - c. create a education student advisory council.
 - d. encourage a student "replacement" campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to encourage each education major to recruit another student to take his/her place in the program by the time the student graduates.
14. Developing and implementing pre-collegiate programs in the schools. Let academically talented youngsters register as guest students while in high school with the understanding that courses taken will count for degree credit upon their admission.
15. Initiating informational programs about the teacher education program in targeted communities and schools.

16. Establishing a toll free line to call to obtain information about the school of education.
17. Developing a network with elementary and secondary teaching associations.
18. Hosting "College for Kids" programs during the summer or designated weekends for youngsters.
19. Developing feeder schools in an effort to create a tradition of students from the feeder school attending the university and enrolling in the teacher education program.
20. Directing contact with youngsters in middle school and maintain contact as they progress through high school.
21. Contacting parents and encourage them to encourage their children to think about choosing teaching as a career.
22. Holding a "Day of Pride" on campus and invite outstanding students to attend and thus be recognized for their accomplishments.

Some strategies in use at the local level include:

1. Subsidizing cost of teacher retraining to meet local needs.
2. Pay the cost of teacher earning a masters degree and teacher commits to staying for three years after obtaining the degree.
3. Identify outstanding juniors in education at the university and begin to recruit at this level.
4. Involve community groups with recruiting efforts.
5. Consider retention strategies such as paying professional dues.

CONCLUSIONS:

The real solution may not be reallocation of able students but the development of strategies to increase the potential pool of students who complete college and to examine ways to recruit from alternate pools not currently tapped for teacher education. Universities to be successful must begin to seek students several years before they will be ready to consider teaching careers. Hillary Clinton believes this shortage of teachers is not a failure of higher education, but unfortunately is the result of the twelve year educational system which fails to instill in disadvantaged children the belief that they can succeed. There is a need to develop a program in kindergarten to foster self-worth and a sense of whether they are going to make it or not. Dr. Hornbeck, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools, also sees 3 and 4 years olds from poor families as a key to the long-term expansion of the potential recruitment pool for future teachers.

We must begin to match our liberal arts and science programs with what students will be tested on and modifications of the curriculum such as five year programs must be studied carefully. They greatly increase the cost of entering education while most existing salary structures do not adequately compensate for this extra year of training. State competency tests of basic skills must be examined as they communicate to students that only prospective teachers, as opposed to those planning to enter other professions, require testing for mundane skills. State certification requirements that make no difference whatsoever in the quality of teaching while increase bureaucratic costs of the educational enterprise must be removed.

The root of the problem is the public perception that teachers don't do anything very sophisticated. This is reinforced by the working conditions we impose on teachers. How many true professionals have parking lot duty this week? The problems of attracting larger numbers of minorities to the teaching profession are part and parcel of the larger problems such as the reward structures and negative attitudes toward the profession. To adequately address the issues will require us to overcome our educational myopia and stop attempting to heal broken legs with band-aids.

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