

THEORY ^{TO} PRACTICE

AN INQUISITIVE REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION & HEALTH

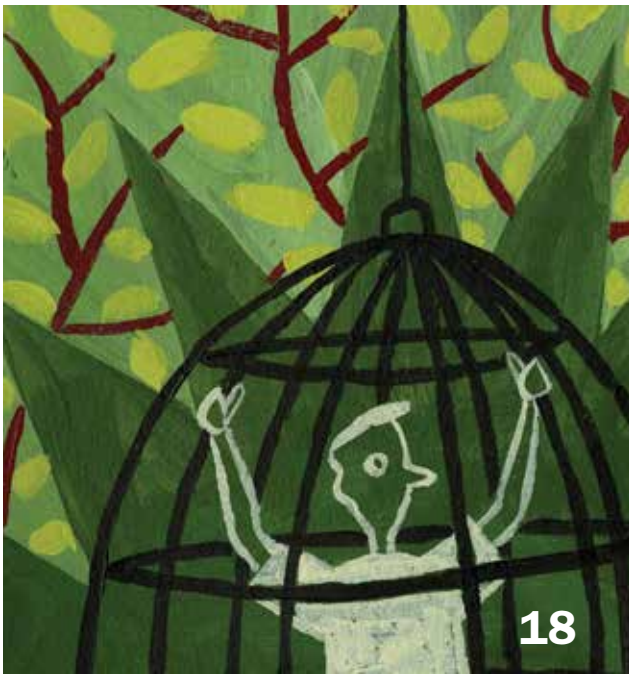
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THE DEAN'S TAKE

The Road to Reform

High-stakes testing. Charter schools. Teacher tenure and seniority. Nowhere in the world of education is the debate louder or more heated than on the subject of school reform.

From New York's rubber rooms to the Vergara v. California lawsuit, these issues are proving to be both polarizing and overtly political, often clouding any meaningful dialogue about approaches that might enrich learning in our schools and result in better educated children.

With this issue of *Theory to Practice*, we take on a broad, wide-ranging look at teachers unions, which are oft-blamed for the ills of public education. Are teachers unions standing in the way of much-needed school reform, or are they simply easy targets when new efforts to improve educational systems sputter and stall? With unions playing a lot of defense these days, it's important to take a step back to examine not only why teachers unions came into being but why they are targets now.

As we look for common ground among those on all sides of the issues, Lehigh's College of Education will welcome Dr. Diane Ravitch to the campus in February 2015. Ravitch, an educational policy analyst



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN HULVAT

who has served the first Bush and Clinton administrations, is a leading voice in the national debate on school reform. Her talk, "Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools," will likely prove provocative as we weigh what is at stake for our children, who have the most to lose in this debate.

In this issue, we also look at the controversial practice of seclusion and restraints, in which students with behavior problems are isolated from others in their schools or even physically restrained. Some members of Congress are trying to severely curtail the use of restraints as well as bar the use of seclusion rooms. That's what the Centennial School, which is governed by Lehigh's College of Education, did more than a decade ago under the leadership of Director Michael George.

Rounding out the issue are articles on the research and global work of the College of Education's scholars, interns and graduate students.

As this issue shows, we are committed to addressing major educational challenges in our back yard and abroad. We hope you enjoy this issue of *Theory to Practice*.

Gary Sasso

Gary Sasso
Dean of the College of Education
Lehigh University

EDU/STATS

Data compiled by unionstats.com show a dip in teachers union membership over the past 30 years.

In 2013:

- 47.7 percent of elementary and middle-school teachers were in unions.
- 52.2 percent, secondary school teachers
- 17.2 percent, preschool and kindergarten teachers

In 1983:

- 57.7 percent of elementary and middle-school teachers were in unions.
- 57.4 percent, secondary school teachers
- 26.3 percent, preschool and kindergarten teachers

A Gallup Poll also showed public opinion waning.

- In 2011, 47 percent of Americans thought teachers unions hurt the quality of public education. That percentage grew from 1976, when 38 percent of Americans thought teachers unions hurt education.

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Research

A 'SafeStart' for Children

A Mountaintop team aims to help caseworkers forge ties with troubled families to gauge county services and help children thrive.

Infants and toddlers in the SafeStart program often have tough beginnings—neglected or abused, or born to parents struggling with drug and alcohol addictions or mental health issues. But at SafeStart, a center-based Early Head Start and Children and Youth Services program, the children receive educational, health and nutritional care while their parents work to address their issues.

To build stronger relationships and to better assess needs and services, Lehigh County Children and Youth Services reached out to Lehigh University for help in

developing a survey for parents and other caregivers, as well as the caseworkers who work with them. The project, "Preventative Health Care for Children: Early Head Start in the Lehigh Valley," was among Lehigh's 2014 Mountaintop initiatives.

"You want to make sure they're offering services that are needed and that are salient for the families," says graduate student Jamie Whitenack, who worked with fellow graduate student Laura Spearot in addressing Children and Youth's concerns. The two, who are both pursuing

doctorates in school psychology, advised other team members, Kristen Schmidt '15 and Sara Dreszer '15, in the work.

Interviews with SafeStart families and caseworkers were among the first steps in the survey development. The students will analyze and code the responses to determine the main issues that the survey will ultimately need to address.

Patricia H. Manz, associate professor of School Psychology at Lehigh, and L. Brook Sawyer, assistant professor of Instructional Technology and Teacher Education, mentored the team.

Questions posed to parents included: Do you feel respected in your interactions with your caseworker? Does your caseworker respond to you promptly? How has your experience with Children and Youth Services changed your role as a parent? Caseworkers were asked: What approach do you use when working with families? What do you like most about your role?

"We wanted answers but we also wanted to promote discussion," says Spearot, who was struck by the multitude of issues some families face as well as the challenges for caseworkers in providing support.

Families seemed empowered by the interviews, knowing that their concerns about their children and their community were being heard, Spearot and Whitenack say. Caseworkers were eager to get the word out that they were there to support families, not penalize them.

The students say they benefited too from the experience. Says Spearot: "It helped us to be better community engagers." ○

Globalization

Solving Problems in Indonesia

The Indonesian Internships for Community Development, Evaluation, and Research give students a "real-world, hands-on experience in economically disadvantaged, marginalized, culturally diverse communities," says Alexander Wiseman, associate professor of Comparative and International Education. "You can talk about what it's like to live and work in communities like this in the classroom, but until you do it, you really don't get it."

Five Lehigh students now "get it," thanks to their eight-week experience living and working in a rural Indonesian village this summer.

The internships developed out of Lehigh's long-standing relationship with the Universitas Gadjah Mada, located in Yogyakarta City, Indonesia. Led by Wiseman and Stacy Burger, assistant director of international services, interns operated within the existing structures of UGM's required community service program for third-year students.

Intentionally designed to allow students autonomy in the scope of their projects, the internships resemble the operation of an international non-governmental organization. Students from both universities divided into groups based on areas of interest. Then, they worked together to identify problems within the community and develop solutions, often with remarkably limited resources.

Leidy Guzman '16 used what she's learned in her behavioral neuroscience coursework to focus on health care. Guzman surveyed local people and prepared a presentation to raise awareness about their most pressing health issues. Guzman also educated locals about the health risks associated with burning trash and presented alternatives.

Xia Zhao, a second-year doctoral student, designed curricula, assisted in preschools, and taught English and life skills to school-aged children. Cole Knisley '16 also taught English, cleverly using a travel guidebook written in both Indonesian and English to cover a different topic each day. Knisley also created posters to



educate children about the dangers of smoking.

"Everything was new and challenging," says Zhao. Wiseman believes that such challenges enabled students to learn that "it's not always so easy to solve problems."

Many Universitas Gadjah Mada students focused their work within the batik-making industry. Batik, the ancient art of using wax to create patterns while dyeing fabric, is a significant component of Indonesian tradition. Some Lehigh interns incorporated batik-industry issues into their work. For instance, Guzman addressed dye-related skin rashes with factory workers and Zhao and Knisley's language instruction considered the importance of English to successful tourism work and batik sales.

"Experience-wise, you can't really get any better than this if you want to work in development for an organization that does that kind of work," says Wiseman. "It's often very hard to get into these kinds of communities, to have this kind of freedom or latitude to decide on your projects." ○

Globalization

Training Cambodian Teachers



Sothy Eng

From 1975 to 1979, nearly 2 million people in Cambodia, including many of the nation's most educated citizens, were killed by the Khmer Rouge. The resulting scarcity of educational leaders stunted development of the country's school system.

Caring for Cambodia, a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Siem Reap, works to solve the problem.

Sothy Eng, professor of practice of Comparative and International Education, guided five interns in their work with the organization and two other NGOs.

Eng, who leads a partnership

between Lehigh and Caring for Cambodia, says the partnership allows students to transfer theoretical knowledge into practical work. "They gained cultural immersion in the country," he says, as they experienced daily life with different people without knowing the local language. "They had to learn to navigate."



Interns worked with Caring For Cambodia and two other NGOs.



AMONG THE EFFORTS:

Amy Moyer Ed.D. '14 designed and led four workshops for English teachers, helping them to develop more engaging, conversation-focused lessons. Moyer also recorded audio clips and trained teachers in how to incorporate the audio into classroom instruction.

Luke Zhang '15 trained teachers to use an online database for student information, as well as repaired and updated the computers in the Caring for Cambodia's eight computer labs.

Graduate student Amanda Blain Pritt wrote curricula for the organization's Wheel Program, which provides extracurricular instruction in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) art, music, health, sports, and service.

Helen Ard '17 organized fund-raising efforts to support the daycare sites of her assigned NGO, Cambodian Development Mission for Disabilities. Her work included a fundraiser to provide sites with needed supplies, as well as a long-term effort to allow Lehigh students to travel to and assist the organization in 2015.

Dean Granot '15 assisted the Royal University of Phnom Penh in analyzing data for a study on the effect of the Cambodian genocide on survivors and their children. He also helped organize a major international conference on mental health and worked with faculty to design the curriculum for a course on the history of psychology.

"The work that I did changed me," says Granot. "I'm not the same person I was when I left, and I'm very happy with the change." Caring for Cambodia was founded by Jamie Amelio, wife of William Amelio '79, after an eye-opening visit to Cambodia in 2003, when she encountered a 9-year-old girl panhandling for money to help pay her school tuition. ○

In the Classroom

Schoolers Learn by Doing

Aristotle expressed the belief that people learn best by doing. "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."

So too is it with project-based learning, where students learn not by memorizing facts and taking tests, but by delving into projects, making mistakes and solving problems as part of a larger project.

"It is like real life," says Scott Garrigan, professor of practice of Teaching, Learning & Technology. "As you work on a real project, problems come up, and as you resolve those problems, you get a deeper sense of learning."



Students learn by doing with project-based learning.



Scott Garrigan

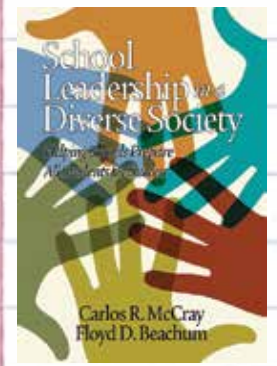
Garrigan and doctoral student Farah Vallera are teaching this education style to middle school science teachers in the Allentown School District as it transitions to more project-based learning and incorporates more science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) into its curricula.

Research has shown that project-based learning can improve retention and students' attitudes toward learning when implemented correctly.

Vallera, who has been practicing project-based learning in her sociology classes and with K-12 students at an agricultural education center, is coaching teachers in ASD's four middle schools for 20 hours a week.

"Many of the teachers are already doing really exciting projects their students love, but often as concluding events following traditional instruction," says Vallera. She is instructing teachers on how to incorporate project-based learning throughout the project with hands-on tasks that require creative problem-solving and collaboration.

"Overall," she says, "I'm hoping to get teachers as excited about project-based learning as I am." ○



BOOK REVIEW

Principals are experiencing more diversity in their schools, whether racial, cultural or socio-economic. In *School Leadership in a Diverse Society: Helping Schools Prepare All Students for Success*, Floyd D. Beachum, associate professor of Educational Leadership at Lehigh, and Carlos R. McCray, associate professor of Educational Leadership at Fordham University, address the need for principals to balance educational excellence and equity as they deal with multicultural student populations.

"Beachum and McCray's work represents a positive step forward for our understanding of issues related to school leadership, diversity and social justice. Their work is both theoretically sophisticated and practical enough to be of immediate use to both scholars and practitioners."

—Jeffrey S. Brooks, chair, Department of Leadership & Counseling, University of Idaho

Beachum and McCray examine issues they consider critical for school leaders who want to be effective and relevant, and provide practical solutions.

Society

Promoting Social Inclusion

Stigmatized by cultural stereotypes, hundreds of isolated communities of Romani people are on the outskirts of towns in the Czech Republic.

These families must often choose between spending money on food or a child's transportation to school. Even when parents opt for transportation, the Czech educational system disproportionately places Romani children in "practical schools" for children with "mild mental handicaps."

Christine Novak, professor of practice in School Psychology, accompanied six interns to Prague to participate in Lehigh's Campaign for Social Inclusion. The internship aims to help students view social inclusion from an unfamiliar perspective, understand factors contributing to exclusion, and address those factors.

"In essence, many Romani children are unprepared for school due to economic and cultural differences," says Novak. "They perform poorly therefore on standardized tests and are placed in inferior educational systems where they have little chance of changing their trajectory. [They] eventually are unsuccessful in competing for better jobs. All this serves to reinforce stereotypes of the Roma as unable to learn, unwilling to work, and untrustworthy."

Students worked with three non-governmental organizations (NGOs), researching grant opportunities, developing relationships, and promoting understanding to eliminate harmful stereotypes. Visits to a Romani

summer camp and an excluded community in an abandoned pig slaughter facility deepened their understanding of the issues.

Hana Longenecker '15 worked with Slovo 21, an NGO focused on education and women's rights for the Roma and other minorities. She wrote a grant for a program to encourage literacy and educational involvement

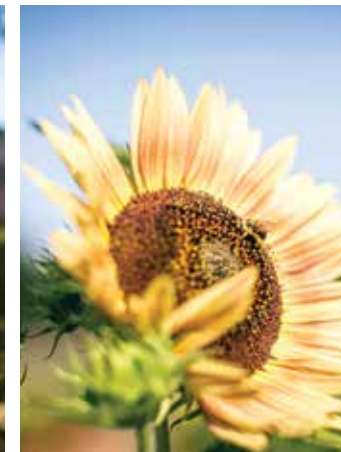


among Romani parents. Graduate student Kevin Basek '14 helped another NGO, Romea, promote positive media coverage of the Roma. Students also aided their hosting organization, Inclusio, by creating an educational video. The experience put a face to the realities of social exclusion. As part of the video, Basek interviewed a Romani taxi driver who holds a graduate degree in management. That left an impression: "Could you imagine if I returned to Lehigh for my master's in economics and couldn't get an opportunity to work in the field I'm studying?"

Novak says the internship experience "allowed not only a chance to do something concrete for Romani youth, but also demonstrated at least in a small way what efforts can be directed toward promoting greater social inclusion both in the Czech Republic and back in the U.S." ○



Honeybees are hard at work at Lehigh's new apiary.

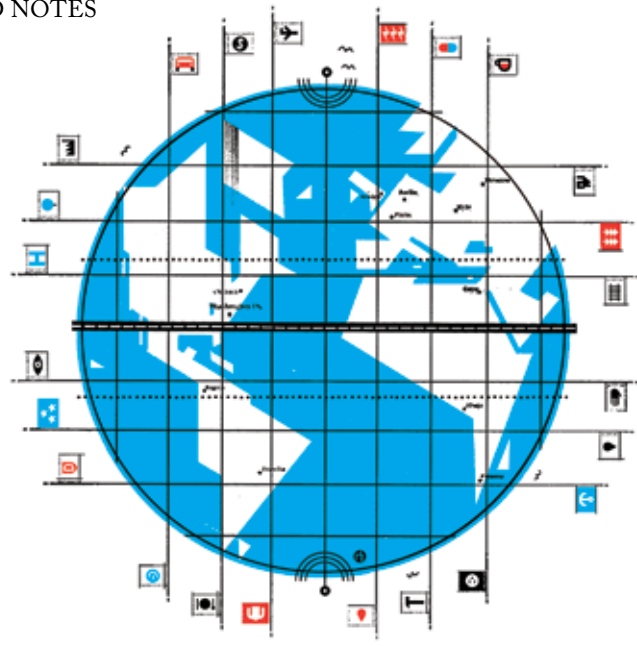


Community

The Buzz

Honeybees have been hard at work on the Mountaintop campus, home to the College of Education. A new apiary, alongside COE's Organic Education Garden, has been helping to raise awareness among students, faculty and staff about honeybees and colony collapse disorder, a condition that has led to honeybees dying or disappearing by the tens of millions around the world at an estimated global economic cost of \$5.7 billion annually. Lehigh's bees, while an educational tool on campus, also have been helping to pollinate the garden. ○

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTA NEU



The Reach of Research

Education in America is at a crossroads. Lehigh's commitment to innovative research and focus on applying research to practice allow College of Education faculty to help shape education and mental-health policy across the nation.

Bethlehem, Pa.

In preschool, children learn to recite their ABCs and 123s, share toys and interact well with others. While important skills, there's something often missing: shapes and spatial thinking. By leaving those math topics out, teachers may miss a learning window.

"Many people don't think about preschoolers and geometry, but research suggests children's knowledge of shapes solidifies around 6 years of age," says Robin Hojnoski, associate professor of Education and Human Services. "So these early years are the best time to intervene and build a rich and varied knowledge base."

Many preschool curricula focus heavily on play, she says. "[Italian physician and educator] Maria Montessori believed strongly in children's ability to think

mathematically, and she designed materials to support that learning," Hojnoski says. "We've gone away from that focus and pay less attention to meaningful work that cultivates deep knowledge."

To enrich the preschool math curriculum and classroom experience, Hojnoski is working with preschool teachers to implement strategies to increase mathematical focus in learning and activity stations, or centers. Her research builds on her work in mathematical development, but takes it in a



slightly different direction.

Last year, Hojnoski and her research team worked with the same classrooms in Donegan Elementary School as part of SPARK, which is the Bethlehem Area School District Preschool Program, and provided small group number and counting activities for the children in center time.

This year they will work with the same program, but they will concentrate more on geometry and spatial thinking, she says.

To incorporate their strategies, they are increasing the mathematical focus in existing activities as opposed to adding new "centers."

"For example, if a child is working in the block area and we strategically place materials, such as solid cylinders, tunnels, triangular prisms and pyramids in that area, the child will have a different experience and one that is more mathematical.

"Of course, teachers also will focus on mathematical vocabulary and concepts—such as the names and attributes of 3-D shapes which they can introduce during large group instruction prior to center time."

Overall, Hojnoski hopes to stimulate preschoolers' excitement about spatial math years before they measure their first angle.

"By making the mathematical focus more explicit through teaching vocabulary and concepts and providing structured experiences for children, we hope teachers will spend more time on math and shape activities," she says.

The hoped-for result: young children with a strong math and geometry foundation they can build on for learning years to come. ○

Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kansas, Missouri, South Carolina

To give high school kids with severe behavioral problems a better shot at graduation and a career, Professor Lee Kern developed the National Research and Development Center on Serious Behavior Disorders at the Secondary Level. As the five-year project ends, Kern and her fellow researchers are assessing data to determine what worked best.

"So far, several interventions look powerful, such as mentoring, so we are looking at how we can enhance that and identify predictors of good relationships between mentors and mentees," Kern says.

The researchers also are examining mental health interventions.

"We got a lot of really comprehensive demographic data, including what kinds of school and mental health services students receive, where and at what age they received them, and the link between the severity of their behavioral problems and the types of services provided," she says.

The researchers already have identified factors that figure into who gets services, including ethnicity and school location.

They also are looking into school special education labels. "There were students in our study who exhibited identical behaviors. Some get a special education diagnosis and others do not," she says. "We want to find out why."

The team will make recommendations to the U.S. Department of Education, which supported the project with a \$10.4 million grant. ○

Around the World

In a world that is becoming more connected, Lehigh faculty have become an integral part of the international dialogue surrounding education—particularly in regions where educational reform is undergoing intense scrutiny.



AUSTRALIA

Iveta Silova, associate professor of Comparative and International Education, has been working with a colleague in Australia on research related to childhood and globalization. They are collaborating on a book that will compare how childhood is envisioned in Western countries and in post-socialist ones. Silova also recently presented a seminar/lecture in Australia.



CHINA

Peggy A. Kong, assistant professor of Comparative and International Education, investigates educational and social inequality in Asia. She conducts research on parental involvement and girls' education in rural China to better understand social inequality and social mobility in China. Kong also compares private supplementary tutoring practices for primary and secondary students in Hong Kong and Japan.



TANZANIA

Jill Sperandio, associate professor of Education and Human Services, and Brandon Knettel, a Ph.D. candidate in counseling psychology, led a group of students in Tanzania. The group spent 10 days sealing the walls of a dirt-floor schoolhouse and giving presentations on sustainability, emotional and behavioral issues, special education, and HIV and AIDS.



CAMBODIA

Sothy Eng, professor of practice of Comparative and International Education, guided five interns this summer in their work with Caring for Cambodia, a non-governmental organization (NGO). The students carried out a number of initiatives, including workshops for English teachers and training in use of an online database for student information.



INDONESIA

With limited resources, five Lehigh students spent eight weeks living and working in a rural Indonesia village, where they worked together on problems that included health and educational matters. The students were led by Alexander Wiseman, associate professor of Comparative and International Education, and Stacy Burger, assistant director of International Services.



CZECH REPUBLIC

Christine Novak, professor of practice in School Psychology, accompanied six interns this summer to Prague to participate in Lehigh's Campaign for Social Inclusion. The students worked with three NGOs in projects that aimed to eliminate harmful stereotypes of the Romani people. Visits to an excluded community helped deepen their understanding of the issues.



Understanding ADHD

Greg is a 7-year-old first-grade student in a general education classroom in a public elementary school. Since preschool, he has had problems paying attention, acting quickly without thinking, and being very active and restless. These problems continued in kindergarten and first grade as teachers report him to have a short attention span, to struggle getting

work done, to have difficulties staying seated during group activities, and to interrupt conversations frequently. Greg's parents also notice these behaviors when he is asked to do chores as well as during mealtimes, getting ready for school, or preparing for bedtime. As a result of these behaviors, Greg is already well behind his peers in reading and math skills and has few friends

his age. Understandably, Greg's parents are very concerned about his school and social difficulties and have sought assistance from his pediatrician. Using information gathered from Greg's parents and teacher, his pediatrician diagnoses Greg with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and prescribes a stimulant medication to reduce his symptoms.

The educational and social challenges that Greg and his family face are typical for children with ADHD, a relatively common neurodevelopmental disorder affecting about 5 percent of youth in the United States and worldwide. Over the longterm, children like Greg are at higher than average risk for chronic underachievement, grade retention, school dropout, aggression toward classmates, and problems maintaining friendships and romantic relationships. My colleagues and I recently completed a national survey of teachers and found that about 7 percent of students in grades K-12 exhibit significant symptoms of ADHD (i.e., inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity) combined with impairments in academic or social functioning. ADHD symptoms and associated impairments are enormously costly to schools and families in terms of resources, finances, and emotional stress.

As is the case for Greg, most clinical and research treatment efforts focus on reducing symptoms with only secondary attention directed toward improving educational and social functioning. In fact, the hundreds of scientific investigations evaluating the effects of Ritalin and other stimulant medications have with few exceptions primarily examined the de-

gree to which medication reduces inattention, impulsive behavior, and hyperactivity. The good news is that these studies consistently show relatively large reductions in ADHD symptoms for the majority of youngsters receiving medication. Unfortunately, investigations also have shown that stimulant medication has modest effects, if any, on academic and social functioning. For example, the single



George DuPaul

... treatments, like stimulant medication, that primarily act to reduce ADHD symptoms must always be accompanied by other interventions that focus directly on improving academic and social impairments.

largest ADHD treatment study ever conducted (the Multimodal Treatment of ADHD or MTA study) found stimulants to reduce ADHD symptoms by about one standard deviation (considered a large effect) over 14 months. In contrast, that same study found less than a quarter standard deviation improvement in achievement test scores and social skills ratings for medication treatment.

In contrast, I believe that treatment for ADHD must primarily focus on critical areas of functioning rather than symptoms for several reasons. First, as was the case for Greg, parents and teachers are most concerned about children's ability to succeed academically and get along with classmates. It is those concerns, and not the symptoms per se, that typically prompt parents to seek treatment for children with ADHD in the first place. Second, parents and teachers don't consider treatment to be a success unless children make educational and

social progress. It isn't sufficient that children's attention improves and/or they become less impulsive and hyperactive. They also have to show concomitant growth in reading, math, and interpersonal skills for consumers (i.e., parents and teachers) to be satisfied with an intervention program. Third, in order for children with ADHD to be on par with their classmates, the former must not only behave simi-

larly to their peers but also must be on grade level academically and socially. Children are aware of how they measure up relative to their peers, and so for treatment to be successful in their eyes, they must see themselves as "normal."

The implicit assumption that many clinicians and researchers make is that reductions in ADHD symptoms will automatically lead to improvements in academic and social functioning. That is, if we can just get children to pay attention better, sit still, and wait their turn, then they will eventually show improvement in reading, math, other academic areas, and interpersonal skills. Unfortunately, as was demonstrated in the MTA project and other studies, this assumption is typically not supported. This means that treatments, like stimulant medication, that primarily act to reduce ADHD symptoms must always be accompanied by other interventions that focus directly on improving academic and social impairments. The latter strategies

include interventions that involve (a) teachers and parents changing classroom and home environments to prompt and reward desired levels of educational and social performance, (b) children receiving direct instruction and guided practice in academic skills, and (c) children monitoring and evaluating their own performance in class and/or with peers.

The advantage of using intervention strategies directly targeting areas of academic and social impairment is that studies have shown these treatments to not only improve functioning but also to reduce ADHD symptoms. That is, when children make progress in reading and math and getting along with classmates, they also tend to look more attentive and less hyperactive-impulsive. It would certainly be difficult for students to get their work done accurately and interact appropriately with their classmates without also paying attention and controlling their behavior. Given that treatment directly targeting academic and social functioning can essentially "kill two birds with one stone" by simultaneously impacting impairment and symptoms, it is critically important for clinicians (like Greg's pediatrician) to prioritize educational and social performance interventions over the more typical symptom reduction approach of medication. Ultimately, for children and adolescents with ADHD to succeed in school and life, they will need sustained treatment not just for symptoms but supportive strategies that directly focus on improving their functioning. ○

George DuPaul, professor of School Psychology



STATE OF THE UNION

WRITTEN BY MARGIE PETERSON
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANTONELLO SILVERINI

HAVE TEACHERS UNIONS BECOME OBSTACLES TO REFORM IN THE BATTLE OVER PUBLIC EDUCATION?

As a newly minted New York City math teacher in 1953, Albert Shanker earned \$2,600 for the year – \$23,200 in today’s dollars. He could have made more washing cars.

Shanker would go on to organize the United Federation of Teachers and become one of most innovative and controversial union leaders of his time as president of the American Federation of Teachers for 23 years.

He was galvanized to work for collective bargaining rights not just by the low wages but also by the working conditions. Principals ruled schools, sometimes as their own personal fiefdoms, routinely requiring teachers to give up lunch breaks to supervise recess or sit through endless afterschool meetings.

Fast forward five decades. New York City teachers deemed by administrators as unfit for the classroom sat in “rubber rooms,” or reassignment centers, where they read or did puzzles while collecting full salaries and waiting sometimes for years for their cases to be resolved. The reassignment centers were estimated to cost taxpayers \$65 million a year.



The rubber rooms became symbols of everything education reformers say is wrong with public schools.

They begged the question: Has the pendulum swung too far? Have unions, which elevated a beleaguered profession, become obstacles to improving education? Do unions protect bad teachers and hold students and communities hostage to their demands?

Welcome to the teachers union wars. On one side are education reformers, including groups backed by heirs to the WalMart fortune and other super wealthy Americans. Those reformers argue that unions and teacher tenure stand in the way of removing incompetent teachers and providing more choices for families seeking better educations for their children. On the other side are two of the biggest unions in America and their allies who say the reformers are ultimately seeking to dismantle the public school system and privatize education.

For decades, the 3-million-member National Education Association and the 1.6-million-member American Federation of Teachers have been huge contributors to mostly Democratic candidates and have usually been able to count on the party's support in the political arena. But unions haven't been happy with the Obama administration's Race to the Top program, and

more recently, some well-known Democrats have joined the reformers' cause. Former Obama White House press secretary Robert Gibbs and high-profile lawyer David Boies are among those signing on with former CNN host Campbell Brown's efforts to challenge teacher tenure in court.

Unions also appear to be losing ground in the battle for public opinion. In 1976, a Gallup poll found that 38 percent of Americans thought unionization of teachers had hurt the quality of public education. In 2011, that figure rose to 47 percent.

Teachers complain the high-stakes testing regimen borne of the No Child Left Behind law has narrowed the curriculum. Now they are facing the use of those test scores in

job evaluations. Meanwhile, charter schools lure away students and siphon off revenue, leaving school districts with what some say are harder-to-teach populations and less money to do it.

Unions are playing a lot of defense. But the NEA's new president, Lily Eskelsen Garcia, is pushing back against what she calls "factory school reform" in which standardized test scores are the barometer used to judge all schools and demoralized teachers are cowed into teaching to the test.

"The revolution I want is 'proceed until apprehended,' Garcia told The Washington Post. "Don't you dare let someone tell you not to do that Shakespeare play because it's not on the achievement tests. Whether they [reformers] have sinister motives or misguided honest motives, we should say, 'We are not going to listen to you anymore. We are going to do what's right.'"

Garcia sees the attacks on unions as part of a larger agenda by wealthy backers of the reform groups: "If they can get rid of unions, then there is nothing in their way from privatizing public schools." She hopes to win more public support by demonstrating that teachers unions are working for better schools, not just job protection and higher salaries.

A former Utah Teacher of the Year, Garcia

first turned to activism in an effort to reduce class sizes in Utah schools after she was assigned a sixth-grade class with 39 students. When she became president of Utah's NEA affiliate, she worked successfully with a Republican governor to fund more teachers to keep class sizes down. Garcia says she has seen the difference it makes to children when they get personal attention, even if it can't be measured by standardized tests.

But some reformers see unions as part of the problem, not architects of solutions to educational ills. They say unions and tenure laws make it extremely difficult to fire ineffective teachers.

The New York State School Boards Association looked at 11 years of teacher termination proceedings and found that it costs about \$313,000 and an average of 830 days to get rid of one teacher. Reports from California showed that the Los Angeles Unified School District spent \$3.5 million trying to fire just seven teachers deemed incompetent, an amount that included paying the teachers full salary and benefits during the process.

Terry Moe, a Stanford University political science professor and author of *Special Interest: Teachers Unions and America's Public*

"If they can get rid of unions, then there is nothing in their way from privatizing public schools." —Lily Eskelsen

Garcia, president, National Education Association

Schools," says the problem is that unions protect bad teachers.

"Because they are so effective, principals know that and they're just not going to get involved in that," Moe says. "What they do is they try to get them transferred so they wind up in somebody else's school... In education, they have a term for that. It's called the 'Dance of the Lemons.'"

Even when districts are willing to spend the money and time, they don't always get the desired result, according to Reshma Singh, executive director of Campbell Brown's group,

Partnership for Educational Justice.

"A principal could spend three years documenting these charges, so the teacher could have hundreds of students along the way," Singh says. "Then you could have a dismissal process that takes two years, and in the end of it, it may not even have the outcome that the district was hoping for despite all of the evidence that was collected showing ineffectiveness."

Reform advocates won a victory in June when Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Rolf M. Treu found that the California teacher tenure and seniority system was unconstitutional. In *Vergara v. California*, Treu ruled for the plaintiffs who argued that the current system makes it too difficult to remove incompetent teachers and results in poorer schools with a high percentage of low-income children ending up with more bad teachers. The judge said the system violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

The Treu decision is being appealed, and both sides agree that it is by no means the last word on teacher tenure. Singh's group is backing a similar lawsuit, *Wright v. New York*.

Union representatives say that where there are problems with the dismissal process, they have worked to fix them. New York City worked with the UFT and New York State United Teachers to place time limits on the process and end the rubber rooms.

Alice O'Brien of the NEA Office of General Counsel said her union doesn't provide lawyers for teachers convicted of a crime against a student. Of cases where they do provide legal assistance, more than 90 percent "are resolved without even going to a hearing and for very little cost."

Barbara Goodman, communications director for the Pennsylvania branch of the American Federation of Teachers, said if a teacher is accused of harming kids, he or she can be removed from a classroom immediately. They will have due process rights but the investigation will go on without them in the classroom.

"People have a right to defend themselves,

and they have a right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty,” Goodman says. “And that is the American system. Should the process be dragged out? No. If it’s a bad process, fix the process, don’t get rid of the union.”

Goodman and NEA representatives say many weak teachers are “counseled out” of the profession by their peers and administrators.

Richard Kahlenberg, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation, a progressive think tank, says some school districts, such as in Toledo, Ohio, and Montgomery County, Maryland, have found success in instituting a peer assistance and review process. Kahlenberg described the rise of the Toledo program in the 1980s in his biography of Albert Shanker, “Tough Liberal.”

“Expert teachers come into a school and try to help struggling teachers improve their craft,” he says. “And if it turns out the assistance isn’t working, then the teachers recommend that their peers be terminated. In places like Montgomery County, Maryland, the number of teachers that are fired or terminated through that mechanism is much greater than in the past when principals were in charge of deciding whose employment was terminated.”

But Kahlenberg and unions point out that retaining good teachers is also a problem. Research shows nearly 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years.

Teacher retention is one reason why unions have an uneasy relationship with Teach for America. Founded in 1990, TFA recruits new college graduates, including many non-education majors, gives them five weeks of training and places them in mostly poor inner city schools. Many of those schools are charters and only 12 percent of charters are unionized. Some TFA teachers continue to teach after their two-year commitment is up, but many do not. By five years, only about 15 percent remain at those schools – which is a higher attrition rate than teachers who go through regular teaching certification.

Union critics like Moe and Singh also bemoan a seniority system that forces districts to let go of newer teachers first when budget cuts force layoffs.

“If you were doing it based on what’s best

for kids, you would keep the most productive teachers, the very best teachers, and you would lay off the worst teachers,” Moe says. “But that’s not what happens. The unions insist on seniority and in the case of layoffs, it’s the youngest, lowest seniority teachers who get laid off even if some of those teachers are the very best in the district.”

But in such cases, how do you decide who is best? Unions argue that basing teacher quality on student standardized test scores is a seriously flawed way of determining good and bad teachers.

MURKY RESEARCH RESULTS

The research on whether unionization and collective bargaining help or harm students is a mixed bag, partly because it is difficult to isolate the effect of unions on student achievement.

“My reading of the research is that our difficulties with raising achievement have very little to do with – or anything to do with – teachers unions,” Kahlenberg says.

In 2002, Robert Carini of Indiana University Bloomington did a review of 17 studies on the effects of unions on student achievement and found that the preponderance of methodologically rigorous studies showed increased student achievement for average students in unionized schools. “At the same time, a union presence was harmful for the very lowest- and highest-achieving students,” Carini wrote.

Meanwhile, Moe says the best studies were done by Caroline Hoxby in 1996 in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, himself in 2009 in the *American Journal of Political Science* and Katharine Strunk in 2011 in the journal *Education Finance and Policy*. All three show negative effects from unionization.

Still, unions argue that if they are bad for students, why do states with strong unions like Massachusetts and New Jersey consistently have higher test scores than Right to Work states like Mississippi and Alabama?

It’s complicated, Moe says, pointing out that Mississippi has a history of segregation and is one of the poorest states.



“Part of the reason Massachusetts scores so well is it has among the highest per capita income in the whole country and it has very low levels of minorities compared to states like Mississippi,” he says. “Those are the big factors right there.”

Of course poverty is a factor in how well students do generally on standardized tests, unions say, which is why it’s unfair to tie test scores to teacher evaluations or pay.

While poverty is a significant problem, it can’t be an excuse to avoid improving the quality of teachers in low-income areas, reformers say. “I just don’t think we can afford to wait until we have fixed poverty to fix schools,” Singh says.

THE NEW ORLEANS EXPERIMENT

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina swept away much of New Orleans, including its largely unionized, low-achieving public schools. They were replaced by a wave of mostly non-unionized charter schools.

Some education reformers saw this as a near perfect experiment for determining whether unions have a positive or negative effect on

learning. Overall, test scores have been rising, but in the city’s Recovery School District they are still considerably lower than the Louisiana average.

Some skeptics say New Orleans is not the ideal Petri dish for the union/non-union experiment because the before-and-after student population is not the same and neither is the spending per pupil. Many students did not return after Katrina, and charter schools receive funding from philanthropies as well as taxpayer money.

Unions and their allies say a better gauge of the effectiveness of mostly non-union charter schools is how they rate nationwide, compared to traditional

public schools. There are some terrific charter schools that consistently boast of high student achievement, but on average, charters don’t outscore regular public schools.

CHANGING ECONOMY

So if there is a war against teachers unions, why is it happening now? According to Kahlenberg, it has to do with the changing nature of the U.S. economy.

“To our credit, our society is really trying for the first time to educate students from all backgrounds to high levels,” he says. “For years we didn’t need to do that because we had a lot of blue collar jobs that did not require people to have high levels of education. You could effectively write off large chunks of society and still have a functioning economy, and that’s no longer true.

“We really need to tap into the talents of all of our students so the stakes are higher than ever before. As a result there are new efforts to try to improve education for students from all types of backgrounds, and it’s proving incredibly difficult. And when you’re in a frustrating situation, it’s tempting to look for scapegoats, and so the teachers unions are an easy one.” ○

verely curtail the use of restraints and permanently retire so-called “scream rooms” nationwide, just as George did at Centennial School 15 years ago.

An ABC News Nightline investigation in 2012 revealed that at least 75 students had died and thousands more were injured after being restrained by school staff or locked

RESPECT BEGETS RESPECT. RESTRAINT AND ‘SCREAM ROOMS’ ARE HURTING KIDS. CENTENNIAL SCHOOL OFFERS ANOTHER WAY OF DEALING WITH STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS.

Written By Daryl Nerl • Illustration by Jeffrey Fisher

The environment at the Centennial School when Michael George took charge of it in 1998 was violent.

Teachers at the school for students with autism and behavioral challenges had to forcibly restrain students more than 1,000 times during the previous year. As many as 25 staff members were being sent to hospital emergency rooms with injuries every year.

“We had teachers who were punched in the face,” George says. “The students had figured out they could assault teachers because the only thing that’s going to happen to them was that teachers were going to put you to the ground, hold you tightly, talk softly to you, and ask you to settle down.”

Within months of his arrival, George implemented new techniques for dealing with obstreperous behavior among the school’s 85 students. By the end of that first year, the number of restraint incidents had been reduced to zero, and the school’s seclusion rooms—where children who behaved badly were locked away in solitary confinement for hours at a time—were permanently closed.

At the time, George didn’t think he was doing anything particularly revolutionary.

Prior to arriving in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, George worked at a similar school in Eugene, Oregon where he and his staff never restrained one child in seven years.

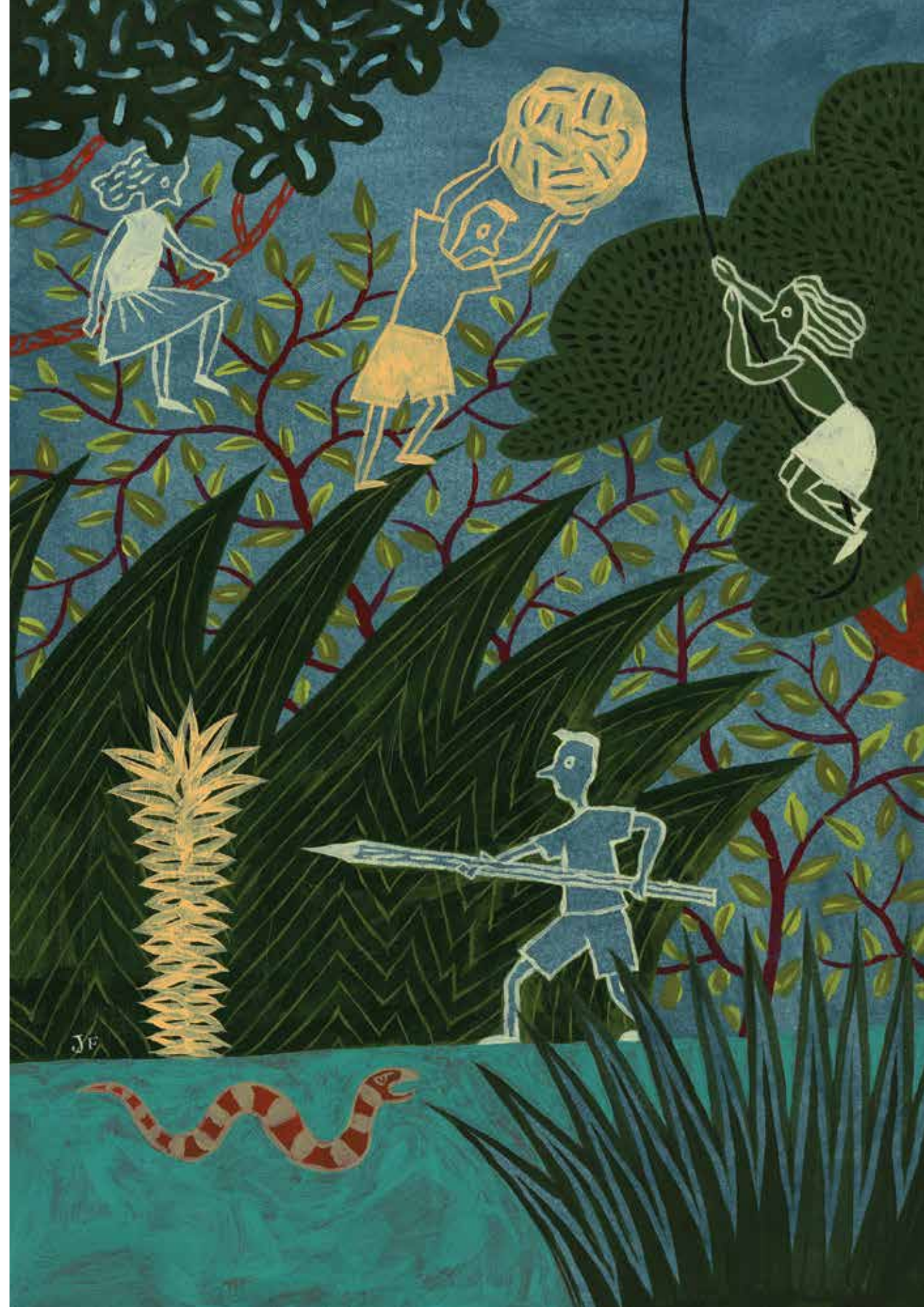
“This was just the way we did business,” George says. “I didn’t think anything of it. I wasn’t following national statistics at the time. Restraint and seclusion weren’t on the national radar. No one was talking about it.”

Lately, national media have been focusing attention on how children are being injured or—in a few cases—have died at the hands of school staff members trying to control unruly behavior. At the same time, some members of Congress are trying to se-

away in a seclusion room. The stories put a spotlight on George and the Centennial School, governed by Lehigh University’s College of Education, for adhering to Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports techniques for dealing with children with behavioral problems.

At Centennial School, children might be separated from their classmates, but never placed in seclusion and rarely restrained. Teachers might ask the student to calm down and discuss what is making them angry or frustrated. In some cases, the teacher might ignore the child until the behavior becomes acceptable. The emphasis is on teaching children a better way to behave rather than simply punishing bad behavior, George says.

“I view misbehavior on the part of young children as a skill deficit that can be taught. If students haven’t yet acquired a skill, we should teach it; we should teach social behavior in the same way we teach academics,” he says. “After all if you’re in math class and you miss 2 plus 2, teachers don’t put you in a closet and restrain you to the floor. They gently correct you



and give you more information so you won't make the error in the future."

Like many others, George said he was "outraged" by some of the punishment tactics revealed in the Nightline report, which included methods such as electrical shocks and specialized duffel bags to stuff children into when they misbehaved.

"I couldn't believe things like that were happening in our society," George said.

Earlier that year, the U.S. Department of Education put out a "resource document" that was extremely critical of the practices of seclusion and restraint.

"Restraint or seclusion should not be used as routine school safety measures; that is they should not be implemented except in situations where a child's behavior poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others and not as a routine strategy implemented to address instructional problems or inappropriate behavior, as a means of coercion or retaliation, or as a convenience," the document says.

According to one analysis of U.S. Department of Education data, practices that include pinning children face down on the floor,

sion and to severely limit the use of restraints in schools, and to provide teachers and school leaders with the resources to replace these antiquated techniques with learning environments that engage students so incidences of challenging behaviors are decreased and learning in schools is optimized."

George, who attended Harkin's news conference and has testified before Congress about seclusion and restraint, agrees with the goals of the senator's bill, including the outright banning of locked seclusion rooms, a practice he called "terrifying" for children.

One 13-year-old boy hanged himself after school officials gave him a rope to keep his pants up and

locked him in a room by himself, according to ProPublica.

"Seclusion likely results in all kinds of adverse psychological effects on the child," George says. "Picture yourself as a child in school, and a group of adults come into your room, drag you to a closet, lock the door and walk away, and leave you in the dark. It's solitary confinement is what it is, and I don't know that we need to be using that with our children."

Only Georgia has completely banned the use of scream rooms. Ten other states only allow seclusion in emergencies. Six other states, including George's home state of Pennsylvania, only place prohibitions against using the practice on disabled students.

Regulations on the circumstances or method of placing restraints on unruly children also vary widely from state to state.

"We can do this by state if we wish, but I think it's grossly unfair to parents in one state to have their children corporally punished, run into timeout rooms, restrained to the floor ... and then right across the border, in another state, those practices are banned," George says.

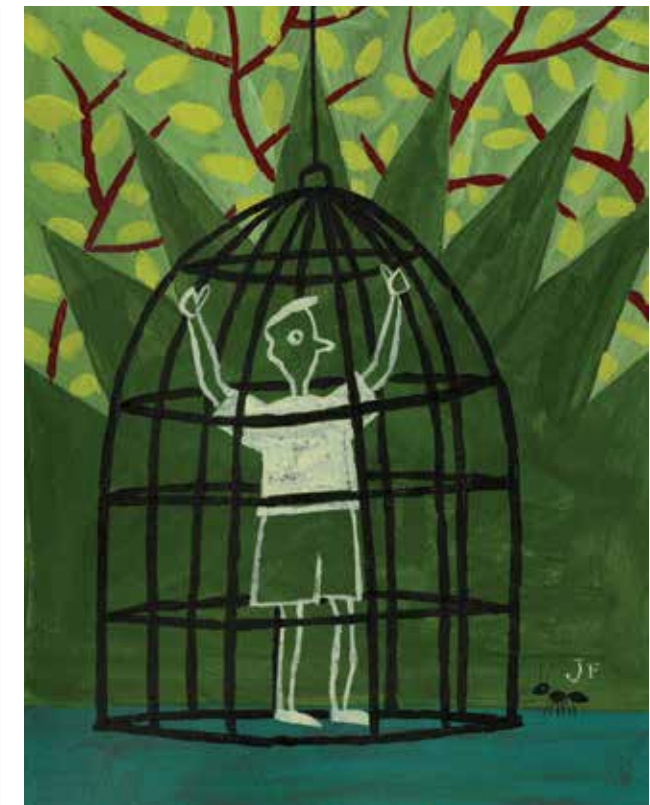
"We wouldn't allow pedophilia in one state and not in another. I think national standards of some sort would be very helpful in this regard because we're talking about situations that cause psychological trauma and have the potential of causing death."

But one important group of educators is opposed to the bill.

"We believe the use of seclusion and restraint has enabled many students with serious emotional or behavioral conditions to be educated not only within our public schools, but also in the least restrictive and safest environments possible," says a 2012 report prepared by the American Association of School Administrators.

"Some of the approximately 4.7 million school personnel working in our public schools are not perfect," the report says. "The unfortunate reality is that they make a variety of mistakes, sometimes intentionally, that can hurt children. However, AASA does not support federal policies built around the few wrongful individuals who choose to disobey school policies, state regulations, or state and federal criminal laws."

While the AASA report asserts that "school personnel around the country understand seclusion and restraint should only be used in rare circumstances where other interventions have failed to address student behavior," George says that the practices in many schools have become a primary method of dealing with bad behavior rather than a last resort to be used only when the



child has become a danger to himself or herself and/or others.

"There are people, I think, who would like to institutionalize the practice as one more strategy or technique in dealing with children who have obstreperous behavior," George says. "And I believe when you get yourself in that position, you're going to find that it will be overused and abused. I think that's what you have in this country at this point."

Restraint and seclusion were "common" at Centennial School when George arrived.

"That was just how you dealt with these children I was told, and when I suggested otherwise, people said, 'you don't understand these children.... When you work with children with behavior problems, you restrain them,'" George says.

And it wasn't just teachers who were skeptical of the changes George was proposing.

"The students were upset when I changed the rules," George says. "Kids habituate to the environment they're in. To them the misbehavior-restraint cycle was school. I was now asking them to control themselves and take responsibility for their behaviors."

"Adults don't understand sometimes when they put in things like seclusion rooms and restraint procedures and they engage in that practice frequently, they're basically communicating to the students that this is the proper way to deal with conflict. Adults are the ones that set the rules. It starts with a different approach, a different philosophy, different beliefs in what you believe about children

"I VIEW MISBEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF YOUNG CHILDREN AS A SKILL DEFICIT THAT CAN BE TAUGHT."—Michael George, Director, Centennial School

tying them up with straps, handcuffs, bungee cords or duct tape and locking them in dark closets were used more than 267,000 times during the 2012 school year alone.

The analysis, by non-profit newsroom ProPublica and National Public Radio, showed that three-quarters of the children that had been restrained or secluded had physical, emotional or intellectual disabilities. Mechanical restraints were used 7,600 times.

And child experts and advocates like George say those figures are likely understated. Less than one-third of all schools reported using restraints or seclusion even once during the school year, according to ProPublica.

In many states, schools are not required to report instances of restraint or seclusion—not to state education authorities, not to law enforcement, not even to the parents of students on whom the techniques are being applied.

In February, U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, introduced the Keeping All Students Safe Act, which would bar the use of seclusion in locked, unattended rooms and would prohibit almost all uses of restraint procedures in schools.

"These practices provide no educational benefit, yet unsupervised seclusion and physical restraints are being used thousands of times each year against our nation's school children," Harkin said during a news conference.

"My goal is to bring about change—to stop the use of seclu-

and following through with those beliefs even when it gets tough.”

George talked about one recent incident at Centennial School when he had to confront a 19-year-old student who lost control at the school library—throwing furniture, screaming and threatening to harm others.

“I walked into the room and I said, ‘I’m going to ask you to calm down. I want you to take a seat,’” George recalled. “He told me to ‘get f—’ and that he was going to do some horrible things to me.

“I made sure the rest of the area was secure, that teachers kept the doors shut and locked. After another five minutes, he continued. I noticed, interestingly enough though, that when I stood in front of him, he didn’t throw one piece of furniture in my direction. He’d start throwing it in the other direction. The tirade continued.

at Centennial and was working in a different school. In her special education class, one child took a chair, put it on top of a table and then sat in it.

“The teacher chose to ignore the behavior and carried on with the rest of class,” George says.

“When the child finally came down from the table, put both feet on the floor ... she gave him attention. ‘I’m glad you’re ready to join the class,’” she told the child.

“PICTURE YOURSELF AS A CHILD IN SCHOOL, AND A GROUP OF ADULTS COME INTO YOUR ROOM, DRAG YOU TO A CLOSET, LOCK THE DOOR AND WALK AWAY, AND LEAVE YOU IN THE DARK. IT’S SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IS WHAT IT IS.”—Michael George, Director, Centennial School

“So finally, I said I’m going to have to ask you to stop or I’m going to have to contact the police. He did not stop. We contacted the police. The police came. By that time, he was exhausted. He was sitting in a chair. The police arrived. The student put the library back together again at the direction of the police.”

No charges were pressed against the young man, who was referred to his psychiatrist. George says he was convinced the student was being overmedicated and that this led to the episode.

In another case George described, a child in the elementary part of Centennial School got upset and flipped over a desk as he stormed out of his class. The boy went to the school program coordinator’s office and barricaded himself in by pushing furniture up against a door.

“I waited a few minutes,” George says. “I kind of pushed the door open. I went in. I sat down. And I sat there for 35 minutes, and I did not open my mouth. And the boy sat there, waiting to see what was going to happen.

“After 35 minutes, he said, ‘I’m ready to problem solve.’ I said, ‘Good. Let’s problem solve.’ Then we had a discussion about how you don’t have to behave that way at Centennial School when you have an issue or a problem. Instead, you can ask for help and we’ll talk about it, and we’ll come up with a solution.

“That boy had a history of doing very similar things, very aggressive, physically dangerous things in his home school which is why he was referred to Centennial School. The episode I described at Centennial happened four years ago. He’s still in our school. He’s never behaved that way since then.”

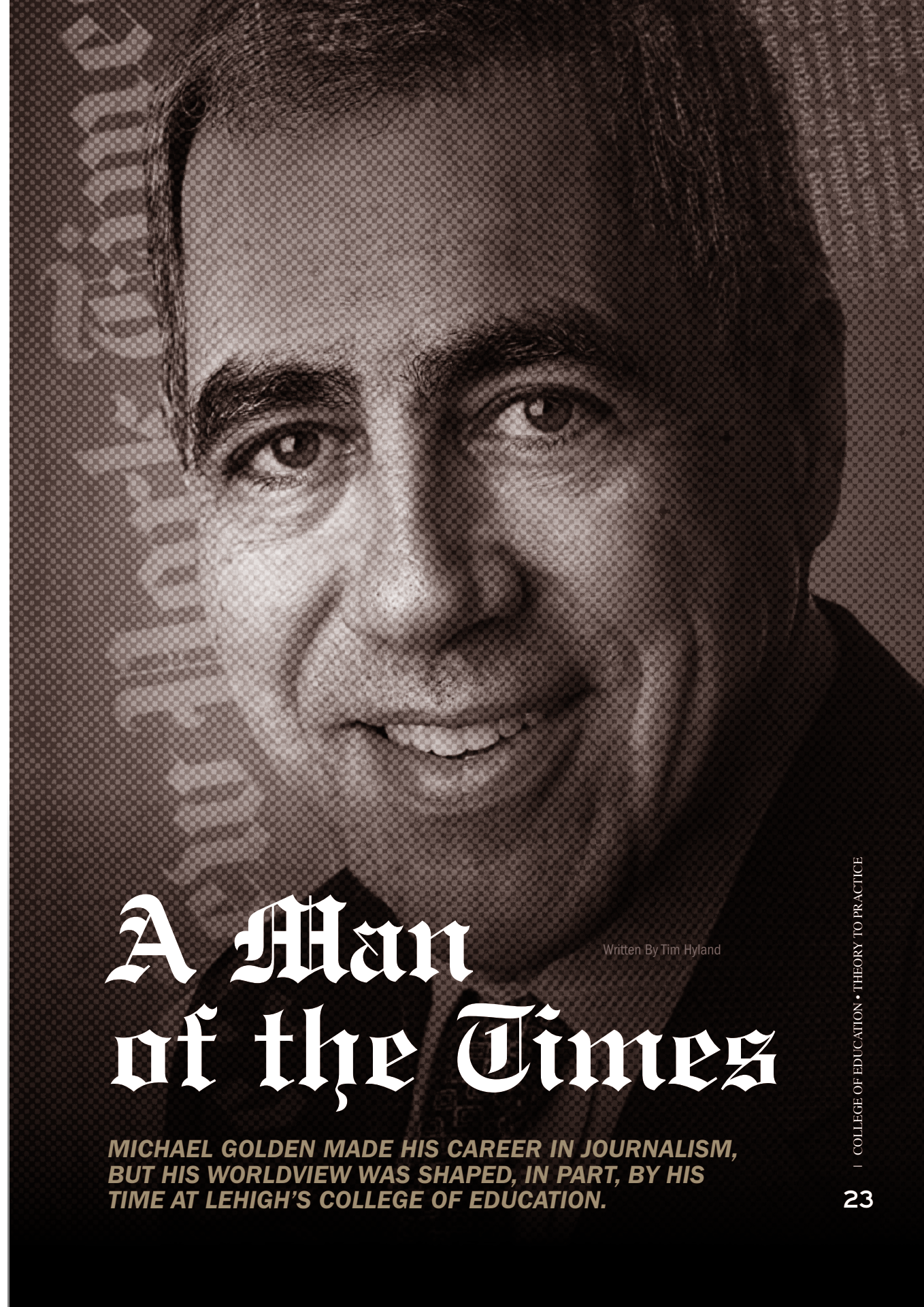
If a child’s unruly behavior isn’t aggressive or dangerous, another method is to ignore the child until the behavior improves. George cited an experience of a teacher who had been trained

The class carried on without further interruption. But the classroom aides and the school principal were upset with the teacher, George says.

“If it had been up to the principal, it seems, the boy would have been dragged down from the table, restrained, and put in timeout,” he says. “He would have been punished for the behavior, which, if you think about it, would have likely reinforced that behavior because the boy would have gotten what he wanted in the first place, which was attention.”

Occasionally, George says, there will be instances where restraint becomes the best option. But that should be the rare exception.

“There is very little good that comes out of it,” George says. “There is much more harm, potential harm and greater harm, and there are better ways of dealing with it, so let’s try those better ways. If we were to do that with fidelity and if we were to do that across time, I think what we would see is a decrease in the level of violence in our public schools.” ○



A Man of the Times

Written By Tim Hyland

MICHAEL GOLDEN MADE HIS CAREER IN JOURNALISM, BUT HIS WORLDVIEW WAS SHAPED, IN PART, BY HIS TIME AT LEHIGH’S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.

MICHAEL GOLDEN DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A “CHILD OF THE 1960S.” AND HE’S GOT THE STORY TO PROVE IT.

Golden, who has served as vice chairman for the New York Times Company since 1997, has spent the past three decades working in the world of journalism, helping the Times maintain its status as perhaps the most important and respected news organization in the world.

But while Golden ’71 ‘74G was born into the newspaper business—his cousin, Arthur O. Sulzberger Jr., is currently chairman and publisher of the Times—he wasn’t always certain that journalism was his calling. In fact, for a while, he was fairly certain he wanted to be a teacher. And that’s precisely what he came to Lehigh to learn to be.

Golden earned his B.A. from Lehigh in 1971, then enrolled in the College of Education to earn his master’s degree in higher education. It was then, during his time with COE, that he stumbled across a unique program that, to his mind, perfectly meshed with his 1960s idealism. That program saw Golden and his fellow COE students spend one academic year teaching inmates at prisons around Pennsylvania.

That often difficult, often unnerving year, says Golden, only validated his belief in the enduring power of education.

Golden recently took a look back on his unique Lehigh experience, and shared his thoughts on how his time in Philadelphia’s Graterford prison shaped the way he views the worlds of education, public policy and journalism.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES.

“I am the vice chairman of the New York Times Company. I’m also the head of the human resources department, and I have our international division reporting to me—the international New York Times and all web activity outside of the U.S. I have been at the company for 30 years this year, and I’ve had a varied career here. I’ve been in the magazine business, in our regional newspaper business, in the corporate center of the company. I was publisher of the International Herald Tribune from 2003 to 2008 and I’ve also done work on the human resources side of things. I’ve had a really great opportunity to work in a wide variety of positions over the years.”

YOU HAVE MADE MOST OF YOUR ENTIRE CAREER IN JOURNALISM, BUT YOU STUDIED AT LEHIGH’S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND EVEN WORKED AS A TEACHER FOR A WHILE. HOW AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE COE? AND WHY DID YOU WANT A CAREER IN EDUCATION?

“When I was in high school, my ambition was to be a math and science teacher. And that ambition led to my ending up at Lehigh. While I was in school there, my interests changed and were less about math and science and more about sociology and social psychology—those sorts of behavioral sciences. But the desire to teach never went away. In fact, I actually worked for a couple of years as a potter. I took a course

at Moravian in pottery, worked as an apprentice, and helped out with some classes. Of course, I eventually concluded that that wasn’t going to work, and so I started looking around for jobs in teaching in the Lehigh Valley. I didn’t have much luck, but then I learned about this opportunity at the College of Education, in a program that was then called Social Restoration. It was partly funded by the state to help train people in how to teach and work in the prison system. That was a perfect fit at the time.”

WHY WAS IT SUCH A PERFECT FIT?

“I’m a child of the 1960s, and trying to do ‘good’ was high on my list of priorities. I wanted to help people who were disadvantaged, and I thought that program would bring together my passions for teaching and social activism, and so I jumped at it very quickly.

“As it turned out, the timing was just right. They were in the final stages of selecting a class, and I found myself accepted into the program. I worked with a class of about 15 students, and we dispersed ourselves during that school year into three different facilities. I was assigned to the maximum security prison called Graterford [in the Philadelphia area], and I taught there for nine months. The experience had a dramatic impact on me in many ways.”

HOW SO?

“It was a real education. In part, that was because I was learning more about teaching, but I was also seeing a side of society that I had not been much exposed to. It was amazing to see a different side of things, especially with respect to how a lack of educational opportunities could have a negative impact on a certain population. But I also saw how education could improve somebody’s situation.”

DO YOU RECALL WHAT IT WAS LIKE WORKING INSIDE GRATERFORD? WAS IT CHALLENGING? UNNERVING?

“Oh, I remember what it was like. That memory has not faded. I don’t think I had a clear expectation for what I was going to experience when I first went in. I think maybe I was a bit naïve, in that I felt we would have a greater impact than we eventually did. Now, I do think I made a meaningful impact, but it was really on a smaller number of students.”

WHY WAS THAT?

“That first week we were there, we had people coming in by the dozens for our program. There were 15 or 20 in every class, and we were very excited. But after the first week, those numbers dwindled down to maybe five people. I was sitting there thinking, ‘Wow, I must be doing a terrible job—I’m driving away all of the students!’ Well, of course, what’s closer to the truth is that a lot of the residents felt that going to school would look good if and when they went before the parole board, and that it was what the board would have wanted them to do. But then they got to class and realized it was going to be work. In that sense it was almost like a New Year’s resolution for some of them. But the ones who did stay, I have to say, they were very committed to it.”

DID YOUR TIME THERE CHANGE THE WAY YOU LOOKED AT THE WORLD?

“Just the experience of being there was very powerful. Within the first couple of weeks that we were there, a prison guard was killed in an interaction with an inmate. While we never heard the truth behind the story, it seemed like maybe this guy was bringing in stuff for the inmates, and then the relationship went badly wrong. They locked down the prison. The guards went on strike. Prisons were becoming less autocratic and more open in reporting about what was going on in them. The guards

didn't necessarily like that change. They liked the old system where guards were the absolute masters. But all of a sudden, the residents were allowed to move freely around the prison. They could choose not to do certain jobs. The guards felt that all of this change was what was causing all of the ills in the prison, and so they went on strike. But my colleagues and I felt we were there to do some good. We stayed and we helped as much as we could. There were a lot of angry, upset people in that prison, and there were a lot of threats made. But none of it ended up being serious."

WHAT WAS YOUR NEXT STEP?

"Well, then I went back into fantasy land for a while. My wife and I moved to France in 1974, and we both found work as teachers in France. It was idyllic. We traveled Europe. We learned to speak French. It was a spectacular experience. But after two years, I then realized that teaching was not going to be my life's work. I eventually had to decide then whether to go into journalism—which is the family business, of course—or go to law school. I chose correctly, I think, and went into journalism."

SO YOU'VE MADE YOUR LIFE IN JOURNALISM. BUT DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR EXPERIENCE AT LEHIGH, AND ESPECIALLY YOUR TIME IN THAT PRISON, HAS INFORMED THE WAY YOU VIEW THE WORLD AND YOUR WORK?

"Yes. It was absolutely pivotal in helping me realize that there are parts of our society that are shielded, guarded, kept secret—places where you really don't know what's going on. I also learned that we as a society don't spend enough resources on certain things, even though we clearly should. And I believe

education is one of them. Sometimes I believe that America does not value its children enough. We don't pay for pre-K programs. We don't pay for good food in schools so those children have proper nutrition. We don't pay for their health care. We underfund schools, and we underpay teachers, and we are reaping the results of that. Look at our lack of competitiveness around the world. That's not a fluke. That's a result of decisions that we have made. But I see what the College of Education is doing—the real world efforts they are making to bring new ideas to the marketplace, the real practices they are introducing that can change the way kids are educated. That's critically important."

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN EDUCATION? WHAT COULD YOU TELL THEM TO CONVINCe THEM THAT IT MIGHT BE THE RIGHT PATH FOR THEM?

"I always liked that fabled story about how Steve Jobs went out and recruited John Scully to Apple from Pepsi. He was having trouble selling John on the idea, and then finally he said, 'John, do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water? Or do you want to change the world?' So along those same lines, I would ask students, 'What is your goal? What do you want to do with your life?' If you want to have an impact on people, and if you want to help people live a better life, then the field of education is a great place to do that. If your goal is to make a lot of money, then maybe an MBA or a law degree is a better choice. And that's fine. But if your ambition is to have a lifestyle that allows you to make a real and positive difference in this world, then education is a prime place to do that."

"And that's one of the fun things about working at the New York Times. The journalism that we do has a real impact. It has changed the debate on so many topics, and education provides the opportunity to have the same kind of impact." ○

ON TOPIC

Ethical Codes for School Leaders

States, like organizations, set high standards for education leaders but their codes lack any means of enforcement.

The ethical framework for school leaders is like a Venn diagram, with students' best interest at the center, and in the overlapping frames, the ethical codes of professional organizations and, in some jurisdictions, state laws.

The University Council for Education Administration (UCEA) ethical code—akin to the ethical codes of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the American Association of School Administrators—has approximately 10 broad principles, such as "valu[ing] and respect[ing] the diversity of person, practice and thought." The major difference is that the UCEA code focuses on the preparation of education leaders, while the other codes are for the practice of education leaders.

The UCEA code is largely distinct from the other three codes; the commonality is limited to the partial overlap for integrity, reform, and research, while other explicit values, such as the emphasis on diversity, are exclusive to its special mission. But what is missing from all of these ethical codes—arguably another overriding commonality—is a lack of any enforcement mechanism, including sanctions.

In contrast, for example, the American Bar Association's ethical code for the law profession has separate functional categories that each have specific items on an

ample basis; differentiated operant verbs, such as "shall" and "may"; comments to clarify the standards and to supplement them with aspirational "shoulds"; an express provision for discipline, and adoption with slight, customized variation at the state level.

Do state laws fill the gap in more detailed coverage and force?

My recent systematic analysis,

which is published in the fall 2014 issue of the *Journal of Law and Education*, revealed that 34 states have ethical codes that cover K–12 school leaders, with most but not all of them with clear legal force. Perhaps more significantly, only four—Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, and South Dakota—were specific to public school administrators, with the rest covering school leaders within a generic rubric for educators.

Other findings included:

- The legal form of the 34 codes were as follows: legislation, 26; state board of education officially approved policies, 6; and, marginally, guidelines, 2.

- The content of the codes fit into nine identifiable, albeit overlapping, categories: specific to the law, the school board, employees, students, parents and community; equitable environment; character traits; broad behavior, and specific behavior. The majority of the codes addressed in part all

these categories except for parent/community-specific conduct. The most frequent categories were specific educator behaviors and student-specific conduct.

- Content analysis also yielded identifiable subsets for each of the nine categories, with the highest weighted frequencies accorded to protecting student safety; avoiding other discrimination; reporting information honestly; avoiding personal gain; maintaining confidentiality; exhibiting consistent integrity; maintaining professional relationships with students, and entering and fulfilling contracts.

- About 70 percent of the state codes authorized one or more

sanctions for violations, usually suspension or revocation of certificate. The remaining codes were sanctionless.

Members of the UCEA and the other national groups are encouraged to critically examine not only their own codes but also the state codes to determine appropriate breadth and depth of coverage, and extent of enforceability.

For example, should the UCEA code join with the other school leadership codes to expressly include students' best interests? Should the UCEA code have an organizational enforcing mechanism, and if so, what should the nature and strength of the sanctions be? The resulting research and scholarly consideration reflect on our views and values with regard to human conduct generally and our profession specifically. ○

—Perry A. Zirkel, university professor of Education and Law

(Based on forthcoming article in UCEA Review.)



Perry Zirkel

A Common (Core) Problem

Debate about the implementation of the Common Core State Standards has reached a fever pitch, but also an intellectual low. Unfortunately, the multitude of speeches and essays that decry or support the Common Core contain substantial fervor, but little substance. Misinformation and unsubstantiated claims have marred both the pro and con Common Core discourse. Less credible assertions promulgate conspiracy theories, whereas more laudable discussions concentrate on differences among curriculum, pedagogy, standards, and evaluation. Yet, the strongest argument supporting or opposing



Craig Hochbein

the Common Core derives from education's peculiar combination of public and private benefits. Although Americans often grouse about their taxes, we typically understand the benefits of a well-educated citizenry. Literate and numerate neighbors positively contribute to the social, political, and economic well-being of our communities. Because of such universal benefits, even citizens without children must pay taxes that fund public schools. However, public education can also lead to private benefits. Seizing opportunities provided by the public education system, students

acquire the knowledge and skills that give them a competitive advantage in college admissions, job placement, and other such arenas.

The strongest argument for the Common Core emphasizes the public benefit of education. The implementation of common standards attempts to ensure that every student who receives a public education, which is approximately 90 percent of all students in the United States, masters the same material, regardless of a student's background. In other words, the content of material taught to and expectations of a student from an impoverished background is exactly the same as those for a student from a privileged background.

The strongest argument against the Common Core emphasizes the private benefit of education. Recognizing the importance of a quality education, opponents of common standards want the ability to secure educational opportunities that provide a competitive advantage. Simply put, parents would like a good education for all children, but a little better for their own.

As an educational researcher and taxpayer, I support policies that provide high quality education to all children. As the father of Sully and Dempsey Jane, I care about policies that give them the best chance of living a life better than mine.

Do I support or oppose the Common Core?

Yes.

And that is the real problem of the Common Core. ○

—Craig Hochbein, assistant professor of Educational Leadership



FLASHBACK: 1965



President Lyndon B. Johnson fought the 'war on poverty' with programs such as Head Start.

Giving Kids a Head Start

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a 'war on poverty' with initiatives that came to include Head Start. Today, the nationwide preschool program for children in low-income families continues to serve 1 million children annually, but it's not without its critics.

Head Start began as an eight-week summer project to help the children of low-income families prepare for school and to break the cycle of poverty. A brainchild of Sargent Shriver, the project grew quickly into a year-round program that has reached more than 30 million children since its

inception. Head Start provides educational services as well as health, social and other services.

In announcing the project in the Rose Garden on May 18, 1965, Johnson spoke of an "awakening" in America to the realization that poverty begets poverty. "Five- and 6-year-old

children are inheritors of poverty's curse and not its creators," Johnson said. "Unless we act, these children will pass it on to the next generation, like a family birthmark."

Johnson envisioned poor children getting a head start on their education by learning educational and social skills, with long-term benefits. "This program means that 30 million man-years – the combined life span of these youngsters—will be spent productively and rewardingly, rather than wasted in tax-supported institutions or in welfare-supported lethargy," Johnson said.

Though Head Start has continued for half a century, there has been lingering debate over its effectiveness, including calls to cut or curb the program, which is funded at about \$8 billion annually. Critics argue Head Start has little impact on academic outcomes. (A 2012 federal evaluation showed children's educational gains had faded by third grade.) Supporters, however, cite other studies that show strong initial gains in the classroom as well as the "sleeping effects" of youngsters thriving later in school and in life because of skills learned.

Today, reforms are under way that aim to strengthen Head Start. In addition to a greater focus on teachers credentials, the organizations, local government agencies and school districts that run programs no longer receive indefinite funding but are on a five-year grant cycle. The most significant change is that low-performing organizations must now compete for new grants. The call for more reform continues. ○

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School Reform: Is There Common Ground?

The 2015 Distinguished Lecture Series of Lehigh University's College of Education will feature Diane Ravitch, an educational policy analyst and historian of education. Ravitch will present "**Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools**" at 7 p.m. on Feb. 10, 2015, in Baker Hall in the university's Zoellner Arts Center.

Ravitch, a research professor at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, is a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education. As Assistant Secretary, she led the federal effort to promote the creation of voluntary state and national academic standards.

She is a blogger and author of several books, including *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*.

Tickets go on sale Nov. 3, 2014.

For more information,
visit coe.lehigh.edu/dianeravitch.

