

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS 1483

The 29 states reporting assignment information for their new teachers are distributed as follows by the grouped percents of all new teachers in 1965-66 who were assigned to elementary-school grades:

Percent of new teachers assigned to elementary grades:	<i>Number of states</i>
65-69 -----	1
60-64 -----	1
55-59 -----	6
50-54 -----	9
45-49 -----	6
40-44 -----	4
35-39 -----	2
Total -----	29

An estimate of trends in the relative demand for new teachers between the elementary- and high-school levels is provided by information reported by the varying number of states in the earlier studies of this series. Summarized in Table 16 are the total numbers of new teachers and the percents of these teachers being assigned to elementary schools in the reporting states since 1948-49. Also shown are the total numbers of public-school teachers in the United States during these same years with the percent of all teachers who are assigned duties in the elementary schools.

The information listed in column 6 of Table 16 shows a gradual reduction during the past 18 years in the proportion of all public-school teachers being assigned to elementary schools. This change is shown, also, among the percents of new teachers being assigned to elementary schools in the reporting states. The impact of the market growth in elementary-school enrollments between 1952-53 and 1957-58 is reflected in the increased percents during these years shown in column 3. The influence of the increased annual growth in secondary-school enrollments upon the demand for new teachers probably has contributed to the lower proportions of new teachers being assigned to elementary schools in recent years.

The percents of all new teachers being assigned to elementary schools in the reporting states are consistently lower than the percents of all teachers in the nation being assigned to elementary schools. These differences range from 2.6 to 8.0 with a median of 5.7 percentage points. The differences tend to be slightly lower during the period of marked growth in elementary-school staff than in the earlier or following years.

If conditions in the reporting states are representative of the nation, the information in Table 16 suggests that the relatively greater annual demand for new (re-entering and beginning) teachers in elementary schools than for high schools has been decreasing, and that during the past session the demand for new elementary-school teachers was not widely different from the demand for new secondary-school teachers.

These data reflect demand for teachers as defined by the Trend Criterion—the demand which has been observed in the employment of new teachers. The demand for new teachers based on the Quality Criterion during these years has consistently called for greater numbers of qualified new teachers being assigned to elementary schools than have been available for such assignment. Possibly, these proportions of new teachers being assigned to elementary schools might have been greater if the supply of qualified new teachers were equally adequate at both levels.

Information in Table 26 shows that the educational qualifications of elementary-school teachers have been gradually improving. Also, there is evidence that staffing ratios are improving at the elementary-school level. These data suggest that educational leaders have been following a middle road between two courses of action: (a) creation of the additional positions needed but staffing them with marginally qualified personnel, with the result that the number of teachers employed increases and the educational qualifications of the staff as a whole improve very slowly, remain constant or deteriorate; or (b) improvement of the educational qualifications of a minimum-size staff, with deferment of the creation of new positions to improve staffing ratios until the minimum standard of educational qualifications is reached among members of the existing staff.