

A quotation from the Passow Report is instructive:

Despite some examples of good quality education, of dedicated and creative professionals at all levels, of a pattern of improving financial support and of efforts to initiate new programs, education in the District is in deep and probably worsening trouble. Unlike most large city systems which have a core of "slum" schools surrounded by a more affluent ring, the District has a predominance of so-called "inner-city" schools. These schools include large concentrations of economically-disadvantaged children, a largely resegregated pupil population, a predominantly Negro staff, a number of overaged and inadequate school buildings and inappropriate materials and programs. The consequence, as the Panel on Education Research and Development, President's Science Advisory Committee, noted on such schools across the nation, is that "adolescents depart . . . ill-prepared to lead a satisfying, useful life or to participate successfully in the community". The panel concluded its judgment of such schools by observing that "by all known criteria, the majority of urban and rural schools are failures.

Among specific problems the report lists:

Staffing patterns which have left the schools with large numbers of "temporary" teachers and heightened the District's vulnerability at a time of national teacher shortage.

In fact, the proportion of temporary teachers, those who are not fully qualified, rose from 16 percent in 1955 to 48 percent in 1966 and it declined only when the teacher certifications standards were eased. The Passow Report comments further on this matter:

The District School System is faced with a number of serious interrelated personnel problems. Foremost among these is the shortage of qualified teachers. Ninety-five percent of the teachers new to the system in 1965-66 were certified as "temporary" employees. Obviously, a recruitment and selection problem of major proportions exists.

Dr. Passow's own public statements have re-emphasized the problem of obtaining quality staff and he has said this publicly in many places and it's been in the papers and some of you have encountered these comments.

The facts concerning the turnover of teachers indicates that the problem of retaining quality staff is getting worse. During the last fiscal year, the District Schools turnover rate was 17.6 percent. This is the highest turnover rate for any year for which records have been kept and the records go back forty years. A total of 471 teachers resigned, as distinct from other reasons for leaving such as retirement, leaves of absence, death, marriage, terminated, or temporary teachers not returning. Whenever one of our teachers resigns, the schools are usually losing one of the better teachers since those are the teachers that people are trying to recruit from us. So these resignations constitute loss of quality not just a loss of an individual in our school system.

Two things must be done in order to create the quality staff this school system needs. First, the massive turnover rate of teachers must be stopped.

We have to be able to hold them, not lose them.

Second, the key to developing a quality staff is having a salary schedule with which to recruit effectively among the best qualified teachers. The Passow Report states that the District Schools must recruit a new breed of teachers. These new urban teachers must be willing as well as able to teach effectively in the most difficult section of a major city. And when we employ and further train these superior teachers, we must be in a position to retain them.