

OF INTEREST TO TEACHERS

One-half of States Now Require Teacher Tests

"More than one-half of all states now require some form of teacher testing, according to a state-by-state survey by the Educational Testing Service. But another 21 states require only that teachers complete a state-approved teacher education program, it says, and few require prospective teachers to pass a classroom performance evaluation.

"Data collected on state teacher standards for 1984-1985 show 27 states require some form of teacher testing. Seventeen states require a test before entering teacher education programs. Prior to certification, teachers in 22 states must pass basic skills tests, 13 states require general knowledge exams and 20 mandate tests in subject areas. Some states require testing in more than one area. Five more states have moved to institute some form of teacher testing by 1987, ETS says.

"Nineteen states demand a minimum grade point average at the completion of teacher training. But successful evaluation of classroom performance is required by only 11 states."—*Education U.S.A.*, June 2, 1986. Reprinted by permission from *Education U.S.A.* Copyright 1986, National School Public Relations Association.

Booklet on Math

A new booklet has been published by the National Institute of Education called "Counting and Early Arithmetic Learning." This pamphlet draws implications from the results of research related to counting and shows how counting can form a basis for learning arithmetic. It is beamed to teachers of children from ages four to eight, and includes a discussion of how children learn, together with specific examples of learning activities suggested by the research. To obtain the booklet, write to U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Education, Washington, DC 20208.

History Texts Evaluated

"The national trend toward 'dumbing down' textbooks appears to have been reversed in [U.S.] history texts, but they fail to provide adequate coverage for the role of religion in American life, according to a new study by People for the American Way.

"The study of 31 junior and senior high school history texts rated 13 texts 'good to excellent,' 12 'satisfactory,' and six 'poor.'

"The 'poor coverage of religion is evidence that textbook publishers are still gun-shy about certain controversial topics,' said Anthony Podesta, PAW President. 'Students aren't learning about America's rich and diverse religious heritage because textbook publishers

are still afraid of offending anyone,' Podesta said. Textbooks should offer coverage of the role of religion in American history without teaching students what to believe, he added.

"Of the 31 books studied:

- Fifty-one percent do a good job of covering controversial periods of American history, such as the Civil War, Reconstruction and the Great Depression.

- Forty-five percent do a good job of interesting students by asking thought-provoking questions.

- Sixty-one percent offer relatively good coverage of women and blacks, but a majority are weak in coverage of other minorities."—*Education U.S.A.*, June 2, 1986. Reprinted by permission from *Education U.S.A.* Copyright 1986, National School Public Relations Association.

Busywork, Powerless Driving Teachers Out

"Teachers leave their profession because of poor salaries, poor working conditions and a lack of professional prestige, according to a survey of former teachers.

"The 'Metropolitan Survey of Former Teachers in America,' conducted by Louis Harris, showed teachers were rewarded for leaving their careers. Former teachers earned an average of 19% more in their new jobs, with 35% reporting new salaries exceeding \$30,000. They also report more job satisfaction and less job-related stress.

"The principal complaints of former teachers about their previous jobs included too much busywork, too many non-teaching duties and lack of input on possible improvements. Of current teachers, more than one-half said they have contemplated leaving the profession, and one-fourth predict they will leave in the next five years.

"A large majority—78-81% of teachers—said national standards would enhance the reputation of teachers, and a similar number favored having teachers pass a rigorous exam to teach."—*Education U.S.A.*, March 24, 1986. Reprinted by permission from *Education U.S.A.* Copyright 1986, National School Public Relations Association.

Teachers Spend Too Little Time Teaching

Most teachers are too burdened by other duties to do what they were hired to do—teach. Only 12 percent of a teacher's time is spent in actual instruction, according to Jane Stallings, director of the Peabody Center for Effective Teaching, at Vanderbilt University. Good management could make certain that at least 50 percent of the teacher's time is devoted to teaching.—Reported by *Tennessee Education*, Fall, 1985. □