

# Of Interest to Teachers

## Bread-Making Kit for Schools

Honey Bear Bread Boxes are a new, convenient idea for teachers who want to involve their students in a hands-on bread-making activity. A kit includes aprons, bowls, measuring cups, pans, stirstiks, moist towelettes, and other useful supplies for 30 children to make bread. You need only to add flour, oil, and warm water. The children mix and knead the bread at school, and then take it home for baking.

Each kit also includes teacher's resource materials—wheat seeds for planting, yeast, activity sheet masters, stories, and suggestions to integrate bread making with lessons in science, social studies, language arts, and math.

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Teachers will find the step-by-step instructions easy to follow. Copy and graphics for a note to send home to parents announcing the activity are included, along with follow-up suggestions. This helps even new teachers to manage this hands-on activity with ease.

A Honey Bear bread-making session teaches children to listen and follow instructions. They learn to share and work together, and they learn about wheat, honey, and nutrition. Best of all is the pride of having made a fragrant loaf of wholesome bread themselves.

Gloria McAdams, originator of the Honey Bear Bread Box, is donating \$1 per kit to Investment. Including a kit distributed by Fleischmann's to cooperative extension services and 4-H clubs, more than 13,000 kits have already been distributed.

To order, send U.S.\$29.95 for each Bread Box kit, plus \$5 for shipping and handling

(add \$8 shipping and handling for orders sent to Alaska or Hawaii, and contact Mrs. McAdams at 410-531-5911 for fees outside the United States) to Honey Bear Bread Box, Total Health Intl., Inc., P.O. Box 44-A, Dayton, MD 21036. Please give street address, not post office box number. Specify what level of students Honey Bear Bread Box is intended for—Pre-K, K-4, 5-8, 9-12—and approximate date of use. The orders are usually shipped within seven days. School purchase orders are acceptable.

## Home Schooling Increasing

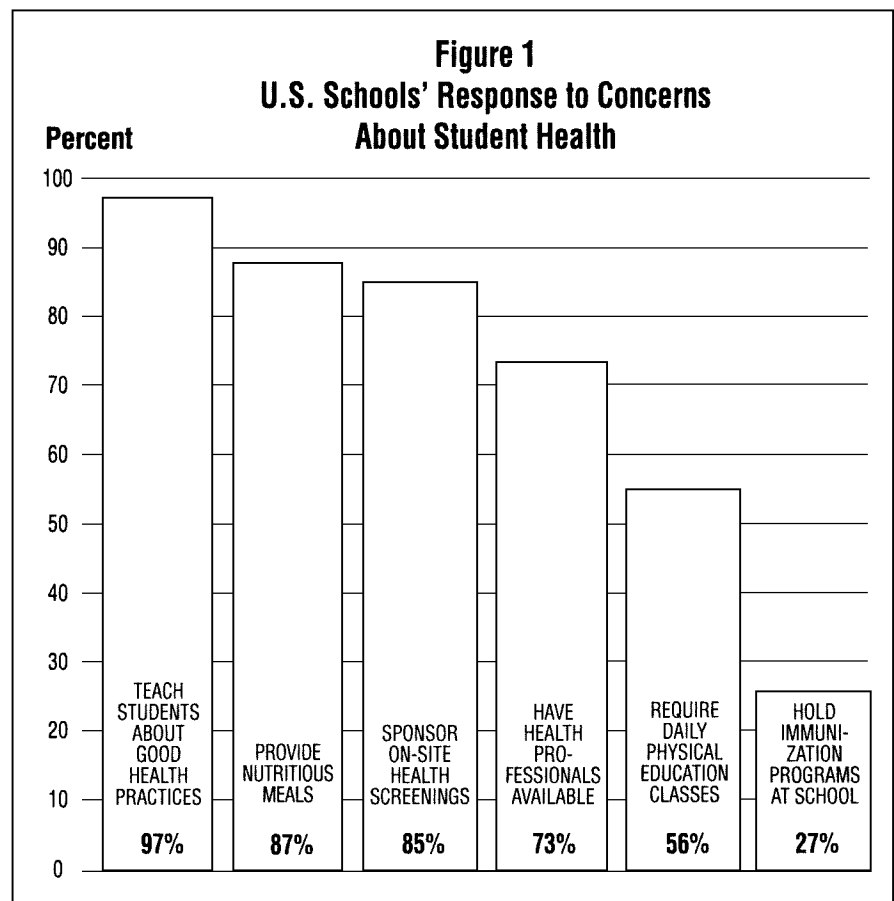
Home schooling has expanded dramatically in the United States, reflecting shifting moods of political commitment and discontent. Estimates range from 300,000 to one million families who are teaching their children at home. According to Terrence N. Tice, author of "Research Spotlight," in the October 1992 *Education Digest*, the main reasons for home schooling at the present time are to foster religious interests and to

protect children from incursions against them.

## Health Affects Student Achievement

Students who have problems learning may suffer from poor health and inadequate medical care, according to a survey of teachers released in September 1992 by U.S. pediatricians and the national PTA. Across the United States, elementary teachers listed untreated illnesses, drug and alcohol abuse, emotional problems and poor nutrition as problems they see in large numbers of students.

The survey found nearly two-thirds of teachers believe that more students have health problems now than in the past. In rural areas, 71 percent of teachers said student health was getting worse. Poor health interferes with the ability to concentrate and to a lesser degree prevents understanding of the material, causes discipline problems, and harms social skills, the teachers said. Schools' responses to the problems are shown in Figure 1.



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## Concern Over Violence in Schools Prompts Reassessment of Corporal Punishment

Amid a new mood of concern about violence in schools, officials in many U.S. districts and states are revisiting the issue of corporal punishment. But experts say that few who ban the practice are likely to revert to paddling students.

Still, a Michigan bill would allow teachers to use physical force against "unruly students." The bill would still ban paddling and spanking, "but allows teachers to use reasonable force against students disrupting the learning environment," according to Michigan Education Association President Julius Maddox.

Twenty-three states—including Michigan—currently ban corporal punishment, and more are expected to follow, with bans being considered in Utah, Kansas, and Washington, said Robert Fathman, president of the Coalition to Ban Corporal Punishment.—Reported by *Education U.S.A.*, March 2, 1992.

## Many Girls Use 'Harmful' Weight-Loss Techniques, Federal Study Finds

In order to lose weight, about one-fifth of American high school girls have used diet pills, more than one in six have forced themselves to vomit, and half have skipped a meal, the results of a recent federal study show.

The study, which marks the first attempt by the federal government to examine students' perceptions of their weight, found that more than twice as many girls as boys, or 34 percent compared with 15 percent, felt they were overweight. Nearly 6 out of 10 girls and about 7 out of 10 boys felt they were just about the right size.

"The high prevalence of body-weight dissatisfaction and the potentially harmful weight-loss practices among female students described in this report underscore the potential influences that equate thinness with attractiveness and social approval," said the study, which was conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

The study was part of the C.D.C. Youth Risk Behavior Study, which questioned a nationally representative sample of 11,631 stu-

dents in grades 9 through 12 about a range of health issues.

Unhealthy weight-loss behaviors, the C.D.C. said, may cause nutritional deficiencies, decreases in growth gains, and delayed pubertal and psychosocial development. To counter unhealthy weight-loss practices, schools should sponsor effective nutrition and physical-education courses, and offer healthy school meals, the report concluded.—Reported by *Education Week*, vol. XII, No. 11, November 13, 1991.

## Expansion Pressures on Scholarly Libraries

The teaching and research libraries in the United States house about 450 million books; which occupy about 45 million linear feet, or 8,500 miles of shelf space, according to an estimate by Billy Frye, provost of Emory University.

Frye claims that with new technologies, university libraries are having to allocate about 15 percent of their expenditures to technologies that didn't exist 20 years ago. This includes automating the existing library

and creating new tools for using new kinds of information.

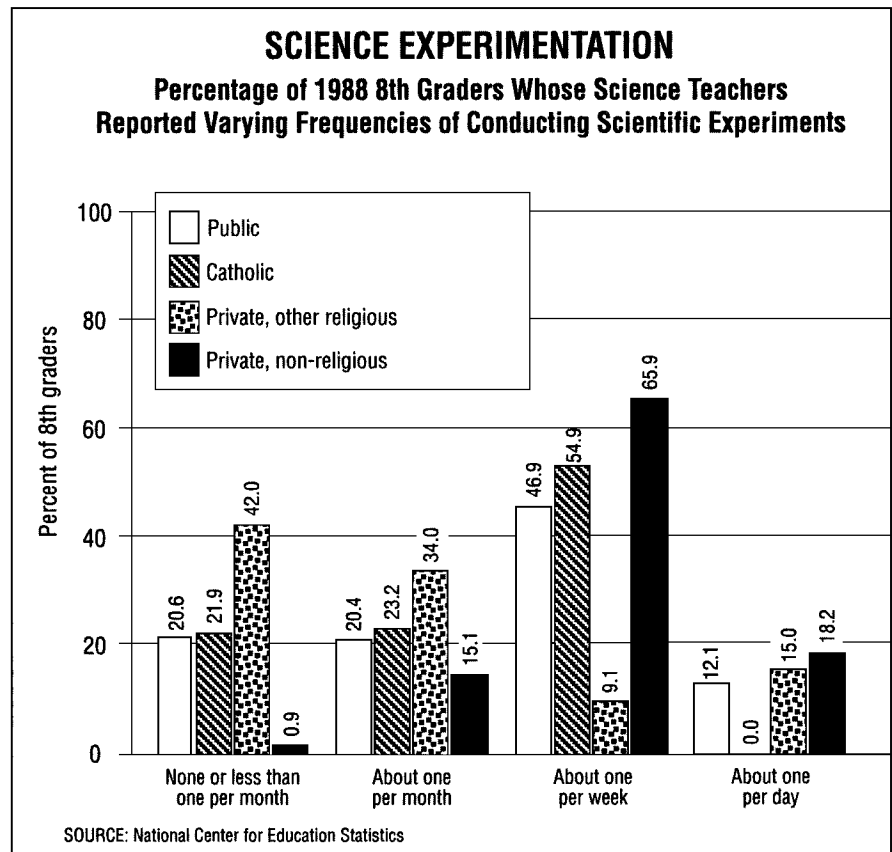
## Relating School to Work

Wholesale changes in teacher education, in-service training, and student assessments are key ingredients in a long-overdue transformation of U.S. schools, a Labor Department commission on workers' skill deficiencies urged recently.

Government and education officials at all levels should make teaching more engaging and active and reinforce that focus with a new generation of tests, according to the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, which issued a report after two years of study.

The education reforms of the 1980s demonstrated that it is futile to try to wring high performance from schools by doing more of the same, argues the report, "Learning by Living: A Blueprint for High Performance."

The report calls for a new classroom approach that stresses problem-solving; teamwork that extends beyond school grounds, teacher and student interaction on projects, grades, and planning; and teachers cast as



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team leaders and guides rather than lecturers armed with all the answers.

The commission last year unveiled its definition of modern know-how, including five competency areas—defined as the productive use of resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology—built on a foundation of basic thinking skills and well-developed personal qualities. It has also defined how its core skills are used in 50 different jobs and how they can be taught in schools. The final report described the path schools and industry will have to take to implement the commission's reforms, officials said.

## U.S. Teenagers Less Materialistic, More Tolerant

The new generation of U.S. teenagers is a bigger group than those in the past few years. They also have dramatically different attitudes and values, according to Teenage Research Unlimited of Northbrook, Illinois. For example, today's teenagers are less materialistic. Five years ago, 61 percent of U.S. teenagers agreed that "success means making a lot of money." In 1992, only 32 percent of teens agreed with that statement, said the president of TRU. The children of baby boomers are more involved with social con-

cerns, sports, fashion, rap music, and African-American culture. The issues they care about most are ones that affect them directly: AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, and the environment, according to TRU surveys. Sports has a much wider appeal than it did for teens 10 years ago. Boys average 10 hours a week playing and watching sports; girls spend six hours a week.

Rap music is "in," according to 80 percent of teenagers. This is one reason why African-American fashions and racial concerns are breaking into mainstream teen culture, according to the president of TRU. While only a minority act on their social concerns, most teens share an intense concern about race relations. Their acceptance of diversity colors their fashion sense, too. They no longer see a need to look and think alike.

The share of today's teenagers who say that religion and "doing things with their families" is enjoyable and important has declined since 1986, and it is lowest among 16- and 17-year-olds. But few have a deep sense of rebellion. Mothers now rate number one on the list of persons that teenagers most admire, and fathers are number three. Number two goes to "other," a category that is likely to include friends.

American teenagers aggregate earnings increased from \$65 to \$95 billion between 1986 and 1992, according to the president of TRU, despite a 7 percent decline in the number of teenagers. Girls are still spending

money on clothes and beauty aids, and boys are still spending on entertainment and food. But in the past 10 years, both sexes have become much more likely to buy expensive items like electronic equipment and cars.—Reported by *American Demographics*, December 1992.

## The Aging College Professorate

The majority of full-time U.S. college faculty members will be aged 60 or over in 2000, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. In every discipline except for mathematics, more than one-third of the faculty will be aged 65 or over by the year 2002.

## College Enrollment Increasing

College enrollment in the U.S. has been increasing, and should increase even faster in the 1990s. Despite the fact that there were comparatively fewer traditional-aged young people in the population than before, U.S. undergraduate enrollment increased 17 percent between 1978 and 1988. The reasons were more women (their enrollment increased 25 percent) and more students older than age 25 (up 33 percent).

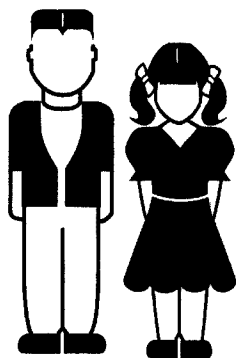
## Teacher Shortages Ahead for U.S. Colleges

U.S. universities have steadily increased the number of doctoral degrees they have awarded since 1958, but more of these degrees are going to foreign citizens who usually return home after graduating. Meanwhile, graduate students in most disciplines are taking longer to earn their degrees, and the proportion who go into teaching has declined from two-thirds in 1973 to about half in 1989.

Graduate students are looking outside academia for many reasons. One is pay: Inflation-adjusted faculty salaries decreased nearly 20 percent between 1971 and 1984. But pay isn't the most important consideration. In a 1991 faculty poll, eight of the nine factors considered most important by applicants for faculty positions were "intangible" benefits. A congenial working atmosphere, opportunities for career advancement, and interesting teaching opportunities were all

### School Spenders

Industrial nations that spend the most (in U.S. dollars) per pupil:



**SWITZERLAND \$4,315**

**USA \$4,131**

**CANADA \$3,791**

**NORWAY \$3,716**

**DENMARK \$3,671**

Source: U.S. Department of Education *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1991

ranked as equally important, or more important, than a high salary.—From “Bringing Into Focus the Factors Affecting Faculty Supply and Demand: A Primer for Education and State Policymakers,” from WICHE Publications.

## Victims of Sexual Harassment in U.S. Schools Can Sue

In a unanimous ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court recently held that victims of sexual harassment and other forms of sex discrimination may sue for monetary damages under federal civil rights law. The ruling greatly expands the ability of public school students to obtain redress from school districts for acts of discrimination, and “could result in some substantial damage awards,” according to the deputy general counsel of the National School Boards Association.

Associate Justice Byron R. White, in the majority opinion, said that “absent clear direction to the contrary by Congress, the federal courts have the power to award any appropriate relief” in a private lawsuit brought under a federal statute. He added that Title IX referred to both sexual harassment by a supervisor or by a teacher.

## Schools Seek to Ease Test Pressure

A kit called Test Buster has been purchased by 3,000 U.S. schools to help students relax before taking standardized tests. Its maker considers it a fun way to help decrease test-taking tension.

But to others, it’s a sad statement about the pre-eminent place that testing has gained in U.S. schools.

By one estimate, U.S. students devote 20 million school days taking 127 million separate tests a year. “Our kids are already the most overtested kids in the world,” says Bob Schaeffer of FairTest, a Cambridge, Massachusetts group critical of standardized testing.

Pressure to prep students for tests comes from school boards and building principals who are concerned about the way their school is going to be judged by scores reported in the press, according to a researcher at the Center for the Study of Testing at Boston College, who claims that in some cases teachers are told to raise the test scores or lose their jobs.

The increase in testing has also led to a multimillion-dollar market for test preparation materials. One of the largest, Scoring High, is owned by a corporation that also publishes the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, one

of the nation’s most widely used standardized tests. Critics decry this connection as an unholy alliance, and complain that the coaching goes on through the entire school year, until the test is administered. ☞

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