



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

July 16, 1997

Dear Colleague:

The State Board of Education, with the support of the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, The Grable Family Foundation, and the Buhl Foundation is sponsoring research to assist the Board in determining policies and practices affecting the preparation, assessment and employment of newly-prepared teachers in the Commonwealth. The research is being conducted by the H. John Heinz School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie-Mellon University under our direction on behalf of the Board.

By this letter we encourage you to respond to the attached survey whose purpose is to capture the essential elements of district employment practices. Understanding the range of teacher recruitment issues you face is critical to the Board's deliberation on teacher preparation, assessment and employment.

We believe that this is an exciting project and we will keep you informed on its progress. Should you have any questions, please contact Professor Robert P. Strauss at Carnegie-Mellon University at 412-268-2177.

Thanking you in advance for your assistance,

Handwritten signature of Helen S. Caffrey in cursive.

Helen S. Caffrey
Vice Chairperson
Council of Higher Education

Handwritten signature of Karl R. Girton in cursive.

Karl R. Girton
Vice Chairperson
Council of Basic Education

Handwritten signature of Earl H. Horton in cursive.

Earl H. Horton
Chairperson
Council of Basic Education



Robert P. Strauss
Professor of Economics
and Public Policy

**H. John Heinz III School
of Public Policy and Management**
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-3890

Phone: 412-268-4798
Fax: 412-268-7036
E-mail: rs9f@andrew.cmu.edu
Homepage: <http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~rs9f>

July 17, 1997

Dear Superintendent:

As part of the State Board of Education's Review of Chapter 49, I have been asked by the Board to research the teacher recruitment and selection process in Pennsylvania's 501 school districts. (See enclosed letter from State Board Members Caffrey, Girton, and Horton.) To accomplish this, I have devised the enclosed questionnaire, and am asking that it be completed by yourself to the extent possible. Please be aware that surveys are also being sent to the President of your local school board, and the Superintendent of your district.

The survey is designed to collect factual information about the manner in which classroom teaching needs were identified, methods of teacher recruitment, and selection in a chronological manner for 1997-8. Unless otherwise noted in the survey, all questions relate to procedures utilized for filling teaching positions for the upcoming, 1997-8 academic year. If your district does not expect to hire any new teachers for the 1997-8 academic year, please answer the questions for the most recent year in which you did hire teachers.

Your survey response will be treated as confidential information, and no tabulations or analysis in the report to the State Board will allow the unique identification of an individual school district or respondent. Please return the survey with any addendum in the enclosed envelope by Monday, August 18, 1997. An Executive Summary of the research findings will be sent to you when it is completed in mid Fall, 1997.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, I can be reached at 412-268-2177 or via e-mail at RS9F@andrew.cmu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert P. Strauss".

Professor Robert P. Strauss
Carnegie Mellon University



Robert P. Strauss
Professor of Economics
and Public Policy

**H. John Heinz III School
of Public Policy and Management**
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-3890

Phone: 412-268-4798
Fax: 412-268-7036
E-mail: rs9f@andrew.cmu.edu
Homepage: <http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~rs9f>

July 17, 1997

Dear Teachers Association President:

As part of the State Board of Education's Review of Chapter 49, I have been asked by the Board to research the teacher recruitment and selection process in Pennsylvania's 501 school districts. (See enclosed letter from State Board Members Caffrey, Girton, and Horton.) To accomplish this, I have devised the enclosed questionnaire, and am asking that it be completed by yourself to the extent possible. Please be aware that surveys are also being sent to the President of your local school board, and the Superintendent of your district.

The survey is designed to collect factual information about the manner in which classroom teaching needs were identified, methods of teacher recruitment, and selection in a chronological manner for 1997-8. Unless otherwise noted in the survey, all questions relate to procedures utilized for filling teaching positions for the upcoming, 1997-8 academic year. If your district does not expect to hire any new teachers for the 1997-8 academic year, please answer the questions for the most recent year in which you did hire teachers.

Your survey response will be treated as confidential information, and no tabulations or analysis in the report to the State Board will allow the unique identification of an individual school district or respondent. Please return the survey with any addendum in the enclosed envelope by Monday, August 18, 1997. An Executive Summary of the research findings will be sent to you when it is completed in mid Fall, 1997.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, I can be reached at 412-268-2177 or via e-mail at RS9F@andrew.cmu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert P. Strauss".

Professor Robert P. Strauss
Carnegie Mellon University



Robert P. Strauss
Professor of Economics
and Public Policy

**H. John Heinz III School
of Public Policy and Management**
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-3890

Phone: 412-268-4798
Fax: 412-268-7036
E-mail: rs9f@andrew.cmu.edu
Homepage: <http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~rs9f>

July 17, 1997

Dear School Board President:

As part of the State Board of Education's Review of Chapter 49, I have been asked by the Board to research the teacher recruitment and selection process in Pennsylvania's 501 school districts. (See enclosed letter from State Board Members Caffrey, Girton, and Horton.) To accomplish this, I have devised the enclosed questionnaire, and am asking that it be completed by yourself to the extent possible. Please be aware that surveys are also being sent to the President of your local school board, and the Superintendent of your district.

The survey is designed to collect factual information about the manner in which classroom teaching needs were identified, methods of teacher recruitment, and selection in a chronological manner for 1997-8. Unless otherwise noted in the survey, all questions relate to procedures utilized for filling teaching positions for the upcoming, 1997-8 academic year. If your district does not expect to hire any new teachers for the 1997-8 academic year, please answer the questions for the most recent year in which you did hire teachers.

Your survey response will be treated as confidential information, and no tabulations or analysis in the report to the State Board will allow the unique identification of an individual school district or respondent. Please return the survey with any addendum in the enclosed envelope by Monday, August 18, 1997. An Executive Summary of the research findings will be sent to you when it is completed in mid Fall, 1997.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, I can be reached at 412-268-2177 or via e-mail at RS9F@andrew.cmu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert P. Strauss".

Professor Robert P. Strauss
Carnegie Mellon University

Suggestions for the state that would assist districts in the teacher selection process

Comments ranged greatly in the degree of assistance they would like from the State Board and often contradicted one another.

- **Develop reciprocal certification requirements among states.**
- **Nothing beyond the application form, which was a help.**
- **Let us alone. Allow the districts to do their own jobs.**
- **Do away with the standardized application. Our own application served us much better.**
- **Standardized application is very useful.**
- **Simplify the process.**
- **Urge our Board to be willing to pay teachers coming in with experience an equitable salary.**
- **Keep unions out of it. Peers should not have input on hiring.**
- **Unions are not involved as associations.**
- **Help get the Board out of the process. (The Board in this district selected the applicants.)**
- **Ours is controlled by the administration. Get a better team. Sometimes, there is just administration and it is very controlled. Get a school director on the team.**
- **Obligate and define statewide criteria of which all of PA's 501 school districts must follow, hopefully eliminating nepotism and politics from the process (Union President)**
- **I do feel that the discontinuation of issuing the complete NTE score or testing agency's decision to discontinue the "percentile" section of the test pulled an important section for our decision-making.**
- **Provide some guidelines. Ask that current teachers (a selected few) be involved in the interview process.**

- **Require a written hiring policy developed by a committee of Board, administration, and teachers.**
- **Share what others do.**
- **Share suggestions for hiring practices.**
- **Provide workshops or info on certification and areas, clarifications beyond written material.**
- **Reduce certification restrictions as for separate sciences, or business and math. Permit trial/probationary employment. Broader base for substitutes.**
- **Certification requirements are too weak.**
- **Remove certification mandates.**
- **Liberalize certification process.**
- **Relax certification requirements.**
- **Assemble a list of minority candidates in different certification areas.**
- **Provide a directory of graduation/certification.**
- **List a pool of qualified/certified applicants who are available for hiring. Keep some sort of centralized database. Act as a clearinghouse.**
- **Eliminate paperwork and this survey.**
- **Require universities and colleges to weed out weak teachers so fewer are certified.**
- **Process certification in a more timely manner.**
- **Relax CSPG.**
- **Eliminate transferability of tenure.**
- **Write a guideline districts could follow.**
- **Encourage technical education and librarians.**

- **Make the certification process more stringent (many certified teachers are poorly prepared to teach).**
- **Update certification manual.**
- **Have a telephone number for the use of superintendents only. It is very difficult to reach them.**
- **Allow more access to certification for hard-to-find positions such as Spanish Immersion.**
- **Broaden certification requirements. Provide counselors (both high school and colleges) with statistical data for potential jobs. Be a voice for public education, not an adversary.**
- **Currently, teachers certified in elementary or secondary can teach junior high classes if these classes are in a middle school. This is not the case if the district does not have a middle school. It would be of great help to small rural districts to have the “middle school” flexibility.**
- **Remove some of the questions from the state application that are clearly inappropriate information such as high school attended, info on armed services, or misdemeanors and summary offenses.**
- **Ask for input before developing a mandated state application.**
- **Reinstitute the temporary certificate.**
- **Realize that school districts and the department need to work cooperatively.**
- **Be more responsive and timely in responding to certification and other issues.**
- **Stay out of it! The PDE is in shambles. They can't do what they are supposed to do as it is. Did you ever try calling there to get an answer to anything?**
- **Encourage the district to involve teachers and students in the procedure of teacher selection.**
- **With the number of teachers available in our area, the early retirement window could provide for new hires and \$ saved.**
- **Establish a task force to work with training institutions to update training. Establish standards for employment based on expectations and current need. I'd love to help.**