

Election '88

Presidential hopefuls bring classroom into campaigns

By WILLIAM TAGGART
Assistant State and National Editor

In a presidential campaign where issues received little attention, both presidential candidates believe education is important for the next president to tackle, campaign officials said.

"George Bush wants to be known as the 'education president,'" said Jim Carroll, communication specialist for the Bush campaign.

"Governor Dukakis feels very strongly about education," said Tripp Jones, press aide for the Dukakis campaign. "He believes a strong education system is one way in which we can make sure the country will be nationally secure in the future."

Bush wants a renewed emphasis on elementary and secondary education, Carroll said. This emphasis includes a special focus on the early development of minority and poor children who are most at risk.

The vice president would expand the Head Start program, which provides preschool education for low-income children.

"Stimulating local education reform is another goal," Carroll said. "Some areas are far behind — we want to level the playing field of education," he said. This includes helping states take over failed school systems, although states should be allowed to run systems that work for their region, he said. Federal intervention would serve only as a safety net.

Cutbacks in education spending by the Reagan administration have caused major problems, especially

with inner-city and minority education, Jones said.

"These are problems that deserve sincere and serious attention," he said in a telephone interview. "Governor Dukakis would give it and provide leadership and incentive for others to get involved."

Dukakis believes in improving the quality of education at the local level across the country, Jones said. Areas of the country where school systems have fallen behind would get special attention.

Bush would also work for higher teacher quality. To increase teacher pay, Bush supports a merit system, Carroll said. He would create a national teacher evaluation model to standardize the criteria by which teachers are awarded merit pay.

"Governor Dukakis has made it clear that teachers need good training and adequate pay, which they aren't receiving now."

"We need to find a way to inspire young people to go into teaching," Jones said.

Part of this program is Dukakis' loan plan for college students. This plan calls for students to pay off their college loans through deductions from their paychecks once they get a job after graduation.

Deductions would be based on a percentage of students' incomes — students with larger incomes would pay more per paycheck, Jones said. Students who want to go into teaching or public service jobs would not have to be as worried about being burdened by loans after college.

Dukakis also supports the continuation of federal aid to education, like Pell Grants, as part of his program to make college affordable. "Governor Dukakis wants to assure qualified students can get a college education," he said.

College savings bonds are a main part of Bush's program for higher education. The bond helps families save for college, working the way a U.S. savings bond would except the interest is tax-free, Carroll said.

"The program is geared toward the middle-income family," he said. It could not be used as a tax shelter because the interest is not tax-free for families with incomes over \$80,000, Carroll said.

Bush also supports Pell Grants, guaranteed student loans and income-contingent loans.

"Bush believes in rewarding educational entrepreneurs — allowing creativity but holding schools to the highest standards of accountability," Carroll said.

Despite its importance, the issue of education has not been addressed enough in the campaign, Jones said. "When you've had the sort of distortions and negative style of campaigning spearheaded by the Bush campaign, it is very difficult to get involved in a debate on how to improve education."

Dukakis is extremely frustrated because "he has had to spend time responding to wild allegations that don't deserve the sort of time that they received," Jones said.



Candidates propose solutions to poverty issue

By STACI COX
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Relieving poverty must be a top priority of the next administration, according to both presidential candidates, who have outlined various plans to handle the problem.

Bush would begin with increased funding to federal programs aimed at pregnant mothers and small children, said Richard Porter, a domestic policy adviser to the Bush campaign.

"The whole focus of our programs is on the people in greatest need," Porter said.

Included among the programs that would receive increased funding in a Bush administration is Head Start, a federal preschool education program, Porter said.

"Mr. Bush feels that Head Start is very important in ending poverty," he said.

Dukakis agrees that funding for Head Start should be increased but sees that as just the beginning of

federally funded programs to help educate the poor, said Tripp Jones, a Dukakis press aide.

Dukakis has outlined a welfare training program that would provide day care facilities to parents who are training for better jobs, Jones said. Such a program would allow welfare recipients and the working poor a chance to move up into higher income brackets, he said.

"The governor would also create a National Day Care Partnership to discuss the possibilities for increased day care services," Jones said.

The partnership would be composed of representatives of business, government, education, labor and families who would not only propose solutions to the day care shortage but provide standards for day care personnel.

"The idea of partnership is (Dukakis') way to get all affected involved in finding a solution," Jones said.

The Bush child care program is

divided into four major points, said Margaret Garikes, a policy analyst for the Bush campaign.

First, Bush would provide an across-the-board refundable tax credit of up to \$1,000 for each child under 4 years of age.

The next step in the Bush child care program would be to require all federal agencies to provide day care programs, she said.

"The federal day care would serve as a model for private businesses to follow," Garikes said. But businesses would not be required to provide day care.

The Bush plan outlines the provision of seed money for individual, innovative child care programs throughout the nation, she said. His proposed expansion of Head Start completes his child care plan.

"All these programs amount to one-half of one percent of the budget, and money gained from a flexible freeze could finance Mr. Bush's

programs," Porter said.

While child care and education are extremely important, Dukakis thinks there must be an increase in the minimum wage to help the working poor out of poverty, Jones said.

"The minimum wage now does people no good. When the legislation to raise the minimum wage was being considered, Bush took no position. Perhaps if he had taken the initiative and shown a little compassion, we'd have it right now," Jones said.

Bush supports a limited minimum wage increase that would not include youth workers or trainees, Porter

said.

"These people are usually getting paid their value to the company," he said.

Raising the minimum wage reduces jobs and drives people out of the economy, Porter said. Bush would try to work against poverty within the framework of the free enterprise system, he said.

In addition to raising the minimum wage, Dukakis would require all employers to provide health insurance for their workers, a plan that would cost the government nothing, Jones said.

Dukakis would also create health care programs for pregnant women and their small children.

"Caring for them early on would save the government in the long run," Jones said.

To help all families buy homes, Dukakis proposes a "Home Start" program that would allow people to use IRAs and other alternative savings programs to buy a house.

By continuing the economic growth of the past few years, Bush feels he can help the poor by creating greater job markets and opportunities, Porter said.

Presidential campaigns address U.S. drug problem, death penalty

By CHRIS LANDGRAFF
Staff Writer

Michael Dukakis and George Bush disagree on the death penalty, but both say that a top priority of their respective administrations would be to bring the nation's drug problem under control.

Dukakis personally opposes the death penalty in all cases but would not take an active role in lobbying against it as president, according to campaign workers.

"The opposition to the death penalty is a personal conviction of Michael Dukakis," said Amy DeHart, communications director for the N.C. Dukakis-Bentsen campaign. "This issue, however, is not a campaign issue. He knows the majority of the voters support the death penalty and does not view the election as a referendum on the death penalty."

"The president traditionally has little to do with death penalty policy because the state governments make the decision."

Bush would take a more active role in making his support for the death penalty a federal policy.

"Bush would certainly appoint Supreme Court justices who share his views on the death penalty," said Scott Gregory, communications director for the North Carolina Bush-Quayle campaign.

Bush would also support legislation to apply the death penalty to drug kingpins who were involved in killings. "Big-time, repeat offenders who could be linked to slayings would be subject to the death penalty," Gregory said.

The campaigns agree that the drug problem is the most important issue in the election, but the candidates' solutions for the problem are quite different.

Bush's proposals would mainly consist of increased funding for Reagan administration drug enforcement and education policies.

"Bush would increase funding for interdiction around our borders. This would mean more money for the Coast Guard to make inspections and would include support for other border patrols," Gregory said.

Bush would address the demand side of the drug epidemic through increased education. "Drug education would be a top priority for the Department of Education in a George Bush administration," Gregory said.

The Dukakis administration would alleviate the drug problem through centralization and coordination, DeHart said.

"The governor would appoint a 'drug czar' who would coordinate the fight against drugs. The current approach is too spread out and unorganized," she said.

More pressure would be exerted on foreign governments to cooperate with U.S. efforts to stop drugs from being brought into the country.

"We need to send foreign countries the message that they will suffer severe consequences if the drug flow is not controlled," DeHart said.

Dukakis would also aid local officials in the war on drugs by increasing funds and personnel for fighting drugs in communities, she said.

Bush, Dukakis disagree on national security measures

By ERIC GRIBBIN
Staff Writer

Presidential candidates Michael Dukakis and George Bush agree that national security is a top priority, but they disagree on the size of the defense budget and on which aspects of the military should be emphasized.

Vice President Bush supports continued research and eventual deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), said David Sander, campaign spokesman for the Bush campaign.

"He supports current funding levels," Sander said. "He plans to deploy it as soon as research and development indicates that it is ready."

The Republican candidate also supports continued arms-control negotiations with the Soviet Union, Sander said.

"Obviously, he has said that we need to continue to negotiate from a position of strength," he said. "We can, for the first time, seek verifiable reductions. This is what we saw in the INF treaty. We will certainly seek further negotiations with the Soviet Union."

Massachusetts Gov. Dukakis believes SDI research should continue, but he also feels spending should be cut in certain areas of the defense budget, said Tripp Jones, a Dukakis press aide.

"He's in favor of continued research, and he feels that we need to stay ahead of the Soviet Union in this respect," Jones said. "They're doing research; we should do the same. He feels we should cut some spending in this particular area, though. We should continue (research) at about \$1 billion a year."

"He (Dukakis) is excited about the opportunity for further negotiations and treaties with the Soviet Union," Jones said. "He's excited about the INF treaty. He looks forward as president to continued negotiations

with the Soviet Union."

Bush advocates a "flexible freeze" defense spending policy, which entails the maintenance of current levels of defense spending (with allowances for inflation) and the possibility of increased spending in priority areas, Sander said.

"If some defense spending need were to suddenly arise, we want to remain flexible to increase spending to accommodate such a need."

Defense is a priority for Dukakis, Jones said.

"Our national security is obviously extremely important," he said. "National security comes from both a strong defense and a strong economy, and he will work for both."

Bush and Dukakis disagree somewhat on how to use conventional forces.

"(Bush) is dedicated to continuing to keep up our conventional forces and to maintaining the upkeep of military hardware worldwide," Sander said. "We have seen an improvement in this area during the Reagan administration over the Carter administration."

Dukakis wants to concentrate on conventional forces, Jones said. "Gov. Dukakis has said he is in favor of improving and strengthening our conventional forces."

Bush believes America should maintain its current levels of chemical and biological weapons, but he opposes the continued production of such weapons, Sander said.

"He has very recently called for a ban on the (further) production of chemical and biological weapons," Sander said. "If you don't have (these) weapons, you don't have a bargaining chip to bring to the table to compel others to reduce their levels of weapons."

Dukakis opposes the use and further production of chemical and biological weapons, Jones said.

Bush supports continued moderni-

zation of the MX missile, Sander said. "What we've seen in general with perestroika, glasnost and the INF treaty with the Soviet Union is encouraging, but we can't become complacent," Sander said.

Dukakis has a slightly different stand on the MX missile, Jones said. "He is in favor of maintaining the MX missile and weapons systems like the Stealth bomber and the D5, but he feels that a system of weapons on railroad cars is unnecessary," Jones said.

"He feels that we should spend money on things that need more attention. Vice President Bush, in the first debate, was asked which three weapons systems he would eliminate, and he named three systems that have already been eliminated. This should tell us how he stands on this issue."

Governor

education in North Carolina. Bob Jordan pushed for the Basic Education Program which ensures equal opportunity for every child in North Carolina. Martin fought that plan," said Phil Wells, Jordan's campaign press secretary.

"Bob Jordan pushed for the teaching fellows program which provides scholarships for university students in education who will go on to become teachers in high schools in North Carolina," Wells said. "Teaching salaries have gone up under Bob Jordan. If we had followed Jim Martin, that would not have improved."

Jordan also proposes building more schools.

"We have oversized classrooms and overcrowding, and that is a threat to good education here," Wells said.

Jordan supports the United Plan for Education, which calls for continuation of funding into the 21st century.

"We want to protect the programs

already in existence, making sure Republicans like Jim Martin don't cut basic education so they could give tax breaks for the wealthy," he said. "Bob Jordan has been a leader in education, not a follower."

Jordan also opposes the 10 percent increase in tuition within the state university system that Martin proposed, Wells said.

And Jordan has criticized Martin for opposing an increase in funding for the education of handicapped children when he was a congressman.

"You've got to be a bastard to get up in the morning and decide to vote against funding for educating handicapped kids," said Michael Plante, research director for the Jordan for Governor Committee.

Another major issue in the gubernatorial campaign has been jobs within the state.

"Since 1985, there's been a net gain of 380,000 new jobs in North Carolina ... unemployment is at its lowest

level in 12 to 15 years," Pittman said. Martin also stresses recruiting new industries and then supporting the state infrastructure, he said.

But 80 percent of the new jobs created in the state came from the expansion of existing companies, not from Fortune 500 companies, Plante said. Fewer companies are now relocating in the state. Five years ago one in three companies relocated here. Now, only one in five companies chooses to relocate in the state, he said.

Throughout the campaign, Martin has emphasized his achievements in improving the state's roads.

"In '84, Jim Martin made only one highway promise and that was to get I-40 under contract from the mountains to the coast. He has fulfilled that commitment," Pittman said.

Martin has also proposed a "strategic corridors plan" which will create major interstates by having county commissioners of neighboring counties to submit the road proposals as

from page 5

a team. "We're trying to take the politics out of roadbuilding. This will build support around one cause rather than have each area ask for a different road. You are not going to build a highway by working on pieces of a road here and there," Pittman said.

But Jordan dislikes Martin's tactics.

"We feel that Jim Martin has politicized the road-building process by haphazardly offering a road here and a road there," Wells said. "Jim Martin makes a lot of promises but there's no way in the world he could build all the roads he's promised without raising taxes a lot."

Jordan and the current secretary of transportation appointed a commission to study highway needs which will report to the legislature in January, Wells said.

Staff writer Lauren Martin contributed to this article.