

NEA Proposes Four-Point Program To Improve Discipline

Special To The Post
Washington, D.C. - A four-part program aimed at developing a "positive disciplined learning environment," in the nation's public schools was urged today by the National Education Association.

The early detection of students with learning problems is a first crucial step in heading off more serious discipline problems later, NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell told the House Education on discipline in schools.

"When students can't master a subject, they act up—and that 'acting up' is a

cover for their failure to learn," said the former Alexandria, Virginia business education teacher. "We need to spot mastery problems early and give classroom teachers the programmatic support they need to help children learn."

The nation's schools, Futrell added, are not the 'blackboard jungles' that recent reports from the Reagan Administration imply. But the NEA president emphasized that much can yet be done to improve school discipline. She called on Congress to provide federal support for

local programs that would:

—establish uniform discipline codes, jointly developed by teachers, parents, administrations and students;

—provide the professional counseling and support services necessary to deal with the root causes of discipline;

—involve parents at every level of their children's education.

Futrell told the panel that Congress can help local school districts by providing adequate funding through such federal programs as compensatory

education (Chapter 1). These currently underfunded programs have in the past significantly helped solve school discipline problems.

The NEA president suggested that in-school suspension programs—if carefully designed—can improve the conduct of offending students.

"We can't solve disciplinary problems by throwing kids out on the street," Futrell said. "The only things kids learn on the street is crime—and society will eventually pay dearly for that lesson."

Futrell also called for

counseling support to help teachers and schools cope with the myriad of discipline problems.

Many schools, she said, don't have adequate counseling support or, if they do, are overwhelmed by the number of students who need help.

"Troubled students will not simply stop being troubled because we ask them to do so—or demand that they shape up," explained Futrell. "Many need special help, individual help, trained professional help."

Finally, Futrell noted, students learn best when schools and parents work

together.

"When teachers and parents both make the importance of school work clear, students get the message—and work hard," she pointed out.

Futrell urged the panel to consider the proposed American Defense Education Act—now before Congress—as another vehicle the federal government could utilize to improve discipline in the schools.

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John Montgomery
.....An exceptional instructor

Former Students To Honor John Montgomery

By Loretta Manago
Post Staff Writer

There was a time when John Montgomery was on the verge of pursuing a radio broadcasting career. No doubt he would have excelled in that field as he has throughout his near 20 year-old career as a teacher.

Education gained more than just another teacher when Montgomery decided that that would be his profession. It gained an educator.

He is one of those exceptional instructors who feels that teaching extends beyond the process of supplying information and facts. "I look at my students as individuals and with whatever expertise I have I help them develop their skills."

That philosophy, coupled with Montgomery's four C's approach to teaching—control, concern, competency and consistency, have been key elements in his overwhelming success in the classroom.

On the rare occasion when a student complains about having to learn the difference between intransitive and transitive verbs and whines, "I'm never gonna use this stuff when I graduate," Montgomery replies, "That may be true but your grammatic usage may be the deciding factor in whether you get a job or not." Montgomery is an English teacher at Quail Hollow Junior High School. Like magic, Montgomery takes the English language and shows how it will later affect them in life.

Everything about Montgomery seems to be somewhat magical. After suffering from a bout of polio at the age of 10, Montgomery was confined to a wheelchair. Whereas this illness may have defeated others, it only inspired Montgomery to over-achieve. Some of that credit of motivation Montgomery gives to his physical therapist during his hospitalization: "I remember she used to tell me 'You have to remember that the most important part of your body has no limitations, and that's your brain.'"

Those words of wisdom stuck with Montgomery and no matter what he attempted to do he did his best. "My father used to tell me that whatever you did that was honest you should do it to the best of your ability. That's why when I decided I would become a teacher I knew I would be the best teacher I could be."

His personal drive to ex-

cell led him to become class valedictorian at York Road High School (now Kennedy Junior High). He pursued a four-year college education at Livingstone College, earning a double major in English and Social Science. While at Livingstone, he was also selected for Who's Who. Returning to Charlotte, Montgomery taught at York Road for six years before being transferred to Quail Hollow.

He has always had the encouragement of local citizens like Kays Gary and "Genial" Gene Potts who raised money to send him to school, but it was his former math teacher, Mattie Grisby, who inspired him to become a teacher. "The way she managed the classroom and taught her subject matter made me want to follow in her footsteps. She knew the students as well as the individual," commented Montgomery.

"I have tried to pay my debt to those who contributed to my education by giving my students a legacy of a love for learning and the desire to achieve against all obstacles." Through almost 20 years of teaching, this is what Montgomery has done. And it has worked, not only for his students but for his co-workers as well. Out of the 11 years Montgomery has been at Quail Hollow he has been voted "Teacher of the Year" eight times.

Just as rewarding as the teachers' votes of confidence has been the thank yous he has received over the years from parents and students. Nothing has quite exceeded the latest expression of gratitude and appreciation by his former students than their desire to raise enough money to buy Montgomery a hand-controlled van in lieu of his 20th year as a teacher. A fundraiser was kicked off Thursday, February 9, and by August, the students aim to achieve their goal. "The gist of the fundraiser will be contributions from former students along with car washes, discos and bake sales," remarked Montgomery. Anise Brown of Johnson C. Smith and Beatrice Thompson of WBTB are co-chairpersons. They can be contacted at 378-1060 or 374-3698 for contributions.

No doubt Montgomery's former students will succeed in this endeavor; if there was ever one thing he instilled in them it was: "CAN'T is not in my vocabulary. Don't use this word in my class."



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