

# School News & Notes

## Solving The Teacher Shortage: A Matter Of Professional Standards

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(NAPSA)—Hospitals in America are facing a crunch in hiring enough qualified nurses. In response, some states allow hospitals and public policymakers to use financial incentives to recruit



trained and qualified nurses. No one is suggesting we relax professional standards to fill the need for nurses.

When it comes to education, however, we seem to think differently.

Everywhere one turns there is talk of a dire teacher shortage. As a result, the pressure is on to adopt “emergency” procedures enabling untrained, untested and unlicensed people to assume the role—and title—of “teacher.”

Instead of seeking to fill slots through gimmicks and temporary fixes, we should invest in attracting top tier candidates and nurturing their professional development. We also must figure out how to keep many of the highly qualified, experienced and dedicated professionals who are already in our schools.

Federal education reform legislation mandates that there should be a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom. That is an important requirement, but it is just the beginning. We must ensure that every child is taught by someone with the knowledge, skills, and

dedication required of a truly competent teacher.

Schools and teachers must be held accountable for student outcomes—for how well students perform against standards set by each state. Such standards-based accountability is perfectly reasonable, and long overdue.

*“We have a huge teacher retention problem. And, the more we resort to emergency procedures to get warm bodies into the classroom, the higher the attrition rate is going to be.”*

—Arthur Wise

**President of the National  
Council for Accreditation of  
Teacher Education**

At the same time, we must recognize that accountability is a two-way street. And teachers are more than justified in demanding that they receive the authority, professional development and training, and resources they need to do what the job requires. They deserve respect and recognition equal to the mission that they undertake on our behalf; that means, among other things, higher salaries and better working conditions. It also requires greater parental involvement and improved student discipline.

If we want better teachers, we have to treat our teachers better. Only if we do these things will we solve the “teacher shortage” problem. Only then will we have a chance of ensuring that every classroom and every child in America has a good teacher.