

HISTORY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM:

A Report Prepared for the Symposium on the Humanities in the Secondary School Curriculum: History as a Case Study*

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The age of "high tech" has taken its toll on the humanities in general and history in particular. Study of the old masters, whether in the arts, literature or music, has gradually assumed a status of secondary importance to "hands on" computer experience. Nevertheless, it has now become increasingly apparent that too much emphasis on keyboarding (typing in the good old days) has not only failed to confer literary grace upon its practitioners but also may have retarded the development of rudimentary reading and writing skills. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching both published findings and recommendations for educational reform, particularly at the secondary level. Meanwhile, responding to a steady decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores and basic literacy levels, Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris appointed his own educational review commission to examine public education in Georgia.

The purpose of this project is to assess the extent to which the policies and practices of the Georgia State Board of Education and its affiliated local school districts conform to the recommendations of the aforementioned commissions. Because of our special interest in the subject matter, history seemed a natural discipline to use as a case study. The assessment involved three primary areas: (1) curriculum requirements on the state and local level; (2) teacher certification requirements; and (3) teaching assignments and the classroom situation. Besides examining published curriculum and certification requirements, a survey of Georgia high school history teachers was conducted in an effort to develop a profile of the Georgia history teacher: his/her educational qualifications, teaching methods, classroom and extracurricular assignments and teaching priorities related to improvement of instruction.

The primary survey sample was taken from the membership rolls of the Georgia Council for the Social Sciences and supplemented by separate survey samples drawn from several key areas: DeKalb, Cobb, Clayton and Fulton Counties in the metropolitan Atlanta area; City of Atlanta and Westminster Schools from Atlanta proper; and Bibb, Richmond, Chatham, Clarke and Dougherty Counties, which include Macon, Augusta, Savannah, Athens and Albany, respectively.¹ In all, 226

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history teachers responded to the survey. The sample has an urban bias, and it probably represents the more dedicated and professional elements of the state's teachers--those who are members of a professional organization or who took the time to respond to a survey of this nature.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHERS

Two-thirds of the history teachers in Georgia's secondary schools surveyed in this study earned their baccalaureate degrees at one of the state's colleges or universities. Of the remainder, bordering state institutions contributed nearly one quarter of the total; only one in ten Georgia teachers earned degrees outside of the South. Moreover, many of these teachers earned their degrees at colleges and universities close to their teaching district. Thus over half of the Albany sample have degrees from either Georgia Southwestern or Albany State College; 67 percent of the Clarke County (Athens) teachers matriculated at the University of Georgia, and over three-fourths of the Bibb County (Macon) teachers sampled took degrees at nearby Ft. Valley State, Mercer, or Georgia College. More cultural, ethnic and geographical diversity, especially in a teaching field such as history or social studies, would seem to be desirable. By comparison, over half of those teaching history at Westminster Schools of Atlanta, generally considered one of the best preparatory schools in the state, had degrees earned outside the South and only one had a Georgia degree (Agnes Scott). Another notable feature of the education of Georgia high school history teachers is the likelihood of their having attended a small private school or a four-year college rather than one of the major universities in Georgia or in neighboring states. Only three respondents, for example, identified Emory University as their baccalaureate institution. Most teachers, then, did not earn degrees from the same institutions as do other professionals such as medical doctors, lawyers, accountants, and the like (see Table 1).

The typical high school history teacher in the survey received the baccalaureate degree in 1968 (see Table 2). If most of these people began their teaching careers shortly after graduation, they now have approximately fifteen years of experience. In fact, experience levels ranged from twenty-two years in Clarke and Richmond Counties to thirteen years in Cobb County. Even the latter, however, represents substantial longevity and stability in the field.

Assuming that most teachers graduated from college at age twenty-three, the average teacher would be just under forty years old; still young and vigorous, yet mature and experienced. These teachers should be at or near the peak of their teaching effectiveness and efficiency. The propitious circumstances represented by these demographic figures, however, fade somewhat upon an examination of the baccalaureate majors of those teachers. Only half of the history teachers in Georgia high schools received an undergraduate degree in history. Even more disquieting, over one-third of the teachers surveyed neither majored nor minored in history (see Tables 3 and 4). Dr. Alphonse Buccino, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Georgia, recently reported that in most states a baccalaureate major is the standard measure of subject-area competency.² Applying

TABLE 1
College of Record
Baccalaureate Degree
(In Percentages)

	Fulton	Richmond	DeKalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative
Georgia	18	13	16	11	7	67			23	11	16	16
UGA	18		5	33					23		9	10
GSU	6	13		6							1	2
Emory					7	11	100				4	4
Ga. Southern											3	2
West Georgia				6							1	1
Atlanta Univ.	6										2	2
Fort Valley				6						44	1	1
Savannah State											2	2
Armstrong State											1	1
Ga. Southwestern											1	1
Kennesaw College				39							2	4
LaGrange College	6										1	1
Augusta College		13									2	2
Morehouse Univ.		13								11	3	1
Paine College		13									1	1
Oglethorpe Univ.											1	1
Berry College											3	1
Valdosta State											1	1
Shorter College											2	1
Agnes Scott			5	17			9				2	2
Albany State											2	2
Tift College											1	1
Georgia College		13		33	11						1	1
Other		13		7						22	4	6
South									15	5	4	4
Border St. Coll.	6		47	17	7	18			15	11	15	15
Border St. Univ.	24		26	7	7				6	7	7	7
Other Southern						18			1	1	1	1
Non-South												
Midwestern	18	13				11	27				4	6
NE/Mid-Atlantic						27			23		4	5

Summary:

Georgia	66%
UGA	25%
GSU	15%
Other	60%
South	24%
Border	23%
Other	1%
Non-South	11%

TABLE 2
Year of Graduation
Baccalaureate Degree

Year	Fulton	Richmond	DeKalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative
Before 1952	2	1	2	1	1					1	4	12
1952												2
1953		1	1									2
1954												2
1955	1	1					2				3	5
1956												4
1957												1
1958												1
1959	1	2									4	4
1960												1
1961				1	1						1	1
1962	1		1	1	1	1		1	1		2	4
1963												5
1964	2	1	1	1	1	1					1	6
1965												4
1966	1	1										1
1967												1
1968												6
1969	1			3	2	1		1	1	2	3	10
1970	1			2	3	2			1		2	12
1971		1							1		1	14
1972				2	1				1		2	17
1973	3		1	1			1		3	2	13	7
1974			3									7
1975												7
1976	1		2	1		1			1		6	13
1977												1
1978			2	1	1	1					3	9
1979			1	2							4	5
1980	2					1					3	2
1981									2			4
1982												2
1983												4
Mean	66	62	69	70	70	62	63	66	71	66	68	68.1

Mean = 68.1
Mode = 70
Median = 69

TABLE 3
Major
Baccalaureate Degree

Major	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative	Percentage
History	10	3	2	2	8	1	7		5	1	57	109	50
Sociology					1					2		7	3
Pol. Sci.	1		2	1		2			1		4	10	5
English							1					1	2
Psychology	1			1							1	3	5
Economics												0	1
Law												0	1
For. Lang.							1					1	.5
Geography			1		1							2	1
Physical Ed.									1		1	3	1
Education	4	5	6	4	5	1	1	1	6	6	24	65	30
Other	1			2		1	2				8	14	6

TABLE 4
Minor
Baccalaureate Degree

Major	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative	Percentage
History	1		3	3	2	3	3		3	1	1	23	41
Sociology				3	1	3					5	28	2
Pol. Sci.	2		2	3	1	2					7	17	10
English	3		2	3	1		2				15	24	15
Psychology											1	2	1
Economics	2		1							1	1	3	1
For. Lang.		1									7	10	6
Geography					1		2				1	2	1
Physical Ed.			2						2		3	5	4
Education	6	3	4	2	6	1		1	2	2	26	57	35
Other		1	1	1					1	2	7	13	8

TABLE 5
College of Record
Graduate Degree
(In Percentages)

	Fulton	Richmond	DeKalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminister	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative
University of Ga.	20	14	6	7	8	78			8	13	19	17
Ga. State Univ.	33		63	21	42		18		42		21	25
Emory University	13						18	50			1	3
Ga. Southern		14				11					4	3
West Georgia	7		6	33					16		11	9
Atlanta Univ.									0	0		
Ga. Southwestern				64								7
Augusta College		57									5	3
Mercer University									8	38	5	4
Georgia College					16	11				38	4	5
Albany State				7								5
Valdosta State												5
Armstrong State								50			7	2
Other			..								4	2
Bordering St. Coll.		14	6				9			13	7	5
Bordering St. U.	20		19								4	2
Other Southern							18				1	3
Midwest							18				2	5
Northeast/Mid-Atl.	7						18				1	3
							18	25				

Summary	83%
Georgia	20%
UGA	31%
GSU	49%
Other	12%
South	66%
Border	14%
Other	51%
Outside South	

this standard to Georgia, approximately half of the state's high school history teachers are substandard, at best, or unqualified, at worst.³ Other than history, most of the state's high school history teachers received degrees from colleges of education, and, among those who majored in history, most minored in education.⁴ By comparison, no Westminster teacher reported acquiring either a major or minor in education, while the vast majority took B.A.'s in history.

Numerous reasons for the apparently poor subject-area preparation of Georgia history teachers undoubtedly exist. The fact remains, however, that school administrators have not only tolerated this situation but in some ways have encouraged it. The growing popularity of broad field certification evidences the continued dilution of standards for the social sciences in general and history in particular. Pedagogic reasons may exist to justify broad field certification but administrative convenience rather than instructional excellence probably explains its adoption in most cases.⁵ Whatever the case, there are relatively few full-time history teachers in Georgia. Among the teachers surveyed, the typical respondent reported teaching an average of 3.87 periods of United States, Georgia and/or world history, well under the average workload of slightly over five periods per teacher.

A majority of Georgia high school history teachers in the survey have earned graduate degrees. It is not surprising that most teachers secured those advanced degrees from colleges and universities close to their homes. Georgia State University, located in the heart of the metropolitan-Atlanta area and having a full night school schedule, conferred the most degrees (25 percent), followed by the University of Georgia (17 percent) and West Georgia College (9 percent). Only one in twenty Georgia teachers attended graduate school outside the South and less than one in five matriculated outside of Georgia, most in bordering state colleges and universities (see Table 5).

Of those teachers holding advanced degrees, the average earned a degree in 1976, eight years (mean) after receiving the baccalaureate degree. All of the averaged sample groups except Westminster gained degrees between 1975 and 1978; the Westminster average was 1968 (see Table 6). The percentage of those majoring in history at the graduate level declined from the undergraduate average of 50 percent to 27 percent. State Board of Education policy, which penalizes teachers who earn graduate degrees in subject areas, contributes significantly to this condition. Not surprisingly, 71 percent of the respondents described themselves as education majors and 81 percent were working for an M.A.T. (8 percent), E.D.S. (6 percent), or M.Ed. (67 percent); only 10 percent listed an M.A. and three percent a Ph.D (Table 7 and 8).

Although a substantial majority of Georgia high school teachers earned advanced degrees in education, most would have preferred to work toward a subject-area degree in history. Similarly, when asked to rank the courses they found most beneficial in their teaching assignments, 90 percent of those teachers surveyed found history courses the most useful, followed by general liberal arts courses. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents found education courses to be the least valuable. This not only puts Georgia teachers in line with the conclusions of the Carnegie Foundation and the National Committee on Excellence in Education but further calls into

TABLE 6
Year of Graduation
Graduate Degree

	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative
Before 1960	1						1				1	3
1961											0	0
1962	1										0	1
1963				1							2	3
1964			1								1	2
1965											0	0
1966						1					1	2
1967							1				0	1
1968	1		3								2	6
1969							1				3	4
1970											3	3
1971					1	1		1			2	5
1972		1				1			2		3	12
1973					1	1				1	4	11
1974				2	1	1			3		2	12
1975	1	2		3	1	1			1	2	7	15
1976	2	1		1	1	1			1	1	3	11
1977	2		2	3	2	1			1		7	15
1978			2	1	1	1			1		5	10
1979			2	1	2	1			1		11	16
1980			2				1				7	11
1981		1	2		2				1		3	6
1982	1		1			2					3	11
1983	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		2	6	16
1984											3	11
Mean	76	75	77	76	77	76	68	78	76	77	76	76

Mean = 75.8
Mode = 80.0
Median = 77.0

TABLE 7
Major
Graduate Degree

	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative	Percentage
History	3										18	48	27
Sociology											1	1	.6
Pol. Sci.						1						2	1
Geography			1									1	.6
Education	11	5	12	5	10	7	3	1	7	5	61	127	71

TABLE 8
Degree
Graduate Study

	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative	Percentage
Ph.D.											2	4	3
M.A.	1			3		1	5		1	1	11	16	11
M.A.T.											5	13	9
M.Ed.	7	7	9	8	11	3	1		5	6	46	103	68
M.S.	1		1								5	8	5
E.D.S.	2						1		1		6	9	6

question Georgia Department of Education policy which discriminates against subject-area study⁶ (See Tables 9 & 10).

In summary, Georgia high school history teachers are long-time state residents who matriculated at one of the smaller Georgia or neighboring state colleges; only a tiny percentage earned degrees outside of the South. Approximately half of these teachers earned undergraduate degrees in history, and an even smaller percentage are pursuing graduate degrees in history. The vast majority of these teachers, however, either have or are working toward a graduate degree. Moreover, they are at an age, averaging about forty, at which such desirable qualities as experience, vigor and enthusiasm are combined. Everything considered, any serious problems that might exist in history instruction in the state are not so much the product of peculiar traits of history teachers as they are the by-product of some rather peculiar state educational policies.

THE CLASSROOM

Georgia high school teachers were asked to respond to a number of questions concerning their classroom assignments, instructional methods, and teaching effectiveness. As in other areas of the survey, few surprises turned up, although interesting details did emerge.

The average number of students in high school history classes ranged from fifteen at Westminster to thirty-five in Chatham County. Public school classrooms averaged thirty students. Assuming that other social studies courses (to which history teachers may have been assigned) had comparable numbers of students, this implies an average of 150 students per day, a number that obviously limits the range of possible instructional strategies and techniques.(Table 11)

Class size, however, does not appear greatly to have influenced the selection of the primary teaching method employed. Eighty percent of those surveyed said they used a combination of lectures and discussion. Even in the small Westminster classes, none of the respondents employed a straight seminar/discussion format while nearly 10 percent said they lectured as their primary teaching method. When teachers were asked whether they would use a different method if they had smaller classes, 53 percent either said "no" or were undecided. Although the remaining 47 percent said they would employ a different method, there is little evidence of what that might be. It appears likely, however, that most of these teachers were referring to an altered emphasis within the lecture/discussion mode of instruction rather than an entirely different approach (Table 12).

Given the large number of students high school teachers meet each day, it is not surprising that two-thirds of them used objective tests as their primary examination method (Table 13). Thirty percent use a combination of objective and discussion questions. Somewhat surprisingly, however, almost half of the respondents said they would employ the same examination method even if they had fewer students. Organizing and writing a historical essay is, of course, an important method of encouraging the development of writing and communication skills.⁷ It is also the best method of developing a sense of history and historical mindedness among students. The failure to utilize essay questions is a major

TABLE 9
Courses Most Beneficial
to Teaching
(In Percentages)

	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science	Cumulative
Education Courses												
Most Valuable	19	11	0	13	13	0	0	100	14	0	10	7
Valuable	13	22	29	33	33	33	0	0	36	33	26	23
Least Valuable	69	67	71	53	53	67	100	100	50	67	65	69
Gen. Lib. Arts Courses												
Most Valuable	6	0	05	7	20	11	9	0	14	11	11	9
Valuable	69	67	66	53	47	44	91	100	43	56	61	63
Least Valuable	25	33	29	40	33	44	0	0	43	33	28	28
History Courses												
Most Valuable	76	89	95	95	87	89	91	100	79	100	84	90
Valuable	18	11	5	5	7	11	9	0	14	0	11	8
Least Valuable	6	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	0	5	2

	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science	Cumulative
Average Class Size	27	30	28	31	27	28	15	35	33	29	27	28*
*Average for public schools (excluding Westminster) = 30												

TABLE 12
Teaching Method Employed
(In Percentages)

	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science	Cumulative
Lecture	0	11	0	5	27	11	9	50	0	0	4	10
Lecture/Disouaion	76	89	95	95	60	78	91	50	86	75	86	80
Discussion	12	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	7	25	3	5
Other	12	0	5	0	13	0	0	0	7	0	9	4
Would an alternative method be used with smaller classes?												
Yes	47	56	57	58	47	44	9	50	57	44	47	47
No	24	0	14	26	27	22	73	50	0	44	34	29
Undecided	29	44	29	16	27	33	18	0	43	11	19	24

TABLE 10
Preferred Degree Area
(In Percentages)

	Fulton	Richmond	Dekalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science	Cumulative
Education												
Most Preferred	50	0	15	33	27	50	9	0	29	0	30	22
Neutral	19	33	35	11	27	25	9	0	21	22	26	21
Least Preferred	31	67	50	55	47	25	82	100	50	78	44	57
Gen. Liberal Arts												
Most Preferred	12	0	19	0	27	11	9	0	21	11	17	12
Neutral	35	67	43	61	27	33	82	100	36	55	39	53
Least Preferred	53	33	38	39	47	55	-9	0	43	33	44	36
History												
Most Preferred	44	100	80	78	60	43	90	100	50	89	59	72
Neutral	44	0	15	11	33	43	0	0	29	11	28	19
Least Preferred	13	0	5	11	7	14	10	0	21	0	13	9

weakness in history instruction at the secondary level, but, realistically, it can only be altered through a reduced student load and a greater commitment on the part of teachers to essay-type examinations.

Almost all of the state's history teachers used one or more special assignments to complement regular classroom instruction. Short research papers are the most common, followed by written book reviews and term papers in that order. In this case teachers responded much more positively to the question of using additional such assignments if they had fewer students (Table 14). Time, however, was not the only factor limiting such assignments. "I regret to answer with 'O's' concerning book reviews, term papers, etc.," one respondent declared. "At one time (in past) I would have given at least one of these items per quarter. Now, student attitudes, [and] lack of administrative support of the history program make it increasingly difficult to use these methods. Athletics seem more important than academics at this school!"⁸ Obviously, teachers should encourage written work; it helps students develop their powers of critical thought as well as promoting a more fluid writing style, improved organizational techniques and generally enhanced language arts skills. One teacher described an almost ideal situation in this regard:

I teach in a team situation. My students have the same math, language arts, and science teachers. We plan together and help each other by reinforcing each other. An example is the belief that all subjects should teach reading and writing. History cannot be taught correctly, in my opinion, unless these areas are stressed as much as history itself.⁹

Given a list of several potential means of improving teaching effectiveness, teachers were asked to rank them, ranging from most important to least important. Of the seven items listed, smaller classes clearly ranked as the change most teachers believed would increase their teaching effectiveness. Smaller classes would create much greater flexibility with regard to teaching strategies, examination policies and the assignment of special projects. Teachers ranked better resource materials second and fewer classes third, followed in order by ability tracking, better school discipline, teacher aides, and better administrative support. These rankings are interesting in several ways. They suggest that school discipline is not as serious a problem as we have been led to believe. Teachers seem to have little interest in teacher aides or further ability tracking, and they generally give their principals and other administrative personnel high marks for administrative support. The high correlation that exists between school discipline and administrative support suggests that teachers tend to evaluate school administrators largely on the basis of their ability to maintain school discipline (see Table 15).

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Although some teachers complained about excessive

TABLE 13
Examination Method Used
(Real Numbers)

	Fulton	Richmond	DeKalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative/Percentage
Objective	7	8	18	13	7	8	0	0	12	7	53	67
Objective/Disquisition	5	1	3	5	8	1	11	2	2	2	41	30
Disquisition	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Oral	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Would you use a different method with smaller classes?												
Yes	11	7	14	10	8	5	0	0	12	4	49	55
No	0	1	4	3	6	2	11	2	1	4	33	31
Undecided	1	1	2	6	1	1	0	0	1	1	16	14

TABLE 15
Methods of Improving
Teaching Effectiveness
(Ranking 1-7)*

	Fulton	Richmond	DeKalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Average
Fewer Classes	3.3	4.0	3.6	5.6	5.4	3.7	2.1	4.0	2.3	5.6	4.4	4.00
Smaller Classes	2.5	3.1	1.5	2.1	2.5	1.7	2.8	4.0	1.4	1.6	2.4	2.33
Better Resource Mat.	4.5	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.1	2.8	3.0	4.0	3.4	3.3	3.7	3.62
Teacher Aids	5.0	5.3	4.1	4.3	3.9	5.1	5.0	7.0	3.2	3.0	4.3	4.56
Ability Tracking	4.0	4.0	4.4	3.9	4.9	4.9	5.5	3.0	4.7	4.2	4.0	4.32
Better Sch. Discipl.	4.5	3.3	3.8	2.6	3.4	4.8	5.7	6.0	5.1	4.4	4.1	4.34
Better Admin. Suppt.	3.6	4.7	5.4	2.9	4.6	4.3	5.5	3.5	5.9	6.7	5.0	4.74

* (1=most important; 7=least important)

TABLE 14
Special Assignments Employed
(Real Numbers)

	Fulton	Richmond	DeKalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Cumulative/Percentage
Written Book Reviews	12	4	12	11	7	4	5	1	8	4	60	47
Oral Book Reviews	5	3	4	9	2	2	6	0	5	4	27	30
Term Papers	7	4	9	12	5	6	3	1	4	4	39	42
Research Papers	12	4	11	8	5	1	2	8	6	5	53	52
Other	7	1	5	3	3	3	4	1	3	2	37	31
Would you assign more such activities with fewer students?												
Yes	11	9	15	13	12	6	2	0	12	7	65	68
No	4	0	3	4	2	3	7	2	1	2	17	20
Undecided	2	0	3	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	16	12

TABLE 16
Extracurricular assignments
(In Percentages)

	Fulton	Richmond	DeKalb	Albany	Clayton	Clarke	Westminster	Chatham	Cobb	Bibb	Social Science Council	Average
Class Sponsor	35	33	24	53	27	22	0	100	0	44	26	33
Club Sponsor	59	56	29	53	40	33	36	0	29	22	44	36
Yearbook	6	0	0	11	7	0	9	0	0	11	4	4
School Newspaper	6	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2
Coaching	29	22	43	5	7	22	45	0	55	22	14	24
Other	6	22	24	21	40	0	36	0	14	11	32	19

extracurricular assignments which, they said, detracted from their preparations for academic courses, most do not appear to be overburdened in this regard and few identified such activities as a serious problem. Most teachers had one or more such responsibilities, with club or class sponsors being the most common. Coaching assignments were reported by 25 percent of the respondents, a somewhat smaller figure than anticipated. Relatively high percentages of coaches, however, taught history courses in Cobb (55 percent), Westminster (45 percent) and DeKalb (43 percent). (Table 16)

Among the other conditions that influenced teaching effectiveness, a great many teachers complained bitterly about excessive paperwork that absorbed much of their preparation period each day. One teacher commented that "the endless record keeping, especially for homerooms, is very frustrating and time-consuming," and another grumbled that teachers had to do "paper work that should be the responsibility of the administrative staff."¹⁰

Teachers also resented the numerous interruptions that intruded on their classroom teaching. Complaints in this regard ranged from frequent intercom announcements to excessive hallway and outside noises. Most comments, however, revolved around extracurricular activities, such as assemblies that interrupted academic coursework. "I teach high school seniors," one respondent reported, "and they have pictures made every time I blink. It is absurd!"¹¹ Several teachers believed that athletics were overemphasized at the expense of academic achievement. This misplaced emphasis appears to involve not only the recognition of student achievement but also the appreciation of teachers. Community values, parental support and student motivation were all frequently identified as important attributes of a positive educational environment. Unfortunately, almost all of the comments in this regard were negative. "I feel our schools reflect our society," lamented one teacher, "and at this time society is at a low level. We have problems of drugs, sex, TV, etc. Until students take responsibility for their own learning, teachers are at a disadvantage." "If education is not a value within the community, it's difficult to teach," commented another.¹²

The political environment within the schools also concerned several teachers. "Politics affects teaching," said one disgruntled teacher "You can't upset certain parents. Principals need their support in sports, etc. . . . things also must look good on paper as part of this political package." Or, according to another teacher,

the biggest problem I have encountered is interference and political manipulation of students on the part of other teachers - particularly coaches, counselors, and special education. This manipulation of students into believing that history courses should not be so "hard" results in complaints to the administration and reinforcement to students who don't want to listen in the first place.¹³

Among the other problems identified by Georgia teachers, working students were the source of several comments like the following: "Students and parents seem to place more importance on after school jobs than on education, yet they

expect us to come up with some way for them to make a good grade. The students can't do homework since they go to a job. They are tired during the school day."¹⁴ Other concerns included temperature control in classrooms, an excessive number of preparations, lack of continuity in teaching assignments from quarter to quarter, morale, turnover among social studies teachers, old and/or insufficient textbooks, and student absenteeism.

SOCIAL STUDIES REQUIREMENTS

The core curriculum established by the Georgia Board of Education includes three Carnegie units of social studies instruction in grades 9-12. One of those units must be in American studies (history and government), one from the world studies area (history, geography, etc.), and one from citizenship education and the "Principles of Economics/Business/Free Enterprise." The typical school system's social studies curriculum looks something like the following:

- 8th grade: Georgia Studies
- 9th grade: Citizenship & Principles of
Economics
- 10th grade: World History or World Geography
- 11th grade: U.S. History and Government

Most college preparatory programs included world history as a required course but otherwise the regular core remained the same. Finally, most school districts offer students a number of social studies electives and/or advanced placement classes in core subjects.¹⁵

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

There are three primary ways in which those who teach history in Georgia may acquire their certification. A prospective teacher can major or minor in history. Those who major in history are required to earn a minimum of forty quarter hours in history with at least ten quarter hours each in U.S. history and world history and five quarter hours in non-western history. Those minoring in history can take as few as ten or as many as twenty quarter hours of coursework. (Teachers in Georgia can legally teach only in those areas in which they have had a minimum of ten quarter hours of course credit.) The third means of qualifying to teach history in Georgia is through broad field social science certification. This method involves a minimum of seventy-five hours in four social science areas. The area of concentration consists of thirty quarter hours, half of which must be in upper division courses. The remaining forty-five hours are divided into three areas of fifteen hours each.¹⁶

CONCLUSIONS

State and local curriculum requirements in the social studies area are, for the most part, in line with the recommendations of both the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Specifically, for example, the

latter group recommended three years of social studies education at the high school level, the teaching of which should be designed to:

(a) enable students to fix their places and possibilities within the larger social and cultural structure; (b) understand the broad sweep of both ancient and contemporary ideas that have shaped our world; and (c) understand the fundamentals of how our economic system works and how our political system functions; and (d) grasp the difference between free and repressive societies. An understanding of each of these areas is requisite to the informed and committed exercise of citizenship in our free society.¹⁷

The social studies requirements included in the Georgia Core Curriculum adopted by the Georgia Board of Education conforms to these recommendations in spirit and letter. Moreover, the requirement that one of the three Carnegie units in the social studies must be in world studies is particularly gratifying. (Beginning in 1987, the University System Board of Regents has mandated one year of world history as a college entrance requirement; unfortunately, the Board failed to enforce its own recommendation that the undergraduate core for System colleges and universities include ten hours of history.)

The authors of the Carnegie Foundation study stressed the need for greater emphasis on English and writing, but in this area as well Georgia schools do not measure up. History is a natural subject in which to emphasize writing. As is, however, the large student load militates against essay examinations and the assignment of book reports, term and research papers, and other written work. Georgia teachers have affirmed that they would assign more such projects if they had smaller classes or fewer classes per day. Indeed, teacher responses to the question of increasing teaching effectiveness raises serious policy issues for both state and national administrators. Both President Ronald Reagan and Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris have argued repeatedly that educational deficiencies can be overcome without an infusion of any substantial amount of new money. While neither of them has offered much more than rhetoric to support this position, they have both pointed to areas such as school discipline as an example of reform that could be accomplished without the expenditure of additional funds. Even if this assumption is valid (certainly smaller classes would resolve some discipline problems), Georgia teachers ranked those changes that would not require substantial budget increases--better school discipline, ability tracking, better administrative support--at the bottom of their list of priorities. Meanwhile, the three items that teachers rated most important in improving teaching effectiveness--smaller classes, better resource materials, fewer classes--would all require the expenditure of substantial amounts of new money for the employment of additional teachers and the purchase of equipment, books, films, and the like. (These issues, of course, leave aside the more pressing issue of higher salaries to recruit and retain superior teachers.)

Georgia policies and practices in the area of teacher education and certification vary significantly from the findings and recommendations of state and national education study groups. Both the National Commission on Excellence in Education and the Carnegie Foundation study emphasized the need for teachers to major in their subject area. Moreover, authors of "The Making of a Teacher," issued by the National Center for Educational Information, a private institution of education research, was particularly critical of education majors.¹⁸ Certainly the national trend appears to be toward subject-area majors. The state of Massachusetts now requires prospective teachers to major in the subject area they plan to teach, and other states, including California, are moving in this direction.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the trend in Georgia, at least in the social studies, appears to be in the opposite direction, toward broad field certification. For example, DeKalb County, which has long been regarded as one of the stronger school systems in the state, now seldom hires subject area majors in the social studies. In some cases this means that teachers have little more than laymen's knowledge in courses they teach such as geography, economics and history. One frustrated prospective teacher, writing in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, related how the teacher certification process in Georgia affected him:

I am certified in South Carolina, have a M.A. from the University of Georgia and will have a Ph.D. from Tulane University upon completion of my dissertation. I have more than four years of teaching experience. Yet, to become certified in Georgia I would need to go back and take 30 hours of undergraduate course work. On the other hand, a person who has completed a Georgia-approved educational sequence in college can become fully certified to teach in my field, history, with as little as six history courses to his or her credit.²⁰

The certification process should be designed to encourage the appointment of the most qualified people possible. It sometimes has had the opposite result. This is not to imply that professional education courses are without value, but it does relate to the issue of emphasis and balance in requirements. Any certification process that discriminates against a teacher who earns an undergraduate or graduate degree in his or her primary teaching field needs to be carefully reevaluated.

Georgia's history teachers leave little doubt as to where they stand on the issue. Teachers who responded to the survey upon which this report is based generally agreed with a nation-wide 1983 Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. poll in which only 10 percent of the teachers surveyed believed that their educational training had done a good job of preparing them for the classroom.²¹ Nine out of ten Georgia teachers found that subject area courses contributed most to their teaching effectiveness.²²

Little enthusiasm for broad field certification among Georgia teachers surfaced in the survey. Instead, teachers with such certification characterized themselves as "pinch hitters" who were used where they were most needed and as

"floating" teachers who sometimes had four or five preparations. A certification process that permits teachers at the secondary level to teach such academic subject areas as history, government and economics with only fifteen hours of undergraduate coursework, all of which could be at the freshman-survey level is a prescription for mediocrity, the product of which ultimately can be found in the form of low literacy levels and poor Scholastic Aptitude Test scores.

In the wake of an impressive number of national studies--including the Carnegie Foundation, the Rand Corporation, the National Center for Education Information and the National Commission on Excellence in Education--which have produced an unusual consensus on necessary reforms in the teacher certification area, it is difficult to understand the resistance to change exhibited by local and state education authorities in Georgia. Until those concerns are addressed, it is doubtful that any substantial improvements will take place.

NOTES

¹The Georgia Council for the Social Sciences survey sample group was quite representative of the state as a whole, although members of the Council probably are a little older and had a greater professional-orientation than Georgia teachers at large. Two hundred sixty-seven questionnaires were sent out to Council members and 129 were returned. Twenty nine of those were eliminated for various reasons, the most common being that they did not teach history, leaving a very convenient survey population of 100. After discussing the character of the Georgia Council for the Social Sciences' membership with Charles Berryman and Gwen Hucheson, it was decided to expand the base by sampling high schools in specific areas, such as metropolitan Atlanta and the larger urban areas around the state (Macon, Savannah, Augusta, etc.). In this case social studies coordinators in the various locales were asked to distribute the questionnaire to representative high schools in their districts. This procedure produced the remaining 126 respondents in the project sample. The responses of the latter sample groups are reported individually and collectively in the tables included in this report. Unfortunately, no responses were received from city of Atlanta, North Georgia, and Muscogee County (Columbus) high schools. The inclusion of Westminster High School was not intended to represent private schools in the state but rather to reflect the optimum school situation against which the public schools could be compared.

²The Atlanta Constitution, 31 August 1984.

³Many of the education majors did identify social studies or social sciences education as their primary field of study.

⁴See Table No. 1.

⁵Georgia Department of Education, "Social Science Education" (Approved August 1978), p. 92.

⁶Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America" (1983); The National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk" (1983).

⁷The Carnegie Foundation study placed particular emphasis on the importance of writing.

⁸Survey, Georgia High School Teachers, May 1984.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid. This is an area in which the authors of the National Commission on Excellence in Education report made strong recommendations for reform.

¹¹Survey, Georgia High School Teachers, May 1984.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Georgia Department of Education, "Graduation Requirements" (Effective August 1984; Adopted November 1983).

¹⁶Social Science Education, p. 92.

¹⁷Graduation Requirements, p. 2.

¹⁸Emily Feistritz, "The Making of a Teacher," (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Information), 1984.

¹⁹Newsweek, 19 September 1983.

²⁰The Atlanta Constitution, 30 October 1983.

²¹Newsweek, 24 September 1984.

²²See Table No. 9.