

Research supporting smaller classrooms sparks controversy

WASHINGTON (AP) — A year after California began drastically reducing classroom size, teachers and parents alike are pleased with the change. Now President Clinton is campaigning for smaller classes everywhere.

Although classrooms across the nation already are far less crowded than they were in California, the administration wants to spend \$12 billion over seven years to hire 100,000 new teachers for grades one through three. Officials cite research they say links smaller classes to better learning.

But the research is less supportive than public opinion polls, working teachers and common sense in favor of lower class sizes. Researchers have studied and debated the issue for decades, often harshly.

"When you ask teachers, they seem to know instinctively classrooms should be smaller," said Marshall S. Smith, acting deputy secretary of education, when questioned about dueling studies. In the Reagan and Bush years, the Education Department opposed class-size reduction as expensive and ineffective.

The National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union, has been pushing since the late 1960s for classes of 15 pupils.

Smith and others quote from a "fairly rigorous" study of a Tennessee experiment during the 1980s with cutting class sizes from 25 pupils to 15 in kindergarten through the third grade. The study found that pupils in smaller classes did better on standardized tests.

Other researchers say the starting and ending numbers in any reduction scheme are more important than the numbers in between. In California, aver-

age class size in the early grades went from 30 to the legally prescribed 20. Clinton wants to bring classes down from an average of 22 nationwide to 18.

"Reducing class size from 22 to 18 is unlikely to make a big difference," Robert Slavin, a researcher at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University and head of a successful reading program, said. "Reducing

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class size from 30 to 18 is probably going to make a much larger difference."

"It's very expensive, and probably has more to do with building morale and a positive environment with the schools than it does with achievement," Slavin, who believes reducing class size is "a good thing to do," said.

Under the plan, California would get \$124 million; New York, \$101 million; Texas, \$94 million; Florida, \$50 million; Illinois and Pennsylvania, \$49 million each; and Ohio,

\$45 million.

Slavin praised Clinton for wanting to phase in the hiring of teachers and assure that they are qualified, hoping to avoid troubles California had in its crash program, and to stress reading. But he said the money could be more efficiently used on tutoring or other targeted approaches.

The proposal figures on an average teacher cost of \$35,000 in salary and benefits. Local districts would pay 10 percent to 50 percent of the cost, with poor districts getting a higher subsidy. About 37,000 teachers would be hired the first year.

Gene V. Glass, at Arizona State University in Tempe, questioned the benefits.

"The difference in achievement between where we are now, which is 22, 23, 24 kids per class, and where the president is talking about, 18, is very small," he said.

"You have to go way, way down to get gains that are appreciable, that would even be noticeable to a teacher," he said. "Those numbers are 10 or six students in an instructional group."

Eric A. Hanushek, a University of Rochester economist, said class sizes have been shrinking nationwide, with no gain in achievement on national standardized tests.

Polls consistently find voter support for smaller classes. In California's Orange County, some parents are putting their children back from private schools into public schools because of smaller classes.

"Teachers are thrilled, parents are thrilled," says Roni Ellis, principal of Harbour View Elementary School in Huntington Beach, Calif. "It's a quality program that allows teachers to better understand the needs of every child in their classroom."

GOP says Saddam may be forced out of power

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright promised Sunday that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein will be punished severely if the United States decides to use military force to enforce U.N. resolutions.

Republican leaders contended that's not enough — the ultimate goal, they said, is to drive Saddam from power.

Albright repeated that Saddam has only weeks to accede to a diplomatic solution to avoid a U.S.-led attack. Bill Richardson, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, rejected the latest Iraqi offer to avoid it, a two-month window for U.N. officials to inspect Saddam's presidential palaces for concealed weapons.

Albright, speaking on CBS' "Face the Nation," said any military action against Iraq for interfering with U.N. weapons inspectors would be a "substantial strike" aimed at diminishing Saddam's ability to rebuild weapons of mass destruction and threaten his neighbors.

Defense Secretary William Cohen arrived Sunday in Saudi Arabia to discuss the Iraq question and said the United States had enough firepower in the region to carry out strikes without using U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia. Saudi leaders have been reported opposing the use of force against Iraq and has been reluctant to allow military missions to originate from Saudi soil.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., speaking after Albright on CBS, said there are worries in Congress that the administration lacks an effective endgame, which would include removing Saddam.

Lott suggested support for democratic forces in Iraq as a way to do it, or setting up a Radio Free Iraq or expanding the U.N.-ordered flight-interdiction zone over Iraq. "I'm not talking about assassination, but I'm talking about

a coherent long-term policy," Lott said.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., said the Senate intelligence committee "Fox News Sunday" that he would support military action against Iraq but not immediately, though, we're going to

up to the fact we're going to have to get rid of him, one way or the other."

"We would obviously," Albright said, "look forward to dealing with a different Iraqi regime, but we have to be very clear about what we are after."

Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., said on Fox that taking out Saddam is "not a doable proposition" without significant ground forces that he would support.

The Republican-controlled administration policy toward Iraq failed to agree on what it should do.

Former Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the coalition forces that beat Iraq in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, said NBC's "Meet the Press" that removing Saddam would be a "very, very tough thing" but better intelligence and a willingness to toughen their resolve.

But he warned of a risk that the bombing of North Vietnam during the Vietnam War, punishing Iraq without eliminating Iraq's nuclear capability, would toughen their resolve.

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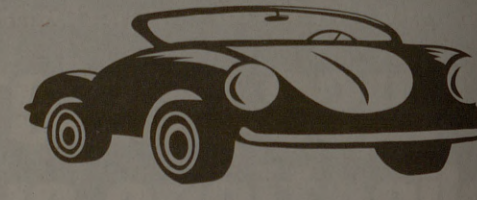
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CHEM 102	7-9 PM	CH 15A	CH 15B	CH 16	PRAC TEST
PHYS 218	9 PM- MID	CH 1, 2, 3	CH 4	PRAC TEST A	PRAC TEST B
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		FRI 4-7 PM Feb 6	SAT 4-7 PM Feb 7	SUN 4-6 PM Feb 8	
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