



## Letters: Pay grades for teachers

08:53 AM CST on Sunday, January 6, 2008

Much of teacher's job involves crowd control

Re: "Tough love for educators – Pay teachers competitively and hold us accountable, says Susan Creighton," Wednesday Viewpoints.



FILE 1996/Staff photo  
Should teachers compete for the best pay?

I am very happy for her that Ms. Creighton, an intelligent and well-educated person, is in the position to teach AP English language and composition. Truly I wish all such college graduates trained in education could step into such a teaching environment and even have a seasoned educator provided as a mentor.

However as long as public education exists, the unfortunate reality is that part of its function is (as spoken by the closest thing I had to a mentor during my 10-year teaching stint) "to keep the children off the streets." When the large part of the population has no moral compass and no motivation to be taught, then the public schools are left with large numbers of students who have no desire to be disciplined or to be educated.

Not all of the high school students will have the desire to take AP classes and a large portion of the students are present only because of the truancy laws.

*Karen Johnson, Garland*

To be fair, pay should be based on progress

I assume Susan Creighton equates accountability with high test scores. Readers must remember that students who take AP classes enter able and willing to make high scores. They will make good grades with or without contrived accountability.

When I think about accountability, I think about special education and disadvantaged children. Special educators are already accountable, but we have to help our babies up an extra flight of stairs before they even get to the first floor. In order to be realistic, accountability plans must be based on progress, which is much less glamorous than high scores.

Most of the students I have taught since 1972 have severe, profound, and/or multiple disabilities. They have high achievement, but will never take an AP course. One of my highest achievers was a little fellow who spoke three words at the beginning of the year and 27 at the end.

*Rhonda Browning, Gonzales, La.*

Competition gets results in business; why not?

Susan Creighton, a public high school teacher, gets it right when she says that the current pay system gives her no incentive to improve her teaching (other than personal pride). Paying teachers based on how many years they have taught and refusing to reward effective teachers over ineffective ones is anti-competitive and reduces the motivation to excel.

Several school districts such as Dallas ISD, Houston ISD, and Austin ISD are incorporating competition into their pay structure by designing their own incentive pay programs. In fact, during the 2006-2007 school year, 90 Texas school districts had a local incentive pay program.

Rewarding excellence could improve the respect for and reputation of teaching as a profession. Teachers deserve the chance to compete for higher

salaries. Give them that chance.

*Brooke Dollens Terry, Texas Public Policy Foundation, Austin*