

# 2009 Annual Meeting – San Francisco

The 87th Annual Luncheon and Meeting of the The Horace Mann League in conjunction with the Suburban School Superintendents Association

The 2009 Annual meeting was called to order by **Fred Hartmeister**

Introduction of Officers and Directors by **Fred Hartmeister**

Introduction of Past Presidents by **Fred Hartmeister**

Introduction of Suburban School Superintendents' Board  
**Charles Fowler**

Invocation by **Carol Choye**

Introduction of Corporate Sponsors by  
**Mark Edwards**

**Promethia Boards,**

**Discovery Education,**

**Scantron Corporation,**

**Apple Computers,**

**Spectrum**

**K-12 Solutions,** and

**Plato Learning**

Nomination and Election of Directors and Officers by Gary Marx  
New Director Appointments

***Evelyn Blose Holman (NY)***

***Nancy DeFord (VA)***

***Stan Olson (ID)***

Vice President

***Julie Underwood (WI)***

President – elect

***George Garcia (AZ)***

President

***Steve Rasmussen (WA)***

Past President

***Fred Hartmeister (TX)***

Motion by Gary Marx that the Nominations Committee report be  
accepted and

the individuals above be approved for the positions listed.

Motion accepted by acclamation. Passed.

The State of Education by **Gary Marx**

Presentation of Awards

Horace Mann League Service Award presented by Eric King

***Richard Christie (IA) and James Anderson  
(NM)***

Ambassador Awards – Presented by  
Fred Hartmeister

***Brent Clark, Carol Choye, James Harvey, Mark  
Edwards, Gary Marx, Charles Fowler, Joe Hairston, Steve  
Rasmussen, Art Sellar, Colleen Wilcox***

Friend of the Horace Mann League – Presented by  
Charles Fowler

***Kenneth Underwood, Search Consultant***

Outstanding Friend of Public Education – Presented by  
Julie Underwood

***John Goodlad, Co-director of the Center for Educational  
Renewal***

Outstanding Educator Award – Presented by  
Colleen Wilcox

***Harry Wong, Speaker, Author, Publisher***

See Harry Wong's comments below.

Presentation of President's Award – Presented by

Steve Rasmussen

***Fred Hartmeister, Past President***

***Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.***

Comments by Harry Wong



On February 21, 2009, at the American Association of School Administrators Convention in San Francisco, the Horace Mann League presented Harry Wong with the Outstanding Public Educators Award. The following is his acceptance speech.

## **You Hire for Qualifications and Then Train for Effectiveness**

Question: What is the most important asset in your school or schools?

I want to sincerely thank the Horace Mann League for the 2009 Outstanding Public Educator Award. In its infinite wisdom, this is the first time the Horace Mann League has ever given this award to a classroom teacher. I am very pleased that you have recognized a classroom teacher. I accept this award, not for me, but on behalf of the three million teachers in our public school classrooms.

My success is not due to what I have done, but to what others have done. My wife Rosemary and I have a passion—we love to share the successes of others in education: superintendents, principals, teachers, schools, and school districts.

These can be found described in detail in our books, videos, and Internet articles. For instance, we do not own Teachers.net, but we have been writing for Teachers.net for over 9 years and every month, we chronicle the successes of PUBLIC EDUCATORS.

Last month (January 2009), we wrote about an orchestra teacher in San Antonio. She came to America as an immigrant and today is a highly successful high school teacher after only teaching for three years.<sup>1</sup>

This month (February 2009), we write about an assistant superintendent and several of his teachers, focusing on how they produce effective teachers in Alberta, Canada.

Let me define the term “effective.” Effective means “having an effect” or “producing a result.” An effective teacher produces student learning, which is the goal and purpose of school.

There is another term that often comes up within education circles—“highly qualified teachers.” “Highly qualified” and “qualified” are redundant terms. They are similar to “pregnant” and “highly pregnant.” “Highly qualified” is a term coined by the No Child Left Behind Act, which mandates that a teacher: 1) must have a college degree, 2) have a teaching credential, and 3) be competent in the subject he or she is to teach. I agree. However, a highly qualified teacher may not be an effective teacher.

It is effective teachers that produce student learning and achievement, not highly qualified teachers. Therefore, you hire for qualifications, and then train for effectiveness.

I spoke in Toronto yesterday morning to 500 beginning teachers. I said to them that a Canadian, John Goodlad, reviewed 40 years of educational innovations, initiatives, programs, and ideologies and did not find a single one that consistently increased student achievement. What he found, instead, was that the only factor that increased student

achievement was the significance of an effective teacher.

Robert Marzano, who is senior scholar at the Mid-Continent Research for Education & Learning in Aurora, Colorado, found that if you have a child who is at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and you put that child—your own child, for instance—in a school that is ineffective and under a teacher that is also ineffective, then in two years, that child will be at a frightening 3<sup>rd</sup> percentile. Research says that a child will normally mature by 6 percentiles every year. Thus, it may be better for these students to not even be in school and to allow them to grow through normal maturation.

In another scenario, neighbors and friends tell you of a good school. So you move and place your child in an effective school but, oh my goodness, your child is taught by an ineffective teacher. After two years your child will be at the 37<sup>th</sup> percentile.

However, Marzano says that if your child is in an ineffective school, but is taught by an effective teacher, in two years your child will be at the 63<sup>rd</sup> percentile. In two more years, your child could be at the 75<sup>th</sup>, and then the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile. Eric Hanushek at the Hoover Institution showed: give a child four straight years with effective teachers, and you could close the achievement gap. The difference between a child at the 3<sup>rd</sup> percentile and a child at the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile could simply be the teacher!

Effective school districts know this.



Last June, 2008, 98.7 percent of the graduating senior class in the Islip Public Schools on Long Island received the NY Regent's diploma. How do they do it? They have a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained induction program that trains their teachers to be effective.

The Flowing Wells Schools in Tucson has produced more Arizona teachers-of-the-year than any other district in Arizona. How do they do it? They have an eight year induction/professional development program that takes their teachers from neophyte to expert.

The Lafourche Parish Public Schools outside of New Orleans reduced their new teacher attrition rate in two years from over 50 percent annually to a current 6 percent with all teachers trained in the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching. Their induction program is so good that the state of Louisiana made it the model for the entire state.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, it is not the school but the teacher that produces results!

Joe Gibbs, the famed football coach who is also in the National Football League's Hall of Fame says it succinctly and correctly, "You win with people."

Translated for schools, "You win with teachers." The only factor

that increases student achievement is the teacher.

In **1991**, Ron Ferguson, who is *director of the [Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University](#)*, reported: A large scale study found that every additional dollar spent on raising teacher quality netted greater student achievement gains than did any other use of school resources.<sup>4</sup> You win with people.

Two years later, to show you how we ignore the research, Walter Annenberg gave schools \$500 million to improve student achievement and called it The Annenberg Challenge. So,

- Boston tried whole-school change
- Chicago tried small learning communities
- Houston tried class size reduction
- Los Angeles tried improving literacy
- New York tried creating small schools of choice
- Philadelphia tried citywide learning standards

In **1998**, the Annenberg Foundation reported that none of the programs improved student learning. The work that delivered the best return on student learning was the money invested in giving teachers SUSTAINED opportunities to improve their classroom skills. **It's not programs, fads, or ideologies. It's the teacher!**

Bill and Melanie Gates are to be commended for their generosity in addressing many of the food and medical problems in Africa, but their concern for the education system is misguided. First,

they pour much money into creating smaller schools and, as we all now know, the Gates have realized this has not resulted in improved student learning. So, now they are focusing on charter schools. In two years they will suffer the same failed results. It's the teacher that has the greatest impact on student achievement, but the Gates invested no money to directly and systematically improve the effectiveness of teachers.

But the Annenbergs and Gates are not at fault. The great tragedy of money from the Annenbergs, Gates, and others is that educators are fixated on money—regarding money as their greatest assets. And when money appears, we ask, “How can we spend the money?” Instead of heeding what research tells us, we choose to recycle the same old programs and ideologies that have failed time after time.

As Gary Marx, who is Professor Emeritus at M.I.T., asked, “What consumes more energy than almost anything else on the planet? The answer is our ongoing battle to maintain the status quo. We have some educators who measure their success by keeping things the way they've always been, and fighting off the challenges of a fast-moving world.”

Instead of spending money haphazardly, we need to learn to ask, “What is it we want to accomplish? (Hopefully, it is student achievement!) With that goal or goals firmly in mind, only then, can we execute the plan.

Harvard Professor of Educational Leadership Richard Elmore says, “To improve student learning, you do not change the structure (i.e., block scheduling, smaller class sizes, smaller school sizes, etc.). You change the instructional practices of the teachers. The schools that seem to do best are those that have a clear idea of what kind of **instructional practice** they want to produce, and who then design a structure to go with it.”<sup>5</sup> It is the teachers and their instructional practices, not curriculum programs or a change in the school structure, that improves student learning.

Theodore Hershberger at the University of Pennsylvania found that good instruction is 15 to 20 times more powerful than family background and income, race, gender, and any other explanatory variables. It is how effectively the teacher instructs that results in student learning.<sup>6</sup>

Peter Drucker, the famed business guru, coined the term “human capital” and considered people “assets.” Human capital refers to what people know and can do. Human capital is not measured by accumulated physical assets, but by knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The very idea of human capital replacing physical capital was so novel that it won a Nobel Prize (1992) for its most ardent exponent, University of Chicago economist Gary Becker. Companies today depend on their people to create the next great idea. Human capital is the wealth and future of a company. People are its major assets.

Peter Drucker says that if you ask any business person to name their greatest asset, they will tell you it’s their PEOPLE. An asset

is what you invest in to make it grow into greater assets. That's why American businesses spend \$53 billion dollars each year training their people—their assets—to make them worth more to a company. Thus, they consider their people their human capital. The better their people—their assets—the more successful the company.

However, ask a school administrator or policymaker to name their greatest asset, and they will often tell you it is money or programs. Rarely do you hear anyone say their teachers are their most valuable assets. Yet the research says it over and over again: Teacher instructional effectiveness is the most critical factor by which to improve student achievement or to close the achievement gap.<sup>7</sup>

This past Monday, Rosemary and I were in a jungle area of Cambodia—five hours from the nearest airport—where we have built a school for 250 students. This is the first school that this remote village has had. During our visit, we met with the school committee (read: school board) and asked them what we could help provide to improve the school. They said two things.

First, they said they wanted to fence the entire school grounds. Why? To keep the cows and pigs off the school grounds.

Second, they wanted continued support to improve their teachers. Here were five men—whom I dare say may not even

have had much of an elementary school education—yet, in their infinite wisdom, they knew that the better the teachers, the better their children would learn.

They did not ask for smaller class sizes, a smaller school size, block scheduling, a literacy program, whole child instruction, or any other initiative, program, or structural change. They knew, like Peter Drucker, that the greatest assets of their school were the teachers.

For 20 years, Rosemary and I have never been involved in any initiatives, ideologies, or programs. All we do is help educators produce effective teachers. That is all we have ever done and will continue to do. We have maintained the course and are focused on results—the learning and achievement of students.

You know this from our video series, ***The Effective Teacher***. It won the Telly Award for the best educational video series of the past 25 years. Notice the word “effective.”

You know our book, ***The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher***. It has sold 3.5 million copies—more copies than any other book in the history of education. Notice the word “effective.”

For nine years, we have been writing a column for Teachers.net called “Effective Teaching.” Notice the word “effective.”

Lastly, we have an 8-page newspaper, ***Successful Teaching – For Those Who Want to Be Effective Teachers***. It is free for the asking for all your teachers at [www.EffectiveTeaching.com](http://www.EffectiveTeaching.com), “Our Products.” Again, notice the word “effective.”

We are able to help you produce effective teachers because we know and we teach the research behind developing effective teachers.

The three characteristics of an effective teacher are:

- 1 They are extremely good classroom managers. (Classroom Management, Unit C)
- 2 They know how to deliver instruction for student learning. (Lesson Mastery, Unit D)
- 3 They have positive expectations for student success. (Positive Expectations, Unit B)

This is based on the research of Thomas Good and Jere Brophy in their book ***Looking in Classrooms***.<sup>8</sup> It is now in its tenth edition. We have known these characteristics of effective teachers for over 30 years.

In 2007, Robert Pianta, Director of The University of Virginia ***Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning***, reported that his survey of 1000 schools determined the same three characteristics.<sup>7</sup>

In 2008, a group at UCLA studied the barriers that prevent at-risk students from learning and came up with the same three characteristics. They deemed these the “Three Barriers to Learning and School Improvement.”<sup>8</sup>

You know that teachers are the greatest asset in our schools because the greatest day of your life is when you come across a former student that you have not seen in 20, 30, or 40 years. The person comes up to you and says, “You probably do not remember me, but I was in your classroom 35 years ago. I am who I am, I am what I am, and I am where I am in life today because of what you represented to me.”

You are standing there speechless and teary-eyed, when you haltingly say, “We teachers do not get validated very often. But, what you have just said makes me very happy to know that I have made a difference in someone’s life—your life. Thank you for making my day.”

The former student responds, “But, you made my life!”

I thank the Horace Mann League for bestowing this honor on me today of being an Outstanding Public Educator.

But, most importantly, I thank you for giving the award to the greatest asset in our schools—the classroom teacher, the public educator!



- 1 [www.teachers.net/wong/Dec08](http://www.teachers.net/wong/Dec08), “The Sounds of Students Learning and Performing.”
- 2 Wong and Wong, *The First Days of School*, 4th edition. (2009) “School and Teacher Effectiveness: Impact on Learning.” Page 25.
- 3 Breaux and Wong, (2003) *New Teacher Induction: How to Recruit, How to Train, Support, and Retain New Teachers*.
- 4 Ferguson, R. (1991) “Paying for Public Education.” *Harvard Journal on Legislation*.
- 5 Elmore, R. (2002) “The Limits of Change.” *Harvard Education Letter*.
- 6 Hershberg, T. “Value-Added Assessment and Systemic Reform: A Response to the Challenge of Human Capital Development.” *Kappan*, 2005.
- 7 Cross, C. T., and D. W. Rigden. (April 2002) “Improving Teacher Quality.” *American School Board Journal*, 189(4), 24–27.
- 8 Pianta, R. (2008) University of Virginia. Classroom Assessment Scoring Guide (CLASS). *Harvard Education Letter*, “Neither Art nor Accident.”
- 9 National Center for Mental Health, UCLA. (2008) *Framework for Systematic Transformation of Student and Learning*

*Supports.* [www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu](http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu).