Editor's Corner - Crisis in Science Education: A Partial Solution?

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Crisis In Science Education: A Partial Solution?

The crisis in science education and the article published in the Autumn 1983 issue of ISTJ has prompted one of our readers to share the following:

Dear Editor:

I've been reading with great interest of the shortage of science and math teachers in our public schools. I feel somewhat guilty for I am an ex-math/science teacher who left the profession. After teaching for six years, I looked ahead at the pay scale and decided my family deserved better. However, I do miss teaching and frequently wish I could have a classroom experience again.

This leads me to a suggestion I have to help alleviate the math-science teacher shortage. The first step would be to convince the school systems that they don't have to have school in session only between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. If they wanted to, they could schedule certain classes in the evenings or on Saturdays. This would open the door to step two, which is to recruit ex-teachers, like myself, who are interested in helping solve the problem but aren't available during the regular school hours.

Over the past several years, I've encountered several ex-teachers who left the profession for financial reasons, but who still have a desire to do some teaching. Why not exploit this natural reserve of qualified teachers to help our schools, at least temporarily, to solve the math-science teacher shortage?

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The concept of alleviating the shortage of qualified science teachers by scheduling some classes during evenings and Saturdays, at a time when part-time teachers would be available, should be a topic which initiates written comments from the teachers and administrators who are now reading this. Teacher compensation, administration and management, and acceptance by students, parents and current teaching staff are some factors which would seem to elicit varied reactions in different communities. What is your opinion?

— C.W.B.