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Testimony by Lewis C. Solmon will provide the committee with an overview of the Milken Family Foundation's Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). TAP is a comprehensive, whole school reform that provides teachers with career path and advancement opportunities; compensates expert teachers for their skills and responsibilities; restructures school schedules to accommodate teacher-led professional development; introduces competitive hiring practices; and pays teachers based on how well they instruct and how much their students learn. These components make the teaching profession more appealing, the job conditions more manageable, and the pay for high quality teachers more generous. Currently, TAP is being implemented in eight states: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota and South Carolina, including the entire districts of Eagle County, Co.; Sumter County, Fla.; and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. TAP expects to start in Ohio and Texas next fall. Over 75 campuses are involved – impacting more than 34,000 students and 2,100 teachers – and that number is expected to grow even more by the beginning of the 2004-05 school year. These schools are supported by a variety of funding sources, including private foundation grants, legislative appropriations, increases in property tax levies targeted for TAP-like programs, sales tax increases, general revenues from state budgets, district funds and federal dollars available through No Child Left Behind.

Lewis C. Solmon
Testimony
“Improving Teacher Quality”

Need for Improving TQ

Quality teachers are central to assuring an excellent educational experience for every young person in America. That is why *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* has made teacher quality a pivotal element of its school improvement program. In polls, the public consistently ranks strengthening teacher quality among the most important issues facing education (Rose & Gallup, 2002). Moreover, this view is supported by a large body of academic research demonstrating that the single most important school factor related to increased student achievement is having a high quality teacher in the classroom (Haycock, 1998; Marzano, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2000; Sanders & Horn, 1998).

Yet, despite the evidence that quality teachers are of utmost importance, until *No Child Left Behind*, ensuring a quality teacher for every student has not been a priority in the myriad attempts to improve public schools. In fact, of the over 360 unique school reform ideas proposed in the *Phi Delta Kappan* between 1987 and 1997, less than one percent focused directly on improving teacher quality (Carpenter, 2000). And, of the few reforms that have addressed the issue, none to date has proved equal to the challenge. None has had the scope, force and focus to attract high-caliber talent to the American teaching profession, then to motivate, develop, and retain it.

Unfortunately, the current academic quality of students pursuing careers in teaching is not very high. Students who express an interest in teaching tend to score at the bottom of college and graduate school entrance examinations such as the SAT and GRE

(Educational Testing Service, 1999). And for those currently teaching, quality varies tremendously. Good teachers produce six times the learning gains when compared to ineffective teachers (Haycock, 1998).

TAP counters many of the traditional drawbacks that plague the teaching profession: low compensation, lack of career advancement, unsupported accountability demands, little collegiality, and ineffective professional development that plague the teaching profession. TAP provides an integrated solution to these challenges—changing the structure of the teaching profession within schools, while maintaining the essence of the profession.

In designing TAP in 1998, the Milken Family Foundation staff surveyed the research, consulted extensively with academics and outstanding elementary and secondary school teachers and principals, and applied experiences from success in the private sector. From these sources, we created a five-principle approach. Today, we recognize the close alignment of TAP to No Child Left Behind, specifically Title II that deals with teacher quality.

The Five Principles of TAP

1. Multiple Career Paths

In a traditional school, a single career path exists for all teachers. Teachers with one year of experience or 20 years generally hold the same position, are engaged in the same activities, and have similar authority and responsibilities. There is no potential for quality teachers to grow in their careers; so many simply leave (Elmore, 2000). TAP provides new opportunities for teachers who perform at high levels and have the desire and qualifications to move along a career continuum of as many as six ranks. TAP

schools reconfigure their staff by creating master and mentor teachers who are selected through a rigorous performance-based selection process. As a result, these expert teachers now have influence over a much larger contingent of students because it is their responsibility to improve all the teachers under their care. Teachers take on increased responsibilities with commensurate compensation as they progress in the TAP career path. “Career ladder” programs have been tried in the past, most to no avail. Basically, they identified the best teachers, gave them more responsibility and some honor, but little if any extra compensation for their extra work. In this respect, TAP provides *significant* additional compensation to master and mentor teachers for their qualifications, responsibilities and performance. It makes these extras worthwhile.

2. Performance-based Accountability

In most schools, teacher evaluations are performed by an administrator once a year, and consist of classroom observation scored against criteria with minimal emphasis on content knowledge, effective instructional strategies, and what students are learning. Teacher evaluation practices at the school level typically do not incorporate teaching and learning elements that have been identified through research as having a positive impact on student achievement. With this weak teacher accountability system, the vast majority of teachers (99.999%) are rated satisfactory or above (Loup, Garland, Ellett & Rugutt, 1996).

In TAP schools, each teacher is observed 6 times by multiple, trained and certified evaluators (e.g., the principal, master teachers and mentor teachers). Rather than a pass/fail system, TAP grades teacher performance on a five-point scale—ranging from unsatisfactory to exemplary—on the 21 *TAP Effective Teacher Performance Standards*

that are based on a large body of research from education and cognitive psychology.

Since few teachers are rated as fives, our belief is that *every* teacher can improve, even the best ones.

While classroom observation is an essential component to measure teacher quality, so is student achievement. Part of each TAP teacher's evaluation includes the value-added classroom achievement gains the teacher produces, as well as the school achievement gains from one year to the next.

3. Market-Driven Compensation

In a traditional school, teachers are paid on a salary schedule where pay increases as years of experience and education credits accrue. All teachers with the same experience and credits, no matter what, where, or how well they teach, are paid the same. Teachers who excel, as demonstrated by their classroom practices and their students' achievement, receive the same salary as teachers with the same years of experience and credits who demonstrate little talent and produce little in the way of student achievement gains. This, despite research indicating that neither a teacher's years of experience, nor an advanced degree can predict increased student achievement (Greenwald, Hedges & Lane, 1996; Hanushek, 1989).

Research has also shown that performance award programs are successful when they are integrated with strong school leadership, professional development, reliable analyses of student performance, and strong feedback (Odden & Kelley, 1996; Odden, 2000).

The market-driven compensation principle in TAP provides school principals with the flexibility to compensate teachers differently based on their position (e.g., career, mentor or master), their performance, and the performance of their students. Furthermore,

principals are encouraged to offer competitive salaries to attract teachers to hard-to-staff subjects like math and science, and hard-to-staff schools. Most TAP demonstration schools have permitted teachers to continue receiving increases in their salary according to their district's salary schedule, while paying master and mentor teachers a salary augmentation. Each school establishes a performance award pool to pay for bonuses based on an individual teacher's yearly performance.

Many former and current performance pay plans have not succeeded because performance bonuses are too small considering the extra work required. Further, the principal alone often determines "performance" in these plans, leading to charges of favoritism and bias. In TAP, performance is determined by multiple evaluators and multiple classroom observations, some announced and some unannounced. Part of the bonus is based on school-wide achievement gains and achievement gains of the students of individual teachers (value-added).

4. Ongoing Applied Professional Growth

In a traditional school, the principal often contracts professional development services that are half-day workshops led by outside consultants, or provides release time for teachers to attend classes or conferences held off-site. The assumption is that after this training, teachers will apply what they have learned in their classrooms. However, research on teacher professional development informs us otherwise. Studies of teacher learning tell us that learning is most likely to occur when teachers:

- Can concentrate on instruction and student outcomes in the specific content and context they teach;

- Have sustained opportunities to experiment with and receive feedback on specific innovations;
- Collaborate with professional peers, both within and outside their school; and
- Have influence over the substance and process of professional development (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; King & Newmann, 2000; Newmann, Bryk, & Nagoaka, 2001).

These optimal teacher-learning conditions can occur in schools that use the varied expertise of their own teaching staff. The TAP career path establishes a structure where master and mentor teachers provide ongoing professional development, conduct classroom demonstration lessons, give regular feedback on specific teaching and learning innovations, and design professional development opportunities to meet their fellow teachers' content and grade-level needs. By providing time for weekly, site-based and teacher-led professional growth activities during the school day, TAP schools focus on issues that are current and relevant to classroom practice.

5. Expanding the Supply of High Quality Teachers

TAP schools expand their teacher recruitment and outreach efforts by advertising for positions outside their school, district or even their state. We encourage schools to seek mentor and master teachers from beyond their own current staffs. This ensures that the very best people available provide leadership and professional development to the staff.

Impact of TAP

Over the next ten years, America will need roughly two million new teachers, and as many as possible should be of very high quality. While some may see the ensuing teacher quantity and quality shortages as a crisis, we see it as an opportunity to

significantly reform the structure of K-12 education to focus on its most valuable assets—quality teachers. The implementation of TAP allows schools and districts to meet some the challenges they face. TAP is a whole school reform intended to recruit, motivate, develop and retain high quality teachers in order to increase student achievement. Here are some of the highlights of the current year.

We now have three years of results from TAP schools in Arizona and two years from TAP schools in South Carolina. We compared 25 year-to year changes in student achievement in TAP schools to control schools. In 17 of these cases, or 68% of the time, the TAP schools outperformed their controls. The RAND study of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) schools concluded that 50% of the CSR schools outperformed their controls in math and 47% outperformed their controls in reading, although the CSR schools had been operating for a substantially longer period of time than TAP. One important anecdotal explanation for the success of TAP is that teaching in TAP schools is improving significantly.

Further, collegiality and teacher satisfaction has remained strong in the TAP schools, despite conflicting research that suggests that teachers who are part of a performance-pay system will experience increased competition and dissatisfaction. These attitudinal results reflect the holistic approach of TAP that combines an accountability system with clear rewards, and a professional development system to support all teachers in improving their classroom instruction.

Additionally, in Arizona, we are seeing some very talented teachers moving from high SES schools that are not doing TAP to low SES schools that are doing TAP. Over the past three years, 61 teachers have started working at the two lowest SES TAP schools

in the Madison School District. Of these, thirteen (21%) have come from high SES schools and are considering to be among the very best teachers from the Madison schools or nearby districts. These early results from our TAP schools are very promising and coupled with the anecdotal evidence from teachers, parents, principals and students, we are optimistic about the student achievement gains that will be evident as the program becomes apart of each school's culture.

One year ago, TAP was being piloted in six states (Arizona, South Carolina, and Arkansas, which were subsequently supported in part by an FIE grant; the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Eagle County, Colorado, which are funded by other sources; and Florida, which had two schools at the time funded by a state appropriation for the Florida Mentor Teacher School Pilot Program). During the past year, we have added one school in the Madison district in Arizona, five more pilot schools in Florida, and five schools in Louisiana. In addition, as will be described below, all the schools in Sumter County, Florida have begun to implement TAP and Minnesota is beginning TAP in at least six schools. By the end of the current academic year, we will have at least 70 schools implementing TAP across the county, up from 31 in the previous year. We are serving over 34,000 students with over 2,100 teachers.

The Florida legislature has passed the BEST (Better Education for Students and Teachers) program, which provides \$25 million this year and hopefully at least \$50 million next year to support pilot programs, either TAP or TAP-like, to recruit, retain, develop and motivate highly qualified teachers. Under BEST, Florida has funded three districts from January to June, 2004, and one of these, Sumter County has decided to do a pure TAP model in all their 10 schools with the assistance and support of MFF. There is

also a plan to add ten more schools to Florida’s Mentor Teacher School Pilot program, which will bring the total to 17 schools implementing TAP through this program.

The state of South Carolina has decided to include TAP as one of the options for the schools in that state that need to improve (referred to as their “technical assistance program”). Currently we have several new South Carolina districts inquiring about adopting TAP, and once the technical assistance program is approved, the numbers are expected to increase significantly.

Minnesota received a federal grant to pilot TAP in St. Paul and in a rural district, Waseca County. The evaluation will compare TAP to several ongoing performance pay plans.

Each year we hold a national TAP conference to enable participating TAP states, districts, and schools to share their experiences, and so states interested in joining the program can learn more about TAP. We received requests from eight new states to attend, and this resulted in Texas and Ohio starting the process to participate in TAP. We expect these two states to join the program by next fall.

Currently the TAP program operates primarily in elementary and middle schools. We have begun implementation of TAP in three high schools, and expect more to be added next year. We are working to develop a full high school model.

Our program is gaining substantial national visibility. TAP was highlighted by the *Teaching Commission*, whose recommendations look like a prospectus for TAP, by *Connect for Kids*, and by Secretary Paige himself, who in a speech at Dartmouth College said, “I am a big fan of the Teacher Advancement Program...” And just two weeks ago, Undersecretary of Education Eugene Hickok visited a TAP school in urban Louisiana.

He talked about his support for TAP because it emphasizes teachers. “In so many places teaching has become such a solitary enterprise, it’s so sad,” he said. “It should be collegial.” TAP is collegial. We are pleased that TAP is reported on in a very positive manner in both the national and local press on almost a weekly basis. We would be happy to provide copies of the articles.

While TAP yields many positive results, the cost of TAP is roughly \$400 per student per year. These funds are required to pay supplements to master and mentor teachers, to provide performance awards, to hire replacements for master teachers, to hire specialists to free up regular teachers to attend professional development cluster groups, to cover costs of additional testing where necessary, and to pay teachers for extra training days. Too many reforms skimp on money and so become trivial programs that do not garner attention and support from teachers. TAP is significant in terms of compensation and professionalism, but that costs money.

TAP schools are being supported by a variety of local sources including legislative appropriations, increases in property tax levies targeted for TAP-like programs, sales tax increases, general revenues from state budgets, and district funds. We are working with all current and prospective states to develop additional funding sources so they can take over full funding of TAP. We believe that the long-term survival of TAP depends upon the states and districts identifying state and local sources of funds (including NCLB funds), as opposed to grants from private foundations or the federal government.

We are working to encourage participating schools to utilize their NCLB funds, especially their Title II funds to pay for TAP. Indeed, the Non-Regulatory Guidance for Improving Teacher Quality State Grants issued in January, 2004 says “Title II, Part A

funds can [also], as part of an overall strategy to improve teacher quality, be used for teacher incentives (e.g., to recruit teachers for hard-to fill positions or retain teachers who have been effective in helping low-achieving students to succeed) or to pay the salaries of master teachers who provide or coordinate professional development services for other teachers.” In essence, this is TAP. The following chart describes how NCLB funds are being used for TAP.

State Uses of NCLB Funds for TAP						
State/District	State Title II	District Title II	Title I	Title VI	Title V	CSR
Arizona			✓	✓		
South Carolina	✓	✓	✓			
Florida		✓	✓			✓
Arkansas		✓	✓			
Indianapolis	✓				✓	
Louisiana		✓	✓			

Although the situation has improved in the past year, our experience is that few states have been willing or able to utilize enough of their Title II funds to fully fund TAP. Much of that money was committed previously for class size reduction or for existing professional development programs. As TAP becomes a more proven program, more states are taking advantage of NCLB funds to embark on TAP. Also, as state budget outlooks are improving, more state money will be forthcoming. Nevertheless, the current situation is one where states that are participating in TAP or intend to do so have some money to support TAP, but are continually seeking new sources of private and public support to enable the purest conformity to the model, and to expand the number of TAP schools. The Milken Family Foundation spends approximately \$3 million annually to

support TAP schools. This support is provided through ongoing technical assistance to the schools; collection and analysis of data on teacher attitudes and performance, and student achievement; annual program reviews of TAP implementation; support for directors who work closely with MFF to oversee implementation of TAP at each school; and ongoing development of training modules and implementation processes to improve TAP nationwide.

Conclusion

By providing an effective strategy for reform, TAP is working to turn teaching from a revolving-door profession into a highly rewarding career choice. The real reward will be the outstanding education available to each and every student in the country.

In TAP schools, high quality teachers are recognized and promoted; they have access to focused ongoing professional development; they work in a collaborative environment; and they are compensated differently based on their skills, knowledge, responsibilities, how they teach, and how much their students learn. This structure is very different from traditional schools. We are already seeing that these structural changes, modeled on existing best practices in business and on research-based strategies in education and the social sciences, provide opportunities for teachers in the same way that opportunities are available to employees in many other industries (Schiff, 2001). This is resulting in improved student achievement as well.

Biography
LEWIS C. SOLMON

Lewis C. Solmon is Executive Vice President, Education at the Milken Family Foundation, a member of its Board of Trustees, and Director of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), a major initiative of the Foundation focusing on improving teacher quality. From 1985-1991 Dr. Solmon served as dean of UCLA's Graduate School of Education. He was the founding president of the Milken Institute from 1991 to 1997, which he built into a nationally recognized economics think tank.

Dr. Solmon has advised several governors and state superintendents in the area of teacher quality, funding school technology, and school finance. He also was a member of Governor Jeb Bush's education transition team in 2002-2003. He currently is on the boards of the Center for Education Reform and the National Council on Teacher Quality. He currently is a member of the US Department of Education's Teacher Assistance Corp. Dr. Solmon has served on the board of trustees of four independent schools in the Los Angeles area and of BASIS charter schools in Tucson and Phoenix, AZ. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto and his PhD from the University of Chicago in 1968, both in economics. He has served on the faculties of UCLA, CUNY, and Purdue, and currently is a professor emeritus at UCLA.

Dr. Solmon has published over two dozen books and monographs and more than 75 articles in scholarly and professional journals. Most recently he has directed studies of satisfaction of charter school parents in Arizona and Florida, as well as a study of test score gains of Arizona charter school students compared to traditional public school students for the Goldwater Institute. His books and monographs include *Talented Teachers: The Essential Force for Improving Student Achievement*, *Does Charter School Attendance Improve Test Scores: The Arizona Results (2001)*, *The Last Silver Bullet? Technology for America's Public Schools (1998)*, *Labor Markets, Employment Policy, & Job Creation (1994)*, *From the Campus: Perspectives on the School Reform Movement (1989)*, *The Costs of Evaluation (1983)*, *Underemployed Ph.D.'s (1981)*, and three editions of *Economics*, a basic text. He has written on teacher quality, school reform, charter schools, learning technology, teacher testing programs, foreign students, demographics of higher education, education and economic growth, the effects of educational quality, the links between education and work, National Service, and job creation; and he appears regularly on the opinion editorial pages of national and local news dailies.

Disclosure of Federal Grants and Sub-grants

Federal Grants Received by the Milken Family Foundation:

2003-04	Fund for the Improvement of Education	\$1,800,000
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Federal Sub-grants Received by the Milken Family Foundation

2003-04	Following the Leaders	\$250,000
2002-03	Following the Leaders	\$50,000