

# U.S. schools falling behind Russia, Japan — expert prof

Fewer Americans complete high school than in Japan and the Soviet Union, and those who do have weaker preparations in math and physics, according to a national expert.

"American elementary and secondary education, especially in the areas of science and math, are in dangerous condition," Isaac Wirszup, a University of Chicago mathematics professor, said during a colloquium at Wayne State University.

Wirszup, a popular congressional witness on education, believes that the economy and future of the nation could very well balance in the hands of the country's educational system.

PRESENTLY, 75 percent of all American students graduate from secondary education — a much lower proportion than Japan's 94 percent and the Soviet Union's virtual 100 percent, he said.

And those American students who do graduate have a considerably lower level of education than do their counterparts overseas.

"At least 70 percent (of U.S. high school students) have been taught arithmetic for nine years or more," Wirszup said. In other industrialized countries, students complete a comparable arithmetic program in six years.

Soviet students also take a mandatory geometry program that spans 10 years. Similarly, five years of physics are mandatory. He expects physics training in the Soviet Union to only improve. "In one year, the Soviets produce the same number of new physics teachers as the total number employed in U.S. high schools."

Part of the reason for the educational success in the Soviet Union and Japan is their respect for teachers. "The status of teachers in the U.S. is inconceivable in Europe and . . . Third World countries," he said.

IN THE Soviet Union, teachers receive pay equivalent to that of engineers, and more than medical doctors.

Although he admires the Soviets' success, he said, "I do not recommend that we adopt the educational goals of the Soviet dictatorship or the Japanese system." He added, "We must preserve (our) system, but make it more efficient."

To solve the lagging education problem Wirszup suggested a "national mobilization toward education," including federally sponsored programs in each state.

# Teacher rules get tougher

Oakland University says it's going to be tougher to earn a teaching certificate there.

There will be special testing to enter the program, higher grade requirements and a final test to be administered before the start of student teaching.

The new requirements were approved by the School of Human and Educational Services (SHES). They take effect for undergraduates entering OU in the fall of 1986.

AND THEY should help answer some of the criticisms leveled by state and federal agencies about the quality of K-12 education and teacher preparation, said Gerald J. Pine, dean of SHES.

Pine said his unit is also moving toward a five-year teacher training program. It would have to be completed before a student could be certified to teach in a K-12 school.

Starting next fall, undergraduates interested in a teaching career will have to pass the pre-professional skills test, an examination administered by

the Educational Testing Service.

Once in the program, they will have to earn at least a 2.5 (C-plus) grade in every class, in and out of the major field.

Before a candidate is allowed to student teach, another examination will be given by SHES faculty, Pine said. (Under current standards, a student must maintain a 2.5 average overall.)

THE UNIVERSITY had a record fall enrollment of 12,586 students, aided by large increases in education.

Undergraduate elementary education enrollment climbed from 284 to 427 students.

Enrollments at the master's degree level increased as well, with early childhood education up from 135 to 154; reading up from 207 to 302; and special education went from 130 to 150.

A post-master's program in educational administration started last fall with 30 students enrolled.

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