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Hoover Institution's Terry Moe Contends that Teacher Unions More Interested in Jobs than Accountability.



Joining "Neal Asbury's Truth for America" was Terry M. Moe, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, a member of the Institution's Koret Task Force on K-12 education, and the William Bennett Munro Professor of political science at Stanford University. He is an expert on educational policy, U.S. political institutions, and organization theory. His current research projects are concerned with school choice, public bureaucracy, and the presidency.

Moe confirmed that against the education systems of foreign competitors, America is lagging behind. He points to a US school system that "is not doing the job. Policy makers are aware of this, but just can not turn the system around. It is really a changing cultural atmosphere," he said. The second problem, according to Moe, is that in addition to cultural changes in this country, the cultural changes occurring in other countries is based on families putting greater emphasis on education. It is based on parents pressuring their kids to excel in school. "The real underlying problem with the American education system is a lack of accountability. You get the feeling that teacher unions are more interested in their pay and jobs than in accountability and measuring success in the classroom. The 'No Child Left Behind' program is a step

in that direction, but it has not proven to be effective" said Moe. Moe puts the blame squarely on the shoulders of teacher unions that have resisted any programs that hold bad teachers accountable for their performance and the ability to remove them from schools. Unions can hold this power, according to Moe, because in states like California and New York, 99 percent of teachers belong to the union. It is much lower in states like Georgia, Mississippi, Texas and South Carolina, where school systems have more flexibility. Moe gives high marks to President Obama and education director



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Arne Duncan for their "Race to the Top" program which has rewarded state schools with some \$4.5 billion in funding if they have demonstrated innovation and excellence in the classroom. Moe is impressed that despite the wide support Obama receives from teacher unions, he has proposed policy changes that have ruffled union feathers. Moe expressed support for voucher programs which give parents options. "When parents have choices, kids tend to do better in school," said Moe.

very regimented education system that demands excellence at every step of a student's development. While Moe acknowledged the cultural differences in these education systems, he noted that while China graduates many more engineers than in the US, the level of education received by Chinese engineers pales that received by US engineering students. "We really need to get our education system on track. We have to move beyond the union's concentration on jobs versus accountability," said Moe.

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Neal Asbury returned the discussion back to foreign school systems, particularly the Japanese school system, where parents put enormous pressure on their children to excel. Failure to excel and get into a good school dooms a student for a lifetime of menial jobs. In China meanwhile, the school system is based on graduating technocrats, moving only the most promising students through a

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