

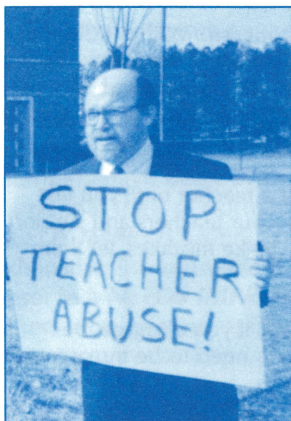


The Teacher's **ADVOCATE!**

EMPOWERING CLASSROOM EDUCATORS

Newsletter of the Metro Association of Classroom Educators

MACE Attacks the Problem *Teacher Abuse is Epidemic!*



Dr. Trotter at Sylvan Middle School

The so-called Accountability Movement (or more aptly called, the Find-Someone-To-Blame Movement), which was spawned, no doubt, in California (where most all educational fads begin) about 25 years ago has now emerged into its devastating fruition: not only are the school boards, the parents, the administrators, and the

public beating up on teachers (emotionally and mentally) but, now, in these horrific conditions, the students, displaying the same disrespect for teachers that the aforementioned groups show, are literally engaging in physical assaults against their teachers.

The mistreatment of teachers has reached epidemic proportions in the Metro Atlanta area. When we read about (1) a fourth-grader beating his teacher to death because he didn't like the assignment that she handed out (*The Atlanta Journal*, 10-11-95, p. A8), or (2) a 16 year old shooting a teacher and then killing himself because he felt picked on (*The Atlanta Journal*, 10-13-95, p. H9), or (3) a 16 year old poisoning his teacher's tea with toxic chalkboard cleaner because she chided him out in the hall for falling

If You Have a Good Principal . . .

Be grateful! There are not many good principals around these days — principals who support teachers and who let teachers teach. So, if you have a good principal at your school, thank the good Lord and then go thank the principal! See "Traits of a Good Principal" on page 2.

asleep in class (*The Atlanta Journal*, 11-20-95, p. B8), we think that surely this can't happen in Metro Atlanta. But, the MACE office gets calls constantly about students cursing their teachers and even physically assaulting them — and the administration turns its back or sweeps the incidents under the rug. This past week alone, MACE attorneys, Bill Woods and Keith Walton, were dispatched immediately to a middle school in South Fulton because a student called his teacher a "bitch," threatened that he and his brothers were going to kill her, and then proceeded to put Mike Tyson to shame by unleashing a devastating punch to her face. Another teacher was talking to Dr. Trotter, MACE's Executive Director, about an egregious situation at a middle school in Atlanta and, in passing, the teacher described the student in this particular situation as the same student who had cursed her out the week before. Dr. Trotter wanted to know what he said. The teacher replied, "Oh, he said, 'F_ _ _ you!'" Dr. Trotter inquired as to what was done. The teacher said that she sent the student to the office and a few minutes later the principal returned with the student, saying, "Now, he's ready to learn. I told him that

"... the MACE office gets calls constantly about students cursing their teachers and even physically assaulting them — and the administration turns its back or sweeps the incidents under the rug."

you're old enough to do it but that would be your choice." Can you believe this unconscionable behavior on the principal's part? We do. We hear about these types of incidents everyday.

In this same week, MACE represented a Clayton teacher before the school board in a

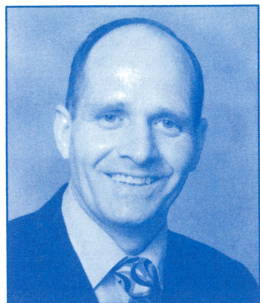
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See pages 7-10 for the Teacher Perception Survey as well as MACE testimonials and membership application.

Traits of a Good Principal

Editor's Note: Daniel D. Trotter, Sr., was a principal from "the old school" — he believed in supporting his teachers and allowing them to teach. He also knew that not much effective teaching could take place if there was not strong, sound discipline in place. Consequently, he fully supported teachers when it came to disciplining the students. And, because he was — and still is — an eminently fair and kind person, the students and the teachers respected and admired him. Mr. Trotter served as a junior high school principal for fifteen years, after having been the only assistant principal for seven years at a high school of over two thousand students. Both schools were run in a tip-top fashion. There are only a few principals like Mr. Trotter around today. We asked Mr. Trotter to submit a list of traits by which all principals should be characterized.

By Daniel D. Trotter, Sr.



Daniel D. Trotter, Sr.

The following is a list of characteristics that I would suggest to any principal who cares to be respected and admired by both students and teachers:

1. Always be completely open to teachers. Be willing to discuss any policy that you have and give the background as to why you instilled the policy.
2. It is important that you always speak pleasantly to your teachers and never put them down in the presence of others. All constructive criticism should be done in private. Never raise your voice when you have a need to correct a teacher. Never strip your teachers of their dignity.
3. Be generous with praise and cautious with criticism. Be quick to give credit to others when it is due to them. Make it a policy to commend your teachers often. Look for reasons to commend them and you will see that they will work harder for you.
4. Always tell the truth — even when it hurts. No one respects a person who they can't depend on to tell the truth. As the saying goes, "Tell it like it is."

Teacher Abuse is Epidemic! (continued from page 1)
Level III Grievance. The grievance involved a situation wherein the principal corrected and embarrassed a teacher in front of his elementary students — when the principal herself was substantively wrong about the matter. The hearing was conducted before a packed board room with several newspaper reporters in the audience. It was apparent that besides having the school board attorney acting in an unfair manner as the hearing officer, there were several board members present who were biased against the teacher from the very beginning. Nevertheless, Dr. Trotter skillfully exposed the principal and her unwarranted shenanigans that she tried to pull on the teacher. (Incidentally, the word on the street was that this principal had the inside track on a promotion to be Director of Elementary Education. But, a couple of weeks ago, she withdrew her name from the list. The Superintendent has since posted the job again.) One Clayton central office administrator was heard talking to another central office administrator about Dr. Trotter's performance in the grievance: "He's fearless and he's good!" Another comment heard was that Dr. Trotter "barbequed" the principal and any board member who tried to interfere with his presentation. It is MACE's contention that this principal had violated Canon VI, Paragraph 2 of the PPC's *Code of Ethics & Standard of Conduct* (as well as statutory laws such as O.C.G.A. 20-2-791) which prohibits principals from treating teachers

5. Be easily approachable. Encourage teachers to ask for your help, if needed.
6. Be seen! A principal should be in the school halls when students are in the halls. You should be in and out of the cafeteria during lunch. You should go into the classrooms often, if only for a very few minutes. You should be visible in order to be a leader.
7. Make discipline your number one concern. Without discipline, little teaching or learning can take place. You are the key to any school's discipline. You must have a firm policy and be sure that both teachers and students fully understand it. Be willing to take a stand and then *stand*.
8. Never accept an accusation against a teacher until you first speak with that teacher. Be a friend to your teachers and support them as much as possible. When they make mistakes, let them down easily.
9. Be open to teachers' suggestions and, if you disagree, be pleasant in your discussion. You have no need to be threatened, if you are open and honest.
10. The last characteristic is a summary of the other nine. When you deal with teachers, remember two things: Tell the truth and treat others like you would want to be treated.

capriciously and arbitrarily and prohibits principals from exposing teachers to unwarranted embarrassment and impairing their professional dignity.

This past week also included MACE picketing for several days the principal at a high school in Clayton County. This white principal asked eight black teachers (out of about 30 black teachers) to resign or face termination. This situation has been covered extensively in the media — especially after more than two hundred students staged a walkout to support the teachers. The *Clayton News/Daily* reported: "According to John Trotter, executive director of the Metro Association of Classroom Educators, the decision to let teachers go seems racially motivated. 'No one has been told why they have been fired. We see a common thread,' said Trotter. 'It's not by chance that all these teachers fall in the black race.' Trotter said another common thread of the teachers on an alleged list of contract non-renewals is they all have had disagreements with Croom" (*Clayton News/Daily*, March 23, 1996, p.1).

Three of the eight teachers affected are MACE members and will be defended by MACE in hearing(s) and in litigation wherein MACE will sue the principal, the superintendent, and the school board members as well as the school district if the superintendent and the school board back the principal's actions. Besides working behind the scenes (talking with parents, board members, the media, etc.). MACE filed a PPC complaint against the principal,

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