

trators who assume responsibility for the quality of teaching that goes on in their schools by remediating or dismissing their marginal teachers and rewarding and affirming their outstanding teachers will have the greatest impact on educational reform" (1998).

Legal complications and other difficulties, however, may entice administrators to avoid taking action with ineffective teachers. Administrators' reputations are subject to public scrutiny. Administrators open themselves to the task and difficulties of defending a non-renewal, and in the process they may face teachers unions whose lawyers defend the rights of teachers to remain on the job. Within their own schools, they may experience a change in morale when placing a teacher on probation. According to Mary J. McGrath, a California attorney who works with school boards to dismiss marginal teachers, less than 1% of all teachers receive critical evaluations from principals (Coeyman, 2000).

There is little doubt that the dismissal process in most states is cumbersome, costly, and time-consuming. For example, the process of firing a teacher in Connecticut was estimated to cost a district between \$100,000 and \$200,000; in 1997, in New York State, a dismissal with an appeal cost approximately \$317,000 (Chinni, 1997). The average cost and time of a teacher dismissal in a New York school district is \$200,000 and 476 days on each dismissal hearing (Weele, 1994).

To help schools build a quality teaching force, states are passing legislation that addresses the evaluation and retention of teachers in the classroom (Coble, 2002; Education Commission of the States, 1997). Many states have new criteria for teacher's evaluations. New Jersey, New York, and Florida are proposing laws to eliminate tenure and replace it with renewable contracts. Other states are narrowing the scope of tenure protections. Minnesota and Michigan are increasing the years of probation from three to five years, while others are shortening the time to improve performance (Minnesota, Oklahoma, Florida, and Texas). Some states also include unsatisfactory performance in addition to incompetence as criteria for termination.

Despite state mandates and national reports, the major responsibility for a quality teaching force at each school remains with the principal. This role of teacher supervision and evaluation is increasingly important as teacher shortages and alternative routes to certification prompt a variety of types of teachers to enter the classroom. Recent literature about administrative practices for working with ineffective teachers, however, is sparse. One example is O'Neil and Adamson's (1993) description of procedures at a Salt Lake

Figure 1

Pre-/Post-Observation Data Form	
Teacher _____	Date _____
Subject _____	Grade _____
Observer time in _____	Time out _____ Observation no. _____
Pre-Observation Data (Completed by the teacher prior to the conference)	Post-Observation Data (Completed by the observer after the conference is completed)
• What type of teaching will take place (drill and practice, lecturing, questioning, discussion)?	_____
• What are the objectives of the lesson?	_____
• What teaching and learning activities will take place?	_____
• What performance areas do you wish to have observed?	_____

City school district to help administrators implement just cause, due process, and progressive discipline for problematic personnel.

This Study

Because of the importance of this topic, we interviewed a variety of principals at both middle level and high schools about their practices with marginal teachers. From an analysis of the principals' responses to our questions, predominant themes emerged about the connection between types of ineffective teachers and techniques for working with them.

Three types of teachers emerged from the interviews: the contrite teacher, the cocooning teacher, and the coaster.

Contrite: The contrite marginal teacher meekly asks, "What did I do wrong?" They are generally well-meaning people who have a real desire to do their job. They are either unable to take directions or lack the skills to do the job. In some cases, their talents could be better used in another profession.

Cocooner: This type of ineffective teacher projects the attitude of "Trying to trap me? Just come and try to get me." They feel no system, person, or process should constrict their behaviors. They are offended by criticisms and respond in a confrontational manner.