South finally takes lead in push for school reform

Reform leaders

English teacher Jimmy Kingman makes a point during a discussion with a student at the Cesar Chavez High School in Cesar Chavez, Calif.

Some wonder whether reforms have caused or worsened historic race and class cleavages in the nation's schools.

In Houma, where unemployment is stuck in double digits, few kids ask their teachers why they should stay in school.

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EDITORIAL NOTE -- The South, much maligned for its poverty and low test scores, has risen to the lead in national school reform. From Texas to Virginia, reformers are now making their moves, often with a higher political and economic stakes than in the North. The Southern school reformers, long overshadowed by their counterparts in the Northeast, are now pushing for a more meaningful education for all, including the poor.

By LEW MIGTANG

CHARLES MCCONNELL

A few short years ago in Houma, La., many worries were lost through sugar cane fields. But Houma High School did not need much schooling to get by.

The first-grade education and some forced leisure, a young man who had done the work of several classes.

For years, the education of Houma High was a nearly exclusive preserve of the Mississippi Delta.

"In this agrarian part of the country, it becomes ever harder to design reform. As the education movement spreads throughout the country, it becomes ever harder to expand.

"It would be nice to be doing all these things again, but not in at those times were moving. They are today."

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