

Minority children still meet barriers in public schools

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Millions of minority children still face disheartening language and cultural barriers in American public schools, the National Education Association has told its members.

Although most educators have abandoned the traditional "melting pot" concept that would fuse all minorities into a homogenous, English-speaking, monocultural society as abruptly as possible, the majority of school districts still seem to be trying to do so.

A major aspect of the problem is that only 15 states yet have any type of bilingual or bilingual/multicultural education legislation and that progress under the federal Bilingual Education Act of 1974, although a big step forward, still has far to go.

Of the more than nine million school-age non-Caucasian children, more than five million come to school speaking a language other than English, says a special feature on bilingual/multicultural education in the April issue of the NEA Reporter.

"The remaining four to five million minority children speak English, but they too are culturally and ethnically different from the dominant

Anglo population," says the feature, which will be circulated to nearly two million teachers and other educators. "These children too, because of their differences, are subject to alienation, exclusion, poor grades, and high drop-out rates."