DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 029 837 SP 002 648

Educational Responsibilities of the Federal Government.
Educational Policies Commission, Washington, D.C.
Pub Date 64
Note-35p.
Available from-National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (Clothbound, $1.25; paper self-cover, $0.35; discounts on quantity orders).
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors-Administrative Organization, Educational Policy, Federal Aid, *Federal Government, Governmental Structure, *Government Role, *Public Education

The federal government has not come close to fulfillment of its educational responsibilities. The problem will not be solved short of radical changes in the status of education at the national level and a greatly enlarged awareness of the responsibilities of those who wield national power. The changes are needed in two areas: federal policy and federal structure. The policy change relates to the amount and type of federal participation in the support of education. Federal funds are needed on a larger scale and should be appropriated for general education purposes. But since large-scale, general support has not been possible (while categorical grants have demonstrated their attractiveness), vigorous efforts should be made to modify categorical grants in terms of large appropriations for more categories and at lower educational levels. The struggle for adequate federal policies affecting education is intimately tied up with the question of an adequate federal structure for the administration of educational affairs. The structure most to be recommended for the permanency and depth of its influence and capacity to serve is a department of education with full Cabinet status. (Included with discussion of these recommendations is a brief history of the federal interest in public education in the U.S. and examination of eight principles "which have their roots in traditional American values" and which "ought to be observed in federal relations to education.") (JS)

Educational Responsibilities of the Federal Government

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 64-23594

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THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION

Of the National Education Association of the United States
and the American Association of School Administrators

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Foreword

A continuing problem of education in the United States has been the relationship of the federal government to the enterprise of education as conducted at state and local levels. At no time has the problem been more pressing than now. Yet the nation seems to be as far as ever from resolving it.

Several of the important aspects of this problem are matters of constitutional interpretation. Because they involve deep conflicts of interests, emotions, and ideals, they are likely to be decided only in the courts. For example, policies designed to achieve a racial mixture in schools have important implications. Similarly, the precise limits set to the use of public funds for private and sectarian institutions or pupils have a great impact on public support of the schools. But constitutional decisions on such matters are the business of the courts.

This statement discusses the federal structure for meeting federal educational responsibilities and federal policy for supporting education through the states. We are impelled to discuss these matters because we believe that federal educational policies fall short of federal educational responsibilities, and that the present federal administrative structure helps to perpetuate that inadequacy.

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Background

Belief in the right of every individual to equal opportunity, and in political democracy as the guarantee of that right, created the public school in this country.

It was assumed that the schools and other educational institutions which grew in response to local needs would be adequate for the nation's interest. Education was among the subjects considered in the original debates on the federal Constitution. From those debates came the decision that the federal government was not to be primarily responsible for the provision of education, that this was a responsibility of the various states.

As early as 1785, however, there began to be efforts at the national level to encourage and help states and localities to support education. The Northwest Ordinance set aside one square mile in every township to be used for the support of schools. This pattern was followed in subsequent statutes governing the territories of the United States as they grew in population and became states.

The tradition thus begun and reinforced through time has resulted in a many-faceted pattern of operation and control of education, with jurisdiction lodged in the states, with control largely delegated to the localities, with some financial support from

federal resources, and with a substantial private investment in independent schools and colleges, which have been protected in their right to exist but have not usually been accorded public financial support.

With the passage of time, a significant development was the recognition within the national government of particular educational needs which were considered to be inadequately met by the states and localities. To further the general welfare, the Congress acted to help meet those needs. Thus, during the Civil War, the Morrill Act granted federal lands in support of state colleges in which the principal objects of instruction were to be "agriculture and the mechanic arts." Although the sums thus conveyed to the states were not of themselves sufficient to establish colleges, they did stimulate the formation of the desired institutions.

Similarly, during World War I, the need for trained workers was recognized through the Smith-Hughes Act, which led to the establishment and extension of vocational instruction in high schools.

The Morrill and Smith-Hughes Acts and the legislation associated with them had the effect of expanding existing state and local programs and institutions or establishing new ones to supply specific services. These institutions and programs persist to this day, and federal participation in their support has expanded. They are recognized in the laws of the states and localities, draw considerably greater support from the states and localities than they do from the federal government, and possess bodies of alumni and faculty members devoted to their purposes. They are in every sense ongoing enterprises which constitute continuing obligations of the local, state, and federal governments.

In the years since the Smith-Hughes Act, a large number of activities bearing on education have been undertaken at the

federal level, but there has been no broad participation in the support of the whole enterprise of education similar to the reservation of land revenues under the Northwest Ordinance. Some federal educational activities, such as the school-lunch program, have been educational only in a peripheral sense. Others have supported education of special types, such as vocational rehabilitation; for special clients, such as veterans; or in special places, such as "federally impacted" school districts.

Changes in national and international conditions have drastically increased the role of the schools in the national welfare. The need for more and better education is continually reinforced in a nation which is now on its way to the moon and which finds increasingly difficult the utilization of the undereducated. The political health of a free people, their economic prosperity, and their national security, all rest on their schools. Many citizens are becoming aware of the truth that the nation's educational needs are great and that they cannot be met without action by the federal government.

The response at the federal level, however, has not yet been of a scale, or even of a type, that gives hope of meeting the needs. Public opinion polls have consistently showed that a majority of the people favor federal participation in the support of the public schools. Yet the programs approved in recent years have been small compared with the need. They have continued, like much of the earlier legislation, to utilize the power of the federal purse to induce schools and colleges to serve purposes viewed at the federal level as being required in the national interest. An obvious example of this type of legislation is found in the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the various titles of which appropriate federal funds in support of a small number of specific educational activities and establish administrative machinery by which funds are to be distributed. In 1962, a significant departure from

the traditional federal role occurred, but it raised new problems rather than solving old ones. At that time, the personal views of the Chief Executive on the importance of physical fitness were urged upon the schools, but this time no financial assistance was provided.

There is little doubt that the federal government has a responsibility for trying to express the national interest in education. But the question is raised whether the Congress ought to have power to decide which aspects of education are worth reinforcing and which aspects do not need support, and whether the Executive agencies which carry out legislation and affect its preparation ought to have influence over such decisions. This power and influence are in fact increasing.

It is therefore timely to review those principles which ought to illuminate the educational activities of the federal government, to ask whether those principles are observed in existing federal practice, and thus to consider what changes are needed.

Guiding Principles

In expressing the national interest in education, federal policy-makers should be guided by a number of principles which have their roots in traditional American values. The most important of these principles are—

The several states should continue to be primarily responsible for the education of their citizens. Under commonly accepted interpretations of the Constitution, education, as such, is not a federal function. Education is among those matters reserved to the states. The national government lacks legal power, therefore, to establish and control the systems by which the people are educated. However, the tradition of diffused control exists not only for Constitutional reasons, but also for practical reasons. Decisions on education ought to rest on information best available to the respective states and localities. Therefore the federal government ought not to interfere with the present diffused pattern of control; decisions on curriculum and staffing—in effect, the decisions that govern actual educational procedures—should continue to be made locally under general state control.

The Constitutional relationship of the federal government to education in the states and localities is limited. There are only two Constitutional provisions which grant the power to serve education: the spending power, which specifies the power to tax and

spend in support of the general welfare; and the power to conduct the international relations of the United States, by which official relations with foreign educators and education systems are an aspect of government. A clear line of Constitutional decisions confirms that the power to spend includes the power to spend for the general welfare through education. A clear line also confirms that the foreign relations of United States nationals and institutions are an aspect of the central business of the nation's President. As the Supreme Court has held: "In this vast external realm, . . . the President alone has the power to speak or listen as a representative of the nation." [1]

There should be substantial federal financial assistance to public education. Not only is there a Constitutional rationale for federal spending in support of education, but there are also practical reasons. The funds required for schools and colleges are becoming increasingly difficult to raise at state and local levels. This is explained partly by the fact that each year sees an increase in the sums needed. It is explained also by the fact that the national economy has been developing in such a way as to favor the national government as an instrument of taxation. The property tax, which could once be relied on for nearly all of the public financing of education, is increasingly inadequate for satisfying expanding public needs. The states have sought to make good the growing local deficits and now supply about 40 percent of the financing of public education. But many states lack the means to finance an adequate program of education, and all states suffer tax disadvantages as compared with the systems of revenue raising available to the federal government. They must, for example, compete with other states to attract residents and investments. At the same time, the mobility of the population assures that a problem of undereducation anywhere in the United States will quickly become a

[1] United States *vs.* Curtis Wright Export Corp. 299 *U.S.* 304 (1936).

national problem, simply because there is no way to quarantine the uneducated. Every American city testifies to this fact. There is a clear need, therefore, for federal participation in the direct support of public education, and such participation has long been federal practice. The question is not whether to participate, but how and how much.

The organic quality of education should be respected. The enterprise of education is an intricate web of relationships among institutions and persons. Efforts to improve the quality of education or to procure for the public greater benefit from any part of the education system must be based on full recognition of these interrelationships. Today's students in colleges and universities are yesterday's students in elementary and secondary schools. They bring to the college the education they have received. The potential of the college is therefore in every sense a product of what has been done elsewhere. For example, one way to produce more and better scientists is to strengthen science education; but a more effective way in many places would probably be to increase the general success of children earlier in their schooling through efforts to improve reading instruction.

Education in its processes should be responsive to the public yet free from partisan political intervention. Education is an enterprise in which the professional and the political each have their place. It calls for a mingling of considerations reflecting the preferences of the citizenry and the knowledge and experience of professionals. Such functions as selecting teaching methods or forecasting educational needs can be performed well only in an atmosphere of professional independence. But the share of education in the national wealth and the basic ends which it will serve are for the people to decide. Moreover, keeping open the channels of public influence reinforces the profession's efforts to remain responsive to the constant need for change. It is therefore

necessary to provide for a proper blending of professional independence and political immersion in the management of education. The traditional method of accomplishing this end has been to lodge the final power of decision in a board responsible to a local or state electorate and to administer the decisions of the board through a professional staff. The need for distinguishing the professional from the political exists at the federal level also: while the allocation of funds must grow out of a deeply political process, there are professional needs which must be insulated from those who would put partisan considerations above service to education.

Information about education should be collected and disseminated nationally. Decisions at the national, state, or local level regarding education require access to considerable data, particularly if they are to take financial needs into account. It is possible for any state or locality to make its needs known, but it is impossible for any to speak for all and difficult for any to determine by its own efforts how it stands in relation to others. There must be some device by which the nationwide collection and dissemination of systematic information about education can be accomplished. Thus there must exist a national data-gathering agency competent to perform the task.

The interests of education should be effectively represented at the national level. Because education is not a primary federal function, and because the interests of the enterprise of education are capable of being strongly influenced by policy decisions taken at the national level, it is important that some means be found at the national level by which the interests of the education enterprise can be expressed.

* * * *

The foregoing are principles which ought to be observed in federal relations to education. The next question is how well they are observed.

Evaluation of Existing Relationships

Federal relationships to education are of bewildering complexity, but it is clear that, in the main, they do not follow the principles just enumerated.

Although the federal role in education ought to be limited chiefly to the financial, the actual role has been to use financial assistance as a means for making decisions regarding the conduct of education in its specifics. The specificity of existing programs is perhaps their dominant characteristic; they tend to deal with particular institutions, or particular educational functions, or particular localities, or particular students; nowhere is there evidence of a commitment to act in general support of education.

The specific approach has the virtue of enabling Congress to promote those delimited educational ends which it believes the general welfare to demand. But this approach has serious drawbacks as well. First, specific aids favor one element of the curriculum over another, thus interfering with state and local curriculum decisions and hence with state and local control. Second, because they support specific subjects and activities, they have tended to support the levels of education which provide specifics; thus the level which is most general—the elementary—tends to be ignored. Yet every level of education depends for its success on the earlier

success of an elementary school. Third, each specific aid granted is used by some legislators and citizens as an excuse for opposing further aid; thus it exposes educational legislation to its opponents without solving any basic problems. Fourth, usually accompanied by matching provisions, specific aid may actually harm activities not specified in the legislation; if schools or colleges that are generally short of funds decide to accept it, money direly needed in many parts of the budget is redirected to match the federal funds.

Even where the federal support is aimed at a general undergirding of the entire school program, it is limited to a relatively small number of favored school districts. The only communities fortunate enough to enjoy such federal assistance are those which are also fortunate enough to enjoy the stimulus to the local economy which goes with being "federally impacted," that is, with having considerable local federal employment. Other school districts, often in poorer communities, can share only in the small-scale specific programs which the Congress has established, and then only at the price of adapting their curriculums to the choices of federal legislators.

Thus, the principle that the role of the federal government is one of finance rather than control is regularly violated. The principle that substantial federal assistance is needed is also ignored. The total sums of federal money involved come nowhere near meeting the needs that many states and localities are also unable to meet.

As already indicated, the federal government, by its decisions regarding the specifics of education to be supported, regularly violates the essence of state and local control of education. Such statutes lead to curriculum decisions which, if still local in the strict sense, are strongly influenced by the pressure of the federal purse.

Further, the tendency to classify these specific programs under other titles than "education,"—whether it be "veterans readjustment," "manpower retraining," "technical assistance," or whatever—scatters educational activities across the federal landscape and brings many federal agencies into close contact with local schools, thus tending to bypass educational agencies at the national and state levels and risking erosion of local ability to control local education.

The federal government, by its decisions regarding the levels of education to be supported, undermines the organic quality of education. For example, any sound educational planning must recognize that the needs of elementary education are basic to all subsequent education; therefore the common federal practice of aiding colleges and ignoring elementary schools is educationally indefensible.

In decisions at the federal level, politics interferes with education in many cases where it should not. There is no clear differentiation of the educational functions which can be performed most effectively and objectively in conditions of professional independence (and therefore should be separated from the political arena) from those educational functions which require decision in the political arena (and therefore should be involved in politics).

The federal government does provide for the collection and dissemination of vital information on education in the United States.

The interests of education are not represented at the national level with sufficient force. The failure of representation has led to the tragic situation of needs unmet in many of the hardest-pressed localities while federal programs reach into places where they are less needed. Thus under the impacted-areas legislation, many comparatively wealthy school districts receive funds while

poorer ones do not. Similarly, programs which require matching of federal funds, as most of the federal programs do, tend to focus their benefits on agencies capable of appropriating the funds needed for matching.

Another evidence of the failure to represent education with sufficient force at the national level is the frequent appearance of legislation which has an effect on education without having adequately considered that effect. Thus, there is a large number of programs which are not thought to be educational but which strongly influence the conduct of education. Examples are the Defense Highways Act, the Selective Service System, and the Urban Renewal program. The need for these programs is not here in question; but that it would have been wise to consider the potential effects on education in the process of drafting the legislation can hardly be doubted. As matters now stand, decisions to establish such programs are more reflective of national political realities than of local educational realities or the national interest in education.

International educational relationships are hampered by the fact that in the United States there is no central agency qualified to speak for education and no educational official with a position equivalent to that of the principal educational officer of most other nations. However great the ability and integrity of a Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Department he heads is composed of unrelated functions. Except for their common commitment to the welfare of the people, there is little community of interest, knowledge, experience, or personnel in such diverse fields as medical research, social security, and education. The chief educational officer of the United States is the U.S. Commissioner of Education, and his official status, whatever his personal merit, is in the second—or even the third—echelon. This annoying reality might not have been of great importance in times when

American education had relatively small international programs. Today, however, educational relations across national boundaries are immense, both in scale and importance, and their administration calls for status both abroad and at home.

Thus federal activities in education violate most of the principles which, for the welfare of education, they ought to observe. The question therefore rises how this situation may be corrected.

Meeting the Needs

One of the needs at the federal level has to do with the establishment of the major policies under which federal educational activities proceed. The other has to do with the establishment of a structure designed to give effect to the policies.

Policies

It should be the policy of the government of the United States to create an environment in which education can flourish in the states and localities. The principal barrier to the conduct of education today is the inability of the states and localities generally to raise sufficient funds to meet needs. Therefore the general fiscal underpinning of education must be strengthened. This could be done by direct federal subsidies to the states for the support of public education, or by a general revision of the tax structure to permit states and localities to increase their fiscal resources. The radical reform of the tax system which would be required by the latter alternative would be politically difficult and may not be possible at all. The major effort of educators at the federal level has therefore rightly been to seek large appropriations in direct support of education in the states.

Recognizing the need for federal financial support, and conscious of the ability and duty of the states and localities to

determine the specific uses to which it should be put, educators have for the most part urged that federal participation in the support of education be general. But because of the opposition to their effort, they have been able to obtain only a series of relatively small-scale specific supports.

From many statements of those who oppose general support, it would appear that the major issues are the need for large-scale aid and the preservation of local control.

It is said, for example, that the real need is for strengthening only selected aspects of the programs of schools and colleges. Yet there is overwhelming agreement among those who study the facts that the needs are general and are unlikely to be met by local or state taxation.

A more frequent contention is that general federal support would necessarily lead to federal control. This claim is without substance. There are available many precedents in which the federal government has supported broad segments of education without controlling it. The land-grant college program is an example. The type of federal program which would truly protect schools and colleges from the threat of federal control, because it would leave the decisions to the states and localities, is the very type which is being resisted in Congress—a general aid bill. Some of the opponents of such a bill contend that it would lead to control, yet many of them voted for the National Defense Education Act, which was intended to have direct impact on curriculums. Supporters of such legislation—and they have been a majority in both houses of Congress—may sincerely oppose federal control, but the actual effect of their votes was to promote it. Similarly, many congressmen actively support the impacted-areas program of general federal support for the schools of their districts. They support general aid, then, for the schools of their own districts but

oppose it for the country as a whole. The execution of that program testifies daily to the lack of substance in the allegation that general federal support means federal control.

A candid review of the actual blocks to passage of desirable legislation reveals that it is not the issue of need or the issue of control that accounts for the difficulty in obtaining federal action. The real opposition arises from three issues:

1. The issue of public funds directed to church-related schools
2. The issue of desegregation in public schools
3. The issue of expanded federal spending.

In the climate of modern politics, a person who insists that federal funds be used in support of parochial schools will ensure by his insistence that a majority of the Congress will oppose him. He will therefore contribute his minority vote to no legislative end but may serve to block desirable legislation. It is similarly a minority of the Congress which insists that public schools be segregated. However, because they subordinate the financial needs of the schools to the maintenance of segregation, they combine with other minorities to prevent the passage of legislation. A third group consists of persons whose view of the national welfare accords an absolute priority to the question of the amount of money spent rather than to the object on which it is spent. These persons might even concede the importance of the object but would hold the general issue of spending to be more important.

The supporters of these points of view must not have pondered the consequence of their actions. The consequence which they are directly fostering from their positions of leadership is the undereducation of millions of Americans.

This, then, is the unfortunate situation today. There is inadequate federal participation in the support of education. It

is to be hoped that Congress will eventually acknowledge generously the willingness it has demonstrated on a small scale, in the Northwest Ordinance and impacted-areas legislation, to provide general support. Educators must continue their efforts to make the people aware of this need, but meanwhile they must consider what alternatives are available.

The most obvious alternative is to improve the dispensing of specific aids. This is not ideal educational policy, but democracy advances through willingness to adapt to present realities, without prejudice to the long-range pursuit of ideals. Moreover, the achievement of specific aids has proved politically feasible. In view of the failure of the Congress to establish general nationwide federal aid to education, and in view of the actual existence of a number of categorical aids, we recommend that educational leadership devote immediate and detailed attention to the improvement and spread of categorical aids, in order to obtain, to the extent possible, the values previously sought through general aid.

For example, the existing programs have their principal effect in scientific and technical fields and in higher education. It would be possible to offset these imbalances, at least in part, by amendments or new programs which would direct assistance to the elementary level and to broader areas of the curriculum. A giant step forward would be the addition of the elementary school or, if still greater specificity is required, of the teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing, and computation, to the categories receiving federal support. All these skills, so vital to subsequent learning, are learned with reasonable economy primarily in the elementary school. Large-scale federal support for instruction in basic skills would, by the nature of the processes involved, extend to many areas of school life and could be of inestimable benefit to the quality of elementary education and hence of education in general. Similarly, it would be possible to extend support to

other specific subjects—social studies, art, literature, music, physical education, and others—and to additional segments of the school program—summer schools, libraries, services for the culturally disadvantaged, and the like.

Of every existing or new proposal, educators and federal policy-makers should ask how it may be made to (a) put more money into serving (b) more categories and (c) lower levels. A constant and unremitting effort to move every educational program in these three related directions might well result, over a period of time, in improvements through which education might obtain many of the benefits of a general program of federal aid.

Structure

To discharge its educational responsibilities, the federal government must have an administrative structure adequate to the task. The existing structure is not adequate.

Every branch of the federal government—legislative, executive, and judicial—deals with educational policy, but it is in the Executive Branch that structural reform is largely indicated. The Congress must remain the scene of the struggle for money and determination of policy, and no proposal has been made which would simplify or eliminate the political maneuvering that inevitably occurs. Similarly, the role of the federal Judiciary is not likely to alter. Its role in clarifying controversial matters of importance to the schools and many other areas of life is basic in the American system.

In the Executive Branch, however, there is both the possibility and the need of change. Some device is needed by means of which education may be within the range of the President's personal attention and through which the affairs of education may be considered in relation to general governmental policy. How this may be done is considerably complicated by the fact that

some educational matters are political and others are not. Strictly professional matters in education ought not to be involved in politics.

Among the professional services which should be insulated from politics are some of those now served by the U.S. Office of Education: collecting and reporting information about education in the United States and elsewhere; allocating contracts for research; and other matters which, although they may support the policies of the political leadership, do not vary as the policies change. Professional functions like these should be in the hands of qualified professionals who are protected from the fires of political controversy. Their activities should be surrounded by safeguards to prevent political intervention much as the crop forecasts of the Department of Agriculture are held apart from the political activities of that Department.

There are many educational functions, however, which are not and cannot be performed in isolation from the political ferment of the national government. These have to do principally with budgeting and appropriating funds. Among the more evident of the activities in this category are the preparation and approval of the annual budget for the U.S. Office of Education and the drafting of legislative proposals for federal participation in the support of education. More subtle functions of this type, which are needed but are not now performed at all, involve the setting of annual legislative goals in the light of an annual review of needs. To take generalized goals and translate them into a program of specific action requires a blending of professional considerations on the one hand and political considerations on the other.

Similarly, the process by which a legislative proposal proceeds through the Executive Branch inevitably requires a blending of professional and political competences. Any proposal, no matter where it may originate—whether in an Executive agency, in

Congress, or even outside of government—must go through the process known as Legislative Reference before it can be sent to Congress as a Presidential request for legislation. No proposal on education is likely to become law without the President's approval and active support. He alone has the capacity to stir the national conscience so deeply as to generate the needed support. Thus every educational proposal must meet the test of Legislative Reference.

Legislative Reference consists of formal consultation of interested agencies and officials and analysis and evaluation of their comments on legislative proposals. Their comments are consolidated so as to produce a single point of view, which becomes the President's policy on that matter. It is obvious that as long as the political status of education is of low rank, the opinions and experience of educators will continue to play a limited role in Legislative Reference. It is obvious, too, that as long as the opinions and experience of educators are not considered by the Administration to be of major importance, the political status of education will continue to be low. The agencies which are consulted are those which exercise political power. It is little wonder that the Defense Highways Act went its entire course without consideration of its effect on educational finance, or that the Overseas Dependent Schools are administered entirely outside the federal educational framework.

An adequate structure for management of educational affairs at the federal level must successfully solve the problems of raising and distributing large sums of money and, at the same time, handling the professional affairs of education professionally and the political affairs of education politically. It must further provide a status adequate to the international needs of education.

The present setup definitely fails to meet these criteria. The requirement of handling professional affairs professionally is

probably the most nearly met of all the criteria, given the existence of the U.S. Office of Education, with its staff headed by a professional Commissioner and supported in virtually every professional position by the protection of Civil Service. But the inadequate sums of federal money raised for education represent a gross failure of responsibility. Functions which are in fact educational are given other names and are administered all over the federal scene by a multiplicity of agencies which have little or no interest in the welfare of the educational enterprise as a whole. Representation of education has never had senior political status. And no educator can deal as a diplomatic equal with a Minister of Education anywhere.

Educational groups have at one time or another proposed a variety of ways of improving the status of education within the Executive Branch. Unfortunately these more or less traditional proposals suffer from serious drawbacks. The best known of these proposals are the following: (a) to establish an independent education agency under a board of education appointed by the President for long overlapping terms, with power to appoint a Commissioner who would head a professional staff; (b) to set up a Cabinet Department of Education, with a Secretary of Education, and to subsume the U.S. Office of Education and all its professional functions, together with other federal educational operations, within the Department; (c) to establish a National Advisory Committee on Education to advise the President (or variously, the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare) on matters concerning education; and (d) to establish within the Executive Office of the President a Council of Educational Advisers whose functions would be analogues of those of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The independent-agency proposal has the attraction of seeming like the systems by which most states and localities manage educational affairs. But it offers little hope of dealing with the

greatest of all federal educational problems: raising the money. Independent status is a device that works for raising money at the local level in those cases where the school board has the power to tax. It is not proposed, however, to grant federal taxing powers to an independent federal education agency. The money will be found only through the regular budgeting and appropriating processes, and they involve, not isolation from policy-making within the Executive Branch, but deep participation in it. Federal agencies which receive little money, but which exercise great powers of control, tend to be given independent status and to operate under the control of boards or commissions appointed for long, overlapping terms. In fact, independence is thrust upon them. Examples are found in the independent regulatory commissions, all of which are independent of direct political controls and operate under appointive boards: the Interstate Commerce Commission, Federal Trade Commission, Federal Power Commission, Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Communications Commission, and others. On the other hand, federal agencies which receive large sums of money are usually held very close to politics. Examples are found in the Veterans Administration and the Agency for International Development, the directors of which customarily attend Cabinet meetings even though their agencies are not thought of as Cabinet-level departments.

Certain activities associated with science are handled within the Executive Branch in a way that appears similar to the independent regulatory commissions. On examination, however, it is seen that they are actually quite different. The National Science Foundation, for example, receives substantial appropriations and makes distribution of funds to educational agencies in states and localities. It is not independent of the Office of the President, however; it is, in fact, a direct appendage of that office. The National Institutes of Health, which appear to be independent, actually are directly under the control of the Department of Health,

Education, and Welfare, to which they bear much the same type of relationship as does the present administration of the National Defense Education Act.

Thus the independent-agency proposal tends toward the very thing most educators want to avoid—control—and shows little promise of achieving what they most need—money.

The proposal to establish a Cabinet-level Department of Education has the attraction of giving education a higher status at home and abroad and more direct access to the Executive policy-making machinery. But to many educators it suggests the specter of partisan intervention and of control of education from the federal level. To centralize in the hands of a single person all of the federal educational power has seemed too great a risk. Further, it is argued that the existing professionalism of the U. S. Office of Education would be endangered under such an administrative structure.

We think that the risk of control of education by a Secretary of Education is overdrawn. It may be true that in certain nations the Minister of Education exerts direct control; but that occurs only in nations where the actual conduct of education is also centralized in the national government. Nations which decentralize their schools, such as Great Britain, maintain localized control even though the educational affairs at the national level are centrally administered through a Minister of Education. Given the decentralization of education in the United States and the multiplicity of its points of control, we see little danger that a shift in the federal administrative structure would undermine state and local control. The far greater risk is the erosion of the power of education caused by insufficient support, for penury is a particularly vicious form of control, causing schools to choose not the right alternatives but the cheap. Associated with this risk is the

impact of specific federal programs which favor parts of the curriculum. The real dangers of control, then, are functions, not of the federal administrative structure, but of federal policies.

While the concept of a Department of Education is sound, there is a crucial obstacle in practice to the proposal to establish such a Department, namely, that the President may not accord to education a status in his thinking which would justify adding to his Cabinet a person who would serve as his chief representative in that field. Many areas of national life compete for the President's attention. Proposals to devote a Cabinet-level department to each have repeatedly arisen. Medicine, science, and urban affairs are among those whose claims have been taken seriously in recent years. We think that the claims of education for such status are especially pressing. An enterprise which commands the energies of a quarter of the population and carries the nation's future surely deserves to be a central concern of the central government. We recognize, though, that this concern will be effectively expressed only if the President looks on education as deserving of such representation.

The proposal of a National Advisory Committee on Education shows some promise. If it were attached to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, it would produce no benefits not now available. Attached to the Presidency, however, it might be effective. There is precedent for this proposal in the President's Science Advisory Committee, but the success of that Committee is attributable, not to the existence of the Committee as such, but to the very high status accorded by all recent presidents to their "Science Advisers," who have served simultaneously as Special Assistant to the President and as Chairman of the Science Advisory Committee. If a President would accept an "Educational Adviser" and accord him parallel status, then the device of an advisory committee might be highly useful as a means by which the Adviser could consult the educational community. The prior

question for settlement, then, is not whether to appoint a committee, but what status the President is willing to grant to an educator who would serve on his staff. Thus the proposal raises the same central question as is raised by the departmental proposal.

A Council of Educational Advisers, if it had the status and power of the Council of Economic Advisers, would also offer real hope. Like the Advisory Committee proposal, however, its real chances depend on the status which the President would be willing to accord to an Educational Adviser.

In the sum, then, one of these proposals is unwise, and the other three all depend for any success on the willingness of the President to give education an important place within his major affairs. We believe that education deserves such status and that the most thorough and most durable way to assure it would be to establish a Department of Education with a Secretary who would sit in the Cabinet.

The proposed Department should as rapidly as possible assimilate a number of educational programs and agencies now scattered across the federal scene and thus reduce the fractionalization of educational functions. Such consolidation would permit better coordination of federal activities in education, and could be accomplished without impairing any existing agency. Among the obvious candidates in addition to the U. S. Office of Education are the Overseas Dependent Schools, Veterans' Readjustment, Manpower Training and Development, and the clearly educational aspects of the National Science Foundation.

The Secretary of Education would have responsibility for preparation of budget and appropriation requests for his Department and for grants to the states in support of their educational programs. He would also be the source from which the President would draw advice on matters affecting education. Other federal

agencies would turn to the Department of Education for consultation regarding the possible impact on education of proposed programs. The Department and its Secretary could serve as the political representatives of education, performing directly that part of the educational-governmental function which requires participation in political decision making and high-level diplomatic representation abroad.

The Department should simultaneously provide Civil Service status as a protection for certain professional functions in such manner as to insulate them from possibly harmful political influence. Among the functions should be the study of trends and forecasting of problems in education, evaluation of the results of federal policies and actions affecting education, and long-range planning of the federal role in promoting the national interest through education.

We further recommend that the Secretary of Education annually prepare for the President a *Report on the State of the Union in Education,* to be submitted to the Congress. Such a report could serve to focus educational debate on the issues with which the national Congress is competent to deal. The central federal decision on education has to do with the amounts of money to be distributed to the states. In reaching a decision on these matters, the Congress ought to have immediately available—for its own consideration and for examination by interested citizens—objective data on enrollments, expenditures, numbers of teachers, numbers of professionals who lack full qualifications, needs for classroom and other construction, special needs of critical areas such as large cities, and similar objective data.

A *Report on the State of the Union in Education* would serve the additional purpose of discouraging the entrance of the Congress into discussion of issues on which it lacks competence.

Particularly, in order to preserve the pluralism and localism of American education, it is of first importance that the Congress not become involved in questions of curriculum and personnel administration.

Conclusion

The federal government has not come close to fulfillment of its educational responsibilities. This failure is of concern not only to the public administrator and the professional educator: it directly affects every citizen and the national welfare.

The problem will not be solved short of radical changes in the status of education at the national level and a greatly enlarged awareness of the responsibilities of those who wield national power. The changes are needed in two areas: federal policy and federal structure.

The policy change relates to the amount and type of federal participation in the support of education. Federal funds are needed on a large scale. We believe that the nation would be best served if these funds were appropriated for general educational purposes. But large-scale, general support has not been possible, while categorical grants have demonstrated their attractiveness. We think, therefore, that vigorous efforts should be made to make categorical grants approximate, to the extent possible, the virtues of general support. That is, categorical aids should be modified simultaneously in three directions: (a) larger appropriations (b) for more categories (c) at lower educational levels.

The struggle for adequate federal policies affecting education is intimately tied up with the question of an adequate federal

structure for the administration of educational affairs. The structure most to be recommended for the permanency and depth of its influence and capacity to serve is a Department of Education with full Cabinet status.

Despite the general tendency to speak well of education, it is a fact that the programs which would most benefit education have so far shown limited political appeal. Elementary schools do not send rockets to the moon—at least, not directly. But what happens in kindergarten may largely determine whether a given child will later be in college or on relief. Never, perhaps, can a breakthrough in a child's ability to read have the glamor of a breakthrough in science, but the two are as intimately related as cause and effect. Public recognition of this fact would give education the political strength it deserves and make it possible to bring about the structural and policy changes here proposed.