

# ASCD

*Probably at no other time in our history* have the American people been better informed or more concerned about the state of affairs in the public schools than they are at the present time.

Educational issues about which there was relatively little concern a few years ago have become bitterly contested national issues. The perplexing problem of the relationship between church and state, an issue that we thought had been settled years ago in this country, has come up for discussion again and re-examination in connection with the question of permitting religious instruction in schools supported by tax funds and proposed national legislation giving financial support to the public schools. A major Congressional controversy is being waged over the latter issue, and the Supreme Court not long ago handed down a decision on the former question. Citizens in public life are speaking out openly and taking a positive stand on these matters, often at the risk of political or personal recrimination by those holding an opposing point of view.

A group of nationally prominent leaders from the fields of labor, business, agriculture, and law have organized a committee whose sole purpose is the promotion and encouragement of public support for the schools. Even the press and radio are helping to impress upon our citizens the precarious situation in the schools occasioned by the "tidal wave of children," the lack of trained teachers, and inadequate financial support.

What significance does all this concern and interest on the part of the public hold for those of us who work in the schools? Certainly it means that we must be aware of the opportunity and the responsibility that such prominence brings—*opportunity* to demonstrate the tremendous power and effectiveness of education and *responsibility* to make certain that professionally we are equal to the task. Your editors hope that during this publication year EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP will be of some help to teachers, principals, superintendents, supervisors—all who work with children and youth—as they meet this challenge.—*Arno A. Bellack*

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