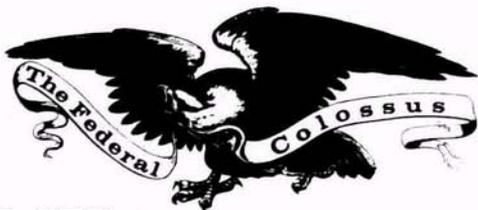


HOW ARE FEDERAL PROGRAMS WORKING IN THE LARGE CITY?



JOSEPH O. LORETAN

Deputy Superintendent of Schools
City of New York, New York

IF ANYONE today questions the need for (a) keeping children in school, (b) preparing them with a marketable occupation, (c) looking into the school programs to reevaluate what we *are* doing and what we are planning for the future, then he is a person who is *ignorant of the facts*. The federal government has started to move in a big way in the field of education, and it is likely that such a move will bring with it big results and big problems. The less effectively school administrators and school boards plan, the sooner will we be faced with competing federally operated projects in education.

President Johnson has proposed doubling the appropriations for the war on poverty and increasing by \$1.5 billion our existing educational programs. Some of this money will be used for new programs, but a billion and a half dollars of it will be used to extend *existing* educational programs. A question of vital interest, then, is "How Are Federal Programs Working in the Large City?" My frame of reference will be New York City since that is where my experience has been.

New York City Programs

One big federal program in New York City is the Manpower Development Training program.

Manpower Development

This program falls into four types:

1. Straight institutional training, which is what we refer to in New York City as a custom-made curriculum for emerging jobs
2. Institutional training and clinical experiences, presently only for health careers

3. On-the-job training programs, in which newly employed trainees are paid and supervised by the employer while on the job, and receive separate federal allowances for the related (classroom) or supplementary (shop) instruction provided at vocational high schools or at adult training centers on alternative-week or varied rotation schedules

4. Umbrella-type programs, in which chronically unemployed trainees, deficient in fundamental skills and desirous of occupational preparation are sent by the New York State Employment Service to be counseled and programmed for special 30-hour-per-week programs, in such multi-occupational (umbrella) areas as building services; commercial occupations, etc. An interesting new type project is the Police Pre-training Program. Here we are preparing candidates to take high school equivalency exams to establish eligibility to take the Civil Service Exam for this job. This is an indication of the varied nature of M.D.T. programs.

At present, in New York City, over 2,000 trainees are currently enrolled in 31 different courses, with funds allocated for 3,400 additional new trainees. Proposals for several thousands more are currently being reviewed for approval and funding.

Training is offered for such occupations as typist, stenographer, bookkeeping machine operator, keypunch-verifier operator, meat cutter, electronic computer mechanic, washing machine serviceman, offset pressman, hospital orderly, practical nurse, and gas appliance salesman. Training for these specific occupations is in addition to the 14 broad areas of occupational training of the Umbrella Project, in which the goal is nothing less than full employment and integration.

What have been some of the results of these programs to date? The retention rate is approximately 70 percent for institutional type courses, but markedly higher in the Umbrella Project. Verified placements of graduates, between 70-75 percent, counting those who drop out before graduation to enter self-obtained employment, would probably raise the placement rate 10 per-

cent and would similarly put the holding power in an ever more favorable light. Employer satisfaction is quite high, and hundreds of thankful letters from former trainees attest to their appreciation for the opportunity afforded to become self-supporting members of and useful contributors to society.

With each of these programs come problems. One such problem is that for every occupational program created there must be an advisory council established, a special teacher found and licensed, a course of study written, equipment either bought or rented, and facilities. Sometimes this is a highly costly routine, since a course might last only six weeks because the students have become adequately trained or because there is no further need for the particular skill.

How do we view the future of the Manpower Development Training Program in our school system? We believe the program has tremendous implications for instruction and curriculum in the total education system. Here is a program that is not giving "lip service" to individualizing instruction but is really doing it. A need is expressed in

industry; a special, made-to-order course of study is written; a specially trained teacher is taken on to teach it; and, most important, the student is checked out when he has completed the course material, and is immediately placed in a position in which he can apply his knowledge. This is the method that we should be using in *all* of education: *diagnosis—prescription—learning* and successful application.

Economic Opportunity

Another project with a big potential for New York City is the Economic Opportunity Act program. At the moment we are only involved in one unit, the Neighborhood Youth Corps. The purpose of this program is to provide useful work experience opportunities for unemployed young men and women, aged 16 and up to, but not beyond, the 22nd birthday, through participation in community programs so that their employability may be increased or their education resumed or continued.

There are some 5,000 young men and women involved, of whom 1,700 are in 43 schools. Although as yet this program has not been evaluated, the Neighborhood Youth Corps has been enthusiastically received by the professional staff. The number of people who are trying to get into it is an indication of the value put on it by students and staff.

The Economic Opportunity Act (Anti-Poverty Program) will also help us participate in Operation Head Start. The problem of Operation Head Start relates to the education of parents. In New York City most children attend kindergarten. We hope this program will affect many prekindergarten stu-

dents. Will these children, the ones who need it most, be sent to summer kindergarten programs?

Much research points to the fact that children's most productive years for learning are the early years, that by the time the student reaches the intermediate school many of his learning patterns have been set. In the estimation of people in the field, children from disadvantaged homes who have attended experimental prekindergarten centers have surpassed their peers without prekindergarten preparation for school success. Why, therefore, do we delay such education? Perhaps the most important instruction and curriculum function of Operation Head Start will be to serve as the opening wedge in extending compulsory attendance in kindergarten and prekindergarten, thereby gaining two years in the social adjustment and general education of children.

A third federal program is the Vocational Education Act of 1963 which has as its major purpose the modernization of vocational education.

In the Vocational Education Act we are involved in a work-study program in which students remain in school, continue with their studies, and are given a stipend of \$1.25 an hour with a maximum of 15 hours per week. The program has been in operation for only six months, but we do find that the approximately 800 youngsters in this program stay in the jobs assigned to them and, for the time being at least, are staying in school.

A fourth project is the National Defense Education Act. In New York City more than \$15 million has already been expended under NDEA for the improvement of instruction in science,

mathematics and foreign languages. This year, for the first time, expenditures are being made for materials and equipment in history, civics, geography, English and reading. Testing equipment (a Digitek 100 Specification System costing \$44,500) has also been acquired with NDEA matching grants. Materials and equipment have also been purchased for audio-visual libraries serving the schools.

Most exciting has been the dramatic increase in modern foreign language instruction in the seventh and eighth grades of junior high schools of the City. Some increases have also taken place in the elementary schools.

The installation of electronic computer systems in mathematics classrooms in senior high schools has already had a far-reaching influence on instruction.

Perhaps the greatest impact from NDEA has been in guidance. In New York City, guidance expenditures have increased from \$4,500,000 in 1962-1963 to \$8,700,000 in 1964-1965, and the end is not in sight. This improvement is largely the result of NDEA assistance in guidance, counseling and testing. In New York City there are now more than 30,000 full-time guidance counselors, almost three times the number in 1958.

NDEA Teacher Institutes have been dramatically expanded this year. School administrators may now plan on advanced training for many of their teachers and supervisors through NDEA-supported teacher-training institutes in almost all subjects of the curriculum. In New York City the Board of Education has appointed an overall coordinator for State and fed-

erally assisted programs so that full educational and financial benefits may be obtained for the City from the burgeoning federal and state legislation.

A fifth and last program is that of Cooperative Research. Compared with other programs, Cooperative Research is small. The insistence by U. S. Commissioner Keppel that evaluation be a built-in factor in project development may well be our salvation as we plan to spend enormously essential funds for education. We must learn more about how people learn before we can make any great dent with what we teach them.

In the New York City public schools we have at this moment several federally supported Cooperative Research programs. The Science-Spanish Research Project was designed and organized to meet the apparent need for academic motivation and achievement on the part of junior high school students of Spanish-speaking background. The Science-Spanish Experiment wants an answer to this question: will students of Spanish origin who are not up to grade in English learn science more effectively in Spanish than those taking conventional courses?

Another program is a talent hunt among the disadvantaged related to music. This research study hopes to develop and produce a test of music potential applicable to the culturally different pupil population. The second stage of the study will be the evaluation of the effect of a musical program on pupils with reading and other academic difficulties.

Good results are already evident in Manpower Development, and in projects supported by NDEA. For the

newer programs we must wait and see. I think the most important need we must keep in mind is the fact that this country has dedicated itself to education for the masses, that people want more education, and that our education must meet the needs of our citizens.

In this age our needs are to a large extent technological, and once again we must help our people to accept technology and be prepared for it. Those who are young adults today, as Margaret Mead has said, may have to be retrained as often as five times in their

lifetime, and those of us who have the responsibility of preparing the adults of tomorrow—those children who are in our schools today and who in the year 2000 will be in their 40's—must consider the *kind of curriculum*, the *kind of preparation*, the *kind of education* that will prepare them for an almost unknown world.

I would hope that federal programs will address themselves more and more to the development of programs for the *future* as well as essential programs just for the present.

Addendum

A SERIOUS intrusion by the federal government into the local administration of public school systems is now occurring under the general provisions of Title IV, Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act. On June 10, 1965, U. S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel, wrote the state commissioners of education about the plans being formulated for carrying out this Section. His letter states that "Congress has instructed the Commissioner of Education . . . to conduct a survey of inequality of educational opportunity in public educational institutions by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin. . . . It will attempt to deal with the problem of inequality by developing comprehensive statistical information and evaluation for items that educators agree are relevant to quality. . . . In my judgment, it is necessary to assess the relative importance of these by means of aptitude and achievement results if the survey is to serve its purpose. This part of the survey will be voluntary; that is, substitutes will be found for those local school systems which do not wish to participate in the program. In the schools which agree to cooperate, pupils in the 1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th grades will be tested. . . . This survey will be done entirely at U. S. Government expense."

The U. S. Office of Education, a federal agency, therefore, has now contracted with a testing agency to carry out directly tests of achievement in American public schools. In further explanation of the program, the Project Coordinator of the U. S. Office, in a letter to state representatives in July, stated that "basically, the survey will examine characteristics of schools . . . that affect educational success." Although local schools may refuse to participate, the federal agency is selecting the school systems, merely asking the state departments to approve their selections.

Inasmuch as Congress required that the survey be made, presumably the results are to be used by the Congress to determine what further steps it should take to control the nature and character of educational opportunities in the local school systems of this nation. However laudatory legislation to ensure equality of educational opportunity may be, this legislation, and the steps being taken by the Commissioner, part of which are based on "my judgment," to carry out the act, move us rapidly down the road of federal dictation of the curriculum and programs of public schools in this country.

—Galen Saylor

Copyright © 1965 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.