

It is our responsibility to establish and maintain relationships with the officials and representatives of State educational departments. It is our responsibility to maintain the same kind of relationship with the local school systems through the State departments of education.

I see our responsibilities as program officers to work cooperatively with and to provide assistance to State educational agencies. And this we feel we have done very successfully in this region.

It is our responsibility, as program officers, to review the assurances and reports and make suggestions where necessary.

At this time there are some differences of opinion as to what the function of the program officer is in visiting local schools. There are those who believe the program officer's function in making such visits is simply to monitor and report the results. Then there are others who believe the program officer should take an active role in the assessment and future direction of the local program.

There is also a strong concern that Federal representatives should not even visit the local educational agencies.

At the present time, and in the light of these various viewpoints, we have attempted to carry out a course of action to some degree that would satisfy each of these opposing viewpoints. These conflicting points of view, of course, will continue to be a problem until such time as the differences are settled.

I should mention that another major objective of our staff is to review and analyze and evaluate the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare audit reports in the title I program in the States in our region, and to negotiate with officials of the State agencies to determine whether disallowances should be sustained as an audit exception.

It is also our responsibility to recommend approval or disapproval of such allowances, or disallowances, in these cases, to make recommendations for the formulation of policy with respect to settlement of similar cases.

Now, our staff, through conferences and workshops and panels and presentations and personal contacts with State educational agency representatives and professional organizations I think stimulates and encourages improvement of established quality systems for the planning of long-range educational programs.

I would like to mention here the recent surveyor budget restrictions, as has been mentioned before, and the freeze on the personnel, and the indecision on the part of the U.S. Office of Education and Congress will restrict our progress in fulfilling our responsibilities as program officers.

As you know, there are some State departments of education that have voiced their strong opposition to a regional system which cannot provide them with decisionmaking personnel.

If decentralization is to succeed, it is vital that the authority to conduct and administer the programs involved be delegated to the regional offices. If this is not done, it is the fear of the States that an extra layer will be built in between them, and the other level will become a reality.

I think also the States are concerned that the appropriation procedures of Congress will seriously hamper the effectiveness of their