

agencies and other federal agencies working for the improvement of the disadvantaged.

I see our responsibilities as program officers to work cooperatively with and provide assistance to State Educational Agencies in the development of administrative policies and procedures. To interpret pertinent provisions, rulings, requirements, regulations, procedures, and standards established under the enabling legislation.

The State educational agency in its formal application to the Commissioner of Education for participation in Title I, includes assurances that it will administer the program and submit reports in accordance with the provisions of the law and the regulations.

It is our responsibility as program officers to review with the State the assurances and the reports and make suggestions where necessary and/or feasible.

The local educational agency is responsible for developing and implementing projects to fulfill the intent of Title I. It is therefore responsible for identifying the educationally deprived children in areas of high concentrations of low income families, determining their special needs, designing projects to carry out the purpose of the legislation with regard to such children, and submitting applications to the appropriate State educational agencies for grants to carry out proposed projects.

At this time, there is some difference of opinion as to what the function of the program officer is in visiting local schools. There are those who believe the program officers function in making such visits is simply to monitor the local program and report the results. There are others who believe the program officer should take an active roll 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 the opposing viewpoints. These conflicting points of view will continue to be a problem until such time that these differences are settled.

Another major objective of our staff will be to review, analyze, and evaluate the Department of Health and Education Audit Reports of the Title I program in the states in Region IV, and negotiate with officials of the State agencies to determine whether disallowances should be sustained as an audit exception; or whether the State has presented a rationale which will satisfy the acceptance of the questioned expenditures.

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

Our staff, through conferences, work shops, panels, presentations, and personal contacts with State educational agency representatives and professional organizations, should stimulate and encourage the improvement and/or establishment of quality systems for the planning of long-range educational programs and for the efficient economical administration of such programs, including budgeting, accounting, and reporting systems. It is the program officers responsibility to provide advice and recommendations on how to accomplish these ends by making appropriate contacts, suggestions, and follow-ups.

The recent severe budget restrictions, the freeze on personnel, and indecision on the part of the U.S. Office of Education and Congress, will restrict our progress in fulfilling our responsibilities as program officers.

There appears to be some disagreements and misunderstanding among Bureaus as to whether de-centralization is the answer to the successful administration of programs for its educationally deprived.

Some State Departments of Education have voiced their strong opposition to a Regional system which cannot provide them with decision making personnel. If de-centralization 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, the fear of the states that an extra layer will be built between them and the decision making level will become a reality.

The states are also concerned that the appropriation procedures of Congress will seriously hamper the effectiveness of their programs. This concern is not only related to the lateness of the appropriations, which naturally severely detracts from the administration of a well-planned, smoothly operated project; but also to the cut backs in appropriations at all levels.