

Are you familiar with the present move to decentralize the authority of the Office of Education, particularly here in Atlanta, which is the first region that is being geared up for this purpose?

When this is completed, and the local regional director does have the real authority to go through your program applications, to make grants, and to have the final word, and not just be another layer of administrative personnel between you and Washington, do you think that this will eliminate many of the problems?

Dr. DEFOOR. I would rather say it this way: I think that is a far better scheme of administration—the U.S. Office of Education—than what we now have. And the one thing that I would base this statement on, too, that is, for the success of it, would be for these people to have sufficient authority to work among us.

Mr. ERLBORN. This, of course, is the key. If they don't have the authority, this will not work, but if they do have the authority to make final decisions here, I think it will work.

You have some hesitancy about whether they will ever have the authority, I imagine.

Dr. DEFOOR. Right. But the thing that I have tried to say in my statement is that administration must be just as close to the pupil-teacher relationship as it possibly can be, in order to do what we think instruction ought to do.

When it is as far removed as it is, I think we are illustrating some of the experiences we have, in order to get direction.

I spent 2 days in Washington Thanksgiving weekend, with two of our staff people, myself, and I could do better by being here working.

Mr. ERLBORN. Just one other question, in the area of the enforcement of the civil rights laws.

Do you feel that the authority for this enforcement is properly lodged with the Office of Education, or would you prefer that the enforcement of these laws be given to some other agency of the Justice Department, for instance?

Dr. DEFOOR. Well, let me say it this way: I am jealous of public school education. I am jealous of instruction. I don't care what it is. I don't like the idea, personally, of using instruction as a means of doing things of that nature.

I am talking about using it as a stick by which to do it. I just never have liked that. I don't want anything to interfere with good instruction. I don't care what race they are. I have had personal relationships in this matter, now, and I know it can be handled if the local people see that they have to do it.

Mr. ERLBORN. Accepting for the fact that we do have Federal laws concerning the desegregation of schools, and they are going to be administered by someone, would you prefer that they be administered by the Office of Education, or by the Justice Department, or do you have any thoughts?

Dr. DEFOOR. Well, I have this thought. Too frequently, I feel that the U.S. Office of Education tries to control that which occurs, shall we say, in the classroom, through the control of money, and that is a wrong thing to do, in my opinion.

I believe as people learn, given time to learn, they will do it, and if education is part of that learning process, I would accept it.