

We should always keep well in mind that school board members represent the public which owns and supports the schools. School boards spend taxpayers' money, and they are responsible to the citizens for their actions.

The NSBA is the only national organization representing school boards throughout the United States and is recognized as one of the nation's major education associations. On several occasions during the past two years the National School Boards Association has testified before the Congress concerning its philosophy and policies and its position on proposed legislation. In the fall of 1965 the National School Boards Association sponsored five area conferences involving a broad representation of those interested in education around the country; the main topic of discussion at these conferences concerned the roles of the national, state and local levels of government in education.

The National School Boards Association welcomes the opportunity to appear today before this sub-committee studying the United States Office of Education and related matters. The NSBA is aware of the importance of representatives of local and state educational agencies being involved in policy making for legislation at the national level. It is also interested and concerned about the operation of the United States Office of Education and how it affects state and local education. Cognizant of the fact that educational activities of the federal government are not limited to those programs conducted by the United States Office of Education, the NSBA also has interest in the programs of other governmental agencies involved in education.

We might summarize the concerns of the NSBA about the involvement of federal governmental agencies in education programs under five headings:

The *first* of these regards the fragmentation of educational programs among many governmental agencies. The 1966 Delegate Assembly, NSBA's governing body which represents its member states at the Association's Annual Convention, passed a resolution concerning this scattering of educational programs. The resolution states:

"The NSBA Delegate Assembly urged that federal education programs affecting elementary and secondary education be administered at the federal level through the United States Office of Education; at the state level by state departments of education; and at the local level by public school boards."

The NSBA endorses federal aid to education but will continue to concern itself with the effect this aid may have upon local and state responsibility for the public schools. NSBA has reservations about the implementation of educational programs which are not channeled through the proper educational authorities and which are not under the control of the local board of education. Such a program is illustrated by project "Head Start" which is conducted in some communities by non-public school agencies. The National School Boards Association believes that educational programs supported by public funds should be administered by the public school agencies so that the total educational program will not be fragmented. This coordinated approach is necessary if the best educational program is to be developed.

The *second* concern about the educational operations of the federal government relates to the guidelines or regulations which are issued by the various agencies responsible for these programs. The NSBA recognizes that it is necessary for the federal government to set up certain broad guidelines for the conduct of the programs which it administers. However, if these regulations or guidelines are so rigid that local initiative and local interpretation are stifled, then the NSBA must raise questions about them. It is obvious that problems have arisen in large cities and small towns throughout the nation concerning the implementation of federal government educational programs. It has been reported that some local school districts, for example, have failed to qualify in time for funds to which they are entitled because of seemingly excessive delay in the approval of their plans. NSBA believes that the local boards of education and the state departments of education, because they are close to the problem, are familiar with local conditions and, because of this fact, are better able to adapt programs to the specific needs of students to be educated. The NSBA is interested in helping develop the best educational program at the local level and feels that local and state agencies should be consulted early and often in the development of federal guidelines.

*Thirdly*, the proposed decentralization of the United States Office of Education policy making powers to its regional offices raises the following questions:

Will these offices simply be another layer in a bureaucratic structure through which requests for assistance from the United States Office of Education must be