

and that we think that this coordinated approach is necessary if we are to develop the best education program.

Now the second concern that we have is about the education operation of the Federal Government relating to the guidance or regulations which are issued by the various agencies responsible for these programs. Now we recognize that it is necessary for the Federal Government to set up certain broad guidelines for the conduct of the program which it administers. However, if these guidelines and regulations are so rigid that you take away logical initiative and logical interpretation, then we have certain serious questions about them. It is obvious that problems have arisen in large cities and small towns throughout the country concerning the implementation of Federal Government educational programs. It has been reported at some local districts that they will fail to qualify because of some seemingly excessive delay in the approval of their plan and NSBA believes that the local boards of education and the State departments of education, because they are close to the problem, are familiar with the local condition and because of this fact, are better able to adapt the programs to the specific needs of the students to be educated.

So NSBA is interested in helping to develop the best educational program at the local level and feels that the local and the State agencies should be consulted early and often in the development of any Federal guidelines.

Mr. QUIE. Were you consulted at all by the National School Board Association?

Mr. ACKERMAN. I would have to refer this to you, Bob.

Mr. WILLMOT. To the best of my knowledge, NSBA was consulted in some capacity during certain stages of the development. You talk about elementary and secondary in particular. I believe this is true, but how extensive that involvement was my background does not permit me to say with authority.

Mr. BRADEMAs. Identify yourself for the record.

Mr. WILLMOT. I am Bob Willmot, director of information for the National School Boards Association. I have been with the association about a year.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I would have to say as I have gone to the State meeting and talked with them in the respective States about their particular problems, at least the impression that I got is they have not really had much voice in the preparation of the guidelines.

Now our third concern is in the proposed decentralization of the U.S. Office of Education policymaking powers to its regional offices. There we have a number of questions that we would like to raise. Will these offices simply be another layer in the bureaucratic structures through which requests for assistance from the U.S. Office of Education must be made—with the ultimate decision still to be made at the national level? Or will these regional offices truly eliminate some of the red tape by giving decisionmaking power?

What effect will be proposed extension of decisionmaking power to regional offices have on the State departments of education? Will this increased authority of regional offices mean ultimately that the Federal education programs may be administered directly to the local district, thus bypassing many State departments of education?