

CHAPTER 18

Area Vocational School Facilities *

A. NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF FACILITIES

1. INTRODUCTION ¹

In a broad sense, all education contributes to vocational competency, or technology grows in complexity, the basic general education requirements for successful employment in most fields are increasing more rapidly than could have been anticipated even a decade or two ago. But as occupations become more specialized, as well as more demanding, the broad general accomplishments of the standard school curriculum constitute less and less a sufficient qualification for satisfying employment, and more and more are only a necessary prerequisite for the acquisition of specific occupational skills. These implications of a changing job market are recognized and reflected in an educational system which can anticipate future needs, and the plight of today's high school dropout may increasingly become the plight of tomorrow's high school graduate.

More and more, in other words, we are moving into an era of specialization for all. However, while it is clear that the physician, the architect, the lawyer, and the international expert, for example, receive specific occupational preparation in their specialized schools, the term "vocational education" has not traditionally been used to refer either to such professional training nor to the liberal arts education, although still only partially specialized, leading to a baccalaureate degree. As it is now commonly understood, vocational education refers to all formal occupationally oriented *subprofessional* instruction, which may be offered as part of a regular secondary or postsecondary educational program or may be especially designed for those who have dropped out of school or who have been long absent from formal educational activities. The student may be youth or adult, and the student's goal in such training may be either initial entry into or advancement within the chosen occupational field.

With this very broad definition, it is clear that the field of vocational education potentially encompasses part of the formal education of all of the great majority of Americans who do not complete college or graduate programs. Thus, it is not surprising that the Federal Government's program for vocational education, which is distributed through the Department of Education, goes ultimately to about two-thirds of the public secondary

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¹ This section is intended primarily to define the scope and limitations of this chapter.