

The job of our Nation's schools is particularly critical in view of the large number of workers under 25 years of age who will be continuing to enter the labor force. From 1965 to 1970, the number of persons 20 to 24 years old in the job market will be increasing by close to 500,000 or 4.8 percent per year—2½ times the rate for the labor force as a whole. By 1970 there may be close to 12 million of these young adult workers, representing about 14 percent of the total labor force, compared with 10 percent in 1960. Overall, the total number of teenage and young adult workers (aged 14 to 24) is expected to increase by almost 700,000 a year, constituting about 45 percent of the increase in the labor force between now and 1970.

More than one million students drop out of school each year. Of the students now in the fifth grade, approximately 80 percent will not complete college. A large number of these students will not receive the education or training which will prepare them to adapt to the jobs available ten or twenty years from now. If they are to develop to their greatest potential as wage earners and as citizens, school programs must be designed to keep them in school, and these programs must prepare them to function in an increasingly complex society.

Failure to meet the needs of students in high schools results in lessened employment opportunities. The unemployment rate for high school age youth is more than three times that of the public at large. The unemployment rate among those who fail to finish high school is 50 percent greater than among those who complete high school—in spite of an expanding economy.

The secondary school system of the United States must be strengthened to enable it to be more responsive to the needs, interests, abilities, and problems of all students and to the current and long-term demands of the world of work. This is especially true in the case of disadvantaged students. High school may be their last opportunity for formal education unless they are stimulated to continue on to college, and unless they receive training for employment they may be doomed to a life of unemployment. For students who do not plan to go to college, high school may be the last opportunity to prepare for, or receive training for, a job.

Proposal

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 would be amended to establish a 5-year program of grants to State vocational boards, local educational agencies, and public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions to support the planning, development, and operation of innovative occupational education programs which may serve as models for vocational education programs. Examples of the types of projects which might be supported are:

Exploratory occupational education programs to provide practical and educational experiences essential to understanding the demands and complexities of our modern society and opportunities in the constantly-changing world of work. These programs would be designed to familiarize students with the broad range of occupations available to them and requisites for careers in the various occupations.

Programs or projects to provide to students educational experience through part-time work to assist in their maximum development and to help in linking school and employment. Such programs would assist needy students to continue their education; promote a sense of achievement in school-related work experiences; enlarge educational opportunities; develop recognition of the value of work; and establish communication channels between education and the world of work which are not now in existence.

Guidance and counseling to assure that all students' interests and capabilities are developed in relation to their career objectives and to ease in the transition from school to work by assisting them in initial job placement.

Improvement of curricula to stimulate broad-scale innovative changes to provide more realistic vocational education programs for youth and adults at all skill levels. The curriculum changes would involve new instructional media; improved curriculum guides; and innovative techniques and services designed to meet the needs of youth and adults for entry into the world of work or for continuing education at the post-secondary level.

The funds appropriated would be apportioned among the States and outlying areas as follows: \$150,000 would be apportioned to each State and outlying area, and the remainder would be apportioned according to population aged 14 through 19.

\$30 million would be authorized for fiscal year 1968.