

months before the data collected in a survey of this magnitude can be fully evaluated, so that firm recommendations for public policy can flow from them. I stress, too, the fact that the information on which the report is based was gathered last fall—before any title I projects really got launched. So, although the survey was not made with Title I in mind, I think it may provide a reliable baseline for measuring the impact of the various Title I programs now underway.

The survey is in effect an effort to describe statistically the extent of educational opportunity which exists through the country for the minority groups as compared to the white majority.

In the months and years ahead the Office of Education staff, aided by advisors from the educational community throughout the country, will be studying how the survey findings can sharpen our current programs and what implications they have for future directions.

But the study does not belong to the Office of Education. It belongs to the Nation, and I would encourage other groups, public and private, to explore it carefully. In particular, I invite the attention of those of you here tonight. Challenge the survey, hypothesize from it, learn from it. I especially ask for your cooperation because I think that in many ways the survey's implications and the applications of title I are complementary.

Now, let's take a look at what we have found so far—and what the survey might seem to suggest to the States and the local school systems most of you represent.

We found that for all practical purposes, American education can be labeled as segregated.

Over two-thirds of all Negro pupils in the first grade go to schools that are 90 to 100 percent Negro; only a handful of the Nation's Negro first graders are getting the benefit of desegregated education. In the light of the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, the requirements of the Civil Rights Act, and the further finding of this survey that segregated education is likely to be of lower quality for minority group children than for the majority, these facts should give us pause.

Turning to the general characteristics of schools, in one part of the survey we measured such matters as the age of the school building, the average number of pupils per classroom, whether there was a library, a cafeteria, a chemistry laboratory. We asked about accreditation, accelerated curriculum, use of the track system, salaries of principals, debate teams and bands, teacher tenure.

Next we turned to the classroom and asked questions of the students themselves. Some of the questions were designed to give us an index of socioeconomic factors: others, an academic achievement rate of verbal and mathematical results.

Among other things we found that many of the obvious differences among schools do not have a major bearing on differences in student achievement. Within that finding, however, it was also clear that achievement of disadvantaged pupils does depend to a statistically significant degree on the schools they attend—considerably more than for children of the white majority.

Put another way, advantaged students are less affected one way or the other by the quality of their schools. It is for the most disadvantaged children that improvements in school quality mean the most.

This finding obviously has significant implications. It seems to say, for example, that a program like Title I can make a difference if we are skillful enough to use it effectively. But before I jump to this or any other conclusion, I want to offer you the same caveat I offered my staff when we first discussed the survey. I think we must steadfastly refrain from reaching for quick, simplified conclusions. I believe we all need to spend considerable time with the full report—all 700-odd pages of it—before we can make plans for special projects and programs based upon it. We have to insert a step between implication and application, and that step should involve very careful study—not just speculation.

Next, let's take a look at the teachers we surveyed—60,000 of them.

We sought information about how much they earn, what they majored in at college, years of teaching experience, average scores on a verbal test, and so on.

The results were not especially surprising. In some ways—though by no means all—they were reassuring. The figures indicate that the quality of teachers defined in terms of the factors I have just listed bears a much stronger relationship to student achievement than does the quality of the school. Furthermore, a good teacher's impact on students appears to be greatest at the higher grades. And third, teacher quality seems to be significantly more important to the disadvantaged boy or girl than to the advantaged student.

These facts have interesting implications too, particularly when they are put against other information that emerged from the study—information which shows that disadvantaged students tend to wind up with the least capable teachers. We must, then, link this fact with the finding that it is the disadvantaged child who most needs a good teacher and who can gain the most from him. Parenthetically, it seems to me worth noting that Congress wisely preguessed these survey findings by forming the National Teacher Corps. This new enterprise is the only effort on a countrywide basis to train high quality teachers specifically for working with disadvantaged children.