

Now that I have suggested some implications concerning schools and teachers, let us turn to the children. We asked 145,000 of them to take an achievement test, designed to measure verbal and mathematical skills that are most important in our society for getting a good job, moving up to a better one, and keeping on top of an increasingly technical world.

We also touched upon such matters as student attitudes and aspirations in the survey. And in the process we came upon one pupil attitude that appears to affect achievement more than all other school factors together. I refer to the extent to which the individual student feels he has some control over his destiny—over the possibility of his own success or failure. Far more than the average youngster, the disadvantaged boy or girl feels that his future lies in the lap of the gods, that whether he succeeds or fails will be determined primarily by blind chance rather than by his own efforts.

Such findings raise interesting questions about what schools can do to build confidence and self-assurance—qualities characteristically lacking in a great many disadvantaged pupils. We must explore the implications here for counselors in the schools, for school organization, and for the human relationships which exist between pupil and teacher.

The survey also demonstrated that when the disadvantaged child walks in the schoolhouse door for the first time, he scores lower on standard achievement tests than his advantaged peers. And by the time he reaches the 12th grade, the gap has widened considerably. Whatever may be the combination of nonschool factors which put minority children at a disadvantage when they enter first grade—poverty, community attitudes, low educational level of parents—the schools have not only failed to make up the difference, they have let these youngsters slip further away from the mainstream of our national life.

This fact presents a sobering challenge to American education. The survey report is full of such challenges. And thus our schools have—for the first time, to my knowledge—a benchmark. Against that benchmark, in the next 2 or 3 years, we can measure the impact of programs like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the schools.

One more item from the survey about students: The findings strongly suggest that perhaps the most significant element in creating opportunity for disadvantaged pupils is to put them in school with children who are not disadvantaged. I want to emphasize that the educational effectiveness of a mixture of children from different backgrounds does not refer only to racial integration. It also refers to economic and social

integration. It means that if you put a small group of disadvantaged Negro children in a class with a large group of white children from middle-class homes, the Negro children will profit appreciably by that association almost without regard to the quality of the school. And it means that if you put white children from an urban slum in a classroom with middle-class children—white or Negro—the disadvantaged white children's schoolwork will also improve. On the other hand, if you took two groups of disadvantaged children—some Negro, some white—and put them in the same classroom, neither group would receive the kind of stimulation for added learning achievement that our survey findings reveal. Such integration would perhaps improve the social attitudes of both Negro and white children, but it would not necessarily produce intellectual stimulus.

Finally—on this matter of students stimulating other students—our survey findings indicate that the integration of children from different social and economic backgrounds helps the disadvantaged without harming the education of the advantaged.

The major point to remember is that when we are talking about public policy and placing youngsters of varied backgrounds in school together to create the best learning situation, we are talking economic and social factors every bit as much as racial factors.

The report also says this to us: that the neighborhood school concept is going to be subjected to considerably more study and debate, much of it doubtless heated. I think we must all agree that neighborhood schools have served us well and continue to do so in many areas of the Nation.

But the extraordinary population shifts taking place in our country make it necessary that we take a close look at what the meaning of the word "neighborhood" has come to include. To a disturbing degree it has come to mean the polarization of families according to the size of their split-level homes or the size of their welfare checks. We are faced with the fact that we are becoming a nation of plush suburbs on one hand and midcity slums on the other. Economically and socially, and in the ability of millions of American citizens to achieve their aspirations, the two show signs of becoming separate and even antagonistic continents.

The schools in the suburbs teach children who live in a world of wall-to-wall carpeting, pleasant backyards, and summers at camp. The parents demand quality education, and they have the political muscle and the capacity to tax that make this demand stick.

But they also have the capacity to forget that their neighbors in the central city have children who play in