

"An analysis of the first year's Title III results shows that states in which the state departments of education have assumed responsibility for organization and direction of Title III projects on a statewide basis have produced projects, (1) of higher quality, (2) more exemplary and innovative in content and services, (3) more in accord with the educational needs of the states, and (4) involving wiser use of federal funds.

"In view of this experience, the Council urges that Title III be amended to authorize the use of state plans for its future administration. Such plans should be developed according to criteria established by the U.S. Office of Education, in cooperation with the state departments of education. Within the requirements of these criteria, the state education agencies should be authorized to evaluate and approve Title III projects proposed by local educational agencies.

"It is imperative that all state education agencies actively coordinate the administration of Title III with reference to their potential or existing local and regional educational service units. With such coordination, exercised in full cooperation with the vast reservoir of leadership in local education agencies, many conditions that now restrict general educational improvement can be removed."

Mr. Chairman, we have been encouraged to believe that the U.S. Office of Education would cooperate with the Council in transferring more involvement in its administration to state departments of education. In this connection, an Office of Education memorandum was the basis for the action of the Council in its New Orleans meeting, specifically authorized to be used by the Council as desired.

On January 5, 1967, we inquired of all chief state school officers what their opinion was on Title III amendments for Congressional action in 1967. There were replies from 42 states and territories, all of which favored state plans making local project applications and proposals for supplementary centers subject to approval by state departments of education. A large minority would be willing to "set aside" 15% for special projects to be approved by the U.S. Commissioner of Education and a very few would support up to a 25% "set aside."

At meetings of the Board of Directors and a general meeting in which 23 state departments of education were represented in Atlantic City last month, there was strong sentiment that an amendment to authorize state plans and state project approval should be enacted as soon as possible, with the percentage of funds to be set aside for special projects approved by the U.S. Commissioner of Education either omitted or kept low. Most of these conferees preferred beginning the state plan arrangements not later than July 1, 1968, and many said they were ready for it now.

Mr. Chairman, there is no mistaking the position of the chief state school officers on the Title III issue. Point 8 of the Report of the Legislative Conference of National Organizations also shows that this proposed change has widespread support throughout the country.

We believe fundamental issues are involved in what is done about Title III in 1967. There are emerging systems of modern regional service center units developing within many of the states under state and local auspices. There is great need for coordination of these emerging regional service centers within states with all supplementary service centers established under Title III. We believe the new Title III centers should not be allowed to develop in ways that will establish a federal system of supplementary service centers, supported primarily by federal funds, paralleling and sometimes duplicating systems of similar centers established and supported by the states.

Continuation of the current Title III program with expansion to supplementary centers may deny great benefits of Title III to the states most in need of it. In a few selected states, the U.S. Office of Education encourages informal state planning for Title III centers. These states enjoy the special advantages that pilot states usually have, but with minimum or even negative results to others. A majority of the states are exhorted to note what their stronger neighbors are doing but are denied the means to experience progress of their own by a denial of the responsibility that is necessary for progress. As the neglected states stand by, observing progress but remaining unsupported for engaging in it themselves, they are denied the administrative, psychological and public reinforcement they need. The neglected states lose ground in full view of their constituencies of citizens and state and local governments. The federal government refuses, in