

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS 1373

Well-meaning spokesmen, trying to meet the crisis, do battle for one component or another of a sound school system. They may struggle for experienced teachers or smaller classes or a full school day for every child. Each of these components is unquestionably important; but a school is a unit whose health is indivisible. All essential elements must operate simultaneously or none will prove fruitful.

If sound conditions for education are established, the children will learn. If teachers are given a professional challenge, they will respond like other professionals. They will rise to meet the challenge. They will seek to further their own understanding.

The reconstruction of inadequate school systems throughout the country is an enormous job, too large for substantial solution on a local basis. It is essential that federal and state governments become involved. Urban educational systems can, however, start this program in a few schools each September. Success would create its own momentum for extension. Nothing less will work.

We believe that a school system, like every social institution, has an elastic potential for better or worse. A better school system can make a major contribution to the community as a social solvent.

We believe that this program can effectively reduce academic disabilities, educational frustration, delinquency, and drop-outs more than any investment in additional special services.

The Effective Schools program is offered by the American Federation of Teachers as a feasible project. We believe that it is not only theoretically sound, but practically effective, and therefore propose rapid annual expansion until there are no more substandard schools. While no single element in the program can in itself assure success, lack of any of these elements is a guarantee of failure. In this sense each is essential.

A responsible board of education must assume leadership, in the solution of this problem, in partnership with the staff, to give the teaching staff and the community reasonable hope of success and to inspire them to renewed enthusiasm.

