

1374 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS

housing effective education

In a large school, children are apt to be herded and regimented. In a small school, children can have personal relationships with all members of the staff with whom they have contact. Teachers feel responsible for their children's progress and take pride in their individual achievement and the achievement of the school as a whole.

The New York State Department of Education recommends an elementary school population of 400 to 800 pupils in 14 to 28 classes. A nationwide survey of educators sets a figure of 800 pupils as the most effective.

Faced with the reality of meeting the needs of the children in seriously inadequate schools, we propose to accept the figure of 1,000 as the upper limit. It is our position that, through drastic reorganization, these inadequate buildings can serve as a base for effective education.

We must insist, however, on sufficient room within the building to afford a seat for each of these 1,000 children and a room for each class. In addition, space is essential for

special services for the physically, intellectually, and socially maladjusted pupils, and for the supportive services.

recommendations

- 1) Schools should have adequate facilities for 800 to 1,000 pupils, with provision for every needed special service.
- 2) If a school has a population in excess of the number which can be effectively housed, the excess children should be transferred and provision made for them elsewhere by one of the following procedures:
 - a. redistricting
 - b. bussing children to underutilized schools
 - c. installing demountable units on an emergency basis until more permanent housing can be built
 - d. constructing classrooms in available unutilized space in existing school buildings
 - e. using space in housing projects for extra classrooms
 - f. setting up classrooms in commercial buildings.

class size

Every child has the right to a dependent relationship with adults. Too many children in so-called "difficult" schools have been deprived of this childhood right because class sizes have been much too large and supporting services too meager.

Unless this right is returned to them, their educational progress will be severely limited. Bonuses for teachers will not return this right.

Grant the children an adequate number of professional adults on whom to depend, and you grant them the right to be curious, which is the basis of learning. For the first time the adults will have the opportunity to see the children as individuals and to build curriculum tailored to the needs of the individual and the group.

In the light of the tremendous growth of curriculum orientations derived from many disciplines, effective education is a function of an appropriately small class size.

If class registers were lowered and the classroom teacher were supported by an adequate number of consultants, creating a child-adult ratio of at most 12 to one,

"The pedagogic tasks which confront teachers in the slum schools are far more difficult than those which their colleagues in the wealthy suburbs face.

"Yet in the suburbs there is likely to be a spacious modern school staffed by as many as 70 professionals per 1,000 pupils; in the slum one finds a crowded, often dilapidated and unattractive school staffed by 40 or fewer professionals per 1,000 pupils.

"The contrast challenges any complacency we may have about our method of financing public schools."

—Slums and Suburbs, James B. Conant

the children of these schools might come into their own. Any higher ratio would be ineffective.

recommendations

- 1) Class size should not be larger than 18 to 22; and where indicated, no larger than 15 or fewer.
- 2) The over-all child-adult ratio should not be greater than 12 children to one professional adult.