

schools—are getting least. That was already known, though how badly their situation has deteriorated just recently relative to the suburbs was not known. It is the portents for the future that are alarming. For if the interested groups in the cities, including the boards of education, perform in the future as they have up to now, it appears unlikely that there will be effective voices demanding the educational resources the cities so desperately require. One may ask: "*Who speaks for the city schools?*"

As recently as 1957, annual educational expenditures per pupil in 35 of the largest metropolitan areas were roughly equal in the cities and their suburbs. By 1962, the suburbs were spending, on the average, \$145 more per pupil than the central cities. This differential is primarily a reflection of the fact that during those years the disparity in wealth between cities and suburbs was growing.

The shocker, however, is that state aid to the schools, which one might think would be designed to redress this imbalance somewhat, discriminates *against* the cities. On the average, the suburbs receive \$40 more in state aid per pupil than the cities.

Some of the federal aid to education (which came too late to be included in the 1962 statistics) is, of course, aimed directly at disadvantaged areas. But while the federal programs are always referred to as "massive," and while one and a quarter billion dollars per year are a lot of dollars, when they are spread over fifty states, for rural as well as city areas, the impact on any one city—or any one school—is not massive at all.

Whatever the sources of the money, local, state, or federal, the point is that the nation is devoting many more resources to educating suburban children than city children. Or to put it another way, it is spending much more money to educate the children of the well-off than the children of the poor. And every shred of available evidence points to the conclusion that the educational needs of poor children are far greater than those of affluent children. By any measure one wants to use—pupil performance on tests, dropout rate, proportion of students going on to higher education—the output of the schools in the depressed areas of the cities is very much poorer than that of the suburbs. There is little reason to believe that even to equalize treatment would begin to close the gap. To achieve the substance rather than merely the theoretical form of equal educational opportunity requires the application of unequal resources: more rather than less to the students from poor homes.

That knowledge is, of course, what underlies the idea of compensatory education being pushed by the federal government and to a much lesser extent by a very few of the states. The trouble thus far with compensatory education, however, is not the idea but the few funds allocated to it. They are spread so far and so thin that only barely perceptible improvements, by and large, can be made. And barely perceptible improvements have barely perceptible effects on pupil performance.

It does little good to reduce class size from, say, 31.6 to 30.8 (like the average American family, the average American classroom seems always to contain a number of whole children plus a fraction of a child), or to raise expenditures for pupil supplies from \$7.25 to \$8.50, or to add one social worker to the staff of a slum high school. The evidence already in on compensatory education tends to prove this.

There is scattered evidence, however, from the few places where it has been tried, that dramatic efforts—placing enormous concentration on the teaching of reading, for example, in very small classes—have dramatic effects. Though this evidence is not conclusive because there is not enough of it, it does suggest that some of the seemingly intractable educational problems of the cities' schools would yield before the infusion of massive resources.

The question is where to find them, or, more accurately, how to *get* them for the city schools. For the money is not hidden, after all. A great deal of it is spent in this country every day, for education and for housing, freeways, war, national parks, liquor, cosmetics, advertising, and a lot of other things. It is a question of the allocation of money, which means the establishing of priorities. That is primarily a political process, and it is heavily influenced by the clarity, vigor, and power with which spokesmen for various interests press their claims.

In education, the decision-making unit at the local level, and the principal spokesman for the schools, is the board of education. Various members of the Syracuse group are making case studies of the role of the school boards in