

You can say that you are unequivocally opposed to the transfer to the Office of Education, aren't you?

Miss PARSONS. That is right.

Chairman PERKINS. Do you have any recommendations to give us about the high dropout rate which you have observed in the vocational schools, how you think that could be cured?

Miss PARSONS. I think a great deal better counseling needs to happen. You not only need a coordinator at the vocational level to work with industry, but earlier on in these student lives they need more people who know more of the variety of things that young people can get into and more about the schools' proposed programs. We have guidance counselors throughout our school systems that have never even visited vocational school that don't really understand what it could be like. You know it is "full life" to be a plumber. The student who drops out, the student who is not kicked out but the student who drops out has had to make a choice. That is a decision on his part and he has been poorly guided to have to make that decision himself. That is an active decision. The guy I want you to worry about as well is the guy that doesn't make a decision to drop out but goes on through and ends up with nothing. The dropout has made a better decision than the boy or girl who stays in and does not get prepared later for college or for a job. The dropout is the most visible but he doesn't begin to see the 50 percent who finish school without any training. I would prefer either for the schooling or for the job. He is not nearly so visible, not nearly so colorful.

The dropout has got to make a strong position and he obviously somewhere along the way has not found among the alternatives what he wants to choose. So I think good counseling is one way. I think another way is to have a greater variety of programs available to him. I think that the school arrangement of the Carnegie unit should be shot and you should break into smaller units of studies so that the student can take within the space of a day as many as 10 different things and not be stuck with four. There is no reason for not wanting to know your U.S. history but no reason why it can't go into various periods and various studies, and there is no reason why certain pieces of vocational education, especially the basics of electricity and basics of drafting, the basics in some of the more technical areas, should not come in a small enough package so that a student could elect this and decide whether or not he wants to have anything to do with it. We do the very same thing in our foreign languages. You must make a commitment based on the foreign language you want to study without showing evidence to yourself of either learning it or anything of that kind. If we should break those things up, people would have a better sense of it.

Also, if the school today were broken into small pieces and a more cafeteria arrangement of things to take, some of the students who might not be able to stand three of the courses might find three others that would be somewhat viable. But the other real problem is the high school student who is waiting to be 16 to drop out. We need for him the sort of home school counselor type of thing.

Chairman PERKINS. One final question: From your travel and experience I take it from that last statement—I am not putting words in