

PART I—POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT TO IMPROVE TEACHING IN THE DISADVANTAGED AREAS

President Johnson's 1965 education message included, among other immediate concerns in higher education, the need:

"To draw upon the unique and invaluable resources of the great universities to deal with national problems of poverty and community development."

He spoke of the potential of higher education to deal with the perplexities of urban education—where 70% of the population now live.

The legislative intent of the Act was to strengthen the universities for these purposes and others. Among the urgent problems of the urban communities, however, none is more pressing than inadequate education for children attending schools in the slums. There is a high degree of correlation between inadequate education and other social problems such as crime and family disorganization. It would follow that there is an immediate need to strengthen universities to help with the school problems of urban areas. One of the primary tasks of the university is the training of teachers.

Part I of this paper deals with this area of university concern. In the ten largest Metropolitan Areas of the United States where $\frac{1}{3}$ of the economically deprived children are being schooled, not one single school district has brought these children up to minimum educational standards, to say nothing about closing the widening educational opportunity and achievement gaps between the slum and suburban children. Indeed most of these disadvantaged neighborhoods are academic disaster areas. Here the "unlearning disease" has reached epidemic proportions, and crash programs tend to provide only "first aid" treatment instead of major therapy.

Certainly our government has recognized these problems and the Congress has made provisions for ameliorating some of the pathology. Surely, Opportunity Scholarships and loans have made it possible for universities to recruit teachers from among the economically disadvantaged.

Part-time and short-term training programs made possible under the National Defense Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have brought aid to teachers of the disadvantaged. These programs certainly reflect a climate of concern in the universities. There is a body of literature that has developed from various teaching and research projects. Many of us have had extensive experience with workshops and demonstration projects in all parts of the country.

Most of all, these years of concern with educating the disadvantaged have led us to two conclusions. First, there is a need for sound theory and tested practice to be brought to bear in a concentrated interdisciplinary approach to an entire school district. This kind of experimentation is uniquely the university's province for it is the institution with a concentration of the special resources needed in the schools.

Short-term involvement of universities needs to be continued, and that is possible under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. There is a need, however, for a long-term application of theory and knowledge in an action setting. There is a need for these extensive programs to be university based so that the results are fed back into the classrooms.

Secondly, there is a need to give top priority to teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, as the most pressing need in current educational designs to improve education for the disadvantaged child.

In this matter, certain questions persist:

1. Why is there a disproportionate number of less educated, less experienced teachers in disadvantaged area schools than in other districts?
2. Why are there so many substitute teachers and such high teacher turnover rates in disadvantaged areas?

One can probe for the answers in such factors as (1) working conditions, (2) teacher recruitment and selection, (3) teacher preparation and (4) in-service education.

Perhaps the first factor, working conditions, is beyond the scope of the Higher Education Act. We deal with some related questions in Part II. However, recruitment, selection, pre-service preparation and in-service training are clearly within the scope of this Act. These functions have been among the primary functions of the universities. In fact, there is evidence from many conferences and other sources to support an amendment to this Act to strengthen teacher educa-