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Of the original 252 audio-recordings in this collection, 212 of these tapes were transcribed around the time of the original recordings (between 1966 and 1978). In 2012, Cabbage Tree Solutions was contracted to create transcriptions for the remaining tapes. Corrections to and clarifications for all transcriptions are welcome, especially for names and places. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

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When I came to the Department in 1930, there were twenty-six (26) professional employees and approximately the same number of clerical. There were 43,092 pupils in 262 school districts. Of these, 175 were one-room (9.4% of the pupils) and 41 two-room schools. Teachers, principals and supervisors totalled 1,503, with an average annual salary of $1,503. It cost $3,653,555 to operate the schools. This was $98 per pupil in average daily attendance. Slightly more than 7,500 pupils were transported at a cost of $236,877. The bonded indebtedness of all the schools was $2,380,525. The number of high school graduates was 1,037.

Now 36 years later, we have quite different conditions. In the State Department there are 102 professional employees or vacancies, and 98 clerical. Many of these have been employed to administer and supervise Federal programs under N.D.E.A. and E.S.E.A. The number of school districts has been reduced to 50 with two one-room schools (1/20 of one percent) of the pupils and one two-room school. Pupil population has increased to more than 110,000 and professional employees to 5,700. The average annual salary of the professional employees was slightly less than $7,500. Current expense was about $55,000,000 or $575 for each pupil in average daily attendance. Approximately 50,000 pupils are being transported at a cost

of $2,350,000. The bonded indebtedness of all the school districts (July 1, 1965) was $59,401,410.

The number of high school graduates (1965) was 5,987. Local tax support for operating the schools increased from practically nothing, except for a small amount in Wilmington, to about 15% of the total amount expended, or roughly $9,000,000. This is significant.

From 1930 to 1966 more than $100,000,000 in State and local funds have been used to construct school buildings. With this expenditure it would appear that we had ample space, but much of this was used for field houses, gymnasiums, cafeterias, auditoriums, and facilities which did not increase the capacities of the buildings. Thus, we are continuously faced with more costs for buildings.

Major changes have taken place since 1930 in the methods of distributing State funds for operating the schools and for school construction.

Distribution of State Funds for Operation

In 1930-31 an appropriation was made to the State Board of Education. From this were taken amounts to operate the State Department, transportation, adult education and summer school. The balance was then made available to the districts on the basis of their enrollments. From 1931 to 1941 the same method was used, except that fixed amounts were given for pupils in grades 10 - 12 and 7 - 9, and the remainder divided according to enrollments - in grades 1 - 6.

From 1941 to 1945, appropriations were made to each district according to an estimate of what each item of expenditure would cost during the year, example: salaries, telephone, textbooks, supplies, fuel, etc. Some districts had as many as 30 items or more. Finally, so many transfers had to be made between items ~~to meet the expenses~~ that the plan was changed to what we now have. The adoption of State-mandated salary schedules also made a change necessary.

During this period there also were many supplementary appropriations for salary increases, repairs, additional personnel, handicapped children, and in the early 40's a two year appropriation for kindergartens.

School Construction Funds

Until 1941, the Legislature appropriated to the State Board of Education the funds for construction. The Board decided the districts in which the construction was to take place and the amounts. The district ~~construction~~ contribution, except for buildings for colored which was 100% State, was 2% of the assessed valuation of 1929. This assessment was very small, so that the districts contributed very little.

From 1941 to 1951, the appropriations were made to districts upon determination of necessity and amount by the State Board of Education. The district's share was based upon a formula which had as its factors the size of the program and the percentage of the cost of previous buildings provided by the State.

Since 1951, appropriations are made to the districts on a 60% basis for schools for white children and 100% for colored, except that for the past three years all appropriations are 60% State. Also, all programs, after approval by the State Board of Education, channel through the State Planner's office and are included in the six-year capital improvement program which he presents to the Governor each year.

During the past few years, the authority of the local school boards and administrators to administer their schools has been decreasing, as this control is being assumed by the General Assembly, the Budget Director and Budget Commission, the State Board of Education and the U. S. Office of Education.

As evidence, we have provisions in the State budget which list the positions and salaries of personnel; give the Budget Director the authority to determine the number and kinds of personnel a school district may employ (this had been the responsibility of the State Board of Education); give control of E.S.E.A. funds to the Budget Commission; and in the 1968 budget an attempt to control the use of local tax money in respect to their use for salaries.

We also have an encumbrance system of State accounting which has now been extended to include all local funds, cafeteria, athletic, and tax money. This costs the State some $350,000 annually, to say nothing of the additional help necessary at the local level. In this respect, we have failed to profit from the experience of other states in which similar methods were used and then abandoned when found unworkable.

The State Board of Education, through the State Department of Public Instruction, recently has tended to reduce the control boards should exercise. We have very detailed instructions on school construction, auditing and inspection of construction funds, plan approval, etc. The latest legislation on the use of school buildings involved the Department in matters which should be local administration, such as the approval of fees to be charged. The closing of small schools and the withholding of certificates, not approved by the Attorney General, are other illustrations.

The Federal government through its rules and regulations for the use of the funds in some odd hundred programs and billions of dollars made available to State departments and school districts, has told the receipients what must be done and how to qualify for the money or ~~they~~ it will not be granted

It is my position that the members of a school board elected by the residents in a district, in most instances, represent the educational thinking of the community and should be given so much freedom as possible in the operation of their schools.

This situation is not unique in Delaware. Other states are experiencing the same problem. Until this trend is stopped, we will continue to have conflicts of control which will not benefit our educational system.