

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

File

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White House Task Force on Education

AMERICAN VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
(Interview with Drs. Shumaker and Mobley by *Herb Jasper + 5/6/65*
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1. General Comments

Vocational education has been closer to OE than perhaps any other educational group has been. Vocational education has been the strongest element of State Departments and has been the best funded and this may explain their closer contacts with OE. In Ohio, for example, more than half of the State's education personnel are in vocational education.

Shumaker observed that the States expect Federal Government to provide leadership, services, and minimum standards and stressed that they were fully prepared to accept Federal standards. But Mobley emphasized the services aspect and gave that as the reason for their strong interest in internal organization of OE. They generally observed that vocational education must be located at a high level within the organization--both at the Federal and State levels.

2. Problems

They observed that the Office was very slow in implementing the 1963 Vocational Education Act and discussed the results of their survey which revealed that about half of the States had received no funds yet. With less than 2 months left in the fiscal year and some doubt as to the ability to carry funds over, this is regarded by them as very serious. They attributed the delays primarily to shortages of personnel.

Mobley described the frequent enlistment of congressmen in getting the Office to act on fund allocations. This approach has been quite effective, but he believes it is indicative of difficulties in the Office and could severely damage the program.

With regard to the reorganization of the Division of Vocational Education, Mobley thought that the Office would have been wiser to consult members of the association and other interested parties before announcing the changes. Though he had suggested it, there were no discussions until after the reorganization was effected. He asked Arnold to prepare an article for their journal, which he did, but by that time opposition was guaranteed. Their chief

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concern was, of course, their fear that the necessary specialization in various fields of vocational education would be lost.

They have found the people in the field to be qualified to deal only with specialized areas such as MDTA. They also insist on the right of State officials to deal directly with Washington personnel, especially on policy matters. However, they would be entirely agreeable to working with field personnel, if they were properly trained and coordinated, on a wide variety of issues.

3. Organization of OE

Their criticisms were limited to the level of the Division within the Office. They would prefer bureau status but recognize that it may not be possible for us to recommend it. They believe that the Division has been able to tie in adequately with the rest of the Office in connection with activities of the other bureaus related to vocational education.

No major interagency problems were discussed but they thought that the MDTA program was very badly run at the outset. They attributed this primarily to Labor's poor internal structure which has now been improved.

CC: Dwight Ink
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