

Newcomer Defends Federal School Aid

BELOW IS A LETTER received from Dr. Leland B. Newcomer, Clark County Superintendent of Schools, explaining his views on special educational programs, partially financed by the federal government, currently being conducted in the local school district or under consideration by the Clark County Board of School Trustees.

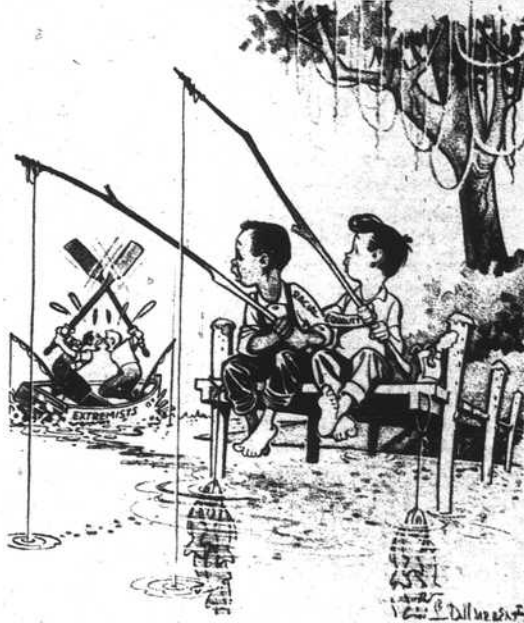
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The following is an attempt to make clear my position, as superintendent of the Clark County School District, with reference to the current federal aid projects under consideration. Of course you are all aware that the Clark County School District has been participating in federal aid programs for many years involving millions of dollars for both building and operating funds. Recent legislation has provided additional funds aimed primarily at providing for more equal educational opportunities for children who, because of their poverty, deprived cultural background, and general environment, have not been able to learn basic skills consistent with their ability and consistent with other more fortunate children.

The Clark County School District has very valid demonstrable evidence that a significant segment of our student population is not achieving sufficiently well to keep them in school. Therefore, there is little chance to obtain jobs that will allow them to become economically self-sufficient. When a significant segment of our student population is not learning, it becomes a school problem, and affects all children. The Board of Trustees' stated policy is to provide the best possible education for every child, regardless of race, color, or creed. There are funds available aimed directly at the solution of the very problems that are preventing all of our children from learning as well as possible.

In my opinion, I would be derelict in my duties and not fulfilling my responsibility as superintendent of schools if I did not recommend strongly that we take advantage of these funds that are not available from state or local services. From a political economic standpoint, I can readily understand opposition to federal aid for it isn't a very good business deal for the State of Nevada since we pay in proportionately more in taxes to the federal government and receive proportionately less. However, when funds made available to us will be spent elsewhere if we do not take advantage of them, when funds are allocated on the basis of our proposals and not the proposals of the federal government, when we have definite

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demonstrated need that has not been met through local resources, I could not in good conscience as a responsible administrator of the Clark County School District do anything but recommend taking full advantage of this program.

It must be made very clear, however, that this is a statement of my personal position and reveals why I recommend that the district take advantage of these resources to help get the job done that needs to be done. On the other hand, the members of the Board of Trustees, as the elected representatives of the people of Clark County, have the official right and authority to determine the extent to which the school district shall participate, if at all, in these programs. If it is their decision not to participate, when that decision is made it is then my responsibility to provide the best possible teaching and learning for all boys and girls with the resources that are provided.

Leland B. Newcomer

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