THE LITTLE REPORTS AND REAPPRAISAL, 1963--1967

Today's climate for organizational change in California was well summarized in the second phase of the Little Report, published in 1967.[36] This report pointed out that America's educational enterprise is now second only to defense in the proportion of the gross national product devoted to it and that the public interest and concern in education have increased dramatically. This enterprise has become an important instrument of national and state policy in regard to social and economic improvement. The impact of Sputnik on our instructional programs, new involvements of the federal government in support of education, the "knowledge explosion" that is rendering obsolete much of what is being taught, research and experimentation in education, explosive population growth, "big city blight," and increasing costs of education compound the demands made on education systems in all states. The educational system of California, including its state-level administration, is regarded as one of the best in the nation. However, educators and the public are well aware that improvements can be made.

The results of the first phase of the Little survey were made available in 1964. Due to lack of finances to make a complete study, the firm was requested to concentrate on two objectives:

1. To examine the role and functions of the California State Department of Education in the context of emerging requirements in the overall process of educational administration in the state and in the light of foreseeable circumstances, goals, and problems in California education

2. To explore the question of whether useful changes should be made in the nature, mix, and extent of services provided by the Department and in the arrangements employed by the Department in carrying out its functions.[37]

The second phase of the survey by the Arthur D. Little firm was made in 1966, and the results were published the following year. In that phase, the emphasis was on a new organizational system for state-level educational administration. During the time that the Little survey and other surveys were being made -- from approximately 1963 through 1967 -- certain changes in organization within the Department were brought about; others are presently under consideration.

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[36] A New Organizational System for State-Level Educational Administration. Submitted by Arthur D. Little, Inc. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1967, pp. 19-21.

[37] The Emerging Requirements for Effective Leadership for California Education, op. cit., p. 6.

The Little Report, Phase One

A set of 17 key conclusions resulted from the 1963-64 Arthur D. Little study:

1. Opportunities and problems in California education are emerging at a rapidly accelerating rate and are having an unprecedented impact.

2. The actions and leadership potentially available to deal with the opportunities and problems in California education are fragmented and uncoordinated.

3. Although California's resources are great, the State cannot meet all educational opportunities equally.

4. Developments of major significance in education will require resources of talent and money beyond the means of local districts.

5. At all levels of educational administration in California, there is need for a formal process to provide plans for educational development.

6. The California State Board of Education is both logically and legally in a position to initiate and lead State level developmental planning for education.

7 The California State Department of Education, as the staff and administrative agency of the State Board of Education, has a vital role to play in the State level planning process.

8 As it presently functions, the State Department of Education is not capable of its full potential in providing staff support to the process of educational development. Major changes are indicated.

9. A process analogous to that recommended for planning at the State level is also feasible at the local school district level. However, encouragement, support, and coordination of local planning are needed.

10. There continues to be a need for measures that will provide an improved basis for educational development in local districts. Renewed efforts to reorganize school districts still further and additional financial support for educational development in local districts are two specific measures that should be supported.

11. The tradition of self-responsibility for professional development among teachers and administrators is proving inadequate as a means of assuring up-to-date competency.

12. The fiscal and regulatory portions of educational administration are becoming more complex and are absorbing increasing amounts of time

and expense in local districts. Efforts to simplify or mechanize these procedures should be encouraged and accelerated.

13. Closer collaborations among districts, county superintendents, and the State Department of Education can lead to improved ease of administration of State rules, regulations, and control procedures.

14. There is clear need for some form of intermediate unit to function as a regional extension of the State Department of Education, as a focal point for interdistrict services and collaborations, and as a vital link in the process of planning educational development in California.

15. Although the need for intermediate administration is clear, it does not appear necessary to base the intermediate unit on county political boundaries, nor is it necessary to pattern its functions on the model of the present office of the county superintendent of schools.

16. The very large metropolitan districts, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego, have needs and resources quite different from the average district and are not easily served by the State Department of Education. It would be useful, therefore, to study the merits of providing still greater administrative autonomy to these few large districts.

17. The junior college districts also represent special problems in administration that are not well met by arrangements suitable for other districts in general.[38]

These conclusions were reached after the survey team had carried out an extensive program of field interviewing among school administrators and their staffs and had consulted many persons in and out of the educational professions. They found significant changes taking place in the schools; this finding alone indicated a changed role for the State Department of Education if it was to meet the needs of the schools adequately.

In interviews with educators throughout the state, the survey team found, even in the smallest and most remote districts visited, that progress was being made toward the use of radically new programs and that most changes of significance were being developed for the schools, rather than by them. Many of the new courses of study originated in large-scale, heavily financed curriculum development projects financed by the National Science Foundation, philanthropic foundations, or textbook publishers.

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[38] Ibid., pp. 1-3

Another factor causing a speedup of change was the increasing interest the state Legislature was taking in matters of curriculum. Many administrators pointed out, however, that the large proportion of the curriculum that is mandated and controlled at the state level restricts district-level innovation and flexibility.

Major pedagogical changes, too, were seen as demanding interdisciplinary collaborations that originate in projects coordinated by universities, colleges, and research centers employing philanthropic or federal funds. Pedagogical considerations are affecting the way schools are designed and equipped and the way teachers, materials, and pupils are "programmed." Manufacturers are making it their business to know more about the learning process and the opportunities for marketing specially designed products, equipment, and apparatus in the educational field.

The report quoted the schools as saying, in effect, "We're being changed we don't really have the option not to change."

Conferences with administrators revealed a growth in specific educational programs aimed at particular opportunities and problems: programs for the gifted, the mentally retarded, the culturally deprived, and the physically handicapped; remedial programs; and experiments with multitrack and nongraded programs to meet needs of differentiated groups. There was a concomitant increase in special facilities and equipment and specialized personnel. Difficult problems arose in regard to allocating limited resources to meet a wide array of specific needs. These problems force the administrator to make the best possible choices based on planning, and planning calls for dependable information, which is not easily found. Administrators feel the need for an unbiased information center on which they can depend.

The interviews with school administrators revealed a need for an overall plan that would transmit national and state goals for education so that they could be considered in local developmental planning. A second need was for information based on careful research to help in planning. Schools will continue to need financial support and general assistance from both state and federal sources to implement plans. The state administration was generally considered extremely helpful in some areas, less helpful and even old-fashioned in others, and unnecessarily burdensome in the matter of paper processing.

The report recommended that the State Department of Education develop a stronger and more flexible capability for planning and implementing educational growth. Instead of recommending an enlarged permanent professional staff, Arthur D. Little suggested that project teams be employed on a short-term basis to help the Department achieve such capability. The Division of Instruction would become a locus for research and communication concerning curriculum and pedagogical development. The report concluded that the Department would make the best use of its resources by focusing sharply on supporting constructive change and withdrawing from direct consultation with school districts.

Some form of intermediate administrative unit, such as the office of the county superintendent of schools, would take over many of the tasks of direct collaboration with school districts. In this role, the intermediate unit should be made more explicitly an extension of the State Department of Education. Such a unit would perform several important functions, such as the following: (1) maintaining services (instructional materials centers and educational TV, for instance) which small districts cannot provide for themselves; (2) planning area programs; and (3) coordinating and implementing fiscal procedures. Finally, the intermediate unit would serve as a communication link between the State Department of Education and school districts in interpreting or enforcing policies, laws, and regulations.

The Little Report, Phase Two

In 1966 the Arthur D. Little firm was able to continue with the second phase of its study, the results of which were published in 1967 as A New Organizational System for State-Level Educational Administration. Certain areas of concern to school administrators that affected the recommended changes were mentioned: the need for good business administration in school districts; the administrative red tape and the confusing and overlapping regulations in the Education Code; the cultural lag in the dissemination and adoption of new but reasonably proven educational developments; and the management of human resources, including attracting better talent to education, using talent more effectively, and maintaining an adequate supply of highly qualified teachers and administrators.

The study recommended that the State Department of Education adopt as its major responsibility "to sense the emerging needs for educational development in the state and for related changes in the state's educational system." The Department should assign priorities and allocate resources among areas of need. Three new instruments to effect these ends were deemed essential: (1) a long-range master plan for public education in California; (2) a comprehensive annual report of recent educational activities in the state; and (3) a state plan for specific actions to be taken in the immediate future. These plans should enunciate the philosophy of the State Board of Education to justify their adoption by the Legislature as the educational goals of the state.

Other responsibilities include the following functions involved in implementing educational developments in new instructional programs and services: (1) providing for their design; (2) evaluating them; (3) facilitating the dissemination of information about them; (4) encouraging and supporting their adoption; and (5) seeking to improve their quality.

Specific reorganizational changes at the top of the state-level system and in all units of the Department of Education were recommended.

As with all studies made of the state agency for education in California, the Little study recommended as the first and most important item a change in the manner of selecting the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

We recommend a State Board of Education which consists of ten members who are appointed by the Governor from a list of candidates developed by the Legislature (or appropriate committees of the Legislature). Board members should be appointed for terms of ten years. Terms should overlap so that one new member is appointed to the Board each year.

We recommend that the State Superintendent be appointed by and fully responsible to the State Board and serve as its Executive Officer, Secretary, and as the Chief Administrative Officer of the State Department of Education. His term of employment and compensation should be set by the State Board. We suggest a four-year term and a level of compensation equivalent to that of top administrators in the best and largest school systems of the state.[39]

The Little Report recommended that these actions, which would require constitutional and statutory changes, be accomplished as soon as possible:

The present situation (in which the State Superintendent is popularly elected) makes it impossible for the governing board to control its executive officer and insure effective administration. This represents a violation of a very fundamental principal of organization. The potential for conflict in this situation is all too apparent and results in confusion of purpose and dissipation of energy, time, and opportunity. The numerous opinions from various attorneys general over time attest to the continued seriousness of the problem as do the actions of the Legislature in moving into what is perceived as a chaotic situation. The increased demands on the State Superintendent resulting from needed and recommended changes in the Department's organizational system will require improved relationships with the State Board and more time devoted to Departmental administration. Additional effort also will be required in developing, integrating, and interpreting program proposals, plans, and results to the State Board, and to representing the position and plans of the State Board to various agencies and parties-in-interest to education.[40]

The respective roles of the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (whose name would be changed to State Superintendent of Public Education), and the Cabinet were defined in the Little Report:

The mission of the State Board is to (a) govern the State system of public and community college education, the State Department of Education, and the recommended new administrative agency for community college education; (b) initiate long-range planning; (c) define long-range goals, priorities, and comprehensive plans; (d) recommend policy goals and plans to the Governor and the Legislature; and (e) set policy, establish programs,

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[39] A New Organizational System for State-Level Educational Administration, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

[40] Ibid., pp. 54-57.

and adopt rules and regulations within limits and according to the charter established by the Legislature. The Board's major concern is with the availability, appropriateness, and quality of public and community college education throughout the State. It acts to insure equality of educational opportunity and to upgrade the quality of education by setting and enforcing certain minimum standards.

We recommend that the mission of the State Superintendent should be to (a) serve as an executive officer of the State Board of Education; (b) manage the Department of Education as its chief administrative officer and provide all necessary administrative assistance and support to the State Board; (c) provide administrative leadership to the State's public school system; and (d) serve as the State-level professional spokesman for public precollege education. We recommend further that the State Board be empowered to appoint the Superintendent, establish his term of office, and fix his compensation at a level commensurate with the responsibility of the position and comparable to that of the best paid administrators of public education in the State.

The Superintendent's Cabinet is now an important, and will become an even more important, instrument in State-level educational administration. The mission of the Cabinet is to advise the Superintendent regarding issues, opportunities and problems important to and affecting educational policy; to discuss and develop recommendations to the Board and the Legislature; to serve as a vehicle for Departmental communication and for coordinating action on interdivisional matters such as long-range planning, Departmental development, budgets, personnel, and programs; to plan and make allocations of staff work for the Board and the Superintendent, and to advise on the progress and quality of the staff work; and to assist the Superintendent in administrative decisions regarding the operations of the Department.[41]

The Little Report has recommended that the personnel and functions of the present Department of Education be reassigned to four divisions related to educational programs and three offices related to educational services. The junior colleges would be a separate agency. (The State Board of Education passed a resolution on November 11, 1966, calling for the creation of a separate community college administrative agency, reporting directly to the State Board and headed by its own chancellor.) The recommended divisions and offices, with their assignments, are described as follows:

> A division of general education (rather than "instruction") would serve the public schools in the area of elementary and secondary education, as differentiated from education for special purposes, such as vocational education, and education for special pupil populations,

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[41] Ibid., pp. 64, 74, and 76.

such as the handicapped. It would include personnel from adult education, counseling services, readjustment education, industrial arts education, as well as consultants on various subjects in the school curriculum.

A division of vocational education would identify needs and update the state plan for precollege vocational education, design and adapt programs, guide programs, and carry on research in vocational education. It would strengthen the intermediate units, help local units, recruit and train instructors, and satisfy federal requirements for programs under federal funding.

A division of special education would be responsible primarily for ensuring that all the physically handicapped, mentally retarded, educationally handicapped, and otherwise exceptional children in the state have an opportunity to enroll in the public school system, participate in an educational program appropriate to their needs, and receive adequate instruction from qualified teachers.

4. A division of fiscal and business management services would absorb the present responsibilities for budgeting, accounting, school planning, textbooks, surplus property, and transportation now mainly performed by the Division of Public School Administration.

5. An office of state education personnel services would involve itself in human resource management as related to professional personnel in the public education system. This involvement would include teacher certification, accreditation of schools, and services concerning personnel within the Department. The office would work closely with the State Personnel Board.

An office of educational information services would combine data processing and education reference services.

7. An office of departmental supporting services would include mailing and shipping, supplies, editing, art work, duplicating, the handling of office space and equipment, and cashiering.

The reorganizational details suggested by the report, however, are less important and less innovative than its general approach to the Department's proper functioning as the head and the heart of a comprehensive, efficient state-level information system for public education in California. This approach is pointed up in the following passages:

A common factor in all seven major functions of the State-level system of administration . . . is the critical need for "information processing" capabilities, very broadly defined, of a high order. It is helpful to conceive of the Department as a switching center in a giant, complex information network, much of which it must design and manage. It must be responsive to requests for information and information services from a tremendous number of clients representing different interests and manifesting different concerns. . . . Not only must the Department collect and disseminate

basic data and trends regarding social conditions and values, manpower requirements, the learning process, teacher needs and teacher conditions, population changes, facility requirements, educational economics and finance, educational offerings, and characteristics of the products of schools, but it must also digest and translate such information into reports of present and future needs. These reports must be distributed to appropriate potential users, including intermediate units and local districts, and assistance must be provided, as necessary, in interpreting the significance of such information in the light of interests and needs of the users.

This information system is concerned with data from a variety of sources which is collected in a number of ways including, among others, regular reports from various elements in the education system regarding routine monitoring of programs and adherence to minimum standards, through meetings and conferences, from reports of workshops and seminars, from Departmental evaluation studies, and significantly from published literature on new trends, developments, and research results. Some of the most creative and potentially important information sensing is done by people in local districts, intermediate units, and the Department, in various combinations and interactions, who synthesize their observations and share them with others. Contacts and linkages with universities, educational research and development centers, regional educational laborabories, educational research information centers, and "lighthouse" schools both in and outside the State provide means of obtaining information regarding educational developments and their effects. The Department sponsors, sometimes conducts or participates in, and publishes results of special studies. It helps put people with questions and people with expertise in contact with each other and catalyzes the interaction. The Department should . . . be regarded as a collector, compiler, synthesizer, interpreter, disseminator, stimulator, and facilitator of the use of new knowledge.[42]

New Vision for the Department

When Max Rafferty took office as Superintendent of Public Instruction in January, 1963, he became the head of the largest public school system in the nation, enrolling over four and a half million pupils. A strong believer in giving greater autonomy to local school districts, Dr. Rafferty made it his business to develop a two-way communication with the governing boards of school districts and to respond to what he interpreted as a mandate from the people to change certain educational practices. He announced an end of "life adjustment" and the substitution of "education in depth" as the philosophy of the Department of Education. He advocated a more thorough grounding in reading skills through the use of phonics in teaching primary pupils; and he recommended that all pupils be given a better understanding of their American heritage through basic courses in history, geography, civics, and economics. He encouraged the schools to emphasize the harmful effects of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. He favored the strengthening of school library services, the use

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[42] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

of children's classics for supplementary reading, and a wider use of closed circuit educational television. In his concern for teachers, he advocated the use of data processing to minimize their clerical work; faster service in issuing credentials; merit pay for outstanding performance, and reduced class sizes. As one result, legislation passed in 1964 requires that the enrollments in classes in grades one, two, and three to be no more than 30 when the 1968-69 school year begins.

Believing that school districts should be allowed more lattitude in the choice of materials to be used in the instructional program, Dr. Rafferty favored a wider selection of textbooks for elementary schools. In response, the Curriculum Commission recommended multiple adoptions in certain subjects and gave districts an opportunity to select books for different levels of ability. The Commission also insisted on a more accurate portrayal of minority groups in books submitted by textbook companies.

A major responsibility of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is to keep the Legislature apprised of the financial situation of the schools. This has involved the Superintendent and his staff in a constant endeavor to secure an equal balance between state and local support of the schools. In spite of an ever-increasing amount of state aid (about 10 percent a year in dollars), the steady growth of the school population has meant that the proportion of school support paid by the state has been decreasing. In 1948-49 state revenues provided 45.9 percent of school support; by 1961-62 it had dropped to 39.8 percent. In 1963 $25 million in additional state aid was granted; in 1964, over $170 million.

The Department of Education was reorganized and strengthened, through the efforts and encouragement of the Superintendent, in the light of information yielded by the Little studies, a survey made by the State Department of Finance and a study team from the Department of Education itself. The junior college staff was reorganized in conformity with guidelines laid down by the Little survey team; and, as has already been mentioned, steps were taken that resulted in the legislative establishment of a separate governing board for public junior colleges (renamed "community colleges"), effective January 1, 1968.

The editorial staffs and facilities of the Department were combined to form a new Bureau of Publications in order to bring about greater efficiency in the production of Department publications, as was suggested in a study completed by Lloyd N. Morrisett in 1963.[43]

The Bureau of Special Education was reorganized into three bureaus: Bureau for Physically Exceptional Children; the Bureau for Educationally

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[43] Lloyd N. Morrisett, "Appraisal of Communication Facilities, Especially Publications, in the California State Department of Education." A report transmitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, October 31, 1963. Mimeographed.

Handicapped and Mentally Exceptional Children; and the Bureau of Program Development and Evaluation, Special Education. A central Clearinghouse-Depository for the Visually Handicapped became a reality in December, 1964. Books in Braille and large print, and other instructional materials, apparatus, and equipment specifically designed for the education of the visually handicapped are obtained by this agency and loaned to schools, subject to recall and redistribution.

A regional educational data processing center to serve 300,000 students in northern California opened in Sacramento in July, 1964. This was the first of an anticipated network of as many as ten such centers to be established in the future to serve all schools in California. It will minimize the clerical work of teachers, counselors, and administrators, and will also serve as a training center for students in data processing.

The Vocational Education Section was modified in the direction of an organizational structure based on types of services rather than exclusively on subject matter categories. Regional offices were given increased responsibility and assistance.

The Los Angeles office of the Department of Education was much enlarged, and the services available to the counties of southern California were extended

In order to secure the best possible coordination in the program of instruction, kindergarten through grade twelve, the services formerly provided by separate bureaus, the Bureau of Elementary Education and the Bureau of Secondary Education are now offered in a single bureau, the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The McAteer Act, passed by the Legislature in 1963, provided for a two-year study of programs to assist children who were handicapped in making effective use of the educational opportunities provided by the public schools because of language, cultural, and economic disadvantages. At the end of the two-year period, in 1965, the Legislature established the position of Director of Compensatory Education at a level equivalent to that of an associate superintendent of public instruction, his principal duty being to oversee the expenditure of $73 million in federal funds (under Title I of ESEA) and $1 million in state funds allocated to educational projects for culturally disadvantaged children.

miIn November, 1964, a Bureau of Intergroup Relations was established as the staff for the Commission on Equal Opportunities in Education. Established in 1958 (as the Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity for Teachers), this office was in 1963 given responsibility for assisting and advising schools in problems of de facto segregation. This assignment brought it into action in the summer of 1964 when a boycott was planned to protest de facto segregation in Oakland schools where 58.5 percent of the enrollment was made up of minority ethnic or racial groups. The boycott was forestalled, partly as a result of timely intervention by the commission. The Bureau of Intergroup Relations later became a unit within the Office of Compensatory Education, the new Director of the office. Wilson Riles, having served as chief of that bureau.

Dr. Rafferty was the first Superintendent of Public Instruction to appoint members of the minority groups to top-level cabinet positions. His appointments included two Negroes -- one as an associate superintendent, one as the Director of Compensatory Education -- and a Mexican-American, appointed Assistant Superintendent in charge of the Los Angeles office of the Department. Many other positions in the Department, at all levels, are held by members of minority racial and ethnic groups.

The Future

It seems fitting to close this history with a hopeful quotation from the Introduction to the 1967 Little Report:

> The members of the study team believe that we have broken some new ground in conceptualizing an organization system for a large, complex state department of education confronted by myriad problems and new stresses. ... We have not hesitated in adapting a number of modern, space-age management concepts to what some believe to be the archetype of governmental bureaucracy, a state department of education.
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> The organization system we propose is not simple. It requires highly developed managerial capabilities and considerable capacity for change However, if we believed the Department was incapable of meeting the requirements for change, we would have settled, but reluctantly, for less.
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> Implementation will be difficult and drawn out. There are a number of constraints built into the system, as there are in most institutions of state government. However, the commitment to educational excellence we sense on the part of the State Board and the Committee on Department Reorganization, and the willingness to wrestle with our concepts that was evident in the Department, augurs well for further improvement in California's State-level system of educational administration.[44]

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[44] A New Organizational System for State-Level Educational Administration, op. cit., pp. xii-xiii.