

June 12, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMISSIONER KEPPEL

SUBJECT: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

I. Existing planning and evaluation efforts in Office of Education.

Planning efforts in the OE appear to be directed primarily toward identification of broad national needs in the field of education. The planning staff has not participated in the preparation of "Program Plans" as called for annually by the Bureau of the Budget since April 1961. In fact, these "Program Plans" in 1963 and 1964 were prepared for OE, as well as other HEW agencies, by the Budget Office of HEW. The statements of goals and objectives submitted to the Budget Bureau for those years were for the most part explanations of trends in funds required to carry out OE programs under approved legislation. Accordingly, they did not meet the objectives established by the Budget Director in April 1961 to the effect that "...the Spring budget preview period should be a time of useful joint examination of goals and objectives and of major policy questions."

New OE programs generally have been developed and considered through legislative channels, independent of the regular budget processes. It is the hope of the Budget Bureau that better program plans can be developed for OE and that new legislative proposals can be developed and considered during the Spring preview.

The need for establishment of more effective planning in the Office of Education is now underscored by the new Government-wide coordinated responsibilities of the Commissioner of Education under Executive Order No. 11185, and by continued emphasis by the Bureau of the Budget. For example, in the 1965 call for the Spring budget preview, dollar projections have been de-emphasized and more attention placed on goals, and other features of planning.

We have also concluded that too little is known of the effectiveness of past and current OE programs. Under present circumstances, it is impossible to evaluate what the American taxpayer is getting for the expenditures involved. This is a matter of concern, as reflected in recent legislation which requires evaluation of and reports on several programs.

II. Establishment of effective planning and evaluation functions.

The Task Force endorses the Office of Education's plan to establish effective planning and evaluation functions. We recommend an Office of Program Planning and Evaluation (in place of the present Office of Federal Education Activities), which would report to the Commissioner. This Office should provide a focal point within the agency for these functions. A major role for this Office would be the task of ensuring planning and evaluation of programs within the bureaus and providing to them such assistance as might be required. We also recommend the establishment of a planning and evaluation staff in each of the bureaus and in the NCES.

III. Recommendations concerning the new OE planning and evaluation functions.

We believe the Office of Program Planning and Evaluation should do the following:

a. Identify Education Goals

Identify education needs and goals of the nation and recommend policies for promoting the progress of education. This is a function prescribed by Executive Order No. 11183.

b. Detailed Program Plans

Establish a program for the annual formulation of detailed plans by each of the bureaus. This activity should be closely coordinated with the development of the budget and the issuance of financial plans which are a part of the total planning process. Such plans would be prepared for each of the current, as well as new, major missions or programs; would cover a span of at least five years; and would delineate broad long term goals of the bureau; plans to meet them; and more precise intermediate objectives. This office would review and comment upon the bureau plans which would be forwarded to the Commissioner for approval in principle. However, the Commissioner should not be given the burden of reviewing and approving details of these plans.

c. Broad Plans and Goals

Drawing upon the plans prepared by the bureaus, prepare an Office of Education long-range plan. This document would set forth broad missions and goals within the legislative framework established by Congress, and propose to the Commissioner the general plans whereby the Office intended to attain those goals.

d. Evaluation

Regularly evaluate and report program results against the specific goals of the bureaus as well as the broad goals of OE, the President, and the Congress.

e. Analytical Studies

Drawing upon the quantitative analytical work of the Division of Operations Analysis, prepare evaluative studies, plans and proposals in depth. These should be concise and made available to OE executives in a form which lends itself to use in current decision making. This function could well include assistance to the bureaus in the formulation of their plans. Special studies of this nature take time and often require advanced analytical techniques which ordinarily would not be found in the individual bureaus.

The stating of goals and objectives with clarity and precision is the key to successful internal planning. Stating such goals in a way which permits measurement of progress and effectiveness provides a means of finding out where a program stands and what the taxpayer is getting for his money. These are not easy tasks. Bringing the longer range outlook into the solution of current problems is essential to the effective administration of programs.

IV. Staffing for the planning and evaluation functions.

The Office of Education has budgeted for seventeen positions in FY 1965 and twenty-seven positions in FY 1966 for the Office of Federal Education Activities. If prompt action is taken to fill vacancies with capable personnel, these authorized strengths should be sufficient to enable the new Office of Program Planning and Evaluation to: meet requirements for planning and program formulation; make special studies related to planning; develop statistical information regarding educational activities of all Federal agencies; and maintain a capability for measuring progress in the achievement of goals and objectives.

V. Technical assistance for activating the planning and evaluation functions.

As stated earlier, OE has already taken action to establish a more effective planning function, including budgeting for the necessary positions, and active recruitment is underway. While there are a number of competent consultants who might be called upon to give assistance during the early stages of activating the planning functions, we believe the more practical approach, in this case, is to insure that the current recruitment effort results in obtaining competent staff in sufficient numbers. There should be included some individuals with backgrounds in planning concepts,

economics and statistics. Some must be highly knowledgeable of OE policies and programs and should have practical operating experience.

VI. Paper Work

One of the greatest pitfalls in planning is the tendency to generate voluminous material which is impractical to begin with and out-of-date by the time it reaches top management. Further, the formidable length discourages management review and approval with the result that the plan has no status and is ignored. Plans must be concise and limited to essential elements. They must be prepared on time and kept current at least once a year.

Similarly, evaluation efforts should be focused on those areas which have practical value to management with a continuous weeding out of analyses which are merely interesting. Priority setting is also important to ensure responsiveness to the needs of management.

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