

Study Finds City Schools Hit by Serious Shortages

By JAMES G. DEANE

Washington children are suffering from serious lacks in the city's public schools, a citizens' committee has been told.

The District Committee for the White House Conference on Education heard yesterday that the Capital's public school system has serious shortages of classrooms, teachers, counselors, nurses, doctors and even clerks.

Classes are too large, teacher pay is too low, many buildings are old and outmoded, and health services—including medical care and provision for the mentally and physically handicapped—are entirely inadequate, the committee was told.

Almost all the inadequacies, spokesmen added, stem from lack of sufficient funds.

Outline Findings

Six study groups which were organized several months ago outlined the shortcomings yesterday at a meeting in the Interior Department auditorium. The reports will be presented in final form in July for reworking into a report to the national White House Conference next November, Robert V. Fleming, chairman, announced.

were given the most detailed attention yesterday.

Max Farrington, George Washington University staff member and chairman of a subcommittee on this subject, reported that the school system has only two-thirds the nurses it needs, has too few trained persons to test vision and hearing, does not give adequate physical and medical examinations because of a doctor shortage, and has practically no psychological and psychiatric service.

There is also a severe shortage of needed special classes, he pointed out. Currently 411 elementary school children are waiting for admission to slow-learner classes and 1,127 other cases have yet to be studied. Four times as many pupils

are waiting for speech therapy as those receiving it. And there are no special classes for emotionally upset children in high schools or any for girls in junior highs, he noted.

Emotionally Disturbed

"How can any school system feel that it is providing a suitable atmosphere for the mental well-being of its children when in many classes there are emotionally disturbed children capable of and often causing disruption of the class? Yet that is the situation in Washington," Mr. Farrington declared.

Mr. Farrington's group proposed that teams consisting of a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, school nurse and teacher, counselor or principal

be organized throughout the city to examine emotionally disturbed children and recommend treatment. The teams would seek co-operation from private physicians, he said.

On health generally, the committee reported:

"It is surprising that this city treats its adult working population in the Government departments with more consideration of health services than its children are treated."

A committee on curriculum, headed by Mrs. Waldron Faulkner, also urged an expanded school health program and more attention to remedial reading, occupational and vocational training and special instruction for the retarded and gifted.

She termed a "decided fail-

ing" the lack of special provision for above-average children, asserting that "the community can little afford this neglect of one of its most precious resources."

Charles T. Penn, chairman of the subcommittee on school housing, reported District school construction needs have mushroomed to almost twice the \$35 million total of the existing public works program.

Many present schools are inadequate and no provision has been made for space to put into effect a newly adopted smaller class-size standard of 30 pupils

to a teacher in grade schools, he pointed out.

Dr. Hurst R. Anderson, president of American University and chairman of a committee on teaching staff, declared that salaries are too low to attract and hold qualified teachers and that District school administrators rank near the bottom in pay compared with those in cities of similar size.

He urged appointing a commission to try to pep up teacher recruiting, but warned that little result can be expected unless pay is improved.

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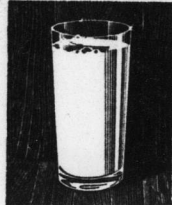
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