

Confidential

November 7, 1975

Charles B. Inlander, Director
Pennsylvania Fellowship Plan
1500 N. Second St.
Harrisburg, Pa. 17102

Dear Charlie,

During last Spring's "Strategy for Advocacy" Conference in Allentown, we discussed the implications of the PARC right to education suit. In the light of that discussion, I thought I should share with you a recent experience of mine at a state institution in Pennsylvania.

I visited this facility during an unrelated visit to Western Pennsylvania, in line with my long-term interest in institutions for developmentally disabled persons. During my tour of this institution, I was able to gain a great deal of first-hand information on the nature of educational programs available to its school-age residents.

Quite frankly, I was deeply concerned and distressed by both the poor quality of life and inadequacy of educational programming at this institution. Let me briefly describe aspects of the educational program which I consider inconsistent with the PARC consent agreement:

1. Although my tour was conducted between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on a weekday (regular school day), I found large numbers of school-age residents (over 20 on each of approximately eight units) who were not participating in any educational programs. To the contrary, these residents sat or stood around on large wards with no activities. Although administrators of the institution claimed that all school-age residents receive educational programming, they were unable to explain this situation.
2. In classrooms on the grounds of the institution, I observed children sleeping during class hours, without any apparent attempt by staff to involve them in activities.
3. I was informed by facility administrators that the "intermediate unit" of the Pennsylvania State Department of Education had rented buildings in the community to which children at the institution were transported to receive educational programming. These children were segregated in these buildings and denied contact with either typical children or developmentally disabled children who reside in the community. This seems to be a direct violation of the principle that children should be educated under the least restrictive circumstances possible.