



# PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION for RETARDED CITIZENS, Inc.

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RETARDED CHILDREN  
CAN BE HELPED

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Mr. Norman J. Taylor  
Deputy Secretary  
Western Region, DPW  
701 State Office Building  
300 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222

Dear Norm:

It has become apparent, over the last several months, that crucial problems continue to mount at Western State School. Complaints from parents, reports from on-site visits, and correspondence which I have received, are more and more alarming. I am sure you are aware that the situation at Western is rapidly moving to the point where it can be called critical. I discussed the situation with Steu Brown and we suggest the following:

1. That a Task Force be convened as soon as possible, consisting of expert DPW personnel, D.E. personnel, I.U. personnel, Western Staff, professional MR consultants, representatives of the Western Board, the Western State Parents group, and representatives of local ARC's. This task force should be under the leadership of one full-time staff member from OMR with other OMR staff to be provided on the basis of need.
2. That this task force be given specific goals including identifying problem areas, recommending actions to be taken to solve these problems, and identifying resources needed to assist in the solution of these problems.
3. That the report of the task force be submitted within six weeks.
4. That the report of the task force be both goal and time specific.
5. That nationally recognized consultants in institutional problems and reform be hired and asked to come to Western for two or three days to observe and make recommendations for action to the Task Force immediately.

WSSH file

Bob

cc: Garry, Sally,  
Doug

Goldberg-10/8

October 3, 1974



6. That the report of the Task Force and its recommendations be studied and reviewed by the Secretary, the OMR, and the Regional Office within two weeks after completion.

7. That all feasible and workable solutions become effective as policy through a directive from the Secretary with completion dates specified.

Norm, it seems that this is a logical, systematic, and goal-oriented way to solve the problems at Western, as well as, to plan for the future. Trying to solve these problems piecemeal, (new buildings, more staff, etc.) is just not the answer. Like a many headed hydra, as soon as one "head" or problem is "killed off", another one or two pops up to take its place.

The problems are there - we all know they are there. Western could very well become another Polk requiring sudden, dramatic, and drastic action. The repercussions which are still being felt from Polk and at Polk should be a lesson to all of us, and that lesson is: let's take preventative action, rather than being forced to respond to a genuine crisis.

I know that you don't want another Polk in your region. I hope that we can discuss these suggestions at length as soon as possible.

Mr. Brown and I await your response.

Sincerely,

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION  
FOR RETARDED CITIZENS, INC.

*Marlene*

Marlene Burda, Chairman  
Residential Services Committee

cc: Wohlgemuth, Meyers,  
Brown, Polloni,  
Thornburgh, Mulgrave,  
Phillips, Nelkin