



Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens

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L STEUART BROWN

President

PETER P. POLLONI

Executive Director

December 16, 1974

Donald M. Carroll, Jr.
Deputy Secretary and Commissioner
of Basic Education
Education Building - Room 333
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126

Dear Commissioner Carroll:

We are writing to request that the agenda for the State Task Force meeting on January 23rd be expanded to include a presentation by the Departments of Education and Welfare on building and construction programs at state schools and hospitals.

It has come to our attention that building construction programs are at the advanced planning stage for several of the state schools. We are alarmed and opposed to what we hear and feel that P.A.R.C. deserves an explanation for this state-wide movement.

Our opposition to the rumors and partial disclosures is twofold. First of all, the construction of educational facilities at state schools and hospitals represents a reinstitutionalization that is counter-productive to the accepted goals of deinstitutionalization and normalization. There seems to be an erroneous assumption that profoundly retarded and multiply handicapped students cannot be transported to a community school or that such transportation is not beneficial. We suggest that where transportation has been attempted that it is both feasible and beneficial.

And second, the construction of education facilities at state schools and hospitals should be reconsidered in light of the Right to Education Consent Agreement. Prior to this Agreement, there was an administrative arrangement whereby residents at state schools and hospitals received all of their services including education from a staff that had some accountability to each other by virtue of being accountable to a superintendent. This model had all the appearances of being able to provide a coordinated program for all the needs of the students, but as agreed to in the Consent Agreement the existing administrative arrangement failed to meet the educational needs of the students. Now that the educational responsibilities have been assigned to the Intermediate Unit, we expect the same degree of quality of educational instruction curriculum development and ancillary services for all retarded

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students within the Intermediate Unit without regard to place of residence. By building classrooms at the state school, it would appear that the old system remains the same with the administrative accountability now diffused and fragmented. We fear that the previous system is being reinstated with the compounding problems that there is no system for total program accountability. Furthermore, by building classrooms at the state school a practice of segregation by residence is being established as in the Brown Decision, we would argue that such separate but equal facilities are not equal.

We have tried to present our position briefly and clearly and urge that the Departments of Education and Welfare reconsider their long-range plans for education and for the construction of educational facilities at the state schools and hospitals. The opposition of the Association is growing in intensity, but we are still hopeful that we are not in essential disagreement and can reach a mutually satisfactory understanding.

We look forward to an initial discussion of this matter at the January 23rd meeting of the State Task Force. We call your attention to the enclosed letters to Gary Makuch and Dr. Daniel Rohrbach concerning Hamburg State School and Hospital.

Sincerely,

Roger E. Buchanan
Roger E. Buchanan, Chairman
Right to Education Committee

Marlene H. Burda
Marlene Burda, Chairwoman
Residential Services Committee

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Enclosures