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Fed. Aid to Education Governor Almond & Paschall, 1954-7

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
RICHMOND

J. LINDSAY ALMOND, JR.
GOVERNOR

March 23, 1959

Dr. Davis Y. Paschall
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Pat:

Enclosed herewith is a letter dated
March 20 from Congressman Cleveland M. Bailey
of West Virginia relating to federal aid to education.

I think I know the answers which Mr.
Bailey in all probability will not like but I would
appreciate your consideration of these questions
and your giving me your views thereon.

Sincerely yours,

Lindsay
J. Lindsay Almond, Jr.

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Commonwealth of Virginia

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
RICHMOND

March 30, 1959

The Honorable Cleveland M. Bailey
Chairman, General Education Subcommittee
House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Bailey:

I appreciate the opportunity afforded by your letter of March 20 to offer my reaction to the questions raised in regard to federal aid to education.

Your questions emanate from an apparent acceptance of the following statements as representing a consensus in the country for national goals in school financing:

1. The recommendation of the Rockefeller Report that America double its annual school investment within the next ten years,
2. The assertion of Mr. Arthur Flemming, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, that a 100 per cent increase in teachers' salaries within the next five to ten years is a reasonable national goal, and
3. The statement of certain witnesses before your Committee that a federal aid program is indispensable if school outlays are to be increased by 5 to 10 per cent each year.

Whereas these statements undoubtedly represent honest opinions, I am inclined to believe they are too limited in source and number to constitute a valid basis for assuming that they represent a consensus for national goals. If this observation is correct, then it follows that your attempt, commendable as it is, to broaden the source of opinion on this important matter, is unfortunately weakened by requesting answers to specific questions that in themselves

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stem from a doubtful assumption.

With this limitation in mind, I shall endeavor to react to the questions in the order listed in your letter.

1. It is entirely possible, but unlikely that our 1957-58 combined expenditure in State and local funds for schools in the amount of \$164,000,000 (exclusive of capital outlay and debt service) will increase to \$328,000,000 or 100 percent, in ten years as advocated by Mr. Flemming and the Rockefeller Report.

Although recognizing that this expenditure has more than doubled in Virginia during the past ten years - from approximately \$66,605,000 (1948-49) to \$175,000,000 (Est. 1958-59) - and also the fact that we intend to continue a justifiable improvement in the program, yet I am constrained to doubt seriously the wisdom of an assumption that such a "doubling" is an economically sound contemplation for each decade. The spiraling inflation that accompanies such an expectation must be assessed for its threat to sound fiscal policy as a cornerstone of stable government at all levels.

2. In 1948-49 the State made available from State funds (including Capitation Tax and Income from the Literary Fund) \$30,300,000 for our schools. The localities provided \$36,305,000. For 1958-59, the State has appropriated approximately \$78,500,000 for school operation (not including capital outlay and debt service) and it is anticipated that the localities will provide \$96,500,000 for the same period.

The General Assembly in 1958 appropriated not only the largest amount ever for schools, but also the highest per cent increase over any previous biennium.

A few years ago, \$75,000,000 was appropriated in State

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aid for construction of needed school buildings.

While the act did not require matching, the localities on a statewide basis have more than matched the State funds.

These are some of the tangible evidences of Virginia taxpayers' support of schools in the past decade.

In all candor, however, the present school crisis precipitated under Federally imposed integration is striking a potentially devastating blow to the public schools, and any ensuing curtailment of financial support must be, in truth, attributable to this evil and not to taxpayer resistance as implied in your question.

3. Unless the unpredictable course of tragic events emanating from the integration issue take an accelerated toll of our educational hopes and desires, it is quite realistic to contemplate a five per cent or more increase in school appropriations by the General Assembly during my term of office.

4. If the effects of the school crisis could be eliminated from consideration, we could predict a twenty to twenty-five per cent increase in teachers' salaries during the next five years.

5. Virginia is recognized nationally for its sound fiscal policy in governmental affairs. We do not anticipate any such overhaul of State and local tax systems as implied in the quote from your question.

Despite the recognized fact that federal programs in health, welfare, and the like have required matching funds locally to such an extent that the residual resources have correspondingly dwindled for education, it would appear wise to reflect carefully before embarking on elaborate federal aid programs in general education under the

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guise of national defense.

The power of control that inevitably accrues to the holder of the purse string can often be visibly guarded when applied to ships and roads and buildings. It subtly escapes this scrutiny, however, when applied to training the mind of youth in the form of education.

It is not the seen enemy we fear half so much as centralized control of the affairs of the mind. It is on this very principle that the Founding Fathers decreed that education should be a State rather than a Federal function. Their belief stemmed from a review of history's pages strewn with the wrecks of empires in which the liberties sustained by a free mind were throttled by a despotic tyranny emanating from a centralized Caesar.

If such principles now lose their applicability in the deliberations of the Congress and federal aid to general education is continued, then I pray that when such appropriations are made they become allotments in the immediate form of "State" rather than "Federal" funds, and that subsequent use accountability be that of "certification" rather than "verification." Such a policy would, at least, have virtue in eliminating federal control, and in reducing the present high cost of our own tax money being redistributed to us at a discount of about \$1. 00 for every \$1. 40 exacted.

I hope that these views may be of some assistance to you.

With very best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

J. Lindsay Almond, Jr.

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cc: Honorable Harry F. Byrd
Honorable Davis Y. Paschall