

At the 1947 Session of the General Assembly basic changes were made in the financial arrangements for the public school system. These changes included an expansion in the degree of State aid to the school systems of the several counties and of Baltimore City, an increase in teachers' salaries, and a change in the equalization formula. All these changes were based upon a fundamental re-study and re-evaluation of the then existing problems of public school financing.

Since that time there has been no comparable re-study and re-evaluation of these problems. They are of vital importance to the State and its citizens, and there is need of a complete new evaluation of the philosophy and practice of the financing of the public school system.

Existing formulae and figures may be outmoded by the great economic changes that have occurred in the past decade or more, including a constant spiral of inflationary prices and costs.

Over the same period the State and its population have undergone a considerable degree of urbanization. While smaller and rural counties in the main have seen their population figures remain fairly static, those counties and areas which are located near the large cities or adjacent to special installations have had a rapid increase in population. For whatever reason the State's population has grown rapidly and is changing its character.

The States surrounding Maryland also have had their own changes in population and in public school financing. These changes in other states also should be part of any re-evaluation here.

Another question which is persistently raised in the realm of public school financing is that of assessment ratios and policies insofar as they affect State aid to public schools. Perhaps there are alternatives to our present system of basing great sums of State aid upon variable assessment ratios.

Through the years of the late 40's and the decade of the 50's many proposals concerning the public schools have been made in legislative, administrative, and educational circles. We have seen proposals for expanded State aid, increased salaries, and changes in the formulae for the equalization fund and for those shared expenses which are paid through the cooperation of the State and its several political sub-divisions. Again the heavy volume of these proposals is an index to public interest in the subject and is a suggestion that the time has come for such a basic re-study of our public school policies as is suggested in this Resolution.

It is universally agreed that our people want a capable school system with competent teachers and adequate programs all over the State. In striving for these ends, one of the troublesome problems has been that competition among the several political sub-divisions may have hurt all of them. This tendency toward competitive advantage should also be part of a new evaluation of the public school system.

These are only some of the more important elements in public interest and concern with the public school system of Maryland. Such