

## THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION ON SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Cora Paul Bomar

Not too many years ago a dream was born in the Hotel Congressional in Washington when the ALA Committee on Legislation invited a few public, school, and college librarians, and consultants from the Library Services Branch of the U. S. Office of Education, to meet with the Committee to discuss the Nation's library needs and how the Federal government might help the states meet these needs. This unpublicized informal conference fashioned a dream that was somewhat revolutionary. The group established the concept that the Federal government did have a responsibility that went beyond the limited Library Service Act which at that time provided not more than \$7 million for rural public library service. The committee on school libraries was the bravest of the sub-committees for it proposed a Federal program for school libraries calling for an appropriation of \$40 million annually, which was far greater than the \$7 million authorized for LSA. And this was asking for the moon! It planted the seed that flowered in 1965. From this brave assertion that the Federal government's share in the support of school libraries should be at least \$40 million annually, this past fiscal year over \$250 million of Federal funds were committed for printed and audio-visual school library resources alone, according to estimates made by the U. S. Office of Education.

### Scope

The need for Federal legislation providing support for school libraries was recognized long before 1965; however, the perpetual arguments against Federal aid to education always emerged to block the way to enactment of Federal aid to school libraries. The popular refrains: "separation of church and State," "Federal control," "stifling of local initiative," "education is the sole responsibility of the states," were chanted even though, many years before, the Smith-Hughes Act had been enacted providing Federal funds for vocational education.

In 1958, a major step was taken toward broadening the base of Federal aid to education with the passage of the National Defense Education Act. This Act provides funds to strengthen instruction in

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specified subject areas by the acquisition of equipment and instructional materials, by the provision of training institutes for professional personnel in the specified subject areas, by providing scholarship loans, by providing State level staff to administer and supervise the Act, by providing local staff in guidance and counseling, and by encouraging educational research.

Dr. Samuel Halperin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in an address before the National Conference on Library Statistics in Chicago on June 6, 1966, stated that there had been tremendous progress in recent years in achieving Federal aid for improved library services and that there are now over twenty Federal programs, supplying over one-third of a billion dollars, to one aspect or another of a total library program. One could go further than Dr. Halperin and state that the school library is definitely "in."

With the emerging concept that quality of education influences our national welfare and that achievement in school is related to quality in school library programs, there is an awakening of the public to the unique contribution the school library makes to the education of children and youth. This realization reached national importance on January 12, 1965 when President Lyndon B. Johnson stated in his education message to Congress:

"I recommend legislation to authorize Federal grants to States to assist in the purchase of books for school libraries and for student use, to be made available to children in public and private elementary and secondary schools."

He further stated in this historic education message:

". . . our school libraries are limping along."

The causes of this nationwide recognition of the school library—its services to education, its weaknesses, its potentials—have never been clearly identified. Belief in the school library by a small group of dreamers may be the real stimulus. Others would assert that standards—local, state, regional and national—are the factors causing this revolution. Still others would claim it is a combination of several things including: the knowledge explosion necessitating a moving away from a single textbook, the urgent need to know, a rebirth in the humanities, new teaching techniques, the commitment to fostering the development of human dignity by all, and quality education in the broad context. Suffice it to say that within the last ten years the school library has attained a place in the sun. This is reflected in State and Federal legislation, in State, local and Federal expenditures, and in private foundation support for school libraries.

When one examines Federal and State library and education legislation there is little to identify as school library legislation. In

fact, I know of no single Federal law that can be classified as school library legislation, and yet, there are few Federal aid to education laws that do not offer opportunity for school libraries. This is the phenomenon that baffles those who must have things tied up in neat identifiable packages.

As one studies this phenomenon and as one reexamines the single purpose of the school library, reason and logic obliterate the phenomenon. One recognizes that the library is an integral part of the school and as such is part and parcel of every facet of the school. The school library, like the school of which it is a part, has as its single purpose the education of children and youth. In fulfilling this single purpose, it supports the school curriculum by providing instructional materials and library services for all pupils and teachers in the school, by offering instruction in library and study skills, and by serving as the learning resources laboratory for the individual, as well as for class groups. Therefore, it is logical that Federal legislation recognize the contributions the school library makes to education by providing financial support for school library materials, personnel, and facilities as a part of Federal education laws.

As an integral part of the school, the library should support all education programs for elementary and secondary schools. So, rather than focus attention on what Federal legislation has to give to school libraries, there must be concern for what the school library can contribute to the attainment of the educational objectives set forth in specific Federal education legislation.

Since this Allerton Park Conference is concerned primarily with Federal legislation affecting libraries, what are the various laws that relate to school libraries?

At least ten major sources of Federal aid to education, in addition to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, provide, directly or indirectly, assistance to school libraries and for the education of school librarians.

With the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and the Amended Act P.L. 88-665, avenues were opened for strengthening school libraries although the Act was specifically designed for the purpose of strengthening instruction in certain subject areas identified as being essential to our national defense. Through NDEA Title III, funds are provided on a 50:50 matching basis for the acquisition of equipment and instructional materials, including library resources, to strengthen instruction in science, mathematics, modern foreign languages, English, history, civics, geography, and economics. Last year alone, North Carolina public schools spent \$4,718,590 for printed and audiovisual materials under NDEA Title III; 90 percent of the materials purchased were library materials.

School Assistance in Federally Affected Areas laws, P.L. 874 and P.L. 815 enacted over fifteen years ago, are perhaps the oldest

Federal laws from which school libraries have benefited, although few people recognize these two sources. Over the years, schools receiving assistance from these two laws have spent Federal funds for library facilities, library personnel, and library resources.

A quick rundown of other Federal laws offering opportunities for school libraries includes:

The Vocational Education Act of 1963, P.L. 88-210

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, P.L. 88-452  
with Amendment P. O. 89-253

The Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329

The Educational Television Facilities Act, P.L. 87-447

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, P.L. 88-352

The Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, P.L. 89-415

with Amendments, P.L. 88-214 and P.L. 89-15

The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, P.L. 89-209.

Several articles provide a composite overview of the Federal laws cited.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the ten Federal laws mentioned above provide many opportunities to strengthen the services of the school library in improving instruction in the school, it is to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-10, that we turn for the major Federal support of school libraries. However, it should be remembered that here again a Federal education law has as its primary purpose to strengthen and improve educational quality and educational opportunities in the Nation's elementary and secondary schools. Only as the school library can contribute to the implementation of this purpose is it eligible to participate in ESEA.

Through the five titles of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, many avenues are open to schools and school districts for the establishment of well-stocked school libraries. Briefly: Title I provides financial assistance to local educational agencies for the education of children of low-income families; Title II provides grants for the acquisition of school library resources and other printed and published materials including textbooks for the use of children and teachers in public and private schools, Title III authorizes funds to provide supplementary educational centers and services not now available in an individual school, including district and regional materials centers; Title IV amends the Cooperative Research Act by authorizing funds for the construction of national and regional research facilities where research in education, including school libraries, will be directed; and Title V provides grants to strengthen State departments of education, including State level school library services.

Not one single Federal act mentioned above is a school library law and only one specifically identifies the school library, that one being Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Yet these Federal laws offer opportunity to acquire school library resources in specified subject areas and categories by types of materials; to build library facilities; to staff libraries with professional and clerical personnel; to purchase audiovisual equipment; to train librarians, audiovisualists, library aides, and library and audiovisual supervisors; to strengthen library services in desegregating schools; and to utilize work-study students as library assistants.

Because Federal aid to school libraries is not tied up in a neat package, it then becomes imperative that the profession and the individual librarian be aware of the opportunities and limitations of the many Federal laws relating to school libraries. To attain such understanding requires study, planning, and coordination of programs. A general knowledge of the legislative process is always helpful in recognizing why a specific law came to be and why it is as it is. Many reasons may emerge, such as the tenor of the times, local and national politics, national security, the personal whim of a legislator, popularity of an individual Congressman, Senator or President, prosperity or lack of it, and a general feeling among the masses that it is time for the Federal government to participate.

### Limitations

As a professional person and as an individual citizen each of us can influence the passage of Federal legislation; however, once legislation is enacted we follow the rules of the game in implementing the law. These rules and procedures for Federal education legislation are dependent upon: (1) the provisions of the Act, (2) the Federal guidelines interpreting the Act, (3) the State Plan for implementing the Act, (4) existing State laws and State boards of education policies, and (5) the local educational agency's plan for taking advantage of the provisions of a Federal law. Without knowledge of all of these regulations and procedures, effective utilization of Federal legislation will be weakened.

Limitations, as well as opportunities, included in specific Federal laws must be recognized. A few examples of limitations of some of the laws already mentioned are:

National Defense Education Act—Title III. Limited to acquisition of equipment and materials to strengthen instruction in nine specified subject fields. Materials may be placed in a public school library; however, funds cannot be used to purchase library equipment, including library shelving to house Title II materials. Federal funds must be matched by State and/or local funds on a 50:50 basis. Except for State administration and supervision, funds may not be used for personnel.

Economic Opportunity Act. Only those individuals included in the poverty category may benefit directly from EOA. School libraries may participate in EOA programs, such as Head Start, Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Work Study, and Basic Education, only if the EOA project designs include school library components. EOA is a grant program with a provision that a contribution in money, services, or facilities be made by the participating State or local agency.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act—Title I. Funds are limited to financial assistance to local educational agencies for the education of children of low-income families. The money can be used to employ additional staff, construct facilities, acquire equipment—including the employment of librarians and library supervisors, the renovation of library quarters, and the acquisition of precataloged collections of library materials only IF the local project design includes a school library component. Deprived students enrolled in private schools may participate in Title I programs.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act—Title II. Funds are provided only for the acquisition of instructional materials—school library resources, textbooks, and other printed and published instructional materials. Equipment, salaries, and supplies are not allowable except for State administration and supervision of Title II. Amount of Title II funds is insufficient to meet the needs for materials where significant inadequacies exist. Lack of Title II funds for staff at the local level places the burden for implementation of Title II on the existing staff, with the result that more technical and clerical work must be undertaken by the already inadequate library staffs, reducing their assistance to children and teachers in effective use of Title II materials.

All Federal library and education laws have specific regulations governing expenditures and liquidation of funds. In some instances, all expenditures must be completed during the fiscal year in which commitments are made. In other instances, two year's time is given for liquidation of funds.

It has been said that one has to have legal training, have the mind of an economist, be an administrator, and be an expeditor of the first order to be able to take full advantage of Federal legislation offering opportunities for school libraries.

### Coordination

Dr. Samuel Halperin emphasized in his talk before the National Conference on Library Statistics June 6, 1966 that the major task confronting the library and education professions is to relate Federal programs to one another to make them work effectively.

Many State departments of education and local educational agencies are coordinating programs with similar objectives. An illustration of such coordination is the blending of Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act with other ESEA titles, with NDEA, and with EOA to the end that comprehensive library and instructional materials services will be accessible to pupils and teachers. North Carolina is cited as an example of this type of coordination. A brief description of the way North Carolina attempts to coordinate Federal programs follows:

#### At the State level

(1) NDEA. Staff served on planning committees to develop State Plan for ESEA Title II, using to advantage experience gained through participation in NDEA Titles III and V State level activities. Later the NDEA Title III Accountant and the NDEA Title III Instructional Materials Supervisor transferred to ESEA Title II. NDEA Title III and ESEA Title II staffs work cooperatively on procedures, project approval, and evaluation of both programs. NDEA funds help support two offices directly integrated with ESEA Title II. These two offices are Audiovisual Education and Instructional Materials Services.

(2) ESEA Titles I, III, and V. The Title I budget includes funds for instructional and professional materials administered through the Education Information Library and through the Center for Learning Resources. The Title I Auditor supervises the work of the Title II Auditor. ESEA Title II staff members serve on Titles I and II State committees. Three ESEA Title V projects relate specifically to library and audiovisual services, and are integral parts of the Educational Media Services.

(3) The newly created Educational Media Section in the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction offers a comprehensive media program including instructional and professional materials, audiovisual and library services. It is composed of four arms: Audiovisual Education, School Library Supervision, Federal Programs for Instructional Materials, and Learning Resources Services. The Section is funded through eight separate budgets: regular State budget, three NDEA Title III budgets, ESEA Title I budget, ESEA Title II budget, and two ESEA Title V budgets.

#### At the local educational level

(1) The usual pattern in North Carolina is for the local educational agency to coordinate ESEA Title II with ESEA Title I and NDEA Title III. The few school systems that have ESEA Title III projects and the school systems participating in the EOA Neighborhood Youth Programs coordinate these programs with ESEA Title II.

(2) One significant development is a Statewide recognition that ESEA Title II funds are not sufficient to meet the critical need for

more library materials, and that whenever other Federal programs can be used for strengthening the materials collections and the library services such components are included in project design. To illustrate, during fiscal 1966 the following acquisitions and commitments were made by North Carolina local educational agencies:

Library books ordered through Federal Programs fiscal 1966

ESEA Title II	536,058 volumes
ESEA Titles I & III	622,000 volumes
NDEA Title III	438,000 volumes
Vocational Educational Act	5,300 volumes

It is significant to note that the 1,601,358 library books ordered through Federal programs fiscal 1966 for North Carolina elementary and secondary schools was 511,499 volumes more than the total 1,089,859 library books acquired through all budgets—local, State, and Federal—fiscal 1965.

Personnel added through Federal Programs fiscal 1966 ESEA Title I. Over 700 positions were funded for library or instructional materials supervisors, school librarians, and library aides.

### Impact and Implications for the Future

The first year with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act will be remembered as the time a universal awareness of Federal aid to education evolved. Beginning with April 11, 1965, business as usual was no longer the order of the day. School libraries and school librarians joined the mainstream of Federal assistance to education and to libraries.

It is too early to evaluate the impact of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act on the improvement of educational opportunities for the children and teachers in the public and private elementary and secondary schools of the Nation. It is quite evident, however, that ESEA has made school administrators more aware of the need to make more adequate provision for school library resources and services. There is also an increasing awareness of the need to strengthen State, regional, and national standards for school libraries. Local educational agencies are becoming increasingly aware of the need for qualified school librarians and adequate library facilities so that the library resources can be more effectively used by children and teachers. A cross section of comments noted throughout the year include the following:

“At last there is Federal assistance specifically designated for school library resources, textbooks, and other printed and published materials.”

“But it isn’t enough. If all Title II funds were used for library books, there wouldn’t be enough money to buy one book per pupil.”

"Well, how about other Federal monies to add to ESEA Title II?"

"We need librarians for our schools."

"Never has so little caused so much interest in providing school library resources and services as has ESEA Title II."

"We do not yet know the best procedure to follow in making Title II materials available for use by children and teachers in private schools."

This first year with ESEA identified weaknesses of Federal programs offering assistance to school libraries and also recognized unmet needs, such as the following:

(1) The maze of red tape with separate guidelines, procedures, and offices for each segment of a Federal program.

(2) Duplication of efforts for similar Federal programs. A glaring example is NDEA Title III and ESEA Title II.

(3) Lack of adequate Federal assistance for increasing personnel through recruitment, training, and employment.

(4) Lack of coordination with the Library Services and Construction Act.

(5) Diversity of regulations for each specific piece of legislation necessitating duplication of administrative personnel and administrative costs.

In the days ahead consideration must be given to such areas as the following:

(1) Evaluation of existing Federal assistance programs for school libraries. School librarians must collect, compile, evaluate, and interpret statistical data to identify unmet needs and to evaluate the impact of existing Federal programs in order to justify their continuance.

(2) Consolidation of Federal legislation with similar provisions. Consolidation of existing Federal programs is imperative if the voluminous red tape is to be decreased as it should be. Elimination of multi-State plans, different guidelines, different cut-off dates and filing periods, separate accounting and auditing is sound economics, while at the same time consolidation would permit a State agency to do overall planning for comprehensive services. Would that the day may soon arrive when a State educational agency would have only one State Plan for all Federal assistance programs!

(3) Realization that personnel must be recruited, trained, and employed if school library resources and services are more adequately to support effective education programs. A new breed of school librarians must evolve. The school librarian of this breed must know the world, what it is like and why; he must possess a

liberal education; and he must have a broad understanding of the general spectrum of librarianship. He must have the vision and the know how to plan, to recognize opportunity, to carry out programs, to try new ideas, and to see into the future. He must be an administrator, an educational planner, a business manager, and a supervisor, along with being a librarian committed to service to students and teachers. If this be true, then it follows that education for school librarianship must change. A library education program to train the new breed may well be the profession's most critical need.

(4) Revision of national, State, and local standards for school libraries. Staffing patterns to include the subject specialist and the library aide must be delineated. Standards for facilities and library collections to serve 40 to 50 percent of the student body at one time cannot be overlooked. It is hoped that the American Association of School Librarians will work expeditiously until standards have been developed that envision a school library program that will offer all the services the education and library professions have said embodied quality school library service.

(5) Recognition of the value of experimentation and demonstration. Federal and foundation funds have opened the way for each state and each local educational agency to search, to try out, to evaluate new and better ways of providing effective school library service. The few states that are using ESEA Title II funds to establish demonstration school libraries and the well-known foundation financed Knapp School Libraries Project, as well as ESEA Title III library related projects, have opened the door for experimentation and demonstration.

(6) Stabilization of relationships with private schools. Public education can no longer be oblivious to private schools. Dependent upon Federal court decisions, the extent of the formal relationships is yet to be decided; however, the commitment to librarianship places responsibility on the school librarian to work toward adequate school library service for all pupils and teachers, whether they are in public or private schools.

(7) Coordination of all library services available to the individual. It is encouraging to note that amendments to the Library Services and Construction Act and amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act recognize the need for coordination between public and school libraries and require that cooperative planning be done. This requirement could very well become the most important single component of existing Federal programs for public and school libraries. It could contribute immeasurably to the development of a national plan for comprehensive library service.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that Federal library and education legislation has as its objectives supplementing, adding to,

establishing and improving State and local programs. Without an already existing program or without sound educational and library planning, effective utilization of Federal funds may be impossible. Money will be wasted and criticisms aimed at Federal aid to education will become valid.

The Federal government has provided fantastic opportunities for strengthening and expanding school library services. The extent to which these opportunities are realized will depend upon the understanding, the imagination, and the cooperative approach of all concerned.

### REFERENCES

1. ALA Bulletin, 60:2, Feb. 1966. "A Special Issue, Federal Library Legislation, Programs, and Services." (Reprint available); "A Schoolman's Guide to Federal Aid," School Management, 9:94-95, June 1965; Bomar, Cora Paul. "Legislation and the School Library," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals," 50:89-95, Jan. 1966.