



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

MAR 27 1978

Honorable Bob Packwood
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Packwood:

Thank you for your letter inquiring about the Follow Through Program. I will speak to your specific questions in order:

1. Since the beginning of Follow Through in 1968, the central emphasis has been on models. A principal purpose of the program has been to identify and develop alternative models or approaches to compensatory education and assess their relative effectiveness through a major evaluation study which compared the performance of Follow Through children with comparable children in non-Follow Through projects over a period of several years. That study had just been completed. A summary of part of the final result, which was sent to the Congress last summer, is enclosed; a more comprehensive final report will be issued in the next few weeks. The evaluation found that only one of the 22 models which were assessed in the evaluation consistently produced positive outcomes. The central finding of the evaluation was that there was substantial variation in effectiveness among the sites in almost all of the models. Accordingly (and this speaks in part to your second question), we are funding 21 of the successful sites as demonstration sites this year so that other schools and educators will learn about, understand, and hopefully adopt the successful activities and procedures taking place in these effective sites. In summary, while the initial emphasis of the program was on designing and implementing models, the evaluation results forced us to shift attention more to successful individual projects. If the evaluation findings had indicated that the various models tested were either generally effective or generally ineffective, then the subsequent demonstration and dissemination activities could have proceeded along model rather than individual project lines. However, with the exception of the Becker-Engelmann Direct Instruction model, this was not the case.

2. The President's budget recommendation for FY 1979 is to begin a phase-out of the Follow Through program. The experiment to assess this particular set of compensatory education models has been completed. It

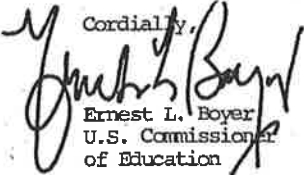
Page 2 - Honorable Bob Packwood

is felt that future research and development efforts of this nature ought to be carried out by the National Institute of Education. The Administration is proposing an increase of \$600 million in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which will substantially expand the kind of direct compensatory education assistance which children in the Follow Through sites are receiving.

With respect to your question about funding selected models on an expanded scale, with the exception of the Direct Instruction Model this could not responsibly be done since, as I noted above, positive evaluation evidence for the other models is lacking. The same problem applies to your question about funding sponsors to disseminate information on Follow Through programs on the college and in-service levels. Since only one of the models, and therefore only one of the sponsors, was found to produce positive results more consistently than any of the others, it would be inappropriate and irresponsible to disseminate information on all the models which carried the implication that such models could be expected to produce generally positive outcomes.

I hope this information answers your questions. If I can be of any further assistance, to you, please let me know.

Cordially,



Ernest L. Boyer
U.S. Commissioner
of Education