

Emphasizing the parental role, and the fact that the earlier education starts, the better for the child, she listed resource rooms for special individualized help, special classes for the severely handicapped, transitional programs and hostels for adult retardates to provide long term care as major priorities.

"Some of these are already being provided to some degree," she said, while other programs are outside the jurisdiction of the Board of Education. For high school-aged youth, she conceded, there are two centers for them, but both are in Manhattan.

"There should be services for them on Staten Island," she said, "especially for the older adult neurologically impaired."

She went on to add that in addition to expanding classes for the severely handicapped and increasing the summer programs and supportive services, no funds could be obtained for teaching staff for the some 18-22 "A" classes for the emotionally handicapped.

Gene Prisco, a special education teacher, asked Feulner what is being done to increase these special classes, and isn't it a violation of the law not to provide them.

Feulner replied that "these children are still in regular classes and just not making it." Her office has applied for \$60 million in funds to provide the classes, she said, but the request is still pending.

Prisco, on the hand, took issue with the fact that "it is always the teachers that are to blame," since the unavailability of funds for staff salaries was given as the reason for the hold-up.

"As an administrator," said Feulner, "I have to watch how the money is spent, not just for this district, but for the entire city. And you as a teacher have to get paid."

Prisco, in turn, earned a round of applause for his suggestion that teachers should start working voluntarily for the sake of their students - and not for their paychecks.

In response to a question raised by another parent, who believes that a municipal hospital should be established to include a diagnostic center, Feulner said that contrary to popular belief, Staten Island has smaller waiting lists for evaluation and testing than any other district in the city.

She drew groans from the audience however, when she added that programs on the

Island are being funded at a rate that is more per capita than any other district -- except for Title I money which is based on the percentage level of poverty income students.

Inadequate Screening

To this, Dr. Sandor Friedman, member of Community School Board 31 and organizer of the forum, said, "I don't think we have adequately screened our children," and cited figures which show that about 400 students a year are left back. Friedman feels that perhaps the state should adopt the policy of automatically evaluating students in a fashion similar to New Jersey's.

Other speakers at last week's hearing included attorney Carolyn Heft of Mobilization for Youth Legal Services and David Riley, a doctoral candidate in special education administration at Syracuse University.

Heft explained the

background behind many legislative actions throughout the country in respect to gaining more rights for the disabled and retarded. She cited various states who have taken far greater strides than New York in upgrading rights for the disabled and urged parents to keep pushing for an end to discriminatory laws.

Riley, in observing the legislative turnover for the year, said, "This could have been the year for the handicapped in New York State -- but it won't be." He cited as an example of legislative inertia in Albany, a bill, which he said, has been waiting for Governor Wilson's signature.

It would simply add the word "disability" to the law which states that no individual can be discriminated against because of race, creed, sex, or national origin. "He (Wilson) was granted a 30-day extension in which to sign the bill, and if he doesn't by that time, the bill dies."

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