

pendent of his background and general social context."

This report, one of the largest surveys ever taken of American schools did show that learning achievement varied widely among schools of different racial and regional background, even though their budgets might be equal. But the popular exaggeration of this finding—that the schools, therefore, made no difference in learning—has come increasingly under attack. According to George Weber, associate director of the Council for Basic Education, the mass statistics of the Coleman Report obscured the fact that some slum schools were doing a good job. To refute the fashionable pessimism about the schools, he says, "All I have to do is find one school which does what they say cannot be done."

But it's easier to show the importance of successful slum schools than to explain how they do it. In the case of P.S. 91, one obvious factor is its slight, energetic principal, Martin Schor, who runs the school with a mixture of tradition, common-sense innovation and taut organization.

Early in Mr. Schor's career, he taught science at a vocational high school where he was shocked by his students' reading problems. "We couldn't use books at all," he recalls. As a result, when he came to P.S. 91 ten and a half years ago, he organized the school to teach reading as efficiently and as early as possible. As his system gradually evolved, his student body changed from 65% white to 80% black.

"The stress has to be on early childhood," he explains, "because if the child can't read by the end of the first year, you're constantly doing remedial work." Mr. Schor begins reading instruction in kindergarten and assigns his best teachers to first grade.

Mr. Schor must also make every minute count, a point he emphasizes as he shows visitors around his classrooms. He briskly dismisses several popular ideas in education, such as "heterogeneous grouping" and the "open classroom."

In the open classroom, several groups work simultaneously on a variety of things and the child chooses which one to join. The general idea is to promote his individual development. Grouping does take place in P.S. 91 classrooms, as children share a tape recorder with an octopus-like array of headsets, or work on self-correcting teaching machines or write their own stories. But teachers assign the child to the activity they think he needs most. "We don't depend on his free choice to learn the skills," says Mr. Schor. "We teach the skills. I can't afford to wait with these children."

Mr. Schor also can't afford the extra energy needed to run a heterogeneous class, which mixes together children of different levels of ability. Mr. Schor argues that in such classes the teachers gear their work to the middle of the class, boring the bright pupils and losing the slow ones. "The average teacher can't handle that set-up," he says. "A good teacher can, but there aren't that many good teachers."

Instead, Mr. Schor has devised a system geared to the "average teacher." His basic principle is to group students by their reading ability, which superficially resembles the traditional homogenous classroom. But he makes a major innovation. "In the old homogenous classrooms," he observes, "the kid was tracked for life." But with competent teaching, he argues, brighter children will begin to outpace their classmates. So he provides "constant inter-class transfers," in which a student who begins to excel moves on to a higher level within his grade.

Frequent transfers up provide a boost in morale for the students who learn well. Transfers to a lower level, which might prove discouraging, are kept to a minimum by careful attention to original placement of the student. This system requires the school to keep constant track of each student's per-

formance. But it allows efficient use of manpower. Bright classes can move quickly, so Mr. Schor keeps them large, with about 30 pupils. Slow classes, with from 12 to 15 children, get more attention and better teachers.

The result, according to Mr. Schor, is satisfying both for pupils, who view the class transfers as a reward for success, and for teachers. "My teachers are happy because they can succeed," says Mr. Schor. "They're not eating their hearts out all day."

Mr. Schor also puts heavy emphasis on phonics. By teaching pupils to "decode" words in the first year, he says, the school gives them tools to learn more on their own. Mr. Schor also mentions the reading materials, primarily the Open Court series, which he praises for its simply written manual as well as for its "well rounded cultural program." Some supplemental reading deals with black history, but the readers make little attempt to be "relevant." Instead of tales about urban life, the children read excerpts from Cervantes and Aesop's fables. Says Mr. Schor, "We don't have to worry about 'urban minority groups.' They eat this up."

The success of minorities at P.S. 91 has given school officials a talking point against some of the more racially oriented (some might say patronizing) recommendations that have come out of the U.S. Office of Education that black and Puerto Rican children be tested by different standards than white children. "If only more people in high places subscribed to your belief in the ability of minority group children," New York Board of Education President Seppour P. Lachman declared last fall in a speech to the staff of P.S. 91.

Examples like P.S. 91 have also spurred interest in case studies of schools which produce better (or worse) results than their "socio-economic background" would lead one to expect. Mr. Weber of the CBE published one of the first three years ago. In March, the New York State Education Department released a study of 12 better, and worse, than average inner city schools.

But researchers are still divided on the ingredients for success in the slums. The New York state study cited seven factors, including rapport with the student, effective control of classes, teacher preparation before each class, and "forceful and positive leadership," whether from principal, assistant principal or group of dedicated teachers. The state's watchdog Office of Education Performance Review took a closer look at two of the schools in this study and rejected most of these factors. This second report concluded, "the quality and attitude of the administration seemed to be the only real difference." But Mr. Weber remains suspicious of such pat conclusions which, he warns, may often be determined in advance by the researcher's decision to study some factors and disregard others. "You're analyzing a very complex human activity," he cautions. "A school is a living, changing, dynamic organism."

THE ESSENTIAL POINT

Mr. Schor agrees that his visitors often miss the point. "The trouble is they take a part of the program that strikes their fancy," he complains. "You have to take the whole program."

What the visitor can discover is that a school can succeed even in the absence of highly desirable conditions. The cubical red-brick building is 70 years old and shows it. Because intruders last year committed two muggings, Mr. Schor has put locks on classroom doors, and some teachers lock themselves in during class. Because the school's reading scores are too high to qualify for special aid its budget is the lowest in the district. As Mr. Schor finds one stairway

blocked by workmen fixing a leak in the roof, he exclaims, "You see, you can't use excuses."

The visitor also finds plenty of variety in the classes, in spite of the emphasis on fundamentals. Second-graders demonstrate one favorite teaching technique, improvising dramas from reading material. As pupils take the role of a giant, a king and three daughters of different character, the girl who plays the wicked daughter teasingly lapses into neighborhood dialect.

Mr. Schor also shows off a display of African masks from art class, a fifth-grade French lesson (one of 16 in various grades, including 500 children), and a music class, a little top-heavy in violins. "We beg and borrow the instruments from other schools in the district," he explains. "What the others don't want, we utilize." The class serenades the departing visitor with a spirited, if discordant, rendition of "Pomp and Circumstance."

OPERATION PEACE OF MIND

HON. BARBARA JORDAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 1974

Miss JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, recently the Texas State delegation was informed that Operation Peace of Mind, a program designed to assist runaway youth and their families, was denied funding by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. It was established by our Governor, Dolph Briscoe, as an aftermath of the Houston mass murders. To deny funding for a program which has demonstrated its success countless times over and which is so badly needed, is to deny many American parents and children possible reconciliation and "peace of mind." Therefore, I have taken the liberty of writing to HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger urging him to reconsider the decision not to fund Operation Peace of Mind. For the edification of my colleagues, the following is a description of Operation Peace of Mind provided by the Texas State office:

OFFICE OF STATE-FEDERAL RELATIONS, STATE OF TEXAS,

June 28, 1974.

To: The Texas Delegation.
From: Alan R. Erwin, Director.
Subject: Operation Peace of Mind.

Governor Briscoe has asked me to convey to you his very strong support and request for aid for Operation Peace of Mind, a volunteer program in Houston created to help runaways and their families.

The program, established shortly after the discovery of the homosexual murder ring in Houston, has been a phenomenal success. Through its work, more than one thousand families in 47 states have been reunited and more than 2,700 messages have been relayed between runaways and their anxious families. Its mission is simple—they have a national WATS number which has been widely publicized. The runaways can call the number and ask that any message they wish be relayed to anyone they wish. Aside from the obvious service of reuniting families, the program has taken much pressure off local law enforcement officials who were being deluged with phone calls from over the country to see if their runaway son was among the victims.

The program is expensive—averaging \$3,000 a month. Money to continue it has come from Governor Briscoe and often out of the

pockets of the over 250 volunteers who have manned the phones in a Houston hotel room.

Ms. Grace Surgy, director of the program, and Ms. Sue Cunningham of Governor Briscoe's staff were contacted recently by representatives of the regional office of HEW in Dallas, who has high praise for the program and suggested that we apply for funds from the HEW Runaway Program. They suggested, in fact, that we ask for \$100,000. We did so gladly, seeing an opportunity to continue and perhaps extend what Governor Briscoe considers one of the finest volunteer programs he has ever run across.

We were rejected by HEW here in Washington. Two other programs were funded—a drug referral hotline in Montgomery County, Maryland, and a hotline in Chicago. The Chicago program has contacted us with a request to send their personnel down to Houston for a week to see how to set up their program—in other words to initiate what we have already had in existence for almost a year.

We were told our program was not well publicized. However, it has been featured by Dear Abby, Seventeen, U.S. News and World Report, McCall's and the New York Times Magazine, as well as hundreds of newspaper features. Fourteen governors have initiated programs in their states to publicize our program. Florida recently put \$20,000 in its state budget to publicize Peace of Mind and a PR firm in Arizona has initiated through private money a complete campaign to publicize the numbers of Operation Peace of Mind.

Governor Briscoe and the volunteers of Peace of Mind—and I'm sure the grateful families who have been helped—need help to continue paying the bills. Anything you might do to help would be greatly appreciated, including a speech on the floor of the House or Senate or an insertion in the Record, and most importantly, a letter from you to Secretary Weinberger asking him to reconsider the decision to refuse funding. As I know you are aware, unanimous support from the Texas Congressional delegation is still the most powerful red tape cutter in Washington.

I hesitate to ask for your support in a case where an administrative decision has already been made by a federal agency, but I feel that this program has not been adequately understood by HEW and is so worthy and important that it deserves your support.

Anything you can do to help Operation Peace of Mind will be greatly appreciated.

RUNAWAYS!

Your messages relayed to family (completely confidential).

Call—"Peace of Mind," (free—no charge).

In Houston, 524-3821; in Texas, 1-800-392-3352; out-of-State, 1-800-231-6946.

A LOOK AT THE FIRST YEAR ALONE

HON. J. J. PICKLE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 1974

Mr. PICKLE. Mr. Speaker, two good writers have taken the time to try to give us a view of the current lives of our former first ladies. The articles begin with Mrs. Lady Bird Johnson, a widow for a little more than a year now.

As the lives of Presidents and their wives have often been examples the country sought to emulate, it is important that in her life alone, Mrs. Johnson continues to be an inspiration to

those around her and to those who see and benefit from her continued good deeds.

The authors of the article note that Mrs. Johnson knows who she is and will not allow herself to be sidetracked. She does the things which are closest to the main interests of her life—helping the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential library, working with beautification projects, working with education and young people, and spending more time with her family and more time seeing the country than her life as First Lady allowed.

I would like to reprint the article concerning Mrs. Johnson in the Record at this time:

[From the Dallas Morning News, June 16, 1974]

LADY BIRD—ALONE DESPITE PUBLIC APPEARANCES

(By Flora Rheta Schreiber and Stuart Long)

JOHNSON CITY, Tex.—Spring flowers were popping out along the roadsides, conveying a sense of renewal after the browns of winter. Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson drove here for a simple ceremony to rename the small Johnson City Hospital for her husband. Her grandchildren unveiled the name plate as townspeople stood by, waiting to visit with their most famous neighbor who lives up the Pedernales River at the LBJ ranch 10 miles away.

The day before, Mrs. Johnson had presented Walter Cronkite with a journalism award at the University of Texas and had seen her Secret Service men, with the assistance of a newspaperman, capture a streaker who barely failed to disrupt the ceremony. Mrs. Johnson is a regent at the University.

These glimpses into two recent days in the busy life of Lady Bird Johnson epitomize four interests which occupy the most recent of the presidential widows—flowers and beauty; grandchildren and family; education and young people, and devotion to the memory of Lyndon Baines Johnson, her husband for 38 years.

The way of life in which these interests are expressed is markedly different from what it was when Lyndon Johnson was alive. Gone is the entourage with which Mrs. Johnson was surrounded, except for the Secret Service men. Her only secretary is the one who works with her at the LBJ Library. Gone is the ranch kitchen staff. Mrs. Johnson now makes her own breakfast, sometimes cooks her own dinner. Now she drives her own car and at Christmas even delivers her own Christmas packages.

There is loneliness for Mrs. Johnson at the ranch these days but no privacy. Tourists on mini-buses make the ranch a public place.

Yet loneliness is assuaged by having been psychologically prepared for widowhood. And significantly, it was Lyndon Johnson himself who did most to prepare Lady Bird for this eventuality.

Lyndon Johnson told his wife that he was going to die soon. He brought in their two daughters, Luci and Lynda, and their sons-in-law, Pat Nugent and Chuck Robb, to make the necessary arrangements for smoothly transferring a large estate.

The Johnsons then proceeded to sell part of the ranchland under a contract by which Mrs. Johnson has absolute veto power on how it is to be used, to make sure that the beauty of the Texas Hill Country land is not marred. They gave the main ranch to the National Park Service with the understanding that Mrs. Johnson will live at the ranch itself as long as she chooses. They sold their television station and drew a careful will with Lady Bird as executrix.

And, perhaps even more important, the family, following Mr. Johnson's lead, encouraged Lady Bird to undertake jobs that would keep her busy when the time came for her to make the adjustment to widowhood.

She had said in 1969 upon returning to the LBJ Ranch from the White House that she might like to be a university trustee. When Texas Governor Preston Smith offered her a 6-year term on the University of Texas System board, Lyndon Johnson encouraged her to accept. She also took a 6-year term on a National Park Service advisory board.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that during her first year and a few months of widowhood Lady Bird has kept very busy living the same sort of scheduled life that used to revolve around her husband's plans and comfort. She still rises early, is never late for an appointment and makes sure that the half hour she allots to a friend or relative is totally his. Once the time is up, she turns to the next matter at hand with equal concentration and warmth.

Lady Bird knows who she is and will not allow herself to be sidetracked. She's always gracious, warm and giving, but not at the expense of herself or her time. Her life is scheduled, and she plans three months ahead.

Like other presidential widows, Mrs. Johnson receives a \$20,000 annual pension. But she administers the business affairs of the company which still operates KLB, the radio station which built the family's fortune. A canny businesswoman, Mrs. Johnson still keeps an eye on her businesses and investments in the family company which now belongs to her and her daughters.

Her husband always encouraged Lady Bird "to do her own thing" at the same time that he challenged her to do and look her best. She still goes to the Greenhouse, a Texas spa, for rest, relaxation and beauty treatment. But she also allows herself a few more visits to the refrigerator than when LBJ was around to help her count calories.

Always eager for a time that was wholly hers unmarred by clock or calendar, Lady Bird Johnson has also been doing some of the private things denied her as a president's wife or even as the wife of a former president. She made a trip to Europe with Chuck and Lynda Robb, her son-in-law and daughter, to see some of the things a presidential party just can't see.

With the Marshall Steves of San Antonio, she made a trip to Mexico where she visited with former President and Mrs. Miguel Aleman, who are old friends. With the Steves, too, she also made a trip to New England to see the autumn leaves.

On a visit to Washington, D.C., she drove to the house on 30th Place which was the Johnson's residence during most of his years in Congress and to The Elms where they lived while he was vice-president. She's also driven across the South en route to Washington to have a first-hand look at the way towns and cities and their roadsides have been beautified.

"The billboards are really coming down," she told us with some awe, since this was one of "Lady Bird's Laws" passed during the Johnson years. Now, as when she was First Lady, she urges people to concern themselves with keeping the beauty of this country alive. As she puts it, "The more I work with people who are knowledgeable and full of zest, the more I want to be a part of the project." She adds, "I'm a natural born optimist, and I think the problems man has created he can solve."

With this attitude, Mrs. Johnson continues her beautification work. She gives an award each year to the Texas highway maintenance foreman who has done the best roadside job. Last year, it went to a man whose