

ADDRESS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U. S. REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND AT THE DEDICA-
TION OF THE NARRAGANSETT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN NARRAGANSETT ON
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1959 AT 2:15 P.M.

It is always a very great joy and a privilege to assist in the dedication of a school. It is a particular pleasure to participate in such a dedication in a community such as Narragansett which reflects so clearly your dedication to the best interests of your young people, your faith in the future growth and well-being of the community, your understanding of the importance of education in a democracy, and your determination to meet the challenge of a new age.

We live in a State which has been closely identified with educational and cultural development since the earliest colonial times. We have a proud heritage from our ancestors who labored to create the foundation of understanding on which our way of life is built. We are an optimistic people with faith and determination that we can meet the future with courage and integrity, and this fine new school which we

dedicate today emphasizes those characteristics which keep democracy safe and strong.

These are challenging and crucial days in education because so much is happening. Within our own lifetime man has entered the age of atomic energy and space. He can transmit events with the velocity of light and travel faster than the speed of sound. His achievements in science and technology are spectacularly increasing, with the result that every other day seems to bring a new and breathtaking headline. This is having a profound effect upon public thinking in regard to education, upon public concern that the education our children receive shall be adequate to the needs of our times.

Because of my own great interest in educational progress and my particular good fortune to serve the Government at a time when that interest is shared to a high degree by the people of Rhode Island, it seems appropriate today to say a few

words about the Federal-State relationship which exists between the schools and the National Government. It is a unique and satisfying relationship and one which has enabled us to strengthen our democracy and hold fast to the ideals of our forebears.

America has a proud history of local control and support of education. That concept was shaped and patterned by our early settlers and it is a pattern in which Americans believe wholeheartedly. We recognize that the schools belong to the people and that their strength is derived from the people. If the schools are to serve the varied interests and needs of the people, the people directly concerned must determine their procedures and their policies. We do not believe in Federal control of education but insofar as the purpose of education in a democracy is to prepare youth for alert and competent citizenship, we do believe in Federal responsibility.

Believing thus, and facing the gravest emergencies of our times, a year ago the Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, a law which has been characterized by many people as one of the three most important milestones in the history of Federal action to strengthen our schools. It was my privilege to have been in the chair during the debate on this important legislation, and I was highly gratified, as were other friends of education, when the bill was enacted into law. It touches every level of education, public and private, from the elementary grades through the graduate schools, and is a major breakthrough in the effort to see that every young person, from the day he first enters school, should have an opportunity to develop his gifts to the fullest extent. It is the recognition that in a free society the individual is the first line of defense.

Under the forward-looking guidance of our State

Department of Education and the ability and leadership of Commissioner Walsh, Rhode Island is participating in considerable measure in the benefits made possible by the National Defense Education Act.

Our young people are availing themselves of the Student Loan Program; our schools have initiated a plan for strengthening science, mathematics and foreign language. Our area vocational program, which is designed to provide people trained in critical areas of scientific development, is being accelerated. Rhode Island is one of the States which has long believed that wide guidance is essential to the educative process, and the Department of Education is substantially extending the testing program now being conducted. The tangible results we can expect from this effort in identifying students with outstanding ability should be truly impressive. In thinking about the results, however, we should remember that this effort is designed not merely to identify and enable the most gifted to make

the most of their gifts. It is to help all children, regardless of the degree or extent of their talents, to take courses best suited to their ability.

Naturally, I am delighted and proud of the example set by the people of Rhode Island in their understanding and acceptance of this partnership with the Federal Government.

But regardless of Federal enactments or of State supervision, education must remain a local responsibility. This beautiful building which we are dedicating today is your building, built for your young people and, under the leadership of your board of education, to be used so that each girl and boy may find herein satisfaction and pleasure and may be led to the fulfillment of his or her greatest capacities.

The school curriculum and how it is taught are matters to be decided by your State Department, Commissioner Walsh,

your local board, your superintendent and the citizens working with their chosen representatives. Yet it is rightly a concern of great importance to all of us that the school curriculum shall encompass the teaching of the fundamental skills and understandings which have made America strong and vigorous. We must have thorough learning of the three R's. We must delve more deeply into geography and history. We must increase our understanding of other peoples and nations.

We must reiterate and re-emphasize, too, the old-fashioned virtues which have made America great but which are sometimes lost sight of in a frustrated and explosive world.

We must teach new competencies to give our children the tools with which they may hew out a path so clear that they shall not stumble or fall; we must teach truth, for only in the understanding of truth can man hold fast his dignity and his freedom; we must teach friendship, which is

understanding and fair play and loyalty and honesty and integrity--
for these are the binding substances of a free world. We must
try to bring to every child the vision of freedom, the glory of
democracy and the joy of an abiding faith.

Of these things you are well aware and you may be very
proud of the record you have established, of the schools you
have maintained, and of the leadership which holds them high.

I said that the schools belong to the people. And yet,
in a very real sense, the schools belong neither to the people,
the taxpayers, the teachers nor any other group, for all of us
are only trustees and we hold the schools in trust for the
benefit of our country, our community, our children and the
generations to come. No school can ever be much better than
the community wants it to be, for it represents our strivings,
our sacrifices, our dreams and our visions.

You have built a school. But this, too you have
built:

Not so much a schoolhouse, as a fortress, a haven,
a temple, a dream, a hope. Within these walls we protect
our greatest treasures and guard our most important resources.

It is a privilege and an honor to dedicate this
school as a living memorial to the past, to the men and
women who lived, struggled and died that their sons and
daughters might grow stronger and wiser than they; to
dedicate this school as a living promise to the future,
that those who follow us may be wiser and stronger and
more understanding than are we.