

## CONCERNING THIS ISSUE

The five years from 1975 to 1980 represent a period of rapid growth and transition for special education services in Hawaii and the Pacific Basin region. With the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) in 1975, a major change was mandated throughout the country. Although this change appears at first glance to be primarily educational—involving the logistics and form of establishing free and appropriate special education programs for all handicapped children—the process and the results affect basic socio-economic and political features of American society. By 1980, when the full range of services is to be in place, two state agencies (the Department of Education and the Department of Health), the state legislature, the University of Hawaii, and innumerable private schools and agencies will have somehow facilitated and/or adjusted to radical changes in the extent and nature of the place of the handicapped person in our school system and community.

While it may seem to some that the transition has been difficult and has produced its moments of discomfort, surely any social change of such magnitude would have its rough spots. I may not speak for all participants in this process, but in my view Hawaii has exhibited a remarkable consensus in its commitment to incorporating the handicapped child into the school system. This commitment to the basic right of the handicapped person to be a full member of school as an integral component of community life has allowed for action rather than resistance to the legal mandate. This issue of *Educational Perspectives* will hopefully provide an

indication of the extent of this commitment, the range of syntheses between *what was* in special education and *what will be*, and an introduction to those areas which will require increasing attention from and teamwork with regular educators and the nonhandicapped community.

For this reason, it seems appropriate that the theme of this issue be "Special Education in Transition." The content of the issue has been selected to represent a variety of need areas and provide a sample of the work which is ongoing. The topics range from preschool screening in Hawaii to teacher training in Micronesia, and include examples of the "islets of excellence" (such as the services for severely handicapped children) which have already emerged. A personal objective which I had in mind in organizing the content was to communicate to the reader the interdisciplinary nature of these special education activities as well as the active interchange of "special" educational concepts with mainstream values and methods. What is now occurring in special education will not be successful unless the mainstream shares, teaches and learns along with the handicapped. In return for this enormous effort, we shall have ultimately affected an entire generation of children who may look at the world in slightly clearer perspective with *everyone* in the picture.

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