

Migrant Farm Child Education Plan Eyed

SALEM (AP) — The state Department of Education said today it will ask the Legislature to appropriate \$155,000 for a state-financed program to educate children of migrant farm laborers.

This recommendation is part of a survey, ordered by the 1959 Legislature, saying it is vital that such education be provided because increasing farm mechanization will deprive many migrants of their jobs.

Therefore, the report says, it is necessary that the migrant children be taught new skills.

In the past year, the report says, about 2,000 migrant children received some education in regular school classes in 81 Oregon schools. The school districts paid the bill.

The department estimated that Oregon has between 4,000 and 5,000 migrant children between 6 and 18 years of age.

Average attendance of those in the schools last year was only nine weeks. But some also received some schooling in special state-supported summer classes at Monmouth, McMinnville, Ontario and Hillsboro.

The new legislation provides that the state would pay the whole cost. The aid would range from \$15 to \$35 per child, with the larger amounts going to schools with greater percentages of migrants.

Many educators, including some in the state Department of Education, feel the problem should be solved by the federal government. They think that most of the children live in Oregon too short a time to give them any help.

The survey, conducted in the 81 schools educating migrants last year, shows that migrant children generally are retarded from two to four years, that one-third of them speak Spanish only, that many of them have severe health and cleanliness problems, and that most of them are shy and withdrawn.

The report says it is hard to get parents of older children to let them go to school, because their earnings are needed to help support the family.

Speaking of these older children, the report says "the further in school he progresses, the less he is able to compete."

The report adds that "in general, schools do not know what to do with the migrant children other than to place them in a seat in a classroom."

The problem is to maintain two educational programs in the classroom at the same time—one for the migrants, and the other for resident pupils. Teachers say this is hard to do, and that the regular school program often suffers.

Some of the teachers say that migrant students should be segregated just so they can be taught separately. But the department will have none of this. The proposed new law bars state aid if the classes are segregated.

"The migrant child," the report says, "needs to be integrated into the schools. He needs to feel that he is a part of our society. This can not be accomplished in a totally segregated school situation."

The teachers of last year's migrant children were almost unanimous in believing that the migrant children are readily accepted by other children. But they add that the migrant's shyness

makes it hard for him to take part in the school program.

Of the \$155,000 asked for the next two years, \$65,000 would be used for regular classes, \$60,000 for summer school programs, and \$30,000 for research and supervisory expenses.

The 1959 Legislature also directed the state Board of Health to maintain sanitary conditions in

farm labor camps. Gov. Mark O. Hatfield is asking that \$23,210 be appropriated for this purpose for the next two-year budget period. This would keep this program on the present level.

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