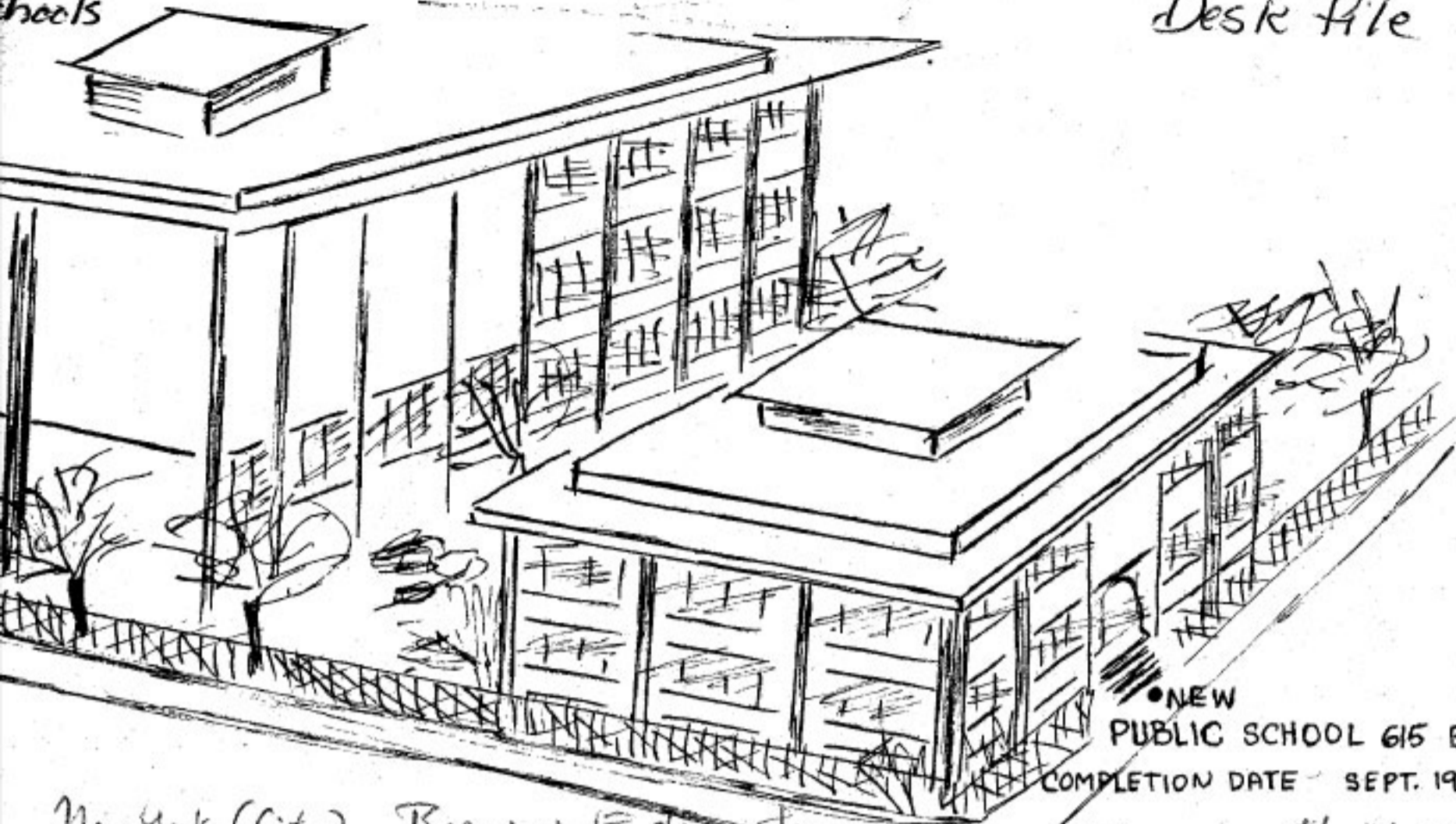


Schools

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New York (City). Board of Education. Committee on the "600"  
Schools.

# "600" SCHOOLS

*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*

Committee Study  
June 1964  
to  
February 1965

36

A REPORT to the Superintendent of Schools  
Board of Education of New York City

## PART I

### INTRODUCTION

At a time when our nation is taking a critical look at whether or not it has been carrying out its responsibilities for the education of all its children, one of the problems which is commanding special attention in New York City is what to do for children who obviously cannot be successfully and effectively educated in a regular school. The movement to help atypical children has progressed on an uneven front. Special programs have been developed for the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded, the emotionally disturbed and the socially maladjusted. New York City has led the nation for many years in developing and improving a wide variety of resources and services to meet the special and urgent needs of all kinds of handicapped children. This report represents a review of what has been done and what still needs to be done to educate one of these groups of severely handicapped children, those who are emotionally disturbed, emotionally handicapped or socially maladjusted. In most communities, there is such a small number of these children that it is not possible to set up special schools for them, and their problems must be handled either in a special class situation in regular school buildings, or in an institutional environment. In New York City, even though the percentage of such children may be no greater than it is in other cities, the actual number involved is so large as to require the organization of schools and school units specifically designed to meet the special and urgent needs of these children.

Almost twenty years ago, in May 1946, the Board of Education of New York City initiated a program establishing separate schools to be known as "600" Schools for the education of children so severely emotionally disturbed or socially maladjusted as to make continuance in a regular school hazardous to their own safety and welfare and to the safety and welfare of the other pupils. These children were characterized as defiant, disruptive, disrespectful and hostile to all authority. The underlying philosophy of the schools embodied the idea that the "600" Schools were to provide

a therapeutic educational program, non-punitive in approach, in which the anti-social, hostile, disruptive behavior would be molded and redirected through positive, constructive approaches toward more wholesome, socially useful and socially acceptable patterns of conduct. Such schools were envisioned as rehabilitative centers where through the joint efforts of clinical, guidance and educational teams, these deviant children would receive new opportunities to participate in carefully planned activities and experiences that would lead to the kind of self-realization and achievements and insights necessary for one to become a personally and socially competent, productive citizen of our American democracy.

Through the years, additional schools have been added in response to the need for special facilities for the education of the increasing number of emotionally disturbed, socially maladjusted children. The number of "600" Schools has doubled in the past decade and now approximately 5000 boys and girls, ages 5 to 21, are in daily attendance in forty-four "600" School facilities. About 2000 of these pupils attend fifteen day "600" Schools, to which children have been assigned from regular schools, while the others receive instruction in classes conducted by the Board of Education in institutions, remand centers, residential treatment centers and hospitals to which they have been committed by the courts and other agencies.

There have been numerous evaluations of the "600" Day Schools both by staff and outside agencies. These include the following major studies and reports:

1. A comprehensive study by The Association of Assistant Superintendents - The Assistant Superintendents Look at the "600" Schools - 1953.
2. Public Education Association Report - Up-Hill Journey - Lives in Danger - 1954.
3. Report of the Children's Court Committee to Survey the "600" Schools - The Judge Warren Hill Report - 1956.

PART IITODAY'S "600" SCHOOLS1. WHY "600" SCHOOLS?

It is generally recognized that the need which prompted the Board of Education in May, 1946 to adopt the resolution setting up a program of education in these special schools still persists. The establishment of the various programs in the early grades (Junior Guidance, Early Identification, Career Guidance, etc.) has not, as yet, markedly reduced the number of those children who reach the upper grades with such extremely severe social, emotional and behavioral problems that they can no longer be contained in regular schools. Both these children and hundreds of others entering our secondary schools from outside of New York City must be transferred to special schools not for punitive reasons, but to receive the special help which they so urgently need to avoid hazard to their own safety and welfare as well as that of the other pupils in the regular schools. A number of interested groups have suggested that these youngsters should be the responsibility of the Mental Health agencies of the city and state, rather than that of a Board of Education, and further that major emphasis be placed on mental health and rehabilitation rather than on education. The State Education Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Human Relations and Community Tensions specifically recommended in its report dated May 12, 1964, (p. 25): "if the child's primary problem is medical or one requiring custody, the responsibility for him should rest with an agency other than the schools."

It is true that during the school year 1963-64, almost 100 children had to be discharged from the "600" Day Schools on the recommendation of a psychiatrist and had to be either transferred or returned to a State Hospital or discharged to Home Instruction. The Committee feels, however, that many of the extreme

behavior manifestations on the part of children are not necessarily symptoms of mental illness, but rather personality distortions growing out of the many social problems and pressures to which these children are exposed. A substantial proportion of these young people can be rehabilitated with the help of other agencies if adequate clinical and educational resources are made available to the schools. The Committee believes that the "600" School despite its limitations still offers the greatest promise, if not a last hope, as an educational instrument for salvaging these young people for society. There is every indication that as social dislocations are corrected, as home and family situations are improved and as more special facilities are developed in the regular schools, the number of children referred for placement in "600" Schools will decrease. However, in a city as large as New York, with its ever-recurring population changes, there will undoubtedly always be many children who, while not requiring 24 hour a day custody, can be better educated in a special environment. The "600" School has been developed to meet this specific educational need, and this inquiry was directed towards determining the extent to which it is actually helping to meet that need.

## 2. WHO ARE THE "600" SCHOOL PUPILS?

It is important to bear in mind that we are discussing an educational program for a very small percentage of the total pupil population in our schools. The total register in the "600" Schools in May, 1964 was as follows: 2045 in the Day Schools; 616 in Remand Centers and their annexes and 1872 in institutions, treatment centers and hospitals. The 2045 on register in the day schools represents less than one half of one percent of the children in our public schools. Small as this group may be, and costly as the educational program is for them, the Committee feels that until a better way for helping

these children is found, the special program is justified. The Committee is in full agreement that the "600" Schools have been functioning under severe handicaps, some of which will be discussed later in this report. However, in spite of the limitations which these handicaps have caused, the schools have made a definite contribution towards the rehabilitation of a sizeable number of children referred to them. To this contribution must be added the great gains in more effective education made for the large number of other children by removing seriously disruptive, hostile pupils and providing relief from time-consuming teaching-learning problems.

A serious criticism has been made that, in these times, when so much dedicated effort by citizens and educators is put forth in an attempt to reduce so-called "de facto segregated" schools, the "600" Schools are ethnically unbalanced with a preponderance of the students being Negro and Puerto Rican. This by-product of the social and economic dislocations which prevail in large cities of our country, cannot be corrected by denying to those children, who need them most, the special clinical and educational services provided in the "600" Schools. The type of hostility towards society which manifests itself in a pattern of severe overt misbehavior, has basically been characteristic over the years of some children from all the minority groups who have been forced to live in slums and ghettos no matter what their ethnic or racial background. This is a situation in which the schools are trying to help those very children who are suffering most from the social evils arising from segregation and discrimination.

There is great need for clarification in the minds of the public of the varied types of behavior disabilities which are treated in schools with a "600" label. The children who are educated in the 15 Day Schools differ substantially from those who are in attendance at remand centers, institutional annexes of the day schools, institutional schools, treatment centers and hospitals. In all

..... illustrate the definite contributions these schools are making towards the rehabilitation of a sizeable number of children referred to them

..... indicate the great gains in more effective education for the vast majority of children in regular schools as a result of the transfer of disruptive and time-consuming special problems to "600" Schools where they can be more adequately resolved

### THEIR PURPOSE

The "600" Schools are designed to educate emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted children who are recommended for special programs because they are unable to profit from instruction in a normal school setting, where they make it extremely difficult for other children to receive unimpeded instruction and where they present a hazard to their own safety and welfare as well as to other pupils.

### THEIR GOALS

The "600" Schools strive to bring about the rehabilitation of these children by providing for each one the opportunity to continue his education while he is being helped to adjust to the unique requirements of his educational, social and personal life. More specifically the schools work:

- ..... to provide a therapeutic environment, within which the inter-personal relationships between pupils and school personnel is designed to lead to wholesome personal and social adjustment
- ..... to provide an educational environment in which, under the guidance of understanding teachers, the child can participate in educational activities which will produce the

learnings which he needs, either for continued education in a regular school situation, or for a vocation for which he can be adequately prepared

..... to guide and motivate the child, through self-knowledge and self-realization, to modify his behavior, to provide him with the help needed to compensate for the inadequacies of his environment, and to broaden his educational and social horizons

THE TYPES OF "600" SCHOOLS

The term "600" School includes several types of schools, each of which serves to meet a different combination of special needs of children, as follows:

THE DAY SCHOOLS

There are fifteen Day Schools -

- 11 for boys from grades 5 through 9
- 3 for boys from grades 9 through 11
- 1 for girls from grades 7 through 12

Students in the Day Schools have not responded to the intensive efforts of the home school to help them. They are of the acting-out type whose primary behavior disorder manifests itself in repeated disruptive and aggressive behavior, extensive in scope and serious in nature. These aggressive behavior patterns not only blocked their own learning, but, also interfered with the education and safety of other children, thus necessitating their withdrawal from the regular school.



Rehabilitation is the focus of the work of the day school. Assisted by guidance counselors, psychological and medical teams, the teaching staff, through the use of small class registers (10-14), curricula adapted to special individual needs, intensified remediation in the areas of reading and mathematics, and the development of a positive mental hygiene climate, seeks to give the students well-motivated goals.

The aim of the day school is to return as many students as possible to the main stream of education as quickly as practicable and, where necessary, to provide guidance and terminal education, whose rehabilitative value will make itself evident in preparing an adolescent for wholesome living, law-abiding citizenship and job-adjustment.

#### THE INSTITUTIONAL SCHOOLS

There are ten institutional schools, placed in a variety of residential settings. Some of these are maintained by the three major religious faiths, others are mandated services of other city departments, (i.e., Hospitals, Welfare, Correction, etc.)

Students from the ages of 6 to 21 are placed in these institutional settings by court order or social agency referral. The majority of these students have been adjudged delinquent or severely emotionally disturbed. A smaller group of neglected children has been assigned to remove them from disorganized family life which was proving destructive.

The school staff works closely with the institutional staff in cooperative planning. Class size is small, a maximum of individual attention is provided and remediation is emphasized to meet the child's educational needs. Some of these children are eventually transferred to the "600" Day Schools and others to regular schools.

Special Circular No. 8, 1961-1962

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

TO ALL SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS,  
DIRECTORS AND HEADS OF BUREAUS

September 27, 1961

Ladies and Gentlemen:

SCREENING PROCEDURES FOR "600" DAY SCHOOLS

The "600" day schools are an integral part of the New York City school system. Their major purpose involves the educational rehabilitation of children whose needs are such that they cannot be met in the normal setting of a large school, who have demonstrated over a period of time a lack of reasonable self control, and whose behavior is seriously disrupting the education of large numbers of children in the regular school. In some instances, there will be children who should not be in attendance even in a "600" school, but should be cared for in facilities for very disturbed children. There will, also, be some children who would be better placed in such facilities, but since places for them are not available, they may have to receive temporary shelter in a "600" school.

In order to serve the best interests of children for whom the "600" schools are organized, it is necessary to establish clear procedures for the placement of children in these schools. The following statement of procedures is designed as a guide to assistant superintendents, principals, "600" school personnel, guidance personnel, clinic staffs, and others concerned with the placement of children in "600" day schools.

The most desirable screening procedure for "600" day school applicants would involve a diagnostic evaluation by a clinical team of the Bureau of Child Guidance of each student seeking admission. In the absence of such evaluation, owing to limitations of clinical personnel, the following criteria for screening will be used:

**1. Criteria for Admission**

- 1.1 School grade placement in grades 5 through 12 (girls 7-12).
- 1.2 An intelligence level above that provided for by the program for Children With Retarded Mental Development and determined by a psychologist.
- 1.3 A history of repeated disruptive and aggressive behavior, extensive in scope and serious in nature, which either endangers the safety of the pupils or others, or seriously interferes with the routine learning in the classroom.
- 1.4 A history of truancy, if coupled with aggressive and disruptive behavior.
- 1.5 The failure of the pupil to respond to extensive and intensive efforts by the home school to help him, and the exhaustion of the resources of that school for the adjustment and therapy of that individual pupil.

**2. Steps in Referral**

- 2.1 The referral to the "600" day school will be initiated by the field superintendent, or the appropriate assistant superintendent in the High School Division, or the High School Placement Unit.
- 2.2 Preliminary screening will be performed by the guidance coordinator or by other appropriately trained professional persons designated by the assistant superintendent.

- 2.3 All referrals must be approved by the field superintendent, or the appropriate assistant superintendent in the High School Division in the case of school referrals, or the assistant superintendent in charge of Guidance in the case of the High School Placement Office, and sent to the "600" school principal.
- 2.4 Accompanying the referral to the "600" day school should be a complete anecdotal record and all other pertinent data, i.e., copy of cumulative record cards, testing card and health record.

### 3. Screening at the "600" Day School Level

- 3.1 The "600" school principal and the guidance counselor will study the referral.
- 3.2 The principal and guidance counselor should interview the applicant for admission, together with his parent. Should this interview reveal a serious medical history or indicate an excessively bizarre behavior pattern, admission should be deferred until applicant can be studied by the Bureau of Child Guidance Team.
- 3.3 Where referrals are "calculated risk" cases, initiated by clinical teams of the Bureau of Child Guidance other than those assigned to the "600" schools, "600" school teams should be consulted before acceptance.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt concerning the suitability of the referral, the clinical services should be requested to help resolve the problem. Final resolution of the referral at that point should be by joint agreement of principal and clinical team. The referral, if unacceptable, should then be forwarded to the Director as described in Item 8 below.

### 4. Role of the Clinical Team in Screening

The time of the clinical team assigned to the "600" day school is not sufficient to permit of its participation in the screening of all referrals and should be utilized as follows to insure maximum participation by the clinical team in this continuing process:

- 4.1 The clinical team of the Bureau of Child Guidance, resident at the "600" Day school, should be consulted on referrals whenever there are serious medical implications of either a psychological or physical nature, i.e., orthopedic handicap, brain damage, partially sighted, etc.
- 4.2 Admission should be deferred when, in the judgment of the principal and guidance counselor, admission of the applicant to the school might prove hazardous to himself or other pupils. Consultation with the clinical team should be made before arriving at a decision.
- 4.3 The clinical team should be consulted where a severe behavior disturbance on admission is evident.
- 4.4 The clinical team should be consulted where there is uncertainty about the student's intellectual potential.
- 4.5 The team should be available to the principal for consultation on any problem that involves clinical judgment and planning for the student. In this way, the team should be helpful to the school in evaluating and interpreting findings and recommendations of outside clinics, family agencies and the like. In some instances, the team may be in the best position to perform the liaison services with outside agencies.
- 4.6 The extent of the team's services on screening activities will be dependent on the nature of the question to be resolved and the needs to be provided for in the individual case.
- 4.7 The team is also available for referrals of other students for whom the principal requests specialized clinical assistance. This will be particularly necessary in "calculated risk" cases. In some severe cases, the clinical team may have to recommend exemption. Opportunity

PART IIITOMORROW'S GUIDANCE SCHOOLS

All reports on school visits by committee members, consultants and others, all briefs submitted and all discussions during the hearings conducted with parent, professional and community groups expressed admiration for what was being achieved by the "600" Schools despite budgetary limitations and inadequate resources for the heavy responsibilities of providing educational programs for children with so many complex, hard-core problems and unique needs. There was consistent mention of the fact that much had been done for a great many of the children referred to the "600" Schools, as well as for the vast number of children in regular schools where important educational gains had been made as a result of their being relieved of disruptive and time-consuming problems.

Although, in the course of its deliberations, the Committee was made cognizant of the urgent need for many improvements in the "600" School program, the Committee was also urged to take particular note of the following strengths so repeatedly observed:

**THE "600" SCHOOLS -**

**HAVE** a staff, at the Bureau and in the schools, which has clung tenaciously to the idea that children given a chance, no matter how severe their problems may be, can be rehabilitated.

**HAVE** a program of education, in which first things have been put first so that the major emphasis has been on helping children overcome inadequacies in their personal lives and in their social adjustment.

HAVE a dedicated group of teachers and supervisors who have continued serving in these schools for many years because their satisfactions come from seeing the changes they have wrought in the lives of children with whom the regular schools and frequently the homes had failed.

HAVE a remotivating program for continued education for a sizeable number of children who have reached a dead end in the regular schools.

HAVE a program which makes it possible for some of the most seriously maladjusted children to be salvaged, prepared for jobs or equipped to continue to high schools.

HAVE a program which makes it possible for many children to be returned to special classes in regular schools.

It is not enough, however, to point to the gains that have been made, commendable as they are. Of course, the good things should not be ignored as is too often the case. But, if the "600" Schools are to really become a fully productive, vital and dynamic educational resource and an integral part of our school system, and if we are to resolve the doubts and anxieties which have been raised in the minds of the public and professional staff about their operation, we must plan to greatly intensify, expand and improve the personnel and services through a comprehensive program of improvements. Such a program will require greater expenditure of time, effort and money and an increase in clinical, educational and community resources if the "600" Schools and related services are going to meet the urgent needs of the children attending them and better serve the total needs of the children of the City of New York.