

RECOMMENDATION No. 19
concerning
EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR SECONDARY
EDUCATION
(1946)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened at Geneva by the International Bureau of Education and being assembled on the fourth of March at its ninth session, adopts on the fifth March, nineteen hundred and forty-six, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Bearing in mind that the social tendencies of the present time exercise a profound influence on the organization of education, particularly with regard to equality of conditions for access to secondary schools, upon which must fall the cultivation of special abilities for a large number of pupils;

Considering that the principle of equality has been clearly expressed, at the International Labour Conference as well as in the Convention establishing the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, where provision is made for collaboration among the nations to advance the ideal of equality of educational opportunity, without regard to race, sex or any distinctions, economic or social;

Believing moreover that the different aspects of the question should be studied one after the other as they arise, both from the educational and the social point of view;

Calling to mind Recommendation No. 2 on Admission to Secondary Schools, formulated by the International Conference on Public Education convened by the International Bureau of Education in 1934;

Noting also that the question of equality of access to secondary schools is conceived differently when secondary education is reserved for a fraction of the school population and when it is made accessible, in principle at any rate, to the generality of pupils;

Submits to the Ministries of Education in the various countries the following recommendation:

1) Admission should depend; as it already does in many countries, more on the pupils' previous activity and on the teachers' reports than on the result of an examination bearing on knowledge or techniques acquired;

2) In countries where secondary education is in principle compulsory, the distribution of pupils between the different types of teaching should be decided largely in the light of the systematic investigation of their aptitudes, rather than primarily from the pupil's own preferences or those of their parents;

3) A continuous system of guidance, particularly during the first few years of secondary education, should offer the pupil frequent possibilities of trial, choice, and passage from one type of school to another;

4) Such a system of guidance should be accompanied by a detailed examination of aptitudes, an examination conducted by means of psychologically controlled observation and investigation directed more towards the study of mental processes than on the mere recording of correct results;

5) The greatest importance should be attached to the granting of substantial financial aid to gifted but needy children; not merely by granting them free tuition, scholarships or monetary grants, but also by recouping the parents for the loss of possible wages earned by the children, by helping towards the cost of board and lodging, and by providing for these pupils access to sources of information and cultural enrichment not available in their ordinary environment;

6) In cases where pupils are already in paid employment, facilities should be granted to them to follow courses, permitting them to complete their secondary education;

7) Special measures should be envisaged for young persons whose secondary studies have been interrupted through the war.