

STATEMENT ON DISCONTINUING DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS AT STATE COLLEGES

January 15, 1968

My recent decision to discontinue demonstration schools on the campuses of our five former state teachers colleges is based on sound professional advice and represents a constructive step in the best interest of public education in this State.

At the time these schools were established, they were considered ideal for teacher training. They were to be pilot projects and take a leading experimental and research role in the development of public education in our State. They no longer fulfill such a role, and there is no justification for operating an elementary school on a State College campus unless it is performing a unique service. This is particularly true now that the former teachers colleges have been converted into liberal arts institutions serving the broader interests of a wide segment of students.

A consultant from the National Education Association recommended to our Board of Trustees for State Colleges last year that the demonstration schools be discontinued. They occupy \$12.5 million worth of classroom facilities needed by the colleges for other educational purposes. The pupils can be as well taught in the adjoining public school districts. As for the student-teachers, the experience gained in teaching in a public school, instead of a laboratory school on campus, should be even better preparation for a career.

A total of only 1,040 pupils attend the five elementary schools now being operated at Towson, Frostburg, Coppin, Salisbury and Bowie State Colleges. At one of the schools, there are only 10 to 14 pupils per class in grades two through six. Towson State College, which has the largest of the schools with 334 pupils, is so hard pressed for classroom space that it is having to use temporary buildings for college classes.

In the budget that will be submitted to the Maryland General Assembly Wednesday, I have diverted the \$600,000 that would have gone into operation of these schools next year to other vital educational purposes. If it is found that a particular hardship is created in some community, then temporary arrangements can be worked out with the public school officials to ease the transition. But this is clearly a step that should be taken *now* in the overall interest of public education and the demands being placed on our resources by a steadily expanding college population.