

## The Idea

(from Education Commission for the States/history page, "the 1965 Compact" link. For my comments which won't fit on here, see FamilyCourtMatters.org (esp. page "Do You Know Your NGA" published 4/27/2017, and related writings on school reform movements of the late 1990s and early 2000s, (Challenge Fund Circuitry, ConnectEd, WestEd, the US Dept of Ed, etc.)

Dr. James B. Conant, president emeritus of Harvard University, looking at how educational policy has been shaped in



the United States, concluded: "It is my thesis that such a jumble of influential private and public bodies does not correspond to the needs of the nation in the 1960's. Some degree of order needs to be brought out of this chaos, primarily for the benefit of the oncoming generations, but also, to achieve a more effective use of public moneys . . ."

"Let me be bold and make a suggestion for a possible way by which the road to the development of a nationwide educational policy might be opened up. Let the fifty states, or at least fifteen to twenty of the more populous states, enter into a compact for the creation of an 'Interstate Commission for Planning a Nationwide Educational Policy . . .'"<sup>1</sup>

In a speech to the National Governors' Conference, he developed his idea further. "I am convinced Washington alone cannot do the job that must be done. The consequence of failure of the states to act together and together with the Federal authorities will be confusion doubly compounded. The vast increase in Federal funds for education, which I heartily welcome, is all too likely to result in a tangled mess that

no one can straighten out unless the states take new and energetic action. And they can only plan together if they can obtain and share information. In short, without some such device as an Interstate Planning Commission, I do not see how a nationwide educational policy can be shaped and made effective. The times challenge educators and statesmen alike. What will be the response from the states?"<sup>2</sup>