

Front Lines in Education

Henry Harap, Editor

Cooperative Curriculum Project. The Minnesota Cooperative Schools Curriculum Project is beginning its fourth year of a proposed eight-to-ten year program of curriculum study and revision. Just preceding the opening of schools in September, fifty-five representatives of the six participating schools met in the third annual one-week institute of this group at the University of Minnesota to discuss their curriculum problems and to plan the program of curriculum attack for each school for the year 1945-46. In five of the schools the elementary and secondary divisions work as a unit in the study of the overall curriculum problems of their school and community. It is expected that in the sixth school the elementary division will join the study sometime this year. This venture in curriculum development is sponsored by the Minnesota State Department of Education, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota Secondary School Principals Association, and the College of Education of the University of Minnesota. Nelson L. Bossing, professor of education of the University of Minnesota, has been director of the project since its inception.

Language a Means to Good Living. It is encouraging to report a recent formal declaration by the Modern Language Association of America which views language as a means to good living. Language is inseparable from the learner's own personal development and group living. The goal of language is the ability to act in new situations by thinking, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Language is basically oral; writing and reading are secondary developments which depend upon speech. With regard to the teaching of grammar, the committee holds that there is no necessary relation between a knowledge of the rules of grammar and correctness of usage. "Grammar will not take the place of continued practice in speaking, hearing, writing, and reading English." The committee does not advocate that grammar

be eliminated; it favors the study of grammar in proportion to its contribution to good language usage. The pamphlet was prepared by Thomas C. Pollock of New York University. In addition to basic principles it includes a discussion of the need for the study of English and a proposed English program for the elementary, secondary, and college levels.

Cooperative Instructional Improvement. The cooperative nature of building a course of study is illustrated by the experience of the teachers and administrators of the Cincinnati Public Schools in the production of the Intermediate Manual, recently published. It represents the culmination of a seven-year program of instructional improvement directed by G. H. Reavis, assistant superintendent of schools in charge of instruction. Every section of the manual was prepared in experimental form by committees of teachers; the materials were revised and restudied twice before final publication. The volume combines previously issued separate courses of study into one unified treatment. The subjects covered are language, social studies, science, arithmetic, health, and the arts. The teaching suggestions in these fields are definite and practicable. With supervisory encouragement the manual could be used by the ingenious teacher in directing large, on-going, purposeful learning experiences.

Curriculum Laboratory. The documents and materials division of the library of the Department of Education of the University of Chicago is being gradually reorganized to serve the broader purposes of a curriculum laboratory. The collection has included courses of study, evaluation instruments, curriculum bulletins, special subject collections, and instructional source materials. Special emphasis is being placed on current materials and on items which are difficult to locate in a library. The audio-visual materials have been transferred to a separate and enlarged department, the Audio-Visual Materials Cen-

ter. A textbook collection is housed in a room of the curriculum laboratory. The several collections of the Department of Education are to be coordinated with a University-wide materials center, according to H. G. Richey who is in charge of the Department library.

Observation and Conference. The program of in-service growth of teachers in Cabell County, West Virginia, was developed cooperatively. The problems for study were determined by a planning group of teachers and principals. The county was divided into zones, each zone including six to eight schools ranging from three to twenty-three rooms. All the teachers and principals of the zone along with the supervisory staff visited one school for two hours and observed classroom teaching. Each classroom had a principal as discussion leader who led a discussion of the teaching and learning the teachers had observed. This was followed by a general group meeting wherein each discussion leader reported recommendations which were made in the small groups.—Olin C. Nutter, *Superintendent*.

Elementary Education in the South. The Southern States Work Conference has undertaken a study of elementary education. The working group starts with the assumption that the rehabilitation of the South depends upon its educational program, particularly in the elementary school. A critical evaluation will be made of present conditions in elementary schools and communities. Case studies of school and community activities will be prepared. A steering committee will direct and coordinate the regional program and state committees will gather factual data and guide the work of local groups. The project will be discussed at the next conference which will be held in June, 1946. The co-chairmen of the steering committee are: John E. Brewton, George Peabody College for Teachers, and R. Lee Thomas, Tennessee State Department of Education.

Cooperative Field Service. Seven departments and colleges of education in Colorado have formed an organization for the purpose of assisting schools in conducting school surveys and other studies. The service will be advisory to teachers and school administrators who will assist in gathering data, planning

programs of action, and interpreting the programs to the public. The Executive Committee comprised of O. L. Troxel, Harl R. Douglass, and A. K. Loomis, will study the requests for service and select the consultants. The institutions cooperating in the service are as follows: Adams State College, Colorado A. and M. College, Colorado College, Colorado State College of Education, University of Colorado, University of Denver, and Western State College.

Secondary Curriculum Program. Secondary curriculum plans for the current school year call for a statewide study of curriculum issues by the high school administrators and teachers of Iowa. The central planning committee for the Iowa Secondary Curriculum Program has selected thirty-five of the more controversial issues in secondary education. Using a printed study manual, high school faculties throughout the state will study and discuss the issues during the year, and their reactions will be reported to the central planning committee on questionnaire blanks provided for the purpose. Using these reports from the schools of the state as a basis, a special committee on philosophy and purposes of secondary education will set up the basic working philosophy for the new high school curriculum. Committees in ten subjects will develop specific materials to conform with the general plan and purposes of the entire curriculum program. Materials will be tried out in tentative form by certain selected schools. It is probable that between two and three hundred people now working in the high schools and colleges of Iowa will have a hand in the preparation of the new curriculum bulletins. It will require about three or four years to complete the program.

Department of Curriculum Is Re-established. The Tulsa (Okla.) Board of Education has recently re-established a Department of Curriculum and Educational Evaluation and Planning. The Curriculum Department is comprised of three divisions according to functions: the educational research council; committees on curriculum evaluation, planning, and construction in special areas; and the curriculum council. The educational research council is concerned with a continuous evaluation of the instructional program in terms of objective evidence from the test-

ing program. Committees on evaluation, planning, and construction in special areas are appointed as the need arises. They have the responsibility of producing materials to assist teachers in guiding the learning experiences of boys and girls. The curriculum council is composed of teachers, principals, and directors representing all buildings, all grades, and all subject-matter departments. Provision has also been made for lay representation. The functions of the curriculum council are interpretative and advisory. The council representatives report and interpret all curriculum projects to the teachers in their respective buildings. Constructive suggestions from the teachers may be reported back to the council. A central committee, selected from the curriculum council, has the responsibility of a continuous study of the total educational program; of review and reformulation from time to time of the basic philosophy of education; of overall planning of the total educational program in light of the aims; and of the construction of patterns for curriculum organization and development.—Jess S. Hudson, *Director of Curriculum*.

Curriculum Revision. Recognizing a lack of continuity in the various subjects from grades one to twelve, the Altoona (Pa.) Public Schools have undertaken revision of the curriculum on a vertical basis. In revising the social studies, the committee has enlisted the services of every teacher of the social studies. As a result, objectives have been established, a few changes in sequence of courses have been made, and content material has been selected for most courses. The superintendent and supervisors were always present for help and suggestions when asked. A fine spirit of cooperation has been developing among the teachers. Following the work in the field of social studies, similar committees have been organized in science, geography, mathematics, and English. About one hundred teachers served on curriculum committees. However, all 430 teachers contributed in one way or another in helping to build up vertical curriculums for each field.—Harry L. Kriner, *Superintendent of Schools*.

Child Study Program Expands. Philadelphia's child study program, now five years old, has been developing steadily. The leadership for the program is supplied through

the staff of the Curriculum Office. The most important single feature of the program is the child study group composed of teachers and principals meeting once every two weeks for a two-hour period. Each member of the group studies one or two children intensively, and brings his experience and records of observation to the group meeting for sharing and discussion. The supervisors of child study and development act as leaders of these groups, which now number fifty and in which some five hundred teachers, principals, and others are participating. To meet the demands of this expanding program the services of the supervisors are to be increased this year by the addition of seven classroom teachers. These teachers, known as collaborating teachers, will lead newly organized child study groups and work with the teacher members of these groups.—J. B. Taulane, *Assistant to the Associate Superintendent*.

Schools Conduct Weekly Radio Program. During the last school year the teachers and pupils of Binghamton (N. Y.) Public Schools assumed responsibility for a weekly fifteen-minute broadcast. A school radio committee, composed of one teacher from each elementary and junior high school of the city, planned programs to serve three distinctly different listening audiences—the primary grades one week, intermediate grades another, and junior high school grades the third week, thus providing thirteen programs for each of the three groups during the year. Each school accepted the responsibility to select its own stories, write its own scripts, provide a narrator, select the cast, and arrange the rehearsals. All of these activities were under the supervision of two directors—Jessie V. Enevoldsen, director of kindergartens and primary grades, and Elizabeth J. Drake, director of English, who edited the scripts, directed rehearsals, and produced the programs.

Introducing High School Seniors to Teaching. In order to help meet the declining supply of elementary teachers, a committee of East Chicago (Indiana) teachers was responsible for the introduction of a course in teaching practice for high school seniors. The coordinator, with the approval of the elementary principal and teacher, assigns

each pupil for one period a day to an elementary teacher who has a wholesome attitude toward her profession. Participation for each pupil is planned by the classroom teacher with the counsel of the coordinator. The student is given as wide a range of work in assisting the teacher as she is capable of doing without detriment to the best interests of the children. Her work begins with observation and is followed by such assignments as caring for the room, arranging materials, and keeping records. Later actual teaching may be done with small or larger groups of children following plans made by the teacher. The pupil is given work experience which may be helpful to her in the choice of a profession and, at the same time, an excellent opportunity is provided for the recruitment of well-qualified young women for the teaching profession.—A. C. Senour, *Superintendent of Schools*.

Continuous Faculty Planning. The daily schedules in the junior high schools of Pasadena, Calif., include a thirty-minute faculty planning and in-service education period preceding each day's school work. The activities range from discussions on general policy by the entire staff to various committee meetings, department meetings, and grade level meetings, each involving only a relatively few persons having particular problems and interests. Through discussion and the free exchange of information and ideas teachers are able to improve the quality of their instruction. Those dealing with different phases of instructional units are able to better coordinate their efforts.—Roland W. Grinstead, *Coordinator of Secondary Curriculum*.

In Brief J. Cecil Parker has been employed to fill the newly created position of curriculum coordinator for the San Francisco Public Schools.

Edgar L. Grim, formerly superintendent of Vassar schools, has been appointed head of the recently established community school service program of the Michigan Department of Public Instruction. The program is an experimental educational project aimed at discovering the best ways of improving community living through the services of the schools. Funds to support the program have been given to the Michigan group by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Under the direction of Byron England, director of instruction, the El Paso (Tex.) Public Schools have undertaken a long range project in the preparation of teaching guides for non-English-speaking pupils on the elementary level with particular emphasis upon the upper grades which are commonly neglected.

A group of graduate students working under the direction of Harold Alberty of Ohio State University has prepared a fully annotated bibliography of magazine articles on high school supervision for the period 1940-1945. The emphasis in the short reviews is upon democratic supervision.

From the Kansas City Schools comes a report that plans have been made for a reorganized program of secondary education with provision for a basic core curriculum, opportunities for the development of individual interests, vocational preparation, and health and physical education.

In the announcement of plans for its peacetime educational program, the San Francisco Public Schools include the initiation of a long-term program of curriculum development involving the participation of the teachers and designed to meet the present and future needs of the children.

A committee of Ann Arbor (Mich.) Public School teachers has developed a statement of policies with regard to awards and competition in the junior high schools. The three school faculties which participated in the development of the statement have agreed to test the principles in practice.

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the legislative front results from the individual teacher's belief that "I do not count, that no one will pay any attention to what I say." This is not true. Congressmen and Senators are sensitive to letters addressed to them, particularly if such letters sincerely and thoughtfully present worthwhile ideas. This procedure is democratic and sound and right. In addition to being thoughtful and sincere, such letters should be simple, brief, courteous, personal. Your voice counts. You can help. It is important that you move to action.—R. B. MARSTON, *Director NEA Legislative-Federal Relations Division*, for DSCD Legislative Committee.

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