

## Groundwork for Improved Curriculums

—EDGAR M. DRAPER



INTENSE INTEREST in improving the educational system of Hawaii has led to a study of pertinent and significant problems of the Territory's schools. At the conclusion of the session of the Hawaiian Legislature in 1943, Holdover Committees were appointed by the Senate and House of Representatives to present recommendations to the 1945 Sessions. These committees concerned themselves immediately with the reorganization of the Department of Public Instruction, studies of the curriculum, teaching personnel, and teacher training. After they had studied the results of several preliminary investigations by interested groups and individuals in the Territory, the House Holdover Committee contacted the National Education Association concerning the need for a survey of the Hawaiian Public Schools.

The American Council on Education agreed to sponsor a curriculum survey of the public schools of the Territory and to select a director and a staff to conduct the survey.

The Survey Committee was able to spend only the month of December 1944 in the Territory of Hawaii since service personnel and equipment for war held first priority for transportation. Through the cooperation of Pacific Fleet personnel, air reservations were finally secured on December 1. Members of the American Council Survey Committee did more than 6000 miles of ocean flying to and from the Islands and in visiting all major islands in the archipelago. As soon as they returned, a preliminary report of eighty-five pages was prepared and hurried to Hawaii by Navy plane for the opening of the Legislative Sessions of 1945.

This preliminary report concerned itself primarily with the essential modifications necessary in the Department of Public Instruction in order to insure the organization and development of a curriculum-improvement program in the Territory. Since the curriculum includes all the educative experiences which youth has under the auspices of the schools, a curriculum survey cannot be approached as a study of the mere sequence of subject matter in grades or areas. The American



Hawaiian youth shares in community activity

Council Survey Committee approached its task from the point of view that the curriculum is primarily concerned with child growth and development and includes not only the subject learnings of the classroom, but also the extra-curricular activities, the guidance services, the social life of the school, and outside work experience if it is related to the school program and correlated with the learning experiences of the pupils.

### There Is Work to Be Done

Careful consideration of the curriculum is particularly important at this time, both on the Mainland and in the Territory of Hawaii because the curriculums of all schools have been subjected to the severe strain of wartime demands. Furthermore, the transition from war to peace will be a crucial time for youth, and it will be the duty of the schools to provide the very best possible education for the generation which will build the post-war world. School programs should be critically appraised in preparation for the tremendous tasks which lie ahead. This preparation must be thorough and sound leading to the elimination of present weaknesses in administration and supervision in order that the foundations may be laid today for a better world for the people of tomorrow.

The public schools of Hawaii have accomplished much in the past twenty-five years. The Territory of Hawaii had convincing evidence in the days which followed December 7, 1941, that its educational program had faced a critical test, and that the ideals of democratic citizenship had become an integral part of the lives and thinking of a people representing many different races and antecedent cultures. Every American citizen owes a debt of gratitude to those people in the Territory who had the vision to plan

and to develop such a realistic and functional democratic school program.

### Educators Are Eager for Improvement

The schools are to be especially commended for the way in which they made adjustments after Pearl Harbor. It is also gratifying to note the professional attitude evidenced by the vast majority of teachers and administrators. Their eagerness for help and guidance in the effective performance of their work gives great promise of what can be done when proper direction and assistance are provided. Other features of the educational program to be noted are: the five-year teacher-education requirement for all prospective teachers; the uniform salary schedule for both men and women at all levels of instruction; the school-lunch program; the development of the program in dental hygiene; the emphasis on good school libraries; and the excellent beginning of the kindergarten program in the Territory.

The American Council Survey Committee believes that the administrators and teachers will do all they can to realize the objectives of a thorough-going curriculum-improvement program in the Territory. Their present limitations are lack of territorial organization, expert supervision and direction, and financial appropriations sufficient to insure adequate services to all sections of the Islands.

It should be constantly borne in mind that public education is "of the people, by the people, and for the people" and is best developed through the cooperative and understanding efforts of all the people. While it is true that certain aspects of curriculum improvement are strictly professional in nature and require trained personnel, it is equally true that the curriculum of the schools has its roots in American life and a continuous program of modification and improvement must have the intelligent and enthusiastic support of the citizens of the nation, the state or territory, and the community. The people of Hawaii appear to be keenly sensitive to the trends in the American democratic way of life and eager to cooperate with administrators and teachers in realizing as fully as possible desirable educational objectives.

Widespread and intelligent interest in education shown by the people in the Territory

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*It is stimulating to learn of Hawaii's concern for its youth during this period of readjustment to a world slowly dropping the shackles of martial activity. Of particular note is the fact that the Legislature of Hawaii appointed committees to examine the merits and demerits of the existing school system and to try to reach an effective and intelligent solution of its problems. This report by Edgar M. Draper, professor of education at the University of Washington and director of the Hawaiian survey, is heartening to educators and laymen.*

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was undoubtedly responsible for the rapid development of the schools. The request for the curriculum survey, in fact, was an indication of that interest and of the desire on the part of the people to improve their school system. Interest, constructive criticism, and a willingness to support sound educational measures were everywhere apparent during the time the survey was being conducted.

### Organization Governs Curriculum Change

The primary objectives of the present survey have been to study the scope of the curriculum, to analyze insofar as possible the offerings in the various fields, and to set up an organization in which curriculum improvement can be effectively developed in all of the public schools on all of the islands of the Territory. It has been the sincere belief of the Survey Committee that most of the educational problems now existing in the Territory of Hawaii will ultimately be solved or remedied through an intelligent and concerted attack on curriculum problems at all levels in all subject-matter fields, core studies, and integrated areas.

A considerable amount of space in the published report of the survey has been devoted to the presentation of plans for the improvement of administration and supervision in the Department of Public Instruction. The ultimate success of the curriculum-improvement program will necessitate a complete reorganization of the Department of Public Instruction to include definite divisions or departments of professional activities and responsibilities and the addition of qualified supervisors and staff assistants. Proper allocation of responsibilities and the provision for adequate guidance and supervision of teachers and administrators cannot be attained without the addition of qualified personnel to the present staff.

The addition of curriculum specialists to the Division of Instruction and of field workers to the staff of the District Superintendents will facilitate the solution of the pressing curricular problems confronting the schools of the Territory, such as improving teachers in service, developing new learning experiences and materials, adjusting the school offerings to the needs of the children, formulating school standards, and determining methods of evaluating the school progress of pupils.

Any proposed reorganization of a school system can be effective only in so far as it is made functional in the schools through administrative vision, dynamic leadership, and provision for adequate professional assistance from the central office. It is not enough for the Legislature to accept a proposed administrative and supervisory program on paper; provision must be made for its realization through the addition of expert supervisors and field workers to assist a teaching staff in guiding the development and growth of pupils in all fields such as instruction, guidance and personnel work, and special activities. It is imperative that sufficient time be provided in the schedules of the teachers for activities which are intimately related to professional growth. Such an administrative and supervisory staff has been proposed by the Survey Committee.

### Teacher Participation Is Encouraged

The professional growth of teachers will be objectively demonstrated through their participation in the curriculum-improvement program of the Department of Public Instruction; and cooperative supervision will be objectively demonstrated through supervisors and teachers working together on the problem concerned with the effective utilization of curriculum materials rather than in classroom visitation for the purpose of checking score sheets and making reports. A teaching corps which is well trained and properly stimulated will be able to cooperate in significant studies in the areas of child growth and development, curriculum improvement, remedial education, extension of educational opportunities downward to 4-year-olds and upward to post-secondary pupils, adult education, and other aspects of education.

### Steps to Be Followed

The Survey Committee proposed that the deputy superintendent in charge of instruction should develop a program of curricular improvement throughout the Territory which would gradually include more and more of the teachers in a concerted attack on this professional work. *Guide for Curriculum Making in Hawaii*, which was published by the Department of Public Instruction in 1938, is forward-looking and should have been very helpful in promoting a curriculum-improvement program provided

## DSCD to Hold National Meeting in 1946

*We would like to present this announcement with the fanfare of trumpets because we believe it is that important.*

**For the first time in four years this Department is holding a national convention. The place is St. Louis, the Statler Hotel, and the time is March 21-23, 1946. Every member of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development is invited to come.**

Not only is this the first national meeting since shortly after Pearl Harbor, but it is also the first time this Department has ever conducted a conference alone, all previous conventions having been held in conjunction with other groups.

During the war years when national meetings were out of the question, school people found other ways of working together and sharing ideas. They turned to closely coordinated local, state, and in some instances regional groups to supplement correspondence and the educational press. In a similar way, this Department was able to continue its services to members in spite of war restrictions. Through its regional and state organization and its committees at work on specific problems, DSCD kept in close touch with the membership throughout the country. Field trips by the executive secretary helped to tie together local and national interests, and Department publications presented important news and discussions.

These commendable ways of working will, of course, be continued. But there is no real substitute for the healthy interchange of ideas made possible when representatives from every part of the country come together. That is why we consider our coming meeting of such great importance to all of us. That is why we hope you will attend. We should like to hear from you as soon as you have made plans. Further details were sent members from the Washington office.

an adequate supervisory staff had been available to assist the teachers in developing their classroom units of work. In spite of this lack of assistance from the central office, many superior teachers are doing curriculum work which is far in advance of any work that is being projected or carried out on a territorial basis.

The proposed organization suggested that the Division of Instruction and the offices of the assistant superintendents in the various districts facilitate the development of a curriculum-improvement program on a territorial basis. The following steps will need to be taken in developing such a program:

1. A philosophy of education should be developed and accepted by the teaching staff, administrators, and supervisors throughout the Territory. This philosophy should be formulated through faculty meetings, district institutes, and territorial conferences and should represent a consensus of all groups in the Department of Public Instruction and the teaching staff as a whole.

2. An experimental attitude should be developed by the teaching staff, administrators, and supervisors in the determination of objectives, learning experiences, teaching procedures, and methods of evaluating growth.

3. A curricular pattern should be formulated in which teacher participation and cooperation can be developed throughout the Territory. This will include territorial committees in subject-matter areas, territorial committees for grade levels, and corresponding district and school committees. All committees should work within the scope of the basic principles included in the philosophy of education. Territorial curriculum committees should assume final responsibility for the organization of basic units to be covered at the various levels in the different subject-matter areas. Such basic units should be comprehensive, but should also indicate certain experiences at particular grade levels and in subject-matter areas. It is, of course, extremely important that teachers in different localities supplement these units in order to

adjust the courses of study to the particular pupil groups and community needs.

4. The next step in a curriculum-improvement program for the Territory, after a philosophy has been developed and a pattern established, should be in the nature of an inventory of the present practices in the classrooms. The teachers should be asked to indicate the objectives for each class in each area, the learning experiences which are projected for the realization of these objectives, and their present methods of evaluating pupil growth. Such a survey will serve to point out schools where significant contributions are being made and areas in which different teachers are capable of assuming some responsibility in the new program. Each school should initiate its curriculum program so that all teachers can participate effectively at their professional level. Teacher participation and the resulting professional growth of the corps are the objectives of the program. Some of the educational innovations introduced in Hawaii have had repercussions in the past because the teachers were not ready for them and could not assume responsibility for participation in the new program.

5. An intensive study of certain fields should be inaugurated at once by the Department of Public Instruction in order that modifications can be made in the present curricular offerings prior to the organization of the professional work in curriculum improvement on a territorial basis. These problems include such pressing needs as:

- Expansion of arts and crafts, manual arts, and homemaking

- Extension of public secondary education

- Expansion of the kindergarten program

- Development of adult-education

- Development of vocational and pre-vocational work in the intermediate and high schools

- Study of day care centers for children of working mothers

- Selection of textbooks

- Remedial classes in all areas

6. Certain practices in the Department of Public Instruction should be modified prior to the introduction of a curriculum-improvement program. The following modifications are recommended:

- Reduction of teacher-pupil ratio in classes

- Reduction of teaching schedules

- Reduction of pupil load

Assignment of teachers to a school on the basis of their classroom schedules. All special personnel such as registrars, guidance officers, and clerks should not be included in determining the size of the teaching staff

Provision for greater utilization of the curriculum work which has been done by teachers in the Territory

7. The teaching load should be reduced throughout the Territory both as to class size and number of class periods per day so that teachers will have the energy and enthusiasm to engage in the strenuous activities which are inherent in any dynamic curriculum-improvement program. This recommendation will involve considerable addition to the present teaching staff and to the clerical assistance allocated to the schools.

### Curriculum Improvement Is All-Inclusive

The survey made no pretense of analyzing intensively all phases of education in the Territory of Hawaii. It was especially concerned with school curriculums, but there were many aspects of education such as administration, supervision, building programs, and teacher training which were closely associated with problems in the area of curriculum improvement and had to be considered in so far as they had a bearing on the investigations and recommendations.

Few recommendations were made by the Survey Committee with regard to modifications in the curriculum in special subject-matter areas. Improvement in these specific curriculum areas such as language arts, social studies, science, and reading should be arrived at as a result of professional study and experimentation on the part of teachers and administrators under the direction of a staff of specialists in the Department of Public Instruction working with other specialists drawn from the University of Hawaii. Instruction offered in the public schools of Hawaii must be adapted to the needs of the children and adults attending these schools. Many of the curriculum problems in the Islands can be solved only by those who are close enough to the people and to the territory to possess the knowledge and understanding necessary to determine what patterns are needed and what modifications are desirable.

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