

## Blueprint for Learning

WILL C. CRAWFORD

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? is the question of the hour. While the war was on we had our problems, but the war gave direction and purpose to the nation's effort. Now with the war won, we are faced with the somewhat baffling problem of redirecting our energies toward reconversion and toward the building of a better world. But where are the blueprints?

The blueprint for world organization is now in the making. Business and industrial planners are also envisioning the world of tomorrow through sketches and plans and dreams. So, too, the school districts of the nation are blueprinting their way ahead. The San Diego City School District, for example, has looked into the crystal ball. It is estimating population trends and building needs, it is evaluating new types of equipment and teaching aids, it is trying to predict the supply and quality of new teachers, and it is planning its instructional program to meet the needs of a new era.

This educational blueprint for San Diego was requested by the local Chamber of Commerce when, about a year ago, it employed an engineering firm to make a commercial and industrial survey of the community. The survey looked into the possibilities of industrial expansion, of broadening our port facilities, and of further encouraging agriculture in San Diego County. But the community also wished to know whether public education saw its way ahead clearly, whether it was prepared financially and educationally to enter the new world through the port of San Diego.

---

*Everything from how to teach understanding to how to acquire a new science laboratory concerned San Diego when it set out to discover the needs of its schools. This was a practical, fact-finding sort of study, out of which has grown a blueprint for a well-rounded program of education. What the survey revealed and how San Diego plans to follow through with action is described by Will C. Crawford, superintendent of schools, San Diego, Calif.*

---

Now in this community, where the population was 17,000 in 1900, 205,000 in 1940, and more than 350,000 at the peak of the war effort, the blueprint of the future is not easy to draw. It is probable that we will settle back to a population of 300,000 to 325,000 persons; but many more San Diegans will be in industrial employment than ever before. As it is, our average age level has been greatly lowered by the influx of young war workers and service personnel and by the rather high birth rate during the war.

Plans for the future, then, must recognize the sharp upward curve of elementary school enrollment. Even though this wave of high enrollment may taper off, the total day-school enrollment will likely stand at 45,000, as against 41,500 now and 32,000 before the war.

### A Simple Functional Setting

This means that building plans must continue; even though, during the war, one new junior-senior high school and twelve new elementary schools (400 classrooms in all, including additions to buildings) were established. Our new building plan, which revises a five-year building program published several years ago, will be launched with \$1,200,000 now in the school district's accumulative building fund. The district hopes to get federal aid to match these funds and it plans to add to the building fund year by year.

For what kind of school building? Not for eternal monuments of stone, of course, but for rambling, light and airy, one-story elementary schools located on partially shaded and generous plots of ground within walking distance of every child's home. Classrooms are to be patterned after a simple, functional plan and equipped with adequate, useful furniture and equipment selected and standardized by committees of teachers and principals.

The ample playgrounds of elementary schools will be equipped with standard equipment partly supplied by the school district and partly by the city; for the school grounds become city recreation areas directed by

recreation personnel at the close of the school day.

For the benefit of small children, elementary schools where possible are to be kept well below a thousand pupils. In fact they will average about 400 or 500. Ample and airy cafeterias serving wholesome warm lunches and small but simple auditoriums are in the plans for every elementary school.

High schools will continue to be multi-storied buildings planned with varied shops, science laboratories, commercial classrooms, home economics laboratories and housekeeping suites, music rooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and cafeterias. Special plans for vocational school buildings, particularly for the provisions for aircraft training shops and laboratories near the local airports, are in the making. The equipment already received from the Army Air Corps and the equipment used in war training classes serves as the initial equipment necessary to continue the program and to launch new courses.

Postwar conditions reopen continued studies of the various types of teaching aids and school equipment. Plans are gradually being formulated as to the amount and variety of visual and audio equipment each school should have and to what extent this equipment can and should be supplemented by the audio-visual instruction center of the school district. Standard equipment for shops and laboratories is also being blueprinted.

### Teachers for the Job

The supply of teachers to use this equipment is not, however, sufficient; nor does it seem likely that we will have an adequate number of elementary-school teachers for some years ahead. The personnel department is therefore continuing plans to attract teachers to San Diego. Recruiting plans are supported by recent improvement of the single salary schedule and ever vigilant care of the system of sick leaves and retirement. Charting the course of the local retirement system, which supplements the state system, we are now studying interest rates and employee contributions in relation to the school district's ability to pay a reasonable annual sum for adequate retirement payments.

Plans to attract bright, young prospects to the teaching profession include, on the one hand, the establishment of local chapters of

the Future Teachers of America and, on the other, continual effort on the part of the district and the teachers' association to establish teaching as a respected profession in the community.

### Reading and 'Ritin' Skills

All of the above planning, however, merely sets the scene so that the act of education can take place on a well-appointed stage. The principal characters in the play are the pupils who must so play their role that their parents may see their good works and praise their schoolmasters and schoolma'ams for developing such fine and practical citizens. The instructional program is the crux, or perhaps the crucible, in which all educational plans undergo the fiery test. And so, what is the instructional blueprint?

There is no controversy as to whether we emphasize the three R's and all those skills and knowledges basic to academic achievement. San Diego keeps a weather eye out for pupil progress in all the fundamental skills. Through a recent and continuing revision of courses of study and through a series of in-service, teacher-training workshops, which are still continuing, San Diego teachers have re-examined their practices quite thoroughly in the fields of reading, spelling, arithmetic, handwriting, and language instruction.

Work on the reading program stretches across the wide area from the pre-reading and reading-readiness activities of the kindergarten to provisions for more adequate remedial reading work and in-service training of remedial reading teachers in secondary schools. Elementary-school teachers have already been assigned as reading counselors in secondary schools; more such assignments are a part of our plan.

The reorganization of tenth-grade English provides for pupil orientation and self-analysis in terms of effective reading skills. This line of activity is only well launched. Future planning will capitalize upon these beginnings. We are trying to have academic skills improved at all levels according to the students' varying ability and achievement.

In handwriting, since print script and cursive writing exist side by side in our society, we have introduced print script as the first form of writing to be learned in the first and second grades. Cursive writing will

remain the basic form of handwriting instruction above the second grade, but with print script continued on a maintenance-of-skill basis.

Present plans call for the intensive and systematic treatment of language during the school year 1946-47. A thorough analysis of the basis of our instructional program will be made by the language arts steering committee.

### Round Pegs for Round Holes

With the end of the war, the need to prepare youth for immediate induction into a military service or a war industry also ended. In secondary schools, therefore, we can now reconsider the core of common learnings for all young people and the specialization induced by the individual pupil's special abilities or his occupational interest. Educational planning in this area does not proceed from any assumption that the traditional secondary-school program should be replaced, but rather that it needs to be reshuffled so as to get the round holes where they need to be for the round pegs and the square holes where they need to be for the square pegs.

The approach to this type of educational planning in San Diego is being made on three broad major fronts and several minor ones:

- a. A tenth-grade general education course occupying two periods is in the making. This course is to be experimental for 1946-47.
- b. Cooperative planning by social studies, English, and science steering committees will develop a better "general educational core" within existing subject fields at grade levels, other than the tenth.
- c. Possibilities for a "common learnings core" in junior high school are being explored.

### Education for Understanding

Intergroup, interracial, and intercultural tension force our school system to develop better relationships of group with group and better understanding and appreciation of one group for another. We have already tried to develop intercultural appreciation through a study of our "neighbors"—Latin America, Canada, Orient, and Russia—and through a consideration of repressed minorities within

our own nation and communities. We are now moving on toward a realization of the unfavorable position of many minority groups within the youth communities of our own schools. This leads ultimately to the need for better teaching of rational and unemotional approach to these problems.

Plans are developing to continue our work against juvenile delinquency through a carefully planned physical education and recreation program from the elementary school through the high school. The plans involve instruction in physical education, competitive games, dancing and rhythm program, character-building projects, and the like.

Work experience and camping for every child on a twelve-month basis is another project looking toward juvenile protection. The work experience program has gained a place of recognized importance. It can no longer be provided by the home alone, or by the community on a "hit or miss" basis. Now that the war is over and there is little demand for it in industry, other plans are necessary. One of the most promising avenues is the twelve-month camp idea. In such a program, young people, probably seventh- and eleventh- or twelfth-graders will enjoy camp life under carefully controlled conditions so that a definite series of educative activities will take place. San Diego is hopeful of getting "foundation" money to support such a program on an experimental basis. Such camps would run twelve months with groups of children going and coming continuously—probably for two-to-six-week periods. This plan should not be confused with present summer camping programs which have been primarily recreational. There is need for these camps too and there should be no competition.

A practical approach to social hygiene education is also a part of San Diego's blueprint. Background and training work have already been done here. Experimental programs have been well received. There is still need, though, for careful supervision, careful selection of instructors, and careful prescription of exact content and method essential to avoid reaction which might block the progress of this badly needed instruction. Our program is beginning in elementary school. It carries on into junior high, senior high, and junior college.

Some unique practices, such as nursery laboratories for parent education in our high schools, seem to point the direction of parent education and family life instruction in San Diego. Elementary-school techniques involve:

- a. Teacher demonstrations for parents of children in their classes of procedures used in teaching the regular subjects.
- b. School-led parent study groups on problems of cooperative planning.
- c. Recognition by principals of the seriousness of social isolation and its prevalence in every classroom and planning ways to eliminate it.

Character education plans probably crown our planning efforts in San Diego. It is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate any single line of activity to label as character education without oversimplification of the problem or ignoring fundamental work inherent

in long-established school practices. But the consciousness of teachers and principals has been sharpened to the necessity of increasing the scope of our special activities under this heading.

When we add to the above blueprint, plans for a more positive and realistic program of evaluation based on our objectives of instruction, we have something of a complete plan for the great structure of education in a community which itself has good foresight and great courage.

San Diego is still a city on the frontier, a city with vision, a city that looks to future greatness. Its public schools are trying to keep abreast of the community's needs and desires. We are, therefore, charting our course. Our blueprints are drawn. There is work ahead of us. Satisfaction in future achievement lies out there too.

---

## Supervision to Meet Today's Needs

MODERN CONCEPTS OF SUPERVISION are thoroughly explored in the 1946 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA. The new publication, titled *Leadership Through Supervision*, will come from the press this spring. ASCD members receive the Yearbook as a part of their membership. Others may order the volume from this Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., for \$2 a copy.

Supervision is considered in the broad light of educational frontiers, with emphasis upon the part sound supervisory practices can play in meeting the needs of children and youth today. A discussion of the problems of supervision is based on a survey of numerous school systems throughout the nation. Most promising practices as revealed by the survey are analyzed and reviewed. Survey results are graphically shown through tables and drawings.

Co-chairmen of the Yearbook committee preparing *Leadership Through Supervision* are Lelia Ann Taggart, director of education, Santa Barbara County, California, and Fred T. Wilhelms, associate director, Consumer Education Study of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, Washington, D. C.

Contents for the new Yearbook are as follows:

EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL FRONTIERS—*William Van Til*, Director of Publications, Bureau for Intercultural Education, New York, N. Y.

THE AMERICAN DREAM—*Marguerite Ransberger*, Supervisor, Elementary School of Lompoc Union, Calif.

ANALYZING OUR PROBLEMS—*Lelia Ann Taggart*, Director of Education, Santa Barbara County, California, and *Mary C. Evans*, General Supervisor, Santa Barbara County, California.

A LOOK AT OUR BEST—*Lelia Ann Taggart* and *Mary C. Evans*

TOMORROW'S ASSIGNMENT—*Fred T. Wilhelms*, Associate Director, Consumer Education Study of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, Washington, D. C.

Copyright © 1946 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.