

Front Lines in Education

Henry Harap, Editor

Regaining Lost Ground. Readers of this department must have been impressed by the number of states and localities that are re-summing the educational programs interrupted by war. Those who are interested in the improvement of the curriculum will have to work harder during the next few years to regain the lost ground. The program of education for living as it was emerging before the war was planned after at least two decades of thorough study of child and community needs. A vigorous, continuously operating program of curriculum adjustment is indispensable in the transitional period if we are to complete the task that lies ahead.

Curriculum Planning in Michigan. Curriculum development in Michigan is directed by the State Curriculum Planning Committee which is a representative group of Michigan schoolmen appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction as an advisory body. The chairman this year is Earl C. Kelley of Wayne University. Upon the recommendation of the Planning Committee, the following subcommittees have been appointed for the current year: Adult Education, Secondary Education, Elementary Education, Guidance, Health Education, Safety Education, Intercultural Understanding, Citizenship Education, Aviation Education, Human Growth and Development, Creative Arts, Conservation Education, and Home and Family Life Education. A conference of representatives of these subcommittees is planned for the spring at which time the achievements of the year will be carefully analyzed and plans will be made for the ensuing year. Nearly four thousand Michigan school people have served on these state committees during the past seven years.—Eugene B. Elliott, *Superintendent*.

A Study of School Readiness. Lawrence A. Averill, head of the department of psychology at the Worcester State Teachers College has recently completed for the

Massachusetts State Department of Education, a statewide study "School Readiness, School Admission and First Grade Objectives." In 88 per cent of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts, children are not older than five years and nine months when they enter school. In 15 per cent of the communities, they are under five years and five months. The obvious results for all, with the exception of some 20 per cent of first-graders whose mental age is considerably accelerated over their chronological age, are failure and frustration at the very beginning of their school career when they should properly be experiencing success and high anticipation. To meet the needs of the other 80 per cent of children, the first grade is called upon to adjust its program so that children may, during much of their first year in school be helped to grow physically, socially, and emotionally and to build up a rich experiential background for reading readiness.—Julius E. Warren, *Commissioner of Education*.

Projects in State of Washington. Local schools in various parts of the State of Washington have made surveys of community needs and have developed programs of curriculum revision. The Kelso Public Schools set up a health and physical education project three years ago, as a result of a survey in their district, and through a well-directed program are now showing good results. The services of Edgar M. Draper, curriculum consultant of the University of Washington, were made available to them through the in-service training program. The Clover Park Schools began an over-all district group study of their entire high school program, later segregating into departmental committees for specialized analysis and review of their findings. A study of basal reading is under way in the Wapato Schools and a testing program of the entire district has been conducted. In the development of the secondary level testing, pupils are tem-

porarily placed in a general grouping until their reading and language skills are developed satisfactorily to transfer into regular classes.—Pearl A. Wanamaker, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*.

The Community Approach in North Carolina. Many efforts at curriculum improvement, based upon needs felt by local school centers for cooperative attacks upon community and school problems, are being made in North Carolina. Teachers' meetings in many centers have been turned into workshops. Efforts of most of the groups are directed generally toward implementing the new *Language Arts Bulletin*, the work of many individuals and groups in the state. Members of departments of education at the University of North Carolina, at other teacher-training institutions in the state and at the State Department are assisting as consultants on call at various centers. Direct attacks have been made to change the curriculum to conform with community needs in Alamance County through workshops, through extension courses, and through strenuous local initiative. In Lee County, in Gastonia, in Burke County, to name only a few of the centers, curriculum changes are taking form, and the same kinds of cooperative efforts as in Alamance County are being used.—James S. Tippett, *Visiting Lecturer, University of North Carolina*.

Developments in Maryland. By act of the legislature, the schools of Maryland have added a twelfth grade to the public school program. Most of the schools are changing gradually by having the seventh-grade pupils begin the first year of the new six-year high school program. Conference committees in the major subject fields were organized at a two-week workshop attended by 150 supervisors, principals, and teachers from every part of the state. For the first time, elementary-school teachers worked together with secondary-school teachers and classroom teachers worked side by side with administrators and supervisors. An overall design for all the twelve grades in each of the major areas of instruction was developed. During the current year committees will meet all over the state in practically every county. A few schools are experimenting with a core

curriculum in the seventh grade.—Earle T. Hawkins, *Supervisor of High Schools*.

Practice Teaching Guide. As an aid to college seniors who are entering their first practice teaching experience, the supervising teachers of Central Michigan College, Mt. Pleasant, Mich., have prepared and published handbooks covering the situations to be met on both elementary and secondary levels. In order to be as helpful as possible topics are handled briefly, concisely, and in a very practical manner. Where needed, actual samples of forms are included, especially in the secondary handbook. Topics covered include such items as the organization of the school, observation, participation, lesson planning, conferences, materials, time schedules, and all the other aspects of teaching with which the student must become familiar. Supervisors make use of the book in conferences and it is a vital part of the material used in senior education courses.—Edna M. Heilbronn, *Central Michigan College, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.*

Longer Periods for General Education. In order to aid the individual pupil, most of the class schedules of the Barratt Junior High School, Philadelphia, have been revised to allow each section to spend two-thirds of every day with one teacher. In addition to making it possible to know pupils better, this plan provides longer uninterrupted periods for the program of general education. The time spent with one teacher includes the periods formerly assigned to arithmetic, English, science and social study. Depending on the teacher, the work in sections thus organized ranges from separate subject-matter instruction to complete integration. As a result of this program, the general tone of the school has become more friendly and attendance has increased from 85 per cent to 93.5 per cent.—Edward T. Myers, *Principal*.

Akron Principals Study Their Duties. In a study program now in progress, the elementary school principals in the Akron (Ohio) Public Schools are making a thorough evaluation of their activities. The project began with a survey showing how principals in the elementary schools really spend their time. On the basis of the results of this survey, a plan of study was developed. The plan calls

for a series of meetings in which the duties actually performed by the principals in the various schools will be carefully considered. At present, five different groups of principals are meeting simultaneously to evaluate their activities and to determine what they should be doing in order to make the educational program in their schools most effective. At the close of the project, the conclusions of each group—largely in the form of recommendations and suggestions—will be assembled into one final report.—O. C. Hatton, *Superintendent of Schools*.

Design for the Curriculum. The New York City Public Schools have published a chart showing the design for the curriculum of the elementary schools. It was prepared to serve as a preview of a forthcoming bulletin on curriculum improvement. A section on growth and development shows some ways in which maturation is related to the curriculum. The objectives are those accepted for the school system as a whole with special interpretation for the elementary school. The curriculum areas are groupings of related materials previously included in many separate courses of study. A section on planning for teaching summarizes some of the important points in guiding learning experiences. The chart has been discussed by principals and teachers throughout the city. Later in the year it will be supplemented by a more extensive discussion of subject matter and units for the several grade levels.—C. Frederick Pertsch, *Assistant Superintendent*.

Integrated Program in Delaware. Curriculum development in Delaware is a cooperative procedure in which the classroom teacher reports the results of her experimentation to the State Department of Public Instruction. Each year new materials resulting from this cooperative program in curriculum development are presented to the teachers at either a pre-school or an early-school conference. An integrated program is followed in all of the schools. Programs are set up so that approximately half the day is devoted to activities in the fields of social studies, language arts, music, fine and industrial arts, while the other half places emphasis upon the development of skills. The latest curriculum bulletin endeavors to bring all of the

materials up-to-date as far as they were used by teachers in the classroom.—H. B. King, *Assistant State Superintendent in charge of Elementary Schools*.

Resource-Use Education in Texas. Individuals throughout Texas have been promoting the conservation and use of our resources for many years. Since 1933, Gordon Worley, special supervisor, has given special attention to this problem. Extension courses and workshops have been conducted regularly. Conferences of from one-to-five days have been held in local communities for the purpose of training the teachers in the county and to develop organizations to plan and carry out school and community improvement programs under the leadership of laymen with the aid of every member of the local faculty. At the 1941 mid-winter school administrators conference, a state committee to promote resource-use education was appointed. This committee included both educators and technical men. Cooperating with state, regional, and national agencies interested in resources and education, this committee has developed materials for use of teachers in instructing their pupils in the proper use of our resources. During 1944 and 1945 the state committee has been enlarged to include bankers, publishers, industrialists, and others who represent education, industry, commerce, and the people.—J. B. Rutland, *State Department of Education*.

Field Services. The Northern Illinois Teachers College at DeKalb has for several years offered service of a supervisory nature to schools in the area which it serves. Upon request of superintendents, the staff members work with teachers individually on special difficulties and on new units of work or in groups on common problems. In beginning any service, a great part of the time off-campus is spent in classrooms where rather continuous, systematic observations are made, first, to become acquainted with the school system and, second, to get to know the teachers. When the needs are understood, help is given by demonstration teaching, by conferences, and by discussion groups, before school, during free periods often when a special teacher is teaching, and sometimes after school. Much aid is given by bringing

textbooks, reference materials, and illustrative aids to re-enforce the matters considered. Considerable pre-teaching planning is done to encourage teachers in attempting new work themselves. Beginning teachers and rural schools were helped in a variety of ways. Numerous requests are received for aid in special subjects.—Helen R. Messenger, *Department of Education*.

Kentucky Stresses Improvement in Reading. One of the causes of retardation is inability to read well. This is recognized in the Kentucky program under way this year to keep children in school. One of the major objectives of the state's program is the improvement of the teaching of reading. A committee made up of the staffs of the Department of Education, state colleges, and public schools worked together for a long period in the spring of 1945 in trying to list the problems faced by teachers in teaching reading. Plans to help solve these problems were worked out. The results were published in a Department Bulletin under the title *Getting the Primary Reading Program Under Way*. More than 7,000 copies were printed but the supply was soon exhausted. More than eighty helping teachers employed in county and city school systems are working on the improvement of the teaching of reading and many are using the bulletin as a guide. The bulletin was developed through cooperation and there is wide cooperation in its use.—R. E. Jagers, *Chief, Bureau of Instruction*.

Minnesota Curriculum Program. The Minnesota plan for developing new curriculum materials calls for the publication of Curriculum Bulletin No. 1 which will point the direction and define the viewpoint for the forthcoming courses of study. About forty educators selected from all areas of education and from every part of the state are now working as committees preparing the material for this bulletin. To assist teachers and school systems in preparing their philosophy of education, a bulletin has been published entitled *A Procedure for Preparing a School's Educational Beliefs*. A number of schools are now using this material for their in-service training program including several of the experimental schools set up jointly by the College of Education, University of Min-

nesota, and the State Department of Education. Production of courses of study in the various areas of learning in the elementary field is scheduled for 1946.—W. A. Andrews, *Director of Graded Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

Adjustment to Individual Differences. As a result of experimentation in several St. Paul (Minn.) high schools during the past six years, a program for slow learners was initiated in each high school at mid-year. Another adjustment is being made in the opposite direction to accommodate individual differences. An extensively enriched program in English is being planned for the superior pupils. This course will be developed in two or three high schools where a large percentage of the graduates go to college and extended to other schools in the fall. English was the first subject chosen because through it all students can be reached, and subsequently the other subjects will be adapted to pupils' needs and capacities. Care is being taken to avoid relying solely on homogeneous grouping. Substantial adjustments are being made in subject matter and presentation.—J. E. Marshall, *Superintendent of Schools*.

In Brief. The Texas State Department of Education called a meeting to consider the question of launching a program for the preparation of a new state course of study for elementary schools. Miss Edgar Ellen Wilson of the State Educational Department acted as chairman.

The Hillsborough County (Fla.) teachers prepared a course of study for the elementary grades and another in high school English. The bulletins were the result of the cooperative effort of 103 teachers who participated in a workshop for a period of three weeks last summer.

Instead of the usual county teachers' institute, the Cumberland County (Pa.) Schools conducted a two-day conference in which teachers worked in groups on topics of their own choice under the direction of consultants.

All courses of study in the St. Louis Public Schools are being revised. Committees have been working for the past two years on the project. Courses of study in elementary-school music and science are already issued.

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