

# Front Lines in Education

Henry Harap, Editor

**Instructional Improvement.** Following the recommendations of a school survey report made two years ago, the Battle Creek (Mich.) Public Schools have established a division of instruction. Under the leadership of the director, W. M. Alexander, a program of instructional improvement has been developed which aims to provide a maximum of participation by the teachers. The teaching personnel will be encouraged to propose problems for study. Study groups will be organized around problems of common interest. Recommendations for change will be thoroughly considered by the entire staff. The teachers have agreed to devote a maximum of two after-school meetings a week to study groups and committee work.

**Tasks for This Year.** Walter Cocking in his monthly editorial in the *School Executive* suggests that the schools should direct their efforts during the current year to the following tasks: teaching world understanding; developing good intercultural relations; securing proficiency in work experience; developing skill in the democratic way of life; developing love and understanding of the out-of-doors; developing adequate consumer competence; operating adequate guidance services; making the school of use to the whole community. Achievement along any of these lines would be a great improvement over the *status quo* in many schools.

**Curriculum Director is Added.** In the reorganization of the administrative set-up in Kanawha County, West Virginia, provision has been made for an assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum development and the improvement of teaching. As such, the new assistant superintendent will have charge of curriculum, the appraisal of instruction, and the selection of teaching

supplies and equipment. Working under his supervision will be the directors of reading, music, art, industrial arts, and audio-visual education. The assistant superintendent in charge of this work is Herbert G. Tag, recently an assistant in the Child Study Clinic of George Peabody College for Teachers.—Virgil L. Flinn, *Superintendent of Schools*

**World Organization of the Teaching Profession.** The World organization of the Teaching Profession was created by the World Conference of the Teaching Profession called by the National Education Association at Endicott, New York, August 17-30, 1946. Representatives of the national professional organizations of teachers in twenty-eight nations attended the session. There were fifty-six official delegates. Advisors and observers included members of the staff of the United Nations, UNESCO, U. S. Department of State, the U. S. Office of Education, the Pan-American Union and representatives of six international teaching organizations and federations. In accordance with the constitution drafted at Endicott, the membership of the World Organization of the Teaching Profession will consist of national teacher organizations, international teacher organizations, state, regional and local associations, educational societies, educational institutions and individual members, subject to the approval and endorsement prescribed by the organic document. Adoption of the draft constitution waits upon the endorsement of ten of the national professional organizations in attendance. Interim business will be transacted by a preparatory commission. The Commission selected William G. Carr as secretary general.—Belmont Farley, *National Education Association*

### Supervisory Program in Remedial Reading.

The introduction and development of a supervisory program in the field of remedial reading is holding the interest of teachers, children and parents of Lansingburgh, Troy, N. Y. The diagnostic work is a cooperative process, supervisor and teacher working together under the guidance of the superintendent. The follow-up aims to provide suitable materials for use of children of the various levels in each classroom. Remedial cases are given a pre-test which is part of the diagnostic process. This is followed by corrective work which is done by the classroom teacher and supervisor. Teachers aim to bring each child up to his level of ability and help him to read widely on his level. Social adjustment demands "promotion" to grade levels higher than the child of limited mental capacity can reach by virtue of accomplishment. Therefore attempts are being made to help these children even after entrance to junior high school.—Mattie Graham, *Elementary Supervisor*

### Spokane Teachers Develop New Courses.

Democratically produced elementary courses of study in the social studies, basic science, and health, mark three years of effort in the public schools of Spokane, (Wash.). The new printed courses, permitting wide latitude in selection of basal texts, were worked out by committees of classroom teachers, principals, and supervisors. Most all meetings were held on release time from school, the Spokane school board providing substitutes for those on curriculum assignment. Heading the research groups was Leila Lavin, formerly director of student teachers at Eastern Washington College of Education, since 1943 the director of elementary curriculum for Spokane schools. A course in language arts for Kindergarten to Grade VIII is being prepared this year. On the theory that sound work by its staff deserves community acquaintance, Spokane schools are presenting weekly samples of the new curricula on KGA.—John A. Shaw, *Superintendent*.

**In-Service Education.** By arrangement with Western Kentucky State Teachers College, the Barren County Public Schools secured the advisory services of Bert R. Smith and Horace McMurtry in a program of school improvement for which the participants received college credit. The county superintendent and elementary supervisor took an active part in the project and provided local leadership. The teachers, after receiving proper instruction, made a survey of the community; gave mental tests to all children from fourth grade through twelfth; made an age-grade table for each grade and a grade progress table for each school; and each teacher made an intensive study of an individual child. The main problem was the development of the curriculum for the entire county school system. Each teacher developed learning units under the direction of the curriculum director and supervisor. Another problem dealt with the improvement of the teaching-learning situation as found in the visitation of different schools.—Lucy Byrd Edwards, *Elementary Supervisor*.

### Curriculum Revision in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction has recently issued a curriculum bulletin entitled "Local Participation in Statewide Revision of the Elementary School Curriculum" which is designed to stimulate study and experimental application of better practices. The basic philosophy throughout the bulletin is that of optimum child growth and development. Workshops used the new bulletin during the summer and many of the fall institute programs in Pennsylvania were planned around it. Administrators and supervisors concerned with elementary education attended "pilot" conferences with colleges acting as hosts, to discuss the bulletin and to set up their own machinery for voluntary participation. From that point the State program will evolve as the best thinking of local participants seems to indicate.—Leversia L. Powers, *Chief of Elementary Education*.

**Sharing with the Youth of the World.** *American Youth for World Youth* is an organization the purpose of which is to encourage American youth to establish friendly personal relations with children of other countries. The program is expected to be planned, organized, and carried out by the youth themselves. The help that young people give is the product of the work of their own hands. About two million youth are participating in the work which includes the sending of gift parcels of food, clothing, school supplies, toys, and games to the children of Europe. The organization publishes a News Bulletin which may be secured by writing to 35 East Thirty-fifth Street, New York 16, N. Y.

**Home and Family Living.** As a result of six years of work, the Seattle Public Schools have issued a teachers' guide to growth in family living. The six major aspects which are treated on all levels are: child care and development, consumer responsibility and family economics, the family's clothing, the family's food, the family's housing, personal growth, and family relations. These are discussed on the elementary-school level, where home and family living is incorporated in social studies, science, and other subjects; on the secondary-school level, where the general home-making and specialized skill courses are focused; and on the adult level, where help in all the strands of home and family living are available to men and women of the community through the family-life education and evening-school programs. For the past three years Vera Alderson, assigned to the central staff as assistant in home economics, directed the work, meeting with committees representing the various phases and levels, as well as with the overall Home Economics Curriculum Committee.

**Study of Home-Life Education.** The Lansing Board of Education of Lansing (Mich.) has accepted the invitation extended by the State Department of Public Instruction to take part in an experimental study on Home and Family-Life Educa-

tion. This study is functioning under the direction of a curriculum committee composed of teachers representing all phases of the city program. The committee recognizes that basically all people have four definite desires; namely, the desire (1) for new experiences, (2) for security, (3) for response-to-be-understood by associates, and (4) for advancement. Many problems were immediately raised which indicate the depths to which this study can go and the vital importance it is to the instructional program. Some of these are safety education which involves driver experience; better understanding of children's problems which reduces delinquency troubles; coordination of the guidance program from the kindergarden through the twelfth grade; study of the causes of divorces, the part income plays in happy living; greater use of the facilities of the community; a study of occupational and professional needs of the community; supplying the social and recreational needs of children, youth, and adults; promoting instructive travel experiences; and making sure that rich spiritual experiences are available. It is hoped to make family life a richer experience and one in which all members of the family can participate and assume responsibility for a happy and satisfactory life together.—Dwight H. Rich, *Superintendent of Schools*

**Curriculum Revision.** During the past year the supervisor of reading in Davenport (Iowa) has worked with the principals and teachers to develop work-type reading exercises in grades 4-6 in the elementary schools. They also developed 104 reading-readiness exercises for the kindergarden teachers. At the high-school level, the curriculum for grades 7, 8, and 9 was revised to provide considerably more time for literature, yet devote time for emphasis on oral and written compositions, and grammar-usage units as well. These units are being tried on an experimental basis for the first time during the school year 1946-47.—P. B. Jacobson, *Superintendent*

**Reconstruction of a School Program.** The Moultrie School for Negro Youth has recently summarized its experience of five years of reconstruction of its educational program in a booklet entitled, *Miss Parker: The New Teacher*. It was written to encourage new teachers to conserve the present achievements and to make further improvements in the program. Miss Parker is the principal character in a narrative into which is woven the activities of the school. The publication was produced in cooperation with the Secondary School Study of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes. Copies may be obtained from the Albany State College, Albany, Georgia.

**Effective Community Leadership.** The Topeka (Kans.) Public Schools are in the process of developing a social-studies program for twelve grades which is designed to give pupils information and understandings needed for effective membership in the local, national, and world communities. The beginnings of the elementary program go back to 1943 when Elementary Supervisor Dorothy E. Cooke and twenty Topeka teachers working at Columbia University under Herbert B. Bruner blocked out the units for the several grades. During the current summer a group of secondary teachers, working under the direction of Howard E. Wilson at Harvard University planned the social-studies sequence to cover the seventh to the twelfth grades. The entire program is based upon the assumption that democracy renews its strength by education in which the principles of democracy are practiced.

**Instructional Materials Laboratory.** The newly created center for instructional materials at the Iowa State Teachers College is intended to serve those who are engaged in problems of curriculum construction and related educational problems. Emphasis will be placed on the processes of working together as well as on the field of teaching

materials. Consultative services will be provided by members of the laboratory staff. The materials in the college will include curriculum guides, textbooks, workbooks, teachers' manuals, pamphlets, exhibits and units of instruction. The materials will be classified so that persons using the laboratory may be able to find what they are looking for quickly and easily.

**Children's Experiences in School.** Two teachers of the Wilson (Ark.) School have written the story of a learning activity for other children to read. *Building a House* was written by Norma Anderson and *Building a Grocery Store* was written by Mary Alice Stuttle. The booklets are lithographed from manuscript in the teacher's hand with illustrations by the children. Each publication is an account of the experiences of the children as they planned and carried out the group learning enterprise. The style and vocabulary are suited to the reading level of primary children.

**Improvement of Rural Communities.** Five rural communities in Michigan have been selected by the State Department of Public Instruction to take part in a project to improve community living in rural areas. This experimental program will seek to discover the best ways to improve all areas of rural living such as the school, health, library, recreation, home and family living, and the economic welfare of the citizens. Leadership in each community will be under the local boards of education with the cooperation of all municipal and independent agencies within the community area. The project is supported by funds from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Its expansion to several other communities is anticipated later. Edgar L. Grim is the director of the project and Ferris N. Crawford serves as supervisor.

**Inexpensive Books for Young People.** The mass production of inexpensive books is being extended downward to reach

young people of school age. *Pocket Books* which has sold millions of pocket-size books to adults recently announced the organization of the Teen-Age Book Club. Members may buy a book a month at 25 cents each for four months, after which they receive a free dividend book. The books are selected by a group of five educators. If the selection committee does its work conscientiously, this project should have a good influence on the reading habits of our youth. For information address: 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York 20, N. Y.

**A Curriculum-Study Program.** Emphasis upon curriculum development in Kalamazoo (Mich.) will this year be stimulated and directed through the Curriculum Council and the Central Administrative Committee on Intercultural Education. The faculty is organized into five committees which function as study groups. The subjects of study for these committees are: the nature of pupil progress; ways and means of securing democratic procedure in the classroom; the principal elements involved in developing standards of achievement in the classroom; the factors contributing to teacher load; and the manner of presenting the best program of social interpretation. Membership on these committees is voluntary. The chairmen of these five working groups, together with the chairmen of the two workshops on intercultural education and community resources, serve on the Curriculum Council. A subcommittee is now at work preparing suggested objectives for the direction of the work of the Central Committee on Intercultural Education and a list of projects which will form the basis of the program this year.—Loy Norrix, *Superintendent of Schools*

#### Brief Notes

¶ Roland C. Faunce, chief of elementary and secondary education for the Michigan

Department of Public Instruction, has resigned to become assistant professor of education on the faculty of Wayne University.

¶ Kenneth A. Batemen, formerly sixth grade critic at Northern Michigan College of Education, has joined the Michigan Department of Public Instruction as consultant in elementary education.

¶ D. F. Folger is the new director of the John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N. C. He was formerly dean of instruction at West Georgia College. The school emphasizes the improvement of living through work with youth and adults on land-use, cooperatives, recreation, and handicrafts.

¶ R. L. Fredstrom has left the Nebraska State Department as a supervisor of secondary education, to become chairman of the education department and director of teacher training at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

¶ The title of the most recent issue of *Building America* is "Cooperatives." It defines a cooperative business; traces its development from the Rochdale Pioneers to the present; explains how the business operates; and discusses its strengths and weaknesses.

¶ During the summer of 1946, the El Paso (Tex.) Public Schools produced three teachers' guides. The course of study in high-school mathematics gives equal emphasis to the academic and practical aspects of mathematics. Helps for the teacher of non-English-speaking and bilingual children have been completed through grade three. A third bulletin is a teachers' outline for conversational Spanish in elementary grades.

¶ Alice McWilliams is the new director of academic education in the Beaumont (Tex.) Schools. Under her direction the course of study in social studies will be revised this year.

¶ After three years of service overseas, G. Robert Koopman has returned to the Michigan State Department of Public Instruction and will serve as Assistant Superintendent on the Department staff.

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