

Front Lines in Education

Henry Harap, Editor

Common Learnings Courses. The Montclair (N. J.) High School Curriculum Committee composed of five teachers has been meeting one period every day on school time for three years. Prospective curriculum changes have been debated in several series of neighborhood discussion groups ahead of implementation. Eight groups of students and sixteen teachers are working now with common learnings courses on all grade levels. In the tenth grade, biology and English plus a home-room stress community problems, housing, public health, recreation, juvenile delinquency, town planning, heredity and environment, problems of human behavior, and much guidance, personal and otherwise. In time it is hoped to include for all, the basic mathematics, health education, music, art, and explorations in the industrial arts available now only to some students outside the experimental groups. In the eleventh and twelfth grades the framework is that of English and social studies. Experimentation here is just finding its directions, but it already suggests gains in broader interests, in units of personal finance, consumer education, and guidance, and notably in combating prejudice and intolerance.—Harold A. Ferguson, *Principal*.

Community College. In cooperation with the Department of Field Services of the University of Chicago, the Moline Public Schools are conducting a survey of the secondary school administration and curriculum. This study was begun in 1945 and will continue through 1948. As a result of preliminary recommendations, the secondary school program has been reorganized on a four-year junior high school basis and a two-year senior high school. Plans are in the making to institute a two-year community college to be

added to the eleventh and twelfth years of the Moline Senior High School. Although the present academic extension program may serve as a beginning for the new college, it is planned to introduce a series of terminal courses in the fields of industrial education, business education, and home economics education. In order that the program may be available to adults in the community, as well as to college age people, the program will be extended through the evening hours.—Alex Jardine, *Superintendent*.

Taking Stock. During the war years curriculum development in the Hamtramck (Mich.) Public Schools was pushed into the background. Last year the program was resumed under three major steps: 1. Where are we? 2. Where should we go from here? 3. What is the best way to get there? An instructional council consisting of the chairmen of subject matter groups met regularly during the year. The first question was answered by the preparation of summaries of all of the courses of study. Each teacher was given a complete set of these brief courses. This year's pre-opening conference consisted of an evaluation of the courses of study in the subject-matter area committees. This year the Instructional Council is planning to try to find the answer to the second question, "Where should we go from here?" When this matter is settled the courses of study will be revised in accordance with the answer to the third question, "What is the best way to get there?"—M. A. Kopka, *Superintendent*.

Teachers Plan School Building. New London, Conn., a city of about 30,000 people faces the need for new school buildings within the next few years. A

plan has been worked out whereby the faculty of one elementary school enrolling about 400 children—kindergarten through grade six—is devoting its attention exclusively this year to the planning of an educational program for a new school building. The faculty of sixteen teachers and one principal meet together every Thursday afternoon for two hours. The faculty is at present engaged in describing the kind of an educational program which it believes desirable for boys and girls. This will be followed by an attempt to describe in detail the kind of a school plant which is necessary if the potentialities of this program are to be realized. In order to bring the parents into this problem, a committee of the Parent-Teacher Association is working with the school faculty. The results of the work of the teacher group and parent group will be presented to the board of education and its architect when the time comes for actually considering the construction of a school building.—George R. Champlin, *Superintendent*.

Teachers Learn From Town Officials. Since it is desirable that teachers have a better understanding of the community in which they work, a plan was devised in West Hartford, Conn. to make this possible. First, the teachers of the town were consulted to find if they thought such a course would be of value and interest, and they were also invited to submit the phases of community life they would like discussed. Following this rather general survey, the various town officials were invited to discuss their departments in terms of their origin and development, the present method of operation, and plans for the future. The result was a series of fifteen one-hour meetings, at which time there was the opportunity to hear, see, and talk with the town manager, the chief of police, the chairman of the board of finance, the director of recreation, the fire chief, the town engineer, the head librarian, the judge of the town court, and many others.—L. H. Bugbee, *Superintendent*.

Program of Child Study. The Maryland State Department of Education is engaged in a three-year, statewide program of child study with Daniel A. Prescott and his staff serving as consultants. Each county selected a number of persons to lead child study groups. Seventy-five groups of white teachers and twenty-three groups of Negro teachers were working the first year—a total of 1200 teachers. The teachers colleges are working on ways to make their courses give the student-teachers a better understanding of child growth and development. New study groups have been organized this year in many cases by persons who were members of study groups last year. Briefly, the plan is that each teacher study one child through the year. Conclusions of causes of behavior are drawn from the information they collect and from scientific research. Implications for curriculum and school policies will eventually grow out of the program.—Grace L. Alder, *Supervisor of Elementary Schools*.

Field Services. The Bureau of Cooperation with Educational Institutions of the University of Michigan was organized to offer a wider type of state service than merely that of accrediting high schools. Provision is now made for consulting service on problems arising in schools and colleges and for lectures and leadership in institutes, conferences, parent-teacher associations, and other educational organizations. The bureau publishes a one-page leaflet, *Observations*, which contains suggestions concerning school equipment, school organization, and the improvement of teaching. An annual report is also published containing the list of all accredited schools; the criteria developed to aid in closer cooperation between secondary schools and the university; and summaries of trends in school enrollments and subject registrations in secondary schools.—George E. Carrothers, *Director*.

Curriculum Study. Following the recommendation of a comprehensive school survey conducted by the Bureau of Educa-

tional Research of Ohio State University, the Hamilton (Ohio) Public Schools engaged in a citywide study of the curriculum in three major fields: language arts, mathematics, and social studies. Certain elementary schools elected to serve as centers for special study in each of these fields. Every teacher in the elementary school division, and all secondary teachers in the departments named, participated in the curriculum study—nearly 200 persons in all. In each curriculum field the work was directed by a citywide committee on which all levels of instruction were represented. Subcommittees organized at the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels gave intensive consideration to problems arising in those areas. Some tentative curriculum outlines in each of the fields studied have been issued and others will be ready for publication before the end of this school year.—Terry Wickham, *Superintendent*.

Education of Teachers In Service. In East Baton Rouge Parish, La. there has been initiated a longtime program for in-service training of school personnel. The program was launched in the summer of 1944 with a workshop for principals and supervisors. The major emphasis of the workshop was the place of the principal in the educational program and his responsibility for supervision in his school. The following summer, a workshop was held for all teachers, principals, supervisors, and administrators of the parish. Over three hundred people were in attendance at the workshop held on the campus of Louisiana State University. During the 1945-1946 school session, the supervisory program both in individual schools and from the central office was designed to follow up the work on problems which were considered during the summer workshop. Professional groups in the parish included in their year's program of activities plans which had been initiated in the workshop. Throughout the year, teachers of East Baton Rouge took part in a series of conferences planned by the teacher-training institutions of the state, designed as a part of the statewide pro-

gram for professional improvement of teachers in service.—Clark L. Barrow, *Superintendent*.

Curriculum Reviewed. A new procedure is being tried in the Mount Vernon (N. Y.) Public Schools to keep the curriculum up to date and to coordinate the work in the schools from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The elementary curriculum will be reviewed by a committee of elementary teachers with a consultant from the junior high school and one from the senior high school. The secondary curriculum will be reviewed by a committee of secondary teachers with a consultant from the elementary school. In this way there will be a coordination of experiences on all committees. Instead of the usual department heads, chairmen of curriculum revision will be appointed who will receive compensation for their work. The elementary committees are to work under the supervision of the elementary supervisor and the secondary committees under the supervision of the assistant superintendent of schools in charge of secondary education. Before final reports are accepted and approved, they will be reviewed by a committee of principals on the respective levels.—Jordan L. Larson, *Superintendent*.

Film Explains New Course. The curriculum planning committee for arithmetic in the elementary schools of Philadelphia, with the cooperation of the Division of Visual Education has produced a series of colored film slides with sound transcription to illustrate practical, day-to-day methods of putting the new arithmetic course of study into practice. Arrangements are being made by the curriculum office for a series of faculty meetings in the elementary schools throughout the city. At these meetings, the film slides will be shown and discussion will be led by collaborating teachers who have served on the arithmetic committee. The film explains the ideas behind the activities shown in the pictures and tells why each is important in the development of number concepts and skills.

Brief Notes

Last year the California Congress of Parents and Teachers established a fund of \$50,000 for teacher education scholarships to attract to the teaching profession students of outstanding ability and sincerity of purpose. Seventy-two scholarships were awarded in 1945.

A program of curriculum revision was projected by a committee of the Central Costa County California Principals' Association under the chairmanship of Fred S. Ramsdell, with members representing the various county elementary and secondary schools.

A student council conference lasting one day was held at St. Mary's Lake Camp for representatives of student councils in the Battle Creek (Mich.) area. Roland Faunce of Wayne University and Frances Martin of Central Michigan College served as consultants.

The Ventura County California Secondary Schools are in the exploratory stage of a comprehensive study program which will be conducted in cooperation with the California State Department of Education.

A conference on recreation, camping and conservation education was held in Albany, N. Y. sponsored by the joint committee on recreation, camping, and conservation education of the state conservation and education departments. The group approved a platform which would extend the camping opportunities to more individuals; provide for the professional training of personnel for these programs; set up camp demonstration centers; and secure increased funds for such services.

The Michigan Study of the Secondary School Curriculum recently held a conference of teachers of core curriculum at St. Mary's Lake Camp, near Battle Creek. Among those participating were teachers of unified studies, integrated programs, social living programs, and block schedules.

The Malden (Mass.) Public Schools have opened a veterans high school center in its high school, staffed and maintained, however, entirely apart from that school.

The instructional plan is largely tutorial, each veteran progressing at his own rate of speed. All high school courses will be offered.

A science committee in the Cranston (R. I.) Public Schools is reviewing the course of study from the first to the twelfth grades. Revisions will be made in accordance with the committee's recommendations.

THE LISTENING POST

(Continued from page 337)

operates under the law of 1939, Louisiana's program was authorized in 1945 under the legally authorized administrative responsibility of the state board of education, and legislative authorization for the New Jersey service was given in the Spring of 1946.

State departments of education: To aid in the development of state programs now authorized by law for children under six, the state boards of education in at least eleven states have to date employed a supervisor or director of early childhood education. For the most part these staff officers are responsible for the full primary unit of the school program. They are working both to assure a continuing guidance program appropriate for children and their parents and to explain the values of the program to the average citizen concerned with the tax dollar.

Many problems lie ahead in terms of state aid, age levels to be included, class size, appropriate equipment, and staff preparation. Yet major progressive steps have been taken in the past two years through the cooperating efforts of state and community workers actively concerned with the family welfare, the health, and the education of young children. Continued cooperation with community agencies and with the lay public as well as a well-planned public information program are essential to extend the school facilities for this younger age level.—MARY DABNEY DAVIS, *ASCD Legislative Committee.*

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