Front Lines in Education

Henry Harap, Editor

Michigan Secondary Study. The Michigan Study of the Secondary School Curriculum which began in 1937 is engaged in a number of current activities. The most recent significant development has been the extension of the college agreement to admit students from schools outside the study that agree to meet certain conditions. Another activity for the remaining three years of the original twelve is the attempt to initiate an evaluation program of the Michigan schools which provide integrated general education courses. The August working conferences are continuing to grow in popularity. This past summer two such conferences were held—each of a week's duration. Efforts are being made to blend the Twelve-year Study with the new study that is in a sense originating as a result of the extension of the college agreement.—Leon S. Waskin, State Department of Public Instruction.

Citizenship Education Study. This study is a joint project of the Detroit Public Schools and Wayne University. Its purpose is to seek ways of increasing the understanding and participation of boys and girls in the activities of good citizens. Two major methods are planned for the Study. First, a general curriculum approach is used in eight participating schools. Second, specific school citizenship practices are to be evaluated by more carefully controlled research techniques. Most of the effort during the first two years of the Study has been given to the general approach with the eight schools. Last year much effort was devoted to helping teachers understand children better. This year the staff has given increased attention to the area of critical thinking. Teacher groups have become increasingly involved in many school projects such as improving the student council, building units on the meaning of democracy, establishing closer school-community relations, and developing pupil participation in service activities.

Community Council. The Longview (Washington) Educational Policies Council consisting of representatives of twenty-five civic organizations came into existence in 1942. During the first two years this council met at frequent intervals and made recommendations to the school authorities and the Board of Directors. Now that the pressing problems are those of a peace time economy the Longview Educational Policies Council has been revived and has taken for its main task a study of the recently completed Strayer report on education in the State of Washington. The council is directing its attention toward local applications of that report and has made several recommendations regarding more adequate local financing of schools and state legislation to improve the ability of local school systems to provide better education. Curriculum implications of the Strayer Survey will probably be the next area for consideration. During the five years of its existence this community council has been a valuable means of determining public sentiment in regard to school problems and of getting to various groups an understanding of what the school is trying to do. It has been a very helpful medium for the Board of Education without attempting to usurp its powers.—E. J. McNamara, Superintendent of Schools.

Language Arts. Climaxing an effort begun in 1943, courses of study in language arts from the first grade through the first year of junior college were published and
put into use in all Hutchinson (Kansas) schools in September, 1946. The outlines were prepared in a workshop at the University of Wisconsin in 1944 under the direction of Robert C. Pooley, Glen G. Eye, and Lois Nemec. The outlines were used on an experimental basis in all grades during 1944-1946 and the present volumes include the revisions that were found necessary. The significant feature of these courses is the close cooperation of teachers at all levels of the school system working simultaneously on the problem. The same philosophy governs the entire series, from first grade into the junior college. Much resource material is provided, and latitude is given to provide teachers with opportunity to exercise individual initiative.—W. R. Goodwin, Superintendent.

Field Work. The Department of Education of Pennsylvania State College is conducting three curriculum studies in different areas of the state. During the first year, participating teachers will study four general problems: teacher, pupil and lay beliefs about the schools, community resources, pupil interests and needs, and present school organization and offerings. Teachers are divided into groups of forty or fifty according to geographical location and representatives of groups come together to organize the materials prepared by each committee. During the second year, such groups will consider broad goals and purposes and educational principles as they are related to the four studies made during the first year of the program. During the third year, committees will try out learning activities in all the schools of the school district. Study groups will be organized, both according to school levels and according to subject fields, so that learning materials may be articulated among the several grades and correlated among subject fields. —Willis E. Pratt, Head of Department of Education.

Supervision in the Individual School. Three schools in one for purposes of supervision and curriculum development have been in operation now for eight years in Radnor High School, Wayne, Pennsylvania. Six faculty members are released from teaching half time in order to share with the principal responsibilities in supervision and leadership in curriculum development. Each grade faculty meets once or twice weekly. Through the weekly grade faculty meetings every teacher knows what units every other teacher is currently teaching and teachers frequently modify their own units to accomplish a desirable objective agreed on by the group. It is the area of work, based on pupil interest and need, rather than traditional subject materials that count most in Radnor. Each grade faculty has its parent advisory committee which meets regularly with the group. Through the parent groups, the entire community grows in appreciation of what good schools are, and the lag between faculty leadership and community acceptance is immeasurably reduced. Thus, it is possible to carry...
on the community centered program in the Lower School, the correlated units built around the American scene in the Middle School, and the related units dealing with world order in the Upper School.
—Cecil L. Rice, Principal.

Democracy in Administration. In order to promote teacher participation in the development of educational policies in the Santa Barbara (Cal.) City Schools, two coordinating committees have recently been appointed. These committees will be expected to deal with curricular problems, to develop policies of promotion and classification in the schools, to study teacher load, and to make recommendations concerning the purchase of supplies, equipment, and books. These committees are not representative in the sense that they speak for all teachers in Santa Barbara; they are, rather, intermediary in the sense that matters discussed by the committees are, through them, taken back to the faculty meetings and there subjected to the criticism and the suggestions which the other teachers and the staff have to make. All of this involves a good deal of discussion but this is itself the very essence of democracy and the changes that take place in people’s thinking as the result of such discussion are the valuable products which come out of the procedure.—Rudolph D. Lindquist, Superintendent.

Exploratory Course. The Secondary Curriculum Study Committee of Highland Park High School, Highland Park, Michigan, has worked out a required ninth grade exploratory course to acquaint pupils with some of the aspects of several important vocations. The course is now in its second year of operation. Ninth grade boys during their first semester may spend seven weeks each in three courses: machines, welding, and auto mechanics; or they may take another series: wood work, electricity, and industrial materials. At the same time the girls are enrolled in exploratory homemaking classes which meet in two apartments of the school’s homemaking houses. In their second semester ninth grade boys and girls together spend ten weeks in each of two areas: commercial work and graphic arts. Here they get information and develop beginning skills in stenography, typing, and business machines; as well as shop sketching, mechanical drawing, and printing. Through actual experience with the processes involved the pupils gain vocational information as well as develop appreciation of the kinds of work done in these several fields.—Roy E. Robinson, Administrative Assistant.

Industrial Education. High Point (North Carolina) Schools have entered upon a newly enriched program of industrial education. The different units within the system have adopted a correlated instructional plan designed for progression through the junior and senior high school levels. At the junior high level the program is characterized by breadth. Laboratory facilities are being organized for comprehensive general shop type work. Subject matter is drawn from the context of life in this community which is predominantly industrial and highly diversified. At the senior high school level general education features are maintained but the work begins to point toward major areas of interest. The facilities are organized for general unit shop approach. These may be terminal courses for those students concerned with general education values or they may supply foundation and crystallize interest for those going ahead into vocational industrial education. The vocational phases of the work are supplemented by an active part-time co-operative work program designed to extend opportunities in actual life situations and to strengthen school-community relationships.—Charles F. Carroll, Superintendent.

Inservice Growth of Teachers. The Oklahoma City Public Schools are operating on a policy which brings all school
employees into a sharing relationship. A program of inservice growth for teachers and principals was put into operation about two years ago. During the current year a graduate study center was set up in a building provided by the Board of Education in cooperation with the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and the University of Oklahoma. The graduate study center has a professional library, two fairly large conference rooms, several smaller offices that can be used by small groups, a visual aids room, and a room for arts and crafts. The enrollment during the current school year consisted of 290 teachers in the following courses: workshop, audio-visual aids, educational psychology, evaluation, shop and vocational problems, health, elementary science, and guidance. Besides the faculty members, the personnel of the coordinating staff of the Board of Education devote at least one evening per week as workshop staff members or as assistants in other courses. A workshop committee composed of teachers, principals and co-ordinators is now formulating plans for the third summer workshop. The greatest demand is for a demonstration school for observation purposes of groups of children from kindergarten through junior high school age.

Art For Twelve Grades. New art guidance material is being developed by the teachers of the public schools of Lincoln, Nebraska. In the elementary schools, art is taught by each individual grade teacher, while the secondary art is taught by trained art teachers. An attempt has been made, first of all, to analyze the complete scope of the desired art program so that each teacher may understand the essential features of the whole program and the contribution she can make toward the art development of the children in her group. In order to relate art to the whole school program, a study was first made of the Frame of Reference for Curriculum Planning, a chart used in the Lincoln schools. The next phase of the study was a detailed analysis of the six art areas. Charts were prepared and have been presented to the faculty, showing the emphases in each area and the continuity and maintenance of these emphases at the different grade levels, from kindergarten through high school. So far, twenty-eight people have helped in the study. The work will be continued in detail this year in a few after-school meetings, but mostly in the Saturday morning art workshops which began in January.—Elva McFie, Supervisor of Art.

Brief Notes

Clarence Fielstra who has been Associate Superintendent and Director of Curriculum for the San Diego County Schools has joined the staff of the University of California at Los Angeles.

During the past two years the course of study for the elementary and junior high schools of Ottumwa (Iowa) has been completely reorganized. The work in the elementary grades was under the direction of Robert Wright, coordinator of elementary education and in the junior high school under Sam Clark, principal.

During the past three years the teaching staff of the Bloomington, Illinois, Public Schools has been organized into sixteen committees which have been working on curriculum and on problems of current interest to the faculty and to the community.

The Tulsa Curriculum Council has been reorganized to include fifteen people representing a cross-section of the instructional division. The former Council, which was composed of all principals and directors and teacher representatives was too large to function as a working group.

The Anderson (Indiana) Public Schools have created the office of coordinator of instruction, curriculum and guidance with Enoch S. Drumm being promoted to head it. His duties will include general supervision of teachers, teaching materials, instructional supplies and audio-visual aids for all grades from kindergarten to senior high school.