

supervisor be more in need of the cooperation of the entire instructional personnel. None of the areas can be more productive of results than this, if there is a follow-through on plans to the point of execution and discovery of additional values; no other area can be so wasteful of the supervisor's time as this, where such planning has not taken place. Public relations programs of the past are not good enough for the future. If steps similar to those suggested above are taken, mutual understanding and concern and not mere "telling followed by uncritical acceptance" should result. Lay and professional groups need to participate in such cooperative planning.²

² See ASCD Bulletin *Laymen Help Plan the Curriculum* for experiments in this area.

Main Highways or Bypaths

The supervisor is tempted to follow hundreds of interesting bypaths; some of these are consistent with over-all purpose, while others may prove to be mirages in the desert leading nowhere. Even though each separate activity performed by the supervisor may have some value, maximum return on the time and effort expended depends upon relating activities to each other and within the scope and direction of a central unifying purpose. If pupils need to center attention upon major goals and to see the details in the light of larger wholes, and if teachers need to guide activities so that attention is focused upon major understandings, it seems reasonable to insist that supervisors critically analyze their activities from a similar standpoint.

The South Looks at Its Elementary Schools

ROY W. MORRISON AND R. LEE THOMAS

The work conference in the south has been examined by many educators as one example of a regional attack upon the school program. This brief account by Roy W. Morrison, professor of education, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and R. Lee Thomas, Director, Division of Elementary Schools, Tennessee State Department of Education, Nashville, illustrates the way the organization as a whole and each community are trying to provide better educational programs for boys and girls.

THE FEDERAL CENSUS shows that approximately one-half of the nation's functionally illiterate adults live in the Southern Region. Comparison of elementary school enrollment, attendance, and retardation figures clearly reveals

the low quality of educational opportunity which is provided in this group of states. In one southern state from thirteen to forty-three per cent of various school age groups was not enrolled in school. In another state the

percentage of pupil failure was as high as thirty-three per cent in some of the local school systems.

These and other such facts prompted the Southern States Work-Conference¹ to select as a major project a study of elementary education. The study was initiated in 1945 with the appointment of a regional steering committee to develop plans and promote the study. The purpose of the study was to increase the effectiveness of elementary education as an integral part of the total school program in the Southern Region by encouraging each state to face squarely the pertinent problems at this educational level and to formulate a program of action to effectuate necessary improvements.

State Committees Take Responsibility

The chief state school officer and the executive secretary of the state education association in each of the fourteen southern and border states during the fall of 1945 selected a state committee to make the project operative in each state. State committees were encouraged to provide for wide participation in the project within each state and to give leadership to local school-community groups in planning, initiating, and carry forward the following activities:

The preparation of a statement of point of view concerning the purpose and function of the elementary school in their community

The gathering of factual data readily

available which revealed the condition of their elementary school

The initiation of improvement programs

The preparation of a report in the form of a case study

The success of the project has been due largely to the work of state committees in developing ways of working together which caused teachers, leaders, and entire communities to evaluate critically the prevailing conditions and practices in their elementary schools and to evolve plans for making needed improvements.

Local Groups Put Plans Into Action

Representatives from every state in the Region actively participated in the Work-Conference at Daytona Beach, Florida, June 3-14, 1946. The results of state studies were brought together and consolidated. Findings and recommendations relating to elementary education in the South have been incorporated in the published bulletin, *Improving Elementary Education in the Southern Region*. The report is intended to serve as a handbook for local groups in continuing the project. The work conference participants were divided into five committees which prepared materials under the following topics:

Point of View—It was agreed that the elementary school has a dual function: first, to help each child attain his optimum growth and development; and second, to improve the quality of community life. The following statement from the report illustrates this point of view:

The elementary school is a heritage which is the culmination of long experimentation in working for the common

¹ The Southern States Work-Conference is sponsored by the State Departments of Education and State Education Associations of the Southern Region. Work Conferences are held at Daytona Beach, Florida, each year during the first two weeks of June.

good. Since it grew out of community life, it still has the responsibility of keeping a program flexible enough to expand with its community's need in order to develop persons sensitive to those needs. The functions of the elementary school affect growth in all aspects; physical, mental, emotional, social. Therefore, the program should fit into the child's life: his home, his amusements, his activities. Never should the school seek to make child life conform to a school stereotype. It is the responsibility of the school staff to study the child and the factors which affect his growth and development as a basis for his guidance in living harmoniously in home, school, and community.

Problems and Needs in Elementary Education—The problems which must be solved if a "lost generation" in the South is to be avoided were listed as follows:

The problem of providing an adequate supply of competent teachers

The problem of developing effective leadership

The problem of developing instructional programs that meet the needs of the children and improve the quality of community life

The problem of providing functional school buildings and adequate materials of instruction

The problem of financing the elementary schools

Movements, Trends, and Forces Influencing Elementary Education in the Southern Region—Elementary education, like many other phases of American life, is being influenced by various social and economic movements. School people are realizing that these forces are working for, or in some cases against, the best interests of the children in the schools. There is, at times, some consciousness of these forces which

has not led to action in evaluating them, nor has it led to definite aggressive action in using or opposing them.

The following movements, trends, and forces were among those identified and evaluated:

Disintegration of traditional American family life

Broadening economic opportunity for women

Interest in conservation and development of natural and human resources

Development of communication and transportation facilities

Increasing influence and power of organized groups

Raising of quantity and quality of educational opportunity

Improving professional status of school personnel

Increasing use of research and scientific study in determining educational needs

Trend toward functional curricula

Forces affecting elementary education:

Historic and regional forces

Educational boards and foundations

Community civic-social agencies

Religious groups

Practices of Promise in Elementary Education—A study was made of reported elementary school practices at the state, county and city, and local school levels in the Southern Region. Certain specific practices in each group were selected which implemented the accepted point of view.

The purpose which the committee hoped to realize was to identify, briefly describe, and cite specific examples of significant practices which should be encouraged in elementary schools generally.

State practices were grouped into the following areas:

Cooperative activities of councils, commissions, and various agencies

The preservice program of teacher education including recruitment of prospective teachers

The inservice education program in its many phases

Materials and services implementing elementary school programs

County and city practices were divided into the following categories:

Significant practices in inservice education

Practices relating to improved selection and use of instructional materials

Practices relating to improved school-community relationships

Local school practices were divided into the following categories:

Practices directly affecting the child

Practices affecting the teacher

Practices pertaining to the program of school life

Practices relating to instructional equipment and supplies

Practices relating to home, school and community relations

Programs of Action—This committee identified broad policies which would guide concerted efforts in solving critical problems, in utilizing the

forces and movements available to elementary education, and in fulfilling the promise of some of our partially successful efforts. The purpose of the policies is to secure for all children in their classrooms and communities an educational opportunity sufficiently rich to develop all of their abilities and resources.

State committees have continued to function during the present school year. A promising practice has been the development in several states of school-community projects in which the people of the community cooperate with the schools in planning and initiating improvement programs. Representatives from state committees will attend the 1947 Southern States Work-Conference at Daytona Beach, Florida, June 2-13, and prepare a progress report to supplement the report of the 1946 Work-Conference. Another interesting development has been the culmination of plans for a cooperative study of the elementary education group with the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges on problems of mutual concern. The purpose of the study is to improve relationships between the two groups.

ASCD CONSTITUTION

Early in the fall of 1947 an amended ASCD constitution will be presented to the membership for official adoption. In compliance with the present constitution notice is hereby given in EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP at least three months before action is taken. The proposed constitutional vote will be taken by mail.

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