

# Front Lines in Education

Galen Saylor

*During this publication year Galen Saylor, professor of secondary education, Teachers College, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, will be editor of the Front Lines in Education department. Mr. Saylor will welcome reports of outstanding practices being sent to him. He, as editor, will retain the privilege of selecting and reporting those of particular significance. All readers of EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP are cordially invited to send items directly to Mr. Saylor for use in this department.*

**Oklahoma City Emphasizes Local School Experimentation.** Illustrative of the trend curriculum development is taking in many city systems is the program at Oklahoma City, where H. B. Bruner is superintendent and Theodore D. Rice has been coordinator of instruction. Curriculum improvement centers on a cooperative definition of point of view, purposes, and policies through study, discussion, and group action, followed by individual school and teacher experimentation within the commonly accepted framework. Mr. Rice summarizes the point of view of the Oklahoma City program in these words: "We have been emphasizing a high degree of teacher education in experimental modifications accepted by a policy of local school responsibility. This means that we have been concerned with helping the school personnel arrive at common overall purposes while at the same time they are encouraged to develop local modifications which are uniquely adapted to the school situation in which they are located."

Correlative with this position are two important policies of the Division of Instruction: (1) "All who are affected by policies should participate in their formulation, execution, and evaluation," and (2) "Local initiative and responsibility should be retained within the individual schools in so far as possible." The function of the instructional coordinators of the Division is to assist teachers and schools "in clarifying problems, coordinating efforts, and developing means whereby both interschool and intraschool teaching and learning procedures are given careful thought and extended in harmony with

the recommendations of an informed teaching and administrative staff." Much attention is given to a wide and continuing professional enrichment program.

A comprehensive report of the Division of Instruction at mid-year of 1946-47 lists the following as some of the areas in which developmental programs are under way in individual schools:

- Improving the school environment.
- Studying community problems
- Enriching the curriculum through use of a wide variety of learning experiences
- Providing for retarded and over-age pupils
- Improving parent-school relations
- Developing a unified studies program in secondary schools so as to provide longer blocks of time for orientation, guidance, and integration of subject matter
- Developing cooperative faculty planning in individual schools.

In carrying forward its activities, the Division of Instruction utilizes two inter-school secondary planning groups—a Secondary Planning Committee and ten Broad Fields Advisory Committees, an inter-school elementary instructional planning committee, and special committees as needed. An example of the work of one such group is an extensive preliminary report on the occupational, vocational, and technical school program which should be provided at the new educational center. Curricular areas, equipment, and facilities are considered in the report.

**El Paso Conducts Own Workshop.** During the past summer, the El Paso (Tex.) public schools conducted two workshops for its own teachers. The University of Texas, through its College of Mines branch, sponsored the project. Thirty teachers of the El Paso staff were paid full salaries for attending the workshops, and twenty additional teachers enrolled.

One of the groups developed teaching aids for teachers of bilingual children. This was a continuation of specialized work begun three years ago. The second group prepared course-of-study materials for social studies from grade five through high school, and science for high school grades only.

"The El Paso schools," Byron England, director of instruction, writes, "have experimented with the idea of providing summer scholarships for teachers engaged in curriculum study for the past three years with most satisfactory results." He states that "this practice has not eliminated other teachers from participation in curriculum study and construction, but it has provided the means to more quickly assemble the results of the thinking transpiring in the entire school system."

**Improvement of Teacher Education.** Unlike too many important educational committee and commission studies in past decades, efforts initiated by the Commission on Teacher Education to improve teacher education in this country are being continued by voluntary professional groups. One such group is the Council on Cooperation in Teacher Education (CCTE) which is a coordinating agency set up by "eighteen national and regional organizations concerned with the improvement of the pre-service and the in-service education of teachers." ASCD is a member. The Council began in a small way in 1942, and in 1946 the American Council on Education "recognized it as the agency to which matters of ACE interest respecting teacher education should be regularly referred," and promised substantial financial support for three years. Thus the thread of continuity with the

original Commission on Teacher Education continues through the sponsorship of the same parent organization and also through the fact that Karl Bigelow, who was director of the Commission Study, is also giving a portion of his time to CCTE. The announced function of CCTE "is to promote mutual understanding, a sense of common purpose, and both individual and concerted action."

The annual meeting of the delegates to CCTE was held on May 4-5 in Washington. After a brief review of the achievements of the Council for the past year, delegates reported on the activities of their respective organizations. This afforded a profitable exchange of ideas and also laid the basis for a cooperative attack upon mutual problems. The Council sponsors studies and committee projects of its own, such as the college study of Intergroup Relations, under the direction of Lloyd Allen Cook of Wayne University, and the Committee of International Aspects of Teacher Education under the chairmanship of Walter E. Hager, president of Wilson Teachers College.

One result of the efforts to improve teacher education has been the organization of state coordinating agencies for teacher education. The Council reports that Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin have organized widely representative state councils on teacher education. Eleven states also reported councils on a limited basis.

One of the most useful services of CCTE is the publication of *The Newsletter of the Council on Cooperation in Teacher Education*. It is published bi-monthly and is available without charge. Write the chairman, Council on Cooperation in Teacher Education, 525 West 120 St., New York 27, N. Y.

Officers are: Karl W. Bigelow, chairman, Gertrude Hankamp, secretary-treasurer; and John Brachen, Charles Hunt, Allen Patterson, John Dale Russell, W. W. Whitehouse, executive committee.

**Curriculum Improvement in Minnesota.** The program of curriculum improvement at the state level in Minnesota, according to W. A. Andrews, director of graded elementary and secondary schools, has proceeded along these six lines:

1. Development of *A Guide for Better Instruction in Minnesota Schools*. This guide resulted from the recommendations of a thirty-six member state Policy and Planning Committee appointed by Dean M. Schwenkhard, commissioner of education, in 1943. It is designed to serve as a study guide for teachers and for groups working on curriculum problems, and to point the direction for local curriculum construction. It was distributed in 1946, and has been widely used in the schools of Minnesota for in-service study.
2. Regional curriculum conferences were held throughout the state in 1946-47, and others are being scheduled for the present school year.
3. Six experimental schools, working cooperatively with the University of Minnesota and the State Department of Education, are studying intensively local curriculum problems.
4. Curriculum problems are discussed monthly in the state educational association magazine, with Nelson Bossing, of the University, and Mr. Andrews serving as co-editors.
5. Guides for instruction in the areas of social studies, language arts, arithmetic, science and conservation, music, and art in the elementary school are now being prepared.
6. Committees to prepare guides in the secondary areas are now being organized.

The point of view underlying the entire program is expressed thus:

"It is not the function of the State Department of Education to blueprint the courses of study for the state as a whole or to expect the schools of the state to follow a course of study slavishly in detail. It is expected, rather, that the curriculum will differ from school to school to meet the special needs of pupils in any par-

ticular locality. Units of teaching suggested by the state are expected to serve as illustrations for adaptation to the community situation by the local school personnel; therefore, a program of curriculum development for the state as a whole depends for its effectiveness on the extent and quality of the participation of school administrators, supervisors, teachers, pupils, and laymen, who determine what is done in each local school."

**Study of Elementary Curriculum in Illinois.** In 1943, Vernon L. Nickell, state superintendent of Public Instruction for Illinois, appointed a committee of six county superintendents to serve as a steering committee in the preparation of a curriculum guide for teachers. Robert M. King, assistant state superintendent, represented the State Department and acted as chairman of the committee. During a period of three years the committee studied the curriculum in Illinois as well as curriculum trends throughout the country. As a result of this study the State Department was able to issue in 1946 the *Illinois Curriculum Course of Study Guide for Elementary Schools*. This publication deals with both content and methods for the classroom. It is intended, as its title implies, as a guide for teachers. More than 30,000 copies of the guide have been issued to teachers of Illinois.

Study of the curriculum guide has been encouraged by several means. First, the five Illinois teacher-training institutions have offered on-campus and off-campus courses dealing with the elementary curriculum and basing their study chiefly upon the guide as a resource. Second, members of the staff of the state office have held numerous meetings throughout the state to discuss the guide with groups of teachers. Third, many county superintendents have had regular meetings on a county-wide basis or in smaller groups to analyze their present curriculum in the light of the recommendations made in the guide. Fourth, many city elementary superintendents and

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### *Proposed Change*

Combining the present Article VIII of the Constitution with the present Article IX of the By-Laws the proposed change makes them Article X.

#### ARTICLE X—Publications

The Association shall publish such journals and other publications as the Board of Directors may direct. The publications of the Association shall be in charge of the Executive Committee, subject to such general policies as the Board of Directors may adopt.

#### ARTICLE X—Expenditures

### *Present*

The funds of the Association shall be disbursed only in accordance with annual budgets adopted by the Board of Directors. The transfer of unused balances from one item in the budget to another shall be at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The Executive Secretary shall receive and disburse the funds of the Association and make an annual accounting to the Board of Directors under the direction of the Executive Committee, which shall be responsible for proper auditing of accounts.

### *Proposed Change*

Present Article X—Expenditures becomes Article XI, as above.

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supervisors have organized curriculum revision committees within their systems and have done a great deal in studying the recommendations contained in the guide.

### **Extended School Year for Teachers.**

While for a number of years various school systems have on occasion retained groups of teachers on salary for periods during the summer months to work on professional projects, the movement to extend the contract year beyond the time schools are in session for all or a major portion of the staff is growing. Four types of an extended school year for teachers, with additional pay for this increased service, of course, have been noted. In some systems teachers are employed and paid for twelve months. State supported salaries of all Georgia teachers cover the entire calendar year. Teachers are on duty for two weeks longer than the regular school session—one week prior to the opening of school, which is utilized for planning and a study of local problems, and one week after the close of school, which is used for evaluation. Another approach is used by the Glencoe (Ill.) schools in which the teachers are employed for twelve months. One month paid vacation is provided and the re-

mainder of the time is spent in professional activities under the direction of the school.

Still another procedure is represented by the Lincoln (Neb.) practice in which the entire school staff is employed for two weeks longer than the school term. The staff—teachers, secretaries, clerical workers, custodians, supervisors, and principals—report a week early for planning and preparation for the school year and remain a week after the close of school for evaluation. Mishawaka (Ind.) extends the year five days beyond the school term. This period may be before the opening of school, at the close of the term, or on Saturday mornings during the year. The fourth approach, illustrated by the Landerdale County (Ala.) plan, is to have members of the staff report a week early for a workshop on local school problems. Grand Island (Neb.) follows the same plan but has only a part of the staff participate in the workshop each year. Probably other plans are in vogue among school systems. Underlying all of these plans is the point of view that cooperative planning by teachers is such an important aspect of an effective school that provision should be made for including it in the paid activities of teachers.

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