

How One County Plans—and Evaluates

SUE SNIPES

A successful year is more apt to result when an entire county organizes to discuss immediate and anticipated needs before the school year, record progress frequently, and evaluate at the close of the school year—especially with confident teacher leadership. This was the basis on which the Bulloch County Schools instituted pre-school and post-school planning, a trend now observable in many in-service programs. Some highlights of the planning are described by Sue Snipes, instructional supervisor in the Bulloch County Schools, Statesboro, Georgia.

TRANSPORT YOURSELF in time to any early September previous to 1944 and from wherever you may be to one of the thirteen Bulloch County schools for the routine faculty meeting on Friday afternoon before school opened on Monday. Yes, you are right—it was called by the principal. You might discover, too, that the county superintendent had called a short meeting of all teachers in the county. Announcements were made and the few necessary details were cleared by the principals or the superintendent. Efforts made toward developing the program of the school for the county, or toward providing helps and stimulation for the professional growth of the teachers were few and far between.

But in the summer of 1944 things began to happen in Bulloch County. It was chosen as one of the twelve "spot" counties in the state for special study of the school program. In these counties the Education Panel of the Agricultural and Industrial Development Board assumed leadership in helping school patrons and teachers plan ways and means of making the school more nearly meet the needs of boys and girls. At the

same time an instructional supervisor was employed to work with the teachers. Because of these two major changes, the county superintendent felt that teachers would have many questions to ask and many problems to raise.

A Start Is Made

So in the fall of 1944 pre-school planning began. All teachers were called together for their first three-day conference. The chairman of the Education Panel conducted a general meeting in which teachers voluntarily brought out problems which they thought needed to be attacked throughout the school—problems which tended to group themselves around four areas: health, reading, art, and guidance.

After this first general session teachers were divided into four groups, according to their own choice, to make plans for beginning an attack on some of the problems. In each group were teachers from all grade levels—primary, upper elementary, and high school. And for the next two days skillful leaders, members of the Education Panel or of the State Department, worked with the teachers in developing general plans for

improvements in teaching reading, in bringing health teaching down to earth, in making beginnings with a guidance program, and in having some first-hand experiences with art materials. The supervisor was new and just becoming acquainted with the teachers so she visited all the groups. A secretary chosen by each group recorded the plans. Later these were mimeographed and given to all the teachers.

And so pre-school planning was off to a start in Bulloch County—but it was just a start.

Goals Are Formulated

During the school year, 1944-45, in each of the thirteen school communities patrons, teachers, and many pupils met each month to study the offerings of the local schools and to make plans for improvements. A member of the Education Panel led most of these planning meetings, but leaders from local school communities took over as often as possible. The supervisor attended all of the meetings and acted as secretary. It was her responsibility to help principals and teachers in the local schools to put into effect the plans which they had made. The composite summaries of these meetings became the backbone of the program of in-service growth for teachers.

During this year's study of the school program in 1944-45, teachers and school patrons made both long range and short range plans in the areas of health, tools for learning, creative expression, occupational guidance, and family, school, and community living. Teachers realized that some of their teaching procedures did not fit into the new program which the total community had planned. One heard such comments as, "I

need to learn how to teach reading better," and "I'll have to get help in creative arts before I can help the children."

A Call for Concentrated Effort

From the comments came the cue for the next step. A Teacher Education Committee, with the instructional supervisor as chairman, was organized for the county. Each school had one or two representatives from either different grade levels or from different departments. To this committee was given the job of studying needs of teachers and proposing plans to meet these needs.

It was natural, indeed, that one of the first jobs of the committee was developing plans for the second pre-school conference at the beginning of the 1945-46 term. Following the advice of the county superintendent a *whole week* was set aside for pre-school planning. The first three days were to be used for county-wide planning and the last two days for planning on the local level. The committee believed that the first pre-planning conference and the year's work had set the stage for further planning upon the same problems.

At any rate, teachers were ready to suggest more specific problems for discussion than they had been before. They asked that the conference be organized around a primary group, an elementary group, and a high school group because of common problems and interests, and the committee readily agreed to this change in the plan of organization. In addition, the committee agreed to invite "outside" people to serve as consultants or leaders for the different areas of the conference.

These consultants, for the most part, were people who had worked with the

teachers in the first pre-school conference. So it was decided to devote part of the second conference to an evaluation of the progress made throughout the year in carrying out the plans of the first conference. Out of these evaluations grew the particular problems for the second pre-school conference.

Suggestions Reflect Immediate Needs

Instead of working on the whole problem of reading, the immediate need for teachers of the elementary and primary grades was to plan desirable ways of using basic reading materials to the best advantage. The results of their planning may not be profound, but they reflect areas in which needs were real and immediate.

READING—TOOL OF LEARNING

1. Keep basal readers in classroom for actual instruction in reading
 - a. Use readers in small groups
 - b. Use on reading levels of children
 - c. Distribute books at beginning of each class period, and collect at end of the period
2. Study manuals for suggested helps
 - a. Look for reading skills you wish to help children acquire
 - b. Use as many of the suggested activities as you feel will be helpful
 - c. Use workbooks accompanying basal readers as directed teaching devices
3. Arrange regular period in schedule for reading instruction
 - a. Use basal readers in logical order
 - b. Proceed slowly and thoroughly—do not hurry.

In the high school group which devoted its time to tools for learning, the discussion centered around reading problems in the Bulloch County high schools. Out of the planning came the following suggestions:

Set up a testing program in the entire county

Ask two education professors from Georgia Teachers College to give the tests

Arrange for teachers in local schools to score tests

Have high school teachers meet again to study test results and plan follow-up program

Formulate general plans for continuing work on the reading program.



In contrast to the plans for improving reading, all teachers worked on the same problems in the general field of health. The problem chosen was the correction of physical defects—the same problem the County Board of Health emphasized during the year. Learning by doing was the procedure here. After seeing a demonstration by a nurse,

teachers repeated the demonstration until they felt successful with it. They learned how to check eyes by use of a Snellen Eye Chart, how to give a simple hearing test, and how to help children examine each other's teeth. Plans for recording findings about the pupils, for following up suspected defects, and for reporting corrections were also made.

The Program Enlarged

But the program was still incomplete. Near the end of the school year, 1945-



**CHILDREN EXAMINE
EACH OTHERS TEETH.**



Eye Chart

46, the State Department of Education recommended that teachers spend a week in pre-school planning and also a week in post-school planning and evaluation. So a committee was appointed to study possibilities for the post-week of school. As a result general suggestions were made and adapted by principals and teachers in local situations. Briefly, the week looked like this:

- Monday—Day for completing records
- Tuesday—Pupil-teacher conference day
- Wednesday—Parent-teacher conference day, school clean-up day
- Thursday—Day of local evaluation, the principal serving as leader for the entire group, or the faculty working in committees
- Friday—Day of county-wide evaluation under leadership of the Teacher Education Committee

Enter—the Teacher Leader

Evaluation on the local basis as well as on the county basis was made in terms of the plans developed by the teachers in the pre-school conference. An important point in the growth of

planning was attained when the group realized that teachers were now ready to lead their own discussions, to serve as chairman, and to work with teachers from other schools. So teacher leadership took over and outside consultants were not invited.

The teachers again met as primary, elementary, and high school groups in the first post-school conference. Teacher chairmen and secretaries were chosen before the day of county-wide evaluation so that their security as leaders might be established. In their pre-planning, they set up general standards for leading group discussions, possible procedures, and possible plans of action for evaluating the year's work.

Definite recommendations for the next school year were made in all the areas emphasized. Three recommendations for the program of reading were: . . . that planning and studying activities on reading be continued . . . that needed adjustments be made in the reading tests

... that mental tests be used in connection with reading tests.

Of course, these recommendations and those from the other areas of the program of the school became the basis for developing plans during the pre-school conference of 1946-47. In turn, the efforts for in-service growth of teachers throughout the year were based upon these recognized needs and other problems as they were suggested by individual teachers.

Previous to the fall of 1947 each pre-school conference had begun with a general session of the one hundred forty teachers. The county superintendent presided at this meeting which usually lasted about one and one-half hours. The instructional supervisor explained the purposes and organization of the conference. Part of the general session was allotted to a business meeting of the professional organization at which time teachers joined local, state, and national education associations. Below is a sample of one day's schedule:

Besides planning for different areas in the program of the school in pre-school and post-school conferences, time was provided for two other phases of the total program. In a special block of time, or as it fitted into general discussions of the conference, the visiting teacher worked with teachers on com-

pulsory school attendance and pupil welfare in general. The county superintendent also arranged a meeting of school bus drivers and principals during one day of the conference to study problems of school transportation.

Progress Brings Reorganization

But September of 1947 brought another plan of organization—for as teachers meet, needs arise and organization must meet them. Because of a recommendation in the post-school conference of 1947, an important change was made in the organization of the 1947-48 pre-school conference. Teachers and principals said they would like to meet in the local school one day before coming together as a county unit. The suggestion was promptly put into effect. Then, after the three-day county meeting, there was another day for planning in the local school.

During the conference this year special efforts were devoted to providing time and opportunities for teachers to become better acquainted with each other and to building desirable relationships between schools. Group singing—just for fun—and a recreation period were innovations. Ten minute rest periods between discussion groups gave teachers frequent chances to relax, to chat, to greet new teachers, to

Primary and Upper Elementary Teachers High School

9:00-10:15	Movies—Art Pictures	Guidance
10:15-11:15	Recreation—All Teachers—Gymnasium	
11:15-12:30	Child Study—Art	Reading
12:30- 1:30	Lunch	
1:30- 3:00	Art—Child Study	Art

get a cold drink. An old-fashioned picnic dinner was served on the first day of the conference.

A special feature of the 1947 conference was the day devoted to seeing films about teaching reading. Five films, such as "We Discover the Dictionary" and "Maps Are Fun" were shown. All teachers first saw a film; then the large group was broken up into small groups of about twelve members each. Approximately forty-five minutes were spent in discussing the skills that are a part of the reading program and in planning ways in which these skills might be taught in each classroom as demonstrated by the film. Teachers served as chairmen of these small groups. In preparation for their leadership roles, they had previewed all the films the afternoon before. The secretaries summarized the discussions of each group. The same procedure was followed in seeing each of the other films.

In contrast to these small group meetings with teacher leadership, on the next day large group meetings with specialized leaders for work on problems of the transition to a twelve-year program were planned. Part of the time for these meetings was devoted to helping all teachers become informed about the plans which selected committees had already made about the new grade.

The rest of the time was given to large group discussions on desirable or probable changes that should be made in the entire school program because of the transition to a twelve-year program.

Concepts Have Evolved

The three years of joint planning and action by teachers and those responsible for instructional leadership have resulted in certain fundamental concepts concerning pre- and post-school planning. It is believed that:

- ...there should be no fixed pattern of organization for pre-school and post-school planning conferences. The pattern should be flexible so that it may be adapted to current needs and immediate changes.
- ...planning should be done in terms of problems recognized by teachers as individuals as well as by teachers as members of local and county—or even larger—units.
- ...there should be constant evaluation of work done in order to see progress in individual and group undertakings and so that additional plans for next steps may be developed.
- ...as much as possible, leadership should come from teachers themselves; however, consultative services of others should be called in as needed.
- ...there should be key people to serve in such a capacity on the county level while the principal or an outstanding teacher may serve to advantage on the local level.



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