

THE LISTENING POST

A Cooperative Project in Denver

COOPERATIVE SUPPORT of a proposed school bond issue in Denver furnishes a good example of how the professional staff, Parent-Teacher Association members, and business and professional leaders can work together on a project of common interest and need.

The story of the recent successful school bond campaign, in which a \$21,000,000 issue was passed by a vote of 7-1 with the largest number of votes ever recorded on a school bond issue in Denver, began in the autumn of 1947. At that time the professional staff, under the direction of the newly appointed superintendent, began the study of building needs in the city. Groups of principals, organized by geographical areas, made studies of and recommendations for present and anticipated needs in those areas.

In the early spring of 1948 the University of Denver School of Commerce, aided by the Research Department of the Denver public schools, made a study of anticipated enrollments by grades through 1960-61, based upon the number of children actually living in Denver in 1948. During this period, also, committees of teachers and principals conducted studies and made recommendations for size, furniture, and equipment of various types of classrooms.

In April, May, and June the results of these studies were reported to the citizens in a series of three pamphlets. These pamphlets called attention to the three-fold nature of the problem of school housing. The first pointed out housing needs arising from the increase in population; the second told the story of migration from the center of the city to the outskirts; while the third reported the history of school building in Denver, showing a twenty-five-year lag in construction.

During the summer a committee of citizens representing various groups in the

city was appointed to study the problem and consult with the School Board. Also during the summer a committee known as the Joint Legislative Committee, composed of representatives of the PTA and the various employee organizations, began plans to publicize the program.

On August 26 meetings of citizens were held in every school in the city. At these meetings principals outlined the problem, showing increases in school population, shifting of school population from one part of the city to others, and the lag in building construction. From the opinion expressed at these meetings and on the advice of the committee of citizens it was decided early in September to submit, as the first step in a long-range building program, a proposal for a bond issue of \$21,000,000 to be expended over five years.

Publicity and promotion work were divided between the Director of Publications, responsible for publicity, and the Joint Legislative Committee, which was in charge of promotion. The friendly support of both daily newspapers was secured. News stories, feature articles, and editorials supporting the proposal were printed in each paper. The local chain-theater operators prepared and showed a newsreel calling attention to the needs of the school system. A fourth pamphlet, "For Denver's Own Kids," summarizing the problem, was prepared and distributed. Other advertising devices included window cards, bill-board posters, car window stickers, and radio programs. Costs for this program were defrayed by donations from business men, the PTA locals, and the employee associations.

The Joint Legislative Committee undertook three major assignments. The first was soliciting funds from PTA locals, employee associations, and business men. Aided by a group of business leaders, the committee raised \$7,500 in cash. The second assignment was to secure endorse-

ments from business groups, labor groups, civic improvement societies, and similar organizations. The Chamber of Commerce, the Colorado Branch of the National Association of Manufacturers, the County AF of L Council, the County CIO Council, and the League of Women Voters were among the groups which endorsed the bonds.

The third task of the committee was to organize a block campaign to make sure that every eligible voter was solicited for his vote. Thousands of PTA members, both men and women, and hundreds of teachers took part in this campaign. Details for each building were worked

out by teachers, principal, and PTA officers.

The result was a stirring victory on October 11. Every precinct in the city returned a majority for the bonds—some by as large a majority as 35 to 1. Co-operative effort by professional staff, parents, and interested citizens resulted in a campaign of supplying information with gratifying results. Those who worked in the campaign had the heartening experience of learning how shared enthusiasm, responsibility, and effort can make for real achievement.—*William H. Anderson, Jr., principal, Park Hill School, Denver, for the ASCD Legislative Committee.*



Make Learning and Teaching Easier with the New

GINN BASIC READERS

Better than ever before, this new basal series fits the book to the child.

More adequately than ever before, it aids the teacher with the most complete, flexible, easy-to-use Teachers' Manuals ever published, one for each book. These provide careful and specific help for the teacher at every point—developing readiness, word analysis, language and speech activities, helping the individual child, etc. Classroom teachers assisted in their preparation. *See the series that everybody is talking about.*

GINN AND COMPANY Boston 17 New York 11
Chicago 16 Atlanta 3 Dallas 1 Columbus 16 San Francisco 5 Toronto 5

Copyright © 1949 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.