

Front Lines in Education

Galen Saylor

All-City Student Councils. Some school systems have become interested in developing all-city student councils for the purpose of coordinating certain school activities on a city-wide basis and of developing better relationships among secondary schools of the locality. Such city-wide councils are in operation at present in Denver and in Battle Creek, Michigan. A brief description of the work of these groups may be of interest to other schools.

Denver, Colorado has two city-wide student councils, one for the five senior high schools and one for the eleven junior high schools. The councils are known as "The Senior High School All-City Student Council" and "Junior High School All-City Council." The senior high school council is composed of five representatives from each of the five schools and the junior high council of three representatives from each of the eleven schools. The representatives are elected by the student bodies of the respective schools.

The councils meet once each month during the school year for half-day meetings. One member of the staff of the Department of Instruction acts as a coordinator for the two groups.

Some of the projects undertaken by these two councils during the present school year are:

(a) Taking responsibility for the visit to Denver of the thirty-four boys and girls from European countries. The thirty-four students from the seventeen European countries who have been spending some weeks in this country as guests of the American people visited Denver, and the all-city student councils assumed responsibility for making arrangements for the students while they were in Denver.

(b) Sponsoring a junior community chest campaign. As a part of the community chest campaign the student councils con-

duct the drive in the Denver schools, and the money raised in this way is set aside for caring for welfare needs of indigent children in the school.

(c) Sponsoring projects of an all-school nature. As example of such a project is the "Fun Without Vandalism" project which is designed to reduce vandalism in Denver during the Halloween season. The project has been eminently successful and only forty-six police calls were received last fall as contrasted to over five hundred in years previous to this project.

Battle Creek, Michigan brings together representatives of all the secondary schools, including junior and senior high schools, in the Battle Creek area. It is known as the "All-City Student Council of Greater Battle Creek." Representatives from all the schools in the Battle Creek area which enroll pupils in grades seven through twelve comprise the council. The council meets once each month in an afternoon session. Faculty advisors are selected by the council from among persons nominated by the principal of each school. Some of the projects the council has sponsored include a dance for all junior high school students in the Battle Creek area; and the development of better relationships among the schools through exchange of student assembly programs and the like. The student council also acts as the Junior Red Cross Council for the city, and through this agency it has sent materials to a Battle Creek teacher who is serving as an educational adviser in Japan.

Coordinated Community-College Health Program. An excellent illustration of the coordination of all interested agencies in a community to provide better health service for its citizens is provided in the Isabella County (Michigan) Community and

College Health Program. Cooperating in the program are the Isabella County Health Department, the city of Mt. Pleasant, the Central Michigan College of Education, and the Michigan Department of Health. There are two broad aspects of the program—the college health program and the community program. Coordination between the two phases is facilitated through the fact that the same individual serves as director of the College Health Department and as director of the County Health Department.

With respect to the college program, a general college health committee has been established. This committee explores problems relating to the student health program and to the health education of teachers, and then divides into sub-committees to study special aspects of the program. The sub-committees make recommendations to the general committee, which takes appropriate action.

Five sub-committees have been appointed to study the following areas: health and safety in the campus environment; health and safety education of professional students of education; health and safety education of the general student; faculty health policies; and in-service education of teachers. These committees have done much to improve the health of the campus community and the health education program of the students.

In its community health program the project has tried to emphasize the education of the citizens of the community in health matters. The county health department performs the usual health services of such departments but, in addition, has carried on an intensive program of education through a county-wide community health council. The council is organized so as to provide both geographical and organizational representation. Thus, there are twenty-one representatives from the geographic areas of the county, in addition to the twenty-five organizational representatives. On the basis of an exploration of health problems in the county, the council established five work committees in the following areas: services

to children; sanitation; public education; dental health; and cancer. In addition, a teachers' health committee has been organized with representation from all the schools in the county. They have given special attention to the problems of school health and have developed a guide on school health policies. Special health education meetings which involve the teachers of both the county and college and health department staff have been held.

The sub-committees of the health councils have studied various problems and have worked with the health department in the development of its services and in its educational program for the citizens of the county.

The health department also works with the community hospital as well as with the doctors and dentists of the county so that complete understanding and cooperation is secured in all phases of health work.

The complete program is well described in a recent publication called *Isabella Steps Out*.

Outstanding Curriculum Publications.

Three exceptionally fine curriculum publications have recently come to the attention of the editor. Not only are they outstanding pieces of work, but they illustrate the newer type of bulletins and publications which school systems have been issuing in recent years. The courses of study of the traditional type are not issued as frequently as they were in the decade before the war; instead, school systems are issuing guides and bulletins of a more informal nature, but along lines designed to emphasize the need for broader educational programs and for giving increased attention to the growth and development of individual pupils.

The three publications are: Denver, Colorado, public schools, *David Goes To Kindergarten*; Battle Creek, Michigan, public schools, *Happily To School*; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, public schools, *The Elementary School in Action*.

The first two are guides for parents who have children in kindergarten. In both cases the bulletins were prepared by com-

mittees of classroom teachers. At Battle Creek the committee was assisted by the county health department, and in Denver by a group of parents. The pamphlets describe for parents what kinds of experiences their child will have in kindergarten and give information about his schedule and similar arrangements in the school. The pamphlets also make suggestions to the parents for guiding the experiences of the child in the home, so that they will be consistent with the program of the school.

The Philadelphia publication is a large, well-illustrated bulletin, attractively printed. The bulletin begins with seven descriptions of school situations. These are written in narrative form, and are designed to describe certain aspects of daily living in the elementary school. Part II of the bulletin then analyzes these descriptions to point out desirable characteristics of the elementary school program, and how the program may be improved through introduction of the practices described. Part III of the bulletin discusses the organization of the elementary program, with suggestions for time scheduling and the like. Part IV is a pictorial interpretation of the school.

Curriculum workers will undoubtedly find these three bulletins very helpful and suggestive in planning their own activities.

A Social Studies Guide. Richmond, California, is one of those boom areas in which school enrollments increased four-fold during the war. Problems of expansion of the school plant and staff inherent in such a situation are obvious. Nevertheless, the Richmond staff has been interested in improving instruction in the schools, and social studies has been selected as the first area in which curriculum improvement would be undertaken. In 1946 Superintendent W. T. Helms asked a representative group of teachers, principals, and central staff members to study the status of social studies instruction in the school, and on the basis of this investigation this group recommended that a program of cooperative curriculum development in the social studies be launched. The board

of education accepted the recommendation and approved the setting up of a long-term program of curriculum development and improvement for the junior and senior high schools, with special emphasis to be placed on social studies at the outset.

The organization has developed along existing subject matter lines, with each of the six secondary schools of the city having one representative on each subject matter committee. One representative from each subject matter committee serves on a central coordinating council. An advisory lay-professional curriculum council, composed of representative business and professional people, parents, labor leaders, teachers, and students has been formulated to advise with the curriculum groups.

In carrying forward the work on the social studies curriculum guide, the University of California organized an in-service workshop for the teachers of the system, and the development of resource units was also carried forward at a summer workshop at the University. Cecil Parker has served as consultant to the project.

As a result of these efforts, a curriculum guide called *Teaching Guide for the Social Studies* has been published. It is being used during the present year in actual classroom situations, and on the basis of teacher evaluation it will be revised as a basis for further use. Lois G. McMahon, coordinator of curriculum development, states that the most valuable outcome of this work has not been the preparation of the guide but rather the realization among teachers that the curriculum is a vital, dynamic matter composed of student experiences rather than material contained in a written guide.

Teachers in the science and mathematics areas are now busily engaged in similar activities and it is expected that they will develop similar guides for use in their fields.

Secondary School Curriculum Study. During the past year Illinois has organized a state-wide secondary school curriculum program, which is a joint under-

taking of the State Department of Public Instruction, the Association of Secondary School Principals, the University of Illinois, and the State Teachers Colleges. The Illinois legislature appropriated \$35,000 to carry forward the work of the study and Mr. Sanford of the University of Illinois and Mr. Houston of the University High School at Normal are each devoting half time to the study. The purposes of the new program are:

(1) To establish an organization for the cooperative study of the curriculum in the secondary schools of Illinois; (2) to prepare and distribute to each high school a guide for the study and improvement of the curriculum; (3) to formulate and distribute to high schools suggested curriculum patterns; (4) to encourage experimental curriculum programs in representative schools; and (5) to conduct workshops for principals and teachers both in separate and in combined groups to better attack the problem of curriculum evaluation and revision. The steering committee will work toward more coordination among these groups in order to provide a curriculum which will encompass all phases of secondary problems.

During the present school year certain Illinois secondary schools which have been selected by the principals association are engaged in experimental work in va-

rious areas of curriculum improvement.

A Bureau of School Services. The Bureau of School Services has been established by the University of Michigan as an over-all university agency to render services to the schools of the state. Through this bureau, the University will continue the services which have heretofore been performed by the University and will also augment and extend the services in keeping with the recommendations of the Michigan Secondary School Association. Lawrence F. Veredevoe has been appointed as director of the bureau. The bureau will administer the cooperative testing program which has already been developed by the Michigan Secondary School Association and University. It will also coordinate the services provided in the areas of audio-visual education, library extension, and psychological testing. The bureau will also provide consultative service in curriculum and guidance and similar areas. In the main, the bureau represents an effort to consolidate the services which have now been rendered by individual agencies within the University. Also, it will assume responsibilities for coordinating the work of accreditation and for helping high schools meet the requirements of the Michigan College Agreement, described in the March *Educational Leadership*.

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