

bought variety so we got some of both kinds and gave a tasting test. Then, they wanted to build the cannery."

Vision can be highly contagious. School and community leaders saw the interrelationships of poor soil, one-crop economy, low income and inadequate diets on the one hand and the quality of home, school and community living on the other. As the program got under way, understanding spread and support and participation followed.

What about the leadership? Many of

the teachers have moved on and the superintendent has now moved to near-by community which is already forging ahead. But the people in the old community continue their progress—a legacy any educational leader should be proud to leave behind.

Then, was there ever a big man out in front? The people seem puzzled when asked. Could such a thing be in a situation like this? "Why, mister, so many people helped it's hard to tell who did the most."

---

## *Bases for Integration of School-Community Effort*

MILOSH MUNTYAN

In a time of mobilization, what are major purposes of school-community effort? What are possible approaches to integration of this effort? These timely questions are treated by Milosh Muntyan, chairman, Department of Higher Education, Michigan State College, East Lansing.

ONCE more the schools throughout the country are finding themselves in a position to become truly community-serving institutions. This apparent opportunity stems, of course, from the nation's having embarked upon a serious effort at rearmament. Obviously, a nation rearms itself because it feels it is threatened by an external force—another nation or group of nations—which is challenging its way of life. Consequently the schools can now expect to have opportunity to serve a genuine community function principally because the community, to use the term in its broadest sense, considers itself seriously threatened by ideologies propounded by other nations.

To put the matter directly, it is clear that schools in our democracy have traditionally had to wait until the society is seriously threatened by external power before they could readily assume the semblance of full-fledged partners in a community effort. It is a sad commentary that the school, an institution created and supported by the community in order to further the common ends of the group, can become a genuine partner to community effort only when external forces threaten the community with disruption or destruction.

The situation just referred to is not really too surprising, however. In a society such as ours, characterized as it is by conflicting interest groups, the

schools automatically become victims of incessant cross-fire between groups. That is to say, when the society is beset primarily by internal, rather than international conflict, the schools largely play the role of innocent bystander to conflict between interest groups. As so often happens, the innocent bystander is apt to be more victimized by the conflict than either of the nominal contestants.

### **Schools Need Public Consensus**

There is another sense in which schools find it difficult to serve a genuine community function during times of relative international quiet. Insofar as there are internal community tensions, schools have difficulty in serving a community function precisely because there is no genuine community to be served. That is, the political, economic, social-moral and aesthetic value systems of the general public are so divergent that it becomes impossible for a public institution to locate a point of focus which will not almost immediately lead some group or other to assume that the schools are being "used" to further undesirable ideas and practices.

Nor is this surprising. If we assume, as we obviously must, that these various competing groups are composed of people of good will, we have but one explanation for the dilemma which commonly faces the schools. The explanation can lie only in the fact that members of these groups, surrounded by different social climates and starting from different value systems, have arrived at different conclusions as to what is desirable in this society.

The obvious fact that two groups holding seriously divergent positions

cannot both be right—or the fact that both might be wrong—lessens the schools' problem not a bit. After all, schools can operate effectively only so long as they gain and maintain public approval and support. If they are to gain this support, they can gain it only from a public which holds major political, economic and social-moral ideas in common. Lacking such a public consensus, schools are inevitably forced to operate in some fashion which exposes them to attack from one group or another. Even if they attempt to operate in such fashion as to remove themselves from issues which confront the society which supports them, they have not escaped the dilemma. In this instance, schools frequently come under direct attack on the point of educational philosophy—even though such attacks appear under the varying guises of attacks on teaching methods, curriculum, discipline, or what not.

### **Schools Need Common Focus**

This inability to locate a community to serve largely disappears when the nation is beset by major external problems. Under these conditions the society tends to unify itself against the external threat, so that the schools have something of a common point of focus. More than that, competing interest groups tend to minimize their differences—so that the schools are less apt to become innocent victims of cross-fire which is aimed at them only coincidentally. Further, there is at such times a strong tendency on the part of society to recognize that public institutions are available for community service and are capable of contributing markedly to the community effort.

It is on such a basis that we can hopefully estimate our present potential for genuine community service. In times of stress, such as these, we can locate a considerable community of feeling among our patrons; we are not beset by a constant procession of conflicts within the society; and we are sought as major contributors to the community effort. That we can render valuable service is undeniable. What is in question, however, is how we can carry on our educational task while we serve the community function. Certainly there is no inherent conflict between these two functions, but it is equally clear that there are major problems that confront us in trying to carry out those functions.

Although there has been considerable effort, in late years, toward making clear the point of view from which efforts at school-community integration arise, two fundamental points have been largely ignored. The first of these, having to do with the problem of locating the community which the school would serve, has been pointed up in the foregoing paragraphs. The second major point which needs to be emphasized is concerned with making clear the possible purposes for which school-community effort may be organized.

#### AIMS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY EFFORT

Essentially the school-community effort has three possible major purposes. At one extreme, school-community effort can be integrated in order to further the narrowly defined function of the school—educating the young in terms of school-conceived learnings. That is to say, the school can try to “use” the community in order to serve school purposes. At the other extreme,

school-community effort can be integrated in order to further certain loosely conceived community purposes—meeting some apparent community need in respect of the total educative effect such effort might have for youth. In this case the community is in effect “using” the schools for community purposes.

The third point of orientation would integrate the school and community for the dual purpose of furthering both the educative and the community function. In fact, it sees these as integrated functions. The first two bases of operation exploit, respectively, either the community or the school and the student body. The third approach is a denial of exploitation and represents conscious effort to make the most worthwhile contribution to the education of the young. In a time of international crisis, this approach clearly can make a significant contribution in terms of both material and moral rearmament of our nation.

#### APPROACHES TO SCHOOL-COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

The preceding discussion has pointed up the fundamental purposes of school-community integration. Other articles in this publication concern themselves with specific examples of various approaches to this integration. It may not be amiss, therefore, to describe here the fundamental approaches which are available to us.

There are, again, essentially three approaches which are common to efforts at school-community integration. The first can be characterized as an effort toward taking the school out into the community. The most obvious example

of this type of activity is the excursion, typified by visits that primary school children make to fire stations, post offices, and the like. The second clear-cut approach to school-community integration can be characterized as an effort toward bringing the community into the school. Obvious examples of this type of activity include mock elections that are frequently organized in schools, talks before students by various business and professional people about opportunities in businesses and professions, and those relatively rare instances wherein school youth undertake studies pertinent to problems or issues which confront the local community.

Whether or not these approaches serve genuine school-community functions, or whether they merely "exploit" the community or the school and student body, depends of course on how the approaches are organized and carried out. The dangers of such exploitation are always present in both approaches. For that matter, the same dangers are present when the school and community are more obviously integrated for school-community purposes. Irrespective of the manner of integration, the danger of exploitation is always present unless both school and community are fully cognizant of the purposes of such activity and are mutually committed to democratic procedures. On any other basis, one group becomes the foil of the other, the school most commonly becoming an unwitting agent of a particular power group in the community.

#### **School and Community: Full Partners**

The third approach to integration of the school and the community would

obviously combine the ideas of taking the school out into the community and of bringing the community into the school. When carried out to its logical conclusion, such an approach figuratively breaks down the walls which now tend to isolate the school from the community. It makes the community and the school full-fledged partners in the process of educating youth, drawing no real distinction between the respective educative functions of the school and the community.

In consequence of the foregoing discussion, we would do well to consider one further point. In trying to serve the community function in contemporary society, schools are now faced with the very real problem of operating in such fashion as to further the understanding, on the part of both students and patrons, of the major differences between the fundamental concepts of democracy and the concepts embodied in various ideologies which currently challenge democracy. There is no escaping the fact that our society is confused, at the moment, as to how democratic values are to be preserved without employing devices and techniques which are themselves denials of democracy. It may well be that schools will be more and more involved in this confusion. In the process, the schools may be invited to become more integral members of the "community" effort. But in the very process of serving this "community" function, the schools will be further emphasizing the lack of genuine community understanding which is already so clearly marked. Consequently, schools must be most sensitive to the type of activity which they undertake in their efforts to knit

a closer bond between school and community.

Some school-community efforts are relatively insignificant educationally. But it is likely that some avenues of school-community cooperation which will be more and more available to the schools in these times of confusion and doubt will represent cooperation not with the community as a whole, but rather with various segments of the community which are essentially interested in furthering their private convictions. It matters little how sincere or well-meaning such groups may be. The end result, educationally, is clearly a

negation of the very democracy which both the school and the community are so vigorously trying to uphold.

In consequence, it would be well for us to judge carefully and critically the various avenues of school-community cooperation available to us. That we should genuinely cooperate with the real community is perfectly obvious. But we should be clear as to whether we are cooperating with the real community or with some more vocal, but partial, element within the community. The one approach is educationally and socially sound, the other is educationally and socially indefensible.

---

## *Programs for Young Children*

MILLIE ALMY

**Schools must meet certain challenges if they are to develop satisfactory programs for young children. Some of these challenges are discussed by Millie Almy, Associate Professor of Child Development and Family Life at the University of Cincinnati.**

"THE young children in our neighborhood have no place to play but the street." "Our children need an earlier opportunity to learn how to get along well with each other." "We ought to start our parent education long before children reach first grade." "Our children come from such limited home backgrounds. We need a kindergarten to enrich their experiences before they tackle learning to read." These are but a few of the comments one hears nowadays which indicate a growing conviction of the need for increased educational services for young children.

Schools that already have kindergartens are stressing their importance

by urging all parents to send their children to them, and by drawing kindergartens into closer relationship with the rest of the school program. In addition to their kindergartens for five-year-olds, some schools are including groups for four-year-olds, and in a few instances even for three-year-olds. Rural schools as well as those in urban areas are increasingly concerned with providing for young children.

Whether or not children will benefit from this concern may depend both on the kind of program provided and on the expectations held for it. Is it not possible to detect in some of the thinking about the extension of school serv-

Copyright © 1951 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.