

ested in improving his school and has courage, a lay advisory council can become a valuable group within the school organization. At first the parents may be suspicious and even somewhat

hostile. But as they come to see the sincerity of the principal's purpose and as they take a hand in the school's work, they will come to accept the school as "our" school.

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## *. . . In Bloomington, Illinois*

GEORGE N. WELLS

THE BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC schools have greatly benefited from Citizens Advisory Councils during the past seven years. In 1944 an education panel of The Better Bloomington Citizens Committee made recommendations which have served as a blueprint for the Bloomington Public Schools to the present time.

The challenge presented the Bloomington Schools through their representative citizens committee has been both interesting and productive. Where but in America could the people have a say in what is to be done in their schools? The story of educational progress in Bloomington is an exemplification of the democratic process in a free society.

The Board of Education and the administration accepted the recommendations of the "Educational Panel of the Better Bloomington Citizens Committee" as a guide in developing the educational program. The citizens of the community accepted their responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of the public schools and they recognized that the function of the administration and the trained staff was to furnish leadership and technical skill in developing and improving the program. It was in this spirit that the

superintendent accepted the challenge offered by the Bloomington community in 1945.

The citizens of the community showed their faith in the recommendations made by the "Educational Panel" when they provided the necessary funds by voting, in March 1945, to increase the educational and building tax rates. Again the public registered approval of the program in December 1945, when the voters authorized the Board of Education to issue bonds in the amount of \$750,000 to provide buildings in which to carry out the proposed program. The citizens insured the success of the program when they stabilized the tax rate in April 1947.

### **Results Have Been Achieved**

The following accomplishments have resulted mainly from recommendations of the "Educational Panel of the Better Bloomington Citizens Committee." Administrative leadership has been exercised to the end that:

- Curriculum development has proceeded during the past seven years to meet the educational needs of children and youth.
- A coordinator of curriculum has been appointed to help provide planned se-

quence and continuity of the educational program from kindergarten through senior high school, to correlate the various aspects of the regular educational program and specialized services, and to lead in continuous curriculum development. We are now engaged in an across-the-board program of curriculum development with the University of Illinois serving as consultant. This program is a project of the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program.

- In April 1945, a salary schedule was cooperatively formulated by faculty, board members and citizens and adopted by the Board of Education. This salary schedule has been revised from time to time. It requires a systematic evaluation of the services of faculty members.
- A good professional attitude and cooperative spirit is being achieved among faculty members. A positive approach has been standard practice in the solution of all school problems.
- Clerical help has been added in the central office to provide increased administrative service to the schools.

### Services Have Been Added

The following services have been added:

- Kindergartens were reinstated in September 1945.
- A successful community adult program has developed.
- Audio-visual aids are used effectively.
- The test program reveals that Bloomington Public Schools are up to national standards.
- A complete guidance program has been instituted in Bloomington High School.
- A physical education program has been developed which is integrated from kindergarten through senior high school.
- Classes for exceptional children in primary, intermediate, junior and senior high school are provided.
- An art consultant has re-established an elementary art program.
- The vocal and instrumental music programs have been extended.
- Driver training is given in Bloomington High School.
- Agriculture was added to the high school curriculum in 1949.
- Citizenship education is the all important purpose to which the Bloomington Public Schools are dedicated.
- Homemaking and industrial education have been strengthened with directors heading these programs.
- A reorganized program has been instituted with three-year junior highs and a three-year senior high school.
- Buildings: A program of long term planning of school buildings has been adopted by the Board. Grounds have been extended to meet modern demands of physical education and recreational programs.
- School buildings have been remodeled with movable furniture and better lighting.
- School buildings are used extensively as community centers.
- Additions have been made to buildings and grounds and new buildings have been built to the extent of approximately one million dollars during the past seven years.

With an excellent background of success of public schools and citizens working together, the Advisory Council

to the Bloomington Public Schools was formed in March 1950, with the assistance of Professor Herbert Hamlin, University of Illinois, consultant in the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program. The Advisory Council is composed of citizens truly representative of all elements (not organizations) in the community. Its purpose is to serve as a two-way channel of communication between the public and the schools.

During its first year the Advisory Council was engaged in establishing the council as a functioning organization. Members learned much about the schools by meeting in various buildings and securing information from school staff members.

The Advisory Council is now engaged in a cooperative survey with the

Board of Education under the leadership of Harold Hand, consultant from the University of Illinois, to find out what citizens think about their schools. The Illinois Inventories of Parent, Non-parent, Teacher and Pupil Opinion are being used. The method of survey now in progress is to ask the "customers" and participants how well satisfied they are with the schools. The results will be used for the basis of a program of improvement for the next five or ten years.

Through the cooperative effort of the citizens, the Board of Education, the administration, and the trained staff, the recommendations of a citizens committee have made a most significant difference in the Bloomington Public Schools.



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