It is especially appropriate that this issue be devoted to the education of the gifted. Curriculum workers are well aware that many school systems are undertaking special programs for planning of educational experiences that will be particularly challenging to talented and gifted pupils. As one looks at the situation nationally, however, he soon becomes aware that most of these programs are still in preliminary stages of development, that many school systems are interested in trying out various promising techniques and procedures, but that no school system believes that it has yet solved the problem or formulated a definitive plan for teachers in adapting instruction to the talented. So the programs described below and the bulletins listed later in this section should be regarded as tentative. These school systems and organizations, nevertheless, are willing to share their thinking, ideas and plans with other curriculum workers interested in planning programs best adapted to the varying abilities of all pupils.

Two states in which educators have been especially active in developing programs for the gifted and talented are California and Pennsylvania. The California Committee for the Study of Education has a special Subcommittee on Education for the Gifted of which Donald E. Kitch is chairman. Bernard J. Lonsdale, consultant in elementary education for the California Department of Education, cites special programs for the education of the gifted in Palo Alto, Castro Valley, San Diego City Schools, San Diego County Schools, and the Long Beach City Schools. Publications prepared by these schools are listed later. Other schools are also concerned about the problem and some are in process of developing special programs.

As one phase of these efforts in California, J. C. Gowan and May Seagoe Gowan have prepared an annotated bibliography on the gifted child. It appeared in the March 1955 issue of the California Journal of Educational Research, published by the California Teachers Association. This bibliography is intended to bring up to date the one published in 1951 in the book edited by Paul Witty, entitled The Gifted Child.

The Castro Valley program got under way in the spring of 1953, when Robert Hayden, principal of the Parsons School, obtained permission of the administration to appoint a special committee to study the problems of the gifted child. On the basis of this year-and-a-half study, a plan was presented to the Board of Education and approval was given to begin an experimental program in the school. The first task facing school officials was the selection of gifted children, and the
committee formulated certain criteria for this purpose. After the children were identified, the program has developed through two phases: (a) enrichment, which takes place in the child's own class, particularly during those periods of the day when in the judgment of the teacher a gifted child is not likely to benefit from the type of activity then in progress; and (b) workshop meetings. The workshop enrolls gifted children in grades 4, 5 and 6 and meets for two one-hour periods per week. It is under the direction of a specialist in gifted children. The purposes of the workshop are to provide special guidance, to give instruction in the art of leadership, to broaden the pupils' interest in world affairs, music, art, science and other areas, and to develop creativity through the arts.

A full-scale evaluation project has not yet been possible, but some preliminary analysis has been made.

The special program in the San Diego Public Schools for the education of the gifted child has extended over a period of at least 20 years, but the program has been given new impetus since 1950. Previously, the school system had assumed that adaptations for these pupils could be made by the individual teacher in the regular classroom situation. But on the basis of some studies made in 1949 school officials found that "most gifted pupils had only a little better than a 50-50 chance of accomplishing as much as the average children in the same classes." In 1950 a volunteer committee was appointed to study the problem and to formulate plans. In
1951 a limited program to meet the needs of gifted children was initiated in the schools. This program involved continuous screening by psychologists and teachers to locate these gifted pupils, some further experimentation in accelerating these pupils, provision of teacher consultants to assist teachers having gifted pupils, a program of individual counseling and guidance service to pupils needing it, and a series of study group meetings for parents of gifted pupils. On the basis of such experimentation and study, by 1953 the program had crystallized at the policy level.

In Pennsylvania those interested in the study of the intellectually gifted organized the Pennsylvania Association for the Mentally Gifted. Marie Saul, associate superintendent of schools, Pittsburgh, is president for 1955-56. The association holds an annual conference and these proceedings provide interesting curriculum material for persons interested in this problem. Margaret Neuber, associate professor of special education of Pennsylvania State University, reports that the Pittsburgh Schools, Derry Township Schools, the Eric Schools, the Altoona Schools, the Lewistown Schools, the Allentown Schools, and the Philadelphia Schools are among those that have formulated plans for developing special opportunities for the gifted.

According to Prudence Bostwick, the Denver Public Schools are just getting well started on their consideration of the problems of the gifted child. The Committees on Instruction created last year a K-12 Study Committee for the Gifted. This committee presented its recommendations to the Board of the Committees on Instruction late last school year, and the board has requested members of all schools to send in their views relative to the report of the board early this fall so that more concrete plans may be formulated. The committee has recommended 6 study areas for the present school year: investigation of curriculum offerings which may be added to the regular program; a study of “drive” as a necessary corollary to high I.Q. if the full potential of giftedness is to be realized; a plan of sequence in instruction and provision for related materials so that the pupil’s educational experience will be continuous; an examination of the ways in which special subjects may be used; a study of persons with special talents other than academic to determine ways to help them; and a further examination of means for securing scholarship assistance for gifted pupils financially unable to continue their education. A survey of actual classroom practices relating to the gifted, which was made last spring, will be published soon.

James Dunlap, school psychologist of the University City (Missouri) School, where Robert Gilchrist recently assumed the superintendency, reports that the schools of that city provide two types of programs for intellectually gifted pupils. In the elementary grades enrichment classes are offered for such pupils in grades three through six. These classes of eight to ten pupils meet twice each week for 40 or 50 minute periods outside their regular classroom to explore topics, generally of their own choosing, under the direction of a special teacher. At the junior high school level, gifted (145
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I.Q. and above) and superior (130 to 140 I.Q.) pupils are grouped together in three or four sections of each grade for academic work rather than being scattered through 12 or 14 different sections. In this way pupils have an opportunity to develop in directions and at a rate compatible with their abilities and interests. Several follow-up studies have shown the worthwhileness of these efforts.

Recent Curriculum Bulletins

In the efforts of many school systems to develop a curriculum that would more adequately challenge all students, including the gifted, several excellent guides and bulletins on the education of talented children have been published. An effort was made to locate as many of these as possible; the listing below comprises this effort. If other school systems have such publications, the column editor would like very much to receive copies for later listing.


This bulletin is designed to help teachers meet individual differences in children, particularly with reference to the gifted child. The booklet explains the general policies of the Palo Alto Schools in meeting individual differences and discusses school practices with relation to such problems. The second section is devoted to the characteristics of the gifted child, and the concluding portion of the booklet offers suggestions to teachers for improving ways in which they are meeting the
needs of gifted children. The guide is largely in outline form and is also cleverly illustrated.


This attractive little leaflet is primarily an appeal to teachers and the public to provide adequate programs for the talented. The council concludes the pleas with six recommendations for meeting the needs of these youngsters.


This booklet suggests ways for teachers in the elementary school to work with intellectually gifted children and those who have special talent in music and art. After a brief introduction, containing suggestions to help the teacher in identifying and understanding the gifted and talented, the booklet presents ideas for providing enrichment activities for such children in the areas of the social studies, science, reading or written communications, arithmetic, physical education, music and art. Especially helpful are a suggested bibliography for teachers and a bibliography of books especially suitable for gifted children.


These three publications of the Long Beach Schools resulted from the efforts of a system-wide committee appointed in 1951. The function of the committee was to prepare work procedures for the identification of the very superior pupil and recommendations for appropriate instructional practices for such pupils. The first bulletin published, in September 1952, contains a history of the project and a statement of policies and procedures, and contains suggested enrichment materials. These suggestions were utilized by the staff for the following two years and in the spring of 1954 an extensive questionnaire was submitted to the schools for use in formulating new suggestions and materials. The two 1955 publications are the outgrowth of reports received from the schools and subsequent recommendations made by the committee. The pattern of the two new bulletins is to present in outline form suggested activities in the various areas of curriculum for challenging the intellectually gifted student. The setting for each activity is explained; then the procedures used in adapting learning activities to individual differences are listed in some detail. Suggestions for summarizing and evaluating the activity are also given.

• Harry Passow, Miriam Goldberg, Abraham Tannenbaum, and Will French, Planning for Talented Youth: Considerations for the Public Schools. Publication 1, Talented Youth Project,
One of the current undertakings of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation is the Talented Youth Project. The Project has three aspects: (a) preparing materials and summarizing interpretative research on the talented and their education; (b) providing assistance to schools in developing their own research and experimental programs for the talented; (c) conducting basic studies in the nature and function of talent. This first publication of the project summarizes and interprets the theory and research in the identification of talent and in the development of educational programs that serve the needs of these pupils. Not only does the publication summarize what authorities know and advocate about education for the gifted, but it points the way for schools in undertaking a developmental program and research of their own. The pamphlet is a preliminary statement, but it will indeed be helpful to schools interested in adapting instruction to gifted students.


This helpful bulletin summarizes the provisions used in large high schools to adapt teaching methods in the subject areas to pupils who are not average. A tabular presentation is used to show the different types of adaptations made in the various fields.


This report by Mrs. Roberts of her study of special programs for gifted children, made possible by a fellowship provided by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, has been published by the Sub-committee on Education for the Gifted of the California Committee for the Study of Education. It describes programs for the education of the gifted developed by school systems and other institutions throughout the country. It is a useful compilation of information for committees studying this problem.