REGULAR readers of this department will note that, with this issue, its name has been altered. For several years—the last two under the able editorship of Professor Galen Saylor—these columns have included news about persons and events in curriculum development as well as reviews of bulletins and guides. Hereafter, news items will be reported elsewhere and the focus here will be on reviews of curriculum materials exclusively.

In addition to the reviews in Educational Leadership, ASCD intermittently has published lists of outstanding materials. Unlike this column, which offered descriptive and evaluative comments, the lists of selected items were bibliographic. The new version of this column will be designed, it is hoped, as a two-in-one model—crystallizing the Publications Committee's desire to combine the best features of the column with those of the periodic lists. One possibility being explored is that of incorporating the columns into a booklet. Readers are invited to share their ideas on making the regular column and the periodic listings more functional.

ASCD members, other readers of Educational Leadership, and co-workers are urged to send all kinds of curriculum materials (bulletins, guides, courses of study, syllabi, resource units, manuals, newsletters, and similar items) to the editor of this column so that they can be shared with others in the field of curriculum and teaching. The column editor will appreciate your adding his name to mailing lists for curriculum materials of every kind.

The last three editions of the lists of outstanding materials (1948, 1951, and 1955) were prepared cooperatively by the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University, and ASCD. Various other departments within the college's Division of Instruction helped by evaluating materials in their areas of specialization. Essentially the same procedure will now be followed in the preparation of these columns. Teachers College staff members will cooperate in reviewing publications in areas in which they have special competence. As in the past, the materials evaluated will then be placed in the Curriculum Laboratory so that students, staff members, and others may have access to them for further study.

In judging which of the 1150 items submitted were to be included in the 1955 edition, the Planning Committee used a set of criteria which it had developed, titled "Guidelines for Evaluating Curriculum Materials." Choosing publications on the basis of these guides, the committee finally selected 283 items. The six major criteria still seem sound and will continue to be used in evaluating materials for these columns. The criteria along with the specific guidelines are as follows:


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1. Does the material reflect reliable scholarship in a given area?
2. Are high quality teaching-learning situations suggested?
3. Is there a highly useful section suggesting instructional materials and resources relevant to the area of concern?
4. Does the production scheme seem to be well conceived?
5. Is the material organized for easy and efficient use?
6. Is the format attractive and appealing?

The primary aim of producing curriculum materials locally is to help the professional staff improve the quality of its own instruction. Materials which meet the above criteria, however, usually have wider applicability. Even when the content seems to be so specific and parochial as to restrict more general use, materials may still have considerable illustrative value and may ring some bell of insight for individuals and groups in other systems.

Local Periodicals Serve as Resources for Teaching

Many school systems issue regular newsletters to inform their professional staffs and others about personalities and events of interest. However, some systems have developed periodic magazines or bulletins as an important resource for teachers and other curriculum workers. The value of the local periodical is significant; such bulletins can sustain a teacher's creativity, provide timely help in planning, suggest resources at hand or easily secured, facilitate communications, and generally serve important functions not possible in more elaborate guides or manuals. These features of timeliness and flexibility make these materials particularly useful to classroom teachers. There follow some examples of periodicals designed primarily as resources rather than as public relations materials.
- **Curriculum and Materials** (edited by William H. Bristow, Curriculum Center, Board of Education of City of New York, 130 West 55th Street, New York 19, New York) is a 16-page bi-monthly publication of the Curriculum Council and Division of Curriculum Development. Attractively designed and produced, each issue is built around a central theme which teachers can use in instructional planning. For example, the March-April 1957 issue contained a lead article on “The International Geophysical Year.” Well written and illustrated, the article provides an informative and interesting account of what the IGY is about and why it is educationally important. Other articles deal with related topics such as “Education for the Air Age” and “Simple Experiments on Air and Flight.” In addition to a special listing of films and film strips, each of the regular features (i.e., Materials and Aids, Museum Round-up, Magazine Rack, Around New York and Around the World) focuses on the number’s theme as well as provides news of interest. Activities are suggested for varied subject areas and grade levels and teachers are directed to specific sources for further study. **Curriculum and Materials** is an outstanding example of a local periodical constructed as a stimulus for improved teaching.

- **Instruction News** (Division of Instructional Services, Denver Public Schools, 414 Fourteenth Street, Denver 2, Colorado) is far less elaborate than **Curriculum and Materials** but serves some of the same purposes. Issued about seven times a year, **Instruction News** reports “promising classroom practices, services and materials available to teachers, current events in the field of instruction, business of the committees on instruction.” The system-wide committees

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THE READER’S DIGEST EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT
Pleasantville, New York

October 1957
play significant roles in building the city's educational program. The News helps communicate the emphases in committee activities and keeps the staff informed of ongoing developments and resources. The items are concise and informative and the summaries direct readers to the work of specific groups. Through the News, teachers are alerted to the preparation and production of helpful curriculum materials.

• Letter to Supervisors (Bureau of Elementary School Supervision, The State Education Department, Albany 1, New York) is a 4-page multilithed monthly publication. In each number, a topic of interest to persons working in elementary education is presented, frequently with a backdrop of research findings. The Letter is prepared by an individual or a group of specialists from appropriate divisions of the State Education Department. A list of readings and of sources for materials is included. These brief “Letters” spotlight important topics and direct workers in schools around the state to further study. The April number dealt with “Developing Problem Solving Abilities”; the May issue with “Nutrition Education, a Bridge to Healthier Children.”

Local Journals Assist Instruction

Instead of the bulletin or newsletter format, some school systems use a magazine as a means of communicating ideas, practices, research findings, and events of importance to the local professional staff. Such publications are a forum for sharing the activities of teachers and other curriculum workers. Four examples of such journals are those produced by the Chicago, New York, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh schools.

• Chicago Schools Journal (edited...
at Chicago Teachers College, 6800 Stewart Avenue, Chicago 21, Illinois) is published bimonthly for Chicago teachers. The range of major articles is illustrated by some of the titles in the May-June 1957 number: “What Is the Teacher For?” “Washington and Chicago Cooperate in Research,” and “Counseling and Guidance in the Classroom.” In addition to articles, regular features include “Tips for Teachers” written by classroom colleagues; “News in Education”; summaries of pertinent items from other “Periodicals”; lists of films, filmstrips and recordings in “New Teaching Aids”; and reviews of “Important New Books.”

- **High Points** (Board of Education of the City of New York, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn 1, New York) is published monthly for teachers in the city’s high schools. Its columns yield articles about issues in teaching in the secondary schools, reports of studies, descriptions of classroom procedures, and scholarly discussions of educational topics. Teaching resources in New York City are called to the attention of readers. Films which have teaching value and professional books are reviewed. In “Chalk Dust,” teachers share teaching techniques.

- **Baltimore Bulletin of Education** (Bureau of Publications, 3 East 25th Street, Baltimore 18, Maryland) appears five times a year. Usually the articles which make up the magazine are clustered about a theme. The May number, for example, dealt with “What They Talked About at Recent Conventions.” The bulk of the articles were texts of speeches made by staff members of the Baltimore schools at professional meetings around the country. Another recent number focused on adult education in the school system. When important conferences take place locally, the texts of major addresses are frequently published in the *Bulletin*. Except for a few references, there are no suggestions of instructional materials and resources.

- **Pittsburgh Schools** (Division of Curriculum Development and Research, 155 Administration Building, Board of Education, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) appears bimonthly. The three articles which comprised the May-June 1957 number were titled “Trends in Physical Education,” “Understanding of Certain Social Science Concepts in Relation to Sociometric Status of Sixth-Grade Children,” and “A Follow-up of Gifted Pupils from Two Elementary Schools.” Like the *Baltimore Bulletin of Education*, this magazine contains only articles and does not catalogue teaching resources or similar aids. Both of these are, in many ways, comparable to the general educational journals, although the articles have local focus and interest.

The materials described briefly above exemplify curriculum publications of a periodical nature produced locally and intended to help upgrade the quality of instruction. All are attractively prepared, although the designs, in terms of format, type, paper, use of illustrations, and arrangement, vary considerably. Most of these publications give considerable attention to suggestions for learning activities and teaching resources. All differ from the curriculum guide or manual which—because of its method of preparation—is usually more detailed, comprehensive, and longer lasting. Systems might well consider the merits of a periodical which focuses on instructional improvement, especially those schools whose existing news bulletins might grow in this direction.