

Curriculum News

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• The San Diego city school system is planning a major reorganization for curriculum development. In the past, responsibility for curricular progress has been in the hands of subject area steering committees. In the plan for reorganization, curriculum development is to be the responsibility of grade level planning committees. For many years the steering committees have carried out these responsibilities very effectively. In the revised plan for system-wide curriculum development, six curriculum planning committees will have responsibility for making recommendations for curricular change. These grade level groups will take over the curriculum development responsibilities which have previously been carried by the subject area steering committee. Many problems had been cropping up that could not be solved by these subject area steering committees. Who, for instance, had the responsibility for programs in health, safety, and moral and spiritual education? These needs cut across subject area lines and are too often ignored. Another problem is that of maintaining proper balance between required and elective subjects. Each subject area steering committee tended to become a pressure group for more of its particular product. Seemingly it became more and more difficult for people aligned on the basis of subject areas to consider all the needs of youth which, again, cut boldly across subject fields. Under the new program curriculum development can now occur on a broad front with the subject

areas providing vertical continuity but with chief consideration being given to a balanced program at each grade level.

• Over 125 Arlington, Massachusetts, teachers and supervisory personnel have been participating in Mental Health Workshops during the past school year. These are sponsored by the Massachusetts Mental Health Association. Elementary and junior high school teachers took part in workshops during the first semester, while other junior and senior high school teachers participated during the second semester. Topics covered were: acceptance of other people's opinions and attitudes, the value of self-analysis, the importance of the impression a teacher makes on a pupil's life, and the causes of various behavior patterns. Also stressed during discussions was the climate of the classroom as pupils progress through different phases of growth and development.

• A report from the standing Committee on Applications of Mathematics, Division of Mathematics of the National Research Council, indicates that its major concern has been with the growing demands for mathematicians in government and industry, and the insufficient numbers of students being prepared to meet these demands. This problem was attacked at the high school level, and the following project was proposed: The committee felt that while many factors contribute to repel even superior students from courses in mathematics, one important factor is lack of information

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about the careers open to mathematicians, and scant and often distorted conceptions of mathematicians and their activities. Therefore, the committee decided that a contribution toward making mathematics interesting to students might be one of attempting to make mathematicians interesting. It seemed that this could be done best by presenting sketches, or profiles, of real, live mathematicians. Since the profiles are for high school students, the mathematicians chosen should be not too old, should be interesting and engaged in interesting work, and should be outstanding. Further, there should be women as well as men. It is hoped that eventually these profiles will be assembled and printed in a little brochure, to be made available at no cost to high school students, as well as to their teachers and counselors.

• Curriculum planners recognize a need for studying present social conditions and foreseeable plans. (The threat of a "Saber-Toothed Curriculum" is ever present.) Readers interested in this area may find the following excerpt significant. It is from the National Planning Association's Joint Statement on metropolitan areas printed in the February 1957 issue of *Looking Ahead*: "The urban centers of the United States are becoming obsolete in many ways. Traffic strangulation; spreading slums; bankrupt mass transportation systems; inadequate schools, parks, hospitals, water supplies and sewers; air pollution; the flight to the unprepared suburbs; and aggravated social frictions are symptoms of a developing situation of dramatic seriousness to the welfare of the American people. The situation calls urgently for vigorous action, action which can be based only on new lines of metropolitan planning, jointly undertaken by government, business, labor, and the urban and

suburban populations. If Americans continue to stumble into future developments in and around the rapidly expanding metropolitan areas on the basis of thousands of separate and unrelated private development schemes and local plans, and if they deal separately with highways, with schools, with housing, and with hospitals, they are likely to misdirect their efforts and waste their time and resources. And what happens to the future requirement for open spaces and recreation, or any other need which happens not to be powerfully represented by an interest group at a given moment of decision?"

• Many local schools include preschool institutes as part of their systematic curriculum planning program. Some schools use post-school workshops. Others have institutes throughout the school year. All these institutes vary in length. Cincinnati, for example, completed (August 27-30) a three-day preschool meeting—the eleventh annual teachers' institute. As in former institutes, wide opportunity for professional growth was offered in 36 work-study conferences relating to various problems in the teaching fields and at various levels. For the sixth year the institute in 1957 continues the common problems approach for the junior and senior high school teachers based on the enrichment of the school curriculum for all children. Many facets must be considered in pre-planning such an institute. Consideration must be given to consultants, assemblies, institute location, work-study sessions, granting of credit, orientation programs, luncheon schedule, visual-auditory aids, enrollment forms, and work-study groups. Planning committees in local school systems, formed now, would have much to work on to get ready for the preschool institute.

GUIDING LANGUAGE LEARNING

by Mildred A. Dawson
and Marian Zollinger

offers a comprehensive and detailed program of language instruction designed to meet concrete situations that arise from day to day. The authors' wide and varied experience is reflected throughout their uncommonly useful book. Special care has been taken to suit the book to all grades, while treating the specific and recurring problems peculiar to each grade level. The authors stress the importance of relating learning to child growth and development, of insuring continuity and sequence of the program, and of recognizing individual differences in abilities and interests. Balanced emphasis is given to the *acquisition* of ideas as well as to the *expression* of ideas. It is shown how correct usage and language technicalities may best be taught in context and reinforced with subsequent direct teaching and practice. An invaluable text for all educators concerned with improving language instruction.

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