materials related to specific problems being tackled by staff groups at the moment. A file of resource materials and resource personnel available for classroom use would be valuable. The equipment should surely include a typewriter and a duplicating machine; possibly, a coffee maker! Resource personnel could include other staff members, the principal, consultants from the central office, parents, and college staff members. The provision of such a curriculum laboratory might easily be one of the keys to effective staff participation.

The listing of these problems which interfere with the realization of all the high values we have assumed were to be found in staff involvement in the curriculum improvement process may serve to make us defensive . . . or depressed . . . or determined to move ahead in a constructive attack on such problems. I hope it has also served to whet your interest in reading the challenging articles which follow in this issue.

One further exercise I recommend, however, before indulging in the pleasure of sharing ideas with the distinguished panel of authors included within these pages! Just what do you consider to be the strengths of including the school staff in the process of curriculum development? If your convictions carry sufficient vitality they may help you see through the obstacles to the underlying values. As a starter I would propose these:

1. It is important that the teacher carry large responsibility in planning curriculum activities so that such activities may be the most appropriate ones for the particular pupil(s) concerned.

2. Curriculum improvement depends in large measure on a change in behavior on the part of the teacher. Changes in behavior are most likely to occur through participation in problem solving activities.

3. While subject matter experts, curriculum specialists, supervisors, administrators, and many other people concerned with the curriculum have roles to play, the teacher is in the unique position of carrying curriculum plans into action. The teaching staff can contribute practical ideas born of this experience. We must not fail to exploit such a resource fully.

—ROBERT S. FOX, director, University School, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Balance in the Curriculum

AT THIS writing, three months have gone by since that day in early October when Russia triumphantly announced the successful launching of Sputnik I. During this time America’s response to the portentous event has presented a spectacle of national hand-wringing and breast-beating which only recently has shifted to a more mature consideration of the implications of Russia’s ascendancy in the world of science and technology.

Educators were not surprised when education became the whipping boy for the loss of American prestige. Schools and colleges have always been convenient scapegoats for those who feel compelled to place blame, or for those who desire to escape responsibility for decisions or actions which have not been
It is ironic that in a few weeks the position of the national administration, as well as that of many local boards of education and communities, can change from an attitude of indifference or opposition to new demands on education to one of almost total reliance on education as they envision it. Education has become the rallying point for disillusioned Americans, shocked out of their complacency. A "new look" in education seems to be the style demanded by this near-panic over recent events.

What are some of the changes in and for education which are advocated by those who see the American school system as crucial to our future? From press, radio and television come the answers in a flood of recommendations of the President, admirals, congressmen, industrialists, scientists, educators—and "the man on the street." Four major concerns seem to trouble those who advocate changes in the educational scene.

1. "The role of the intellectual must be elevated in our society, both economically and socially. Teachers, researchers, scientists, mathematicians and others who push back the frontiers of thought and action must be given more social prestige and adequate salaries—at least as much as given their counterparts in Russia."

There remains the question of whether such an attitude is only a temporary expedient geared to the idea that intellectuals have suddenly become important means to new and crucial ends, or whether they will be returned to their former status of "eggheads" if and when the emergency is met.

2. "Individual differences among students constitute a major problem in democratic education." (A strange and wonderful discovery for many, seen only in the light of Sputnik.) "Provision for individual differences among pupils in abilities, interests and needs requires facilities, teachers and methods which are expensive, but we must provide them."

The gifted child, again seen by some as a special kind of means to these new ends, is brought into the center of the focus on individual differences and their importance in education. The proposed provisions for special programs for gifted youth prompt misgivings in terms of what they may do to individuals and to our concept of public education in America. Will the public school of America revert to the public school of England from whose traditions it only recently escaped?

3. "More and better guidance services are needed to insure that more young people are tested and counseled into scientific and technological careers. National testing services, counseling centers, and scholarship grants must be provided to identify, attract and educate youngsters capable of going into scientific fields."

No one questions the need of more counseling services in the schools. However, to make guidance synonymous with telling pupils they ought to be scientists and mathematicians is educationally naïve, and philosophically debatable. Such manipulation of students' goals and expectations may be appropriate in Russia, but seems incompatible with our democratic ideals. If a draft of our youth-power is necessary, we should have it. Guidance is hardly the word, however, for such a turn of events.

4. "The curriculum content and teaching methods of our schools need revision. Science and mathematics must have a central place in the curriculum of all pupils. For some youths who can become highly proficient in these areas there
should be more courses offered earlier in the grades and with higher standards expected.”

The question of maintaining balance in the curriculum, or of purposely creating an imbalance, is an issue which cannot be disposed of easily. All curriculum decisions are value judgments, by someone, some place. An arbitrary decision for more mathematics and science on whatever value basis will not make these values acceptable to the learner, or the content teachable.

In addition to these major concepts of educational changes, some have argued that more homework should be given, stricter discipline must be maintained, a longer school day and year are needed, extracurricular activities ought to be curtailed, married teachers must be eliminated, and educational television might be introduced more generally. These latter proposals are readily seen to be of a different order from the first four, most of them suggesting “pet gripes” or “axes to grind” which may be unrelated to the current crisis.

The fact remains, however, that clear thinking is called for in the face of these many clamors for improvement and change, particularly when many appear related to goals for which professional educators have been working many years. Now we find in 1958 some strange new allies, protesting the need for more education and money to buy that education. Crash programs are demanded. We must guard against succumbing to the idea that curriculum change and educational progress come in this way. We in ASCD, working with others who are conscious of the problems and complexities of institutional change, must caution against precipitous policy formulation and action under pressure and panic. Sputnik has not changed the laws of learning or the principles of child growth and development. One hopes that it has not altered our beliefs about freedom, human dignity, and other basic values.

Education must still be an attribute of government, not a tool. People must continue to be seen as ends, not means. Even in times of crisis such basic tenets must be held fast. If we do not preserve them, we may find ourselves pursuing the educational policy and program of Russia whose philosophy we are committed to negate in the world.

Cognizant of these grave problems in aims, policies, programs and outcomes of education in the Sputnik era, ASCD has planned for its yearbook in 1961 to be devoted to the problem of achieving balance in the curriculum. The task of the yearbook committee is a difficult one at this time, because one cannot predict the shape of things to come in the schools during the next three years. If drastic changes are made, the yearbook will be a document coming too late; if we find ourselves in 1961 still pondering the need and form for revisions, the yearbook could make a significant contribution.

In either case, members of ASCD need to be alert to these proposals for change, many of which are conceived in panic and delivered prematurely in the hope of helping America keep up in this era of competition with the totalitarian aims and projects of Soviet Russia. The ASCD 1961 Yearbook Committee welcomes suggestions from the membership of the Association on what this volume can contribute to the current scene.

—Paul M. Halverson, professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York. Dr. Halverson is chairman of the ASCD 1961 Yearbook Committee.

Educational Leadership