

# Curriculum News

Column Editor: Paul R. Klohr

## National Defense Education Act

BY THE time this column reaches your desk, you and others in your school system or your institution undoubtedly will have been involved, in one way or another, in plans to carry out some of the provisions of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, enacted by the 85th Congress in September. Certainly, your state department of education will have developed a "state plan" in considerable detail.

It is not the intent here to analyze the act, itself. Several excellent interpretations are available. And it is no longer news to report again the potential this law has for assisting in far-reaching developments in education. Rather, it is our aim to underline the heavy responsibility curriculum workers have in helping to make and to carry out plans adequate in scope to fulfill this potential. Adequacy in this case calls for insight into the problems that exist in the *total* scene and a boldness in projecting creative solutions. In short, we must be willing to take what one ASCD member refers to as the "qualitative leap."

To take such a leap, one must first learn how to think in a way which causes him to relate his broad concerns about curriculum to many specific proposals, often diverse and sometimes contradictory. One's organization of values plays a crucial role in this process. What is our value commitment? What pur-

poses must we keep central if we are to honor the values we hold?

These have always been hard questions to face in curriculum planning. Current pressures in society and in education, in particular, make confronting them even more difficult. In fact, there seems to be a marked trend toward proposals to solve specific problems which have major consequences for curriculum with little or no attempt to raise questions of value and purpose.

The ASCD Platform of Beliefs can be a useful instrument in helping us to clarify our beliefs and values. Such clarification can then lead to the development of an organization of values which has meaning for us and one which can serve as a sounding board against which we can reflect specific ideas and plans for testing.

Having engaged in this kind of a process, one is in a position to assess the relationships that obtain, or are likely to develop, between his major concerns in curriculum and certain specific action proposals. And so, if he is advising or working on plans in his own school to implement Title III of the Act, a title which deals with financial assistance for strengthening science, mathematics, and modern foreign language instruction, he has a broad value orientation to help guide his decisions. Or, if he is involved in making judgments about actions proposed under the

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DALLAS 1  
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provisions of Title V which deals with guidance, counseling, testing, and the identification and encouragement of able students, he has a base for making judgments and establishing priorities.

Sound judgments involving curriculum values and purposes are also required as one confronts action proposals derived from Title VII which has to do with research and experimentation in more effective utilization of television, radio, motion pictures and related media. The same is true if one is concerned with Title VI which focuses on modern language development, and Title VIII which provides assistance in the establishment of more extensive area vocational programs.

No one of these titles deals directly with curriculum. Yet, all have implications for curriculum. The point made here is that individuals will need to be aware of these implications and will

need to sensitize others. Faculty groups faced with decisions growing out of the Act can work together to develop their own platform of beliefs.

We have discussed briefly how a statement such as the ASCD Platform of Beliefs might serve. Individuals and faculty groups will also find the broad outlines of ASCD's CAPCI to be increasingly helpful.

As ASCD members throughout the nation continue to plan co-operative action in the three large problem areas—reaching toward a balanced curriculum, providing for individual differences, and evaluation of learning, the values and purposes which give direction to such action will be clarified. This clarification will, in turn, help each of us to take a more effective leadership role in shaping the plans and actions of the new National Defense Education Act. CAPCI is under way at a most significant time in American education.

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#### Importance of People

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ate. Chinese civilization, as Professor Drake has further observed, emphasizes family ties to make human values the basis of society. As a race they contribute much to one's vision of human potentiality and faith in human nature.

Thus when the gongs shuddered in Green Hill temple, they tolled for me, and not dolorously. For my island had ceased to be an island; it had formed an isthmus with the main of a mighty people.

—CARLTON CULMSEE, *dean, University College, Utah State University, Logan.*

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