

*Described here are
school problems and procedures
in a community in transition.*

Elsie Hayes

Changing Neighborhood— Changing School

THE minute men of 1959 are the officers and men of the 101st Airborne Division. The Screaming Eagles of World War II fame pride themselves on their ability to leave Fort Campbell ready for combat anywhere in the world on a two-hour alert.

The home of the 101st Airborne, which is the leading element of the Strategic Army Command—STRAC, is Fort Campbell, Kentucky, a temporary post of World War II, in process of transformation to one of the finest military installations in the United States.

The primary mission of the 101st Airborne is to protect and maintain the security of the United States and the free world against alien aggression.

Major General W. C. Westmoreland, Commanding General of the 101st Division and Fort Campbell, reiterates his belief that, in reality, the long-term security of the United States and the free world is directly dependent upon a strong, dynamic educational program.

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Speaking to the entire school staff at the 1959 preschool conference, General Westmoreland challenged the staff to provide an education program second to none.

Translating this challenge into reality is a responsibility which the staff of Fort Campbell Dependent Schools accepted with a seriousness of purpose equal to that of the Screaming Eagles. This is no small task!

Fort Campbell is truly a community in transition. The temporary quarters of World War II vintage are giving way to permanent structures of brick, block, and steel. Last year's parade ground is becoming this year's housing development. An enrollment of 700 students in 1951 has more than tripled, becoming 2,300 in 1959.

Mobility of the Fort Campbell population is the rule rather than the exception. The average tour of duty of a Fort Campbell family is two to three years. Consequently, a veritable stream of students flows through the schools. Daily registration or withdrawal is routine.

Teaching-learning truly becomes a

two-way process when a fourth grade teacher faces a group of children who have lived in both Europe and the Orient.

Extreme mobility creates many opportunities as well as problems which a modern system must face realistically. The Census Bureau reports that 40 million Americans move every year. This mobility has tended to make us aware of the fact that standardization does not exist in our American schools. While standardization to the "nth" degree may not be desirable, continuity within a school program should be a concern.

Coordinating, facilitating and helping schools to improve instruction are generally recognized as important functions of supervision.

The purpose here is to indicate some of the ways in which a supervisor has worked cooperatively with administrators, teachers and parents on the problems involved in adapting to mobility and change.

The administration of Fort Campbell Dependent Schools, having observed a keen interest on the part of parents in a mobile community to relate themselves to the school has made provision for this need in its organization.

The contract period for staff members is 10 months. This arrangement provides necessary time for both preschool and postschool planning.

The salary schedule provided by the administration is attractive to highly qualified personnel and encourages staff members to make a career of teaching.

The system-wide P.T.A. serves as a unifying force for the system and provides for two-way communication.

Regular meetings of the superintendent, supervisor and principals are held each Monday to consider administrative and instructional problems.

A system-wide curriculum steering committee, composed of the administrative and supervisory staff, teacher representatives of each school, the P.T.A. president, the curriculum chairman of the school board, and the testing and guidance counselor, meets biweekly to provide opportunities for developing better leadership, guidance and direction for the total instructional program.

Principals meet regularly with individual school staffs for continuous evaluation and improvement of programs at each school level.

Grade level meetings are held within individual schools and on a system-wide basis for the purpose of sharing ideas, and planning for continuity in the school program.

Interest groups are also working on projects which are an outgrowth of an interest inventory conducted early in the school year.

The program and plans of the system-wide professional organization are coordinated with other activities.

Helpful Procedures

What are some of the problems resulting from mobility? What are some cooperative procedures employed in meeting these problems? Following are indications of our attempts to answer these questions.

1. Mobility makes mandatory a continuing evaluation of a system of reporting pupil progress.

It is unrealistic to assume that any report card, regardless of the type, can serve as a thorough and complete means of communication between the school and the home. This is particularly true when parents move frequently and are exposed to many different systems of reporting pupil progress. This necessitates

employment of a variety of contacts with parents, such as:

- a. Parent-teacher conferences
- b. Written reports
- c. Folders with samples of children's work sent home
- d. Homeroom meetings at which the program is explained and an opportunity given for parent questions
- e. Homeroom visitation for observation
- f. Pupil evaluation as a part of the reporting system
- g. Home visits by teachers
- h. Achievement test results recorded on the report card.

2. Mobility requires continuing interpretation of school policies and procedures to parents.

New parents moving into the community bring rather than "send" their children to school. This gives the school principal an opportunity to orient the parent as to policies and procedures. Other methods employed are these:

- a. Home visitation
- b. Parent-teacher conferences
- c. Centrally scheduled registration conducted by staff members, at which time information sheets are distributed and parent questions answered.
- d. P.T.A. programs
- e. Handbooks for parents
- f. School publicity in the local paper
- g. Mimeographed materials
- h. Daily bulletins distributed to parents
- i. Radio publicity
- j. School newspapers
- k. The wife of the P.T.A. president serves as a member of the school board for liaison purposes.

3. Mobility of pupil population necessitates that pupils be placed in groups

that will encourage them to learn and will accelerate the adjustment which each must make when he arrives at a new school. To facilitate this placement, these procedures are employed:

- a. Examination of records brought by children
- b. Teacher observation
- c. Early testing scheduled (both achievement and intelligence)
- d. Principal-parent conference
- e. Principal-child conference, which is followed by a guidance-counselor-child conference if problems arise
- f. Principal-teacher conferences
- g. Grouping based on reading ability and achievement levels.

4. Mobility emphasizes the need for facilitating pupil-teacher adjustment. Emphasis is placed on this from the time the teacher is employed and is continued through such activities as these:

- a. Extensive program of orientation for new teachers
- b. Handbooks prepared over a period of time by staff members for teachers and parents
- c. Preparation and presentation of films with a narration depicting various phases of the school program
- d. Grade level meetings of teachers to discuss problems of adjustment and procedures for meeting the problems
- e. Preschool and postschool conferences aimed at helping all teachers
- f. Curriculum steering committee.

5. Mobility of pupils creates the problem of making it possible to have the appropriate instructional materials in the hands of teachers and students at the right time. Some attempts to meet this need are these:

- a. Placing students in groups working at or near their achievement levels

b. Providing a variety of supplementary materials

c. Providing teacher-made materials of instruction

d. Working with principals, teachers and committees in planning for the purchase of materials appropriate for individuals and groups through surveys and meetings of grade level groups.

6. Mobility presents a problem to the administrative staff in predicting enrollment and providing adequate facilities at the individual school and system-wide levels. Specific planning to meet this need includes:

a. Preregistration (prior to opening of school)

b. Enrollment cards which indicate all members of the family

c. Cooperative planning of school administration with post housing authorities.

d. Pretesting.

7. Mobility of students creates the problem of insuring continuity of learning experiences toward educational objectives of both the school and the child. In order that horizontal as well as vertical sequences may be provided, these are some of the techniques used:

a. Use of results of achievement tests in individual rooms—emphasizing strengths as well as weaknesses

b. Consideration of individual differences (study records and performance of the child)

c. Provision for complete cumulative records (which follow the child to the next school)

d. Efforts of curriculum steering to facilitate continuity

e. Use of locally constructed tests to supplement achievement tests

f. Close supervision of the program

g. Discussion sessions in initiation of units to determine known facts

h. Emphasizing intercultural relations

i. Teaching foreign languages.

8. Mobility has had a tendency to make both parents and children aware of the importance of community agencies and the need for coordinating activities sponsored by the different groups. Some of these groups are:

a. Youth Activities Center, which coordinates: Boy Scouts program; Girl Scouts program; teen club for junior and senior high students; Little League football; Little League baseball; organized horseback riding; bicycle safety program and shop; and Camp Tagaytay for recreational purposes; and community field trips

b. Religious Education Center, which conducts an instruction program on voluntary basis in schools after school hours

c. Youth Activities Council on which the superintendent serves for coordination purposes.

9. Mobility necessitates continuing evaluation of all phases of the school program as well as the individual child and his work.

a. Evaluation efforts which are employed deal with: philosophy and purposes of school; program for children (curriculum offerings); facilities for program; school personnel; cooperative efforts of school and community; and coordination of the program

b. Procedures used in evaluating the above areas are: curriculum steering committee projects; principal's meeting; individual school faculties; Fort Campbell Education Association; P.T.A.; grade level meetings; interest level meetings;

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time allotments and two illustrative units. This same pattern is followed for grades eight and nine. In some instances, related vocabulary, teaching approaches and enrichment suggestions are included. The seventh grade emphasizes elemental number concepts, such as fractions, ratio, per cent, area, and also measurement and design. The eighth grade considers many of the same items at a more mature level, plus scale drawings, using formulas, introduction to algebra, and mathematics in business and home. General mathematics and algebra are treated in grade nine.

An elaborate Appendix presents professional books and pamphlets, free and inexpensive materials, films and filmstrips, a mathematical game called *Nim*, an instructional unit and various devices for illustrating mathematical concepts. This guide contains much practical information for both new and experienced teachers.

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consultative services; pre- and post-school conferences; testing and guidance; exit interview of students; follow-up study of students and parent letters; evaluation when students enter junior high and senior high school (orientation and guidance service); guidance counselor interviews with children not achieving up to capacity.

10. Mobility implies that a student will meet many new and different people, differences in teaching methods and materials, and new expectancies. Teacher preparation and ability to understand individual differences, and teachers' at-

titudes concerning homework, discipline, extracurricular activities and other phases of the program will also vary. Efforts to aid the teachers in meeting these problems include: pre- and post-school workshops; individual and group conferences; guides for teachers; a special type of grouping or organization; establishment of a climate of close cooperation between teacher and parent; and use of mental health center services.

11. One of the results of mobility is the creation of fear, insecurity, anxiety, tensions, and shyness, on the part of many children. It is extremely important for the administration to be aware of these problems and to create the kind of climate which will alleviate them insofar as possible. Some of the things which seem to help are: group and individual conferences in which parents are informed about the school and its program and of ways by which they can help their children to have a more successful school experience; open house or visiting days for parents; mimeographed or printed materials which give information about the school; personal teacher contacts by visit, phone, or letter.

Change seems to be the order of the day in military as well as civilian communities. The increasing shift in the population by middle and lower economic groups to industrial centers is a challenge to educators as they attempt to determine adequately the extent to which the needs and interest of our youth are being served and to plan for better ways of meeting these needs.

What are the problems involved? What is being done? What changes are needed? How may the effectiveness of changes which have been made as a result of the efforts of the school be determined? Do some of the areas need further research?

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