

News Notes

Programs and Practices

ROBERT C. MCKEAN AND BOB L. TAYLOR

City Meets Country in Cultural Exchange

Picture two busloads of kids from the Bronx, most of them black or Jewish, meeting 100 white kids, most of them Christian, in a parking lot 600 miles from home. The scene is the Andover School in southwestern Allegheny County, New York, and the program is "The American Dream," a junior-year honors course at Harry S. Truman High School in the Bronx.

The purpose of the program, according to Truman's principal, Julius Perlman, is "to provide an exchange of views," and in the case of the Andover visit—the program's fourth—the exchange focused on city life versus country life. Each school presented a skit describing life in the other school's environment, which prompted students to discuss ways people stereotype each other. Later, students from each school answered a 35-question survey on subjects ranging from religion and race to foreign affairs and perceptions of success. Before seeing the results, they tried to predict how students from the exchange school would answer the same questions.

The Andover trip, which also included such activities as a pancake supper and a hike, was followed three weeks later by a trip to the Bronx for Andover students.

For more information, write Julius Perlman, Principal, Harry S. Truman High School, 750 Baychester Ave., Bronx, NY 10475, or Al Barden, Principal, The Andover School, Andover, NY 14806.

Los Angeles Schools Offer Employee Counseling

More than 400 employees with personal problems were counseled last year through the Los Angeles Unified School District employee counseling program.

The counselors are not school counselors; they are professionals hired to work with employees only.

"No matter what the nature of the problem," says Director Mollie Bersin, "the service is free and completely confidential." Some authorities feel such a program is an essential part of the total supervisory services of a school district.

For further information, contact: Mollie Bersin, Director, Employee Medical Services, c/o *Spotlight*, Office of Communications, Los Angeles Unified School District, 450 N. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Are SAT Scores Valid for the Handicapped?

Children who are deaf from birth are utterly cut off from language development, so it should come as no surprise that deaf and severely hard-of-hearing students score significantly lower than hearing students on the verbal portion of the SAT, or that as the age of the onset of deafness increases, so do the scores.

These findings emerged in a recent study by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which also discovered that for the physically handicapped, verbal SAT scores were about the same as the national mean. The learning disabled scored 60 to 70 points below the mean, however; and the profoundly deaf scored even lower.

As these figures suggest, there are significant differences in testing the handicapped that affect not only the administration of the test but also the validity of the scores. For example, the SAT scores *underpredicted* the performance of deaf students in their first year of college, but at the same time, their high school grade-point averages overpredicted future performance—perhaps because the students had attended schools for the deaf, where they received special support services.

While SAT scores probably kept some deaf students out of college, ETS concluded, they could probably have succeeded in higher education with good support services.

For more information, contact Marjorie Ragosta (DV), Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541.

Finance a Major Problem for Superintendents

School finance was ranked the number one challenge in public education by a sample of 2,533 superintendents in a survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators. Finance was also the number one concern in the survey in 1971.

Other findings from the recent survey are:

1. The average U.S. school superintendent is a white, married male, 48.7 years of age.

2. The median salary of the sample is \$31,665 for an average work week of 54.8 hours.

3. Politically, 35.2 percent are Republicans, 30.9 percent are Democrats, and 33.3 percent are independents.

4. Of the women superintendents surveyed, 43.3 percent listed sex discrimination as a major limiter of career opportunities, but only 12.2 percent of the male superintendents agreed.

5. Around 25 percent considered their job decreasing in importance and influence; 14.8 percent believed this in 1971.

6. In responding to whether they would choose public education as a career if they had it to do over again, 26.7 percent indicated that they would not. Only 12.2 percent gave this response in 1971.

Other key issues and challenges identified in the survey were in order of rank:

1. Planning and setting goals
2. Measuring student learning
3. Maintaining accountability and credibility
4. Evaluating staff and administrators
5. Relating to administrators and boards
6. Handling special education
7. Obtaining timely and accurate information for decision making
8. Negotiating and handling strikes
9. Dealing with changing enrollment
10. Being more visible
11. Managing personal time
12. Dealing with parent apathy and

irresponsibility

13. Complying with state and federal record-keeping requirements
14. Disciplining students.

Two concerns from the top 15 in 1971 did not appear in the 1981 list: "Changes in values and behavioral norms" and "Social and cultural issues, such as race relations."

Try A Senior Citizens' Day

"In many communities, senior citizens are a potent, vital, and often critical voice in school affairs," states *The Wyoming Educator*. They're also the most neglected segment when it comes to school involvement. Here's how educators can involve senior citizens via a senior citizens' day:

1. Organize a student-staff committee for senior citizens' day.
2. The day's events should include a welcoming address by the school principal, small-group visits to classrooms, a tour of the building and facilities, opportunities for senior citizens to talk to the students, special presentations by a class or classes, and an opportunity for student leaders to talk to the visitors about school activities.
3. Invitations to individual senior citizens should be sent using mailing lists from nursing homes, senior citizen or-

ganizations, adult communities, and student input.

4. District transportation administrators should be urged to provide buses to pick up the guests at central points in the community. (Have a student or an adult from the school to welcome the senior citizens as they board the buses.)
5. Gear the day's activities around the lunch hour at school with the guests invited to eat with the students.
6. Announce your intentions to have a senior citizens' day to the local media two weeks prior to the event.

Too often senior citizens aren't aware of the many things children are learning today. Schools have a responsibility as well as a need to keep this segment of the community informed.

Washington State Takes Action on Early Childhood Education

A Washington state study on the development of voluntary early childhood education programs in public schools has found:

1. A high level of current usage of early childhood programs and projected increase in the three- and four-year-old population through 1990
2. Diversity of parent needs and preferences, and a variety of early childhood education/children's programs

3. Multiple, autonomous provider systems for educational and child care services with high variability in program funding and sponsorship, as well as diverse standards and external accountability

4. Varied levels of preparation and skills of providers/caregivers/teachers, as well as disparity in performance expectations for service providers
5. Reduction in federally supported services and programs designed to move families out of poverty
6. Minimal employer assistance with child care needs of employees
7. Interest of public schools in leasing space and exploring options of conducting preschool/day care programs

8. Minimal planned transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten and primary grade programs

9. Research substantiating the efficacy and cost effectiveness of quality early childhood education programs for high-risk populations and the major role of parent involvement in lasting gains for children.

The study has resulted in an Early Childhood Education Plan of Action. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Nancy Johnson, Chair, SPI Early Childhood Education Committee, 7510 Armstrong St., SW, FG-11, Tumwater, WA 98504.

Curriculum Clearinghouse

WILLIAM J. STEWART AND
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Reading Encouraged with Community Support

What do Ronald Reagan and "The Fonz" have in common? They've both participated, along with other national celebrities, in the Fox Mill Elementary School "Reading Rainbow" program.

Each year, a steering committee rep-

resenting school, family, and local businesses from the Herndon, Virginia, community establish a two-week period in February to emphasize reading as an enjoyable pastime. Parents receive packets of materials with ideas for reading with their children at home, while classroom activities are planned to tie in with family efforts. The emphasis is on reading for fun without worrying about grades.

Students hear guest speakers during special assemblies and participate in the daily silent reading programs along with all school personnel. In addition, drawings for free books, restaurant-sponsored book parties, and media coverage contribute to the success of this community project.

Linda Harris Sittig, "Involving Parents and Children in Reading for Fun," *The Reading Teacher* 36 (November 1982): 166-168.

Teachers Become Advisors in Pennsylvania

In the "Walking Advisement" program at Neil Armstrong Middle School in Newton, Pennsylvania, teachers assume entry-level activities that are traditionally the role of guidance counselors. Teachers help students with self-concept and study skills development and with arriving at alternative solutions to problems middle schoolers face.

Interested teachers attend an inservice program to develop the skills needed to

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