Mathematics

STEPHEN S. WILLOUGHBY

New Hope for Textbooks
In March 1985 the California State Board of Education approved a Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools. This remarkable 95-page document redefines the purposes of mathematics education and spells out criteria for textbook content and design. For example:

Textbooks must be restructured to include all strands and to integrate problem solving, mental arithmetic, estimation, use of calculators, and appropriate reinforcement into each strand. Major concepts from every strand—number, measurement, geometry, patterns and functions, statistics and probability, logic, and algebra—must be incorporated and interwoven throughout the text for each grade level. The new criteria can be met only by texts that foster understanding and the ability to use mathematics.

These criteria clearly cannot be satisfied by simply annexing problem-solving sections (however good) or discussions of manipulative materials to a "back-to-basics" or "new math" series. Almost all publishers will need to develop completely new textbooks. The California State Board of Education has the courage to stick to its guns and adopt only well-conceived and thoroughly tested programs that meet the spirit and the letter of the Framework. shorely, the effect on mathematics education and education generally is likely to be profound. The board showed its courage and commitment to quality with junior high science textbooks. Our expectations are high for California's effect on mathematics education.

Reference


Social Studies

WALTER C. PARKER

New Curriculum Scholarship
A different way of thinking about social studies education may foretell curriculum reforms to come. No mere "swing of the pendulum" in reaction to the minimum competencies movement, this development actually predates that movement by more than a decade. And, unlike it, the new scholarship is too disparate to be called a "movement." Drawing from a variety of scholarly traditions, it nearly defies