

Community School Forum Vol. 1 No. 1

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COMMUNITY SCHOOL FORUM

War Relocation Authority

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This is the first issue of the COMMUNITY SCHOOL FORUM, a monthly letter to school personnel in the War Relocation Centers. It is designed as a substitute for the staff meetings and conferences which distance and travel restrictions make impossible, and will provide opportunity for exchange of ideas and experience on some of the problems which are important in the philosophy and development of schools on the projects. From time to time it will carry reviews of books, magazines, or articles which seem particularly timely. We suggest that the letters be used in your curriculum workshop, and as discussion material at some of your teachers' meetings. If you have suggestions on subjects which you would like to see discussed, please send them in.

--Lucy Wilcox Adams
Editor

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND ITS CURRICULUM IN RELOCATION CENTERS

The W.R.A. adopts the philosophy of the Community School.

The superintendents of education of the Relocation centers in the western region met in conference in the summer to formulate the program of the schools to be opened in the centers. They agreed that the Community School, with its ideal of a working partnership between youth and adults, its aim at community improvement, and its use of the community as the laboratory in which social processes and skills can be studied and learned, was the one best fitted to training for democratic living in America.

Schools are now in session and many teachers, and probably parents and pupils on the projects, are asking what is this Community School?

How do you build one in a relocation center?

What is a Community School?

The Community School is one which recognizes that even the young child is a responsible member of society, and that his maturing responsibilities require understanding of the organization and motive forces of his community, and a share in working out plans for its improvement. In common with all schools the Community School teaches fundamental skills and tries to give students a usable knowledge of the past, but it harnesses these to the present and gives training in the dynamics of social action. It

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recognizes that education takes place in the streets, in the movies, over the radio, through the newspaper and comic strips, in work, in play, in the daily contacts of associations of students, and observation of community life in all its phases. It makes use of these environmental resources as power tools to supplement and vitalize the learning that comes through textbooks, assignments and recitations. The goal of the Community School is not only the training of the individual but the service to the community.

Why a Community School?

Education, like charity, begins at home, and the community is an extended home. The community furnishes the material with which the student is or can most readily become familiar, and about which his observations and opinions have value. It is the most inclusive group to which he owes immediate responsibility, and in which his actions may have a measureable influence. It supplies examples of many of the organizations and much of the machinery which American society has developed, and it affords opportunities not only for observation, but for practice of the techniques of citizenship. It is a testing ground for the truth about what teachers and the textbooks tell him.

The community begins at home, but it has a two-way connection with every corner of the earth, and is the live conductor of national and international currents of thought and opinion.

How to Build a Community School.

A Community School is not built overnight, or by the adoption of a name. It grows out of the labor of teachers, the enlistment of students, and the cooperation of parents in the community.

The job of building begins with the teacher. It requires awareness on the teacher's part of the nature of the community, its resources, its problems, its prejudices and its ideals, and a knowledge of the form and direction these take. It demands skill in selecting and organizing these into teaching material; and boldness in using the techniques of observation, research, and controlled experiment which are the instruments of discovery and progress.

The Community School requires a creative partnership between students and teachers, and between the students themselves, and the acceptance by the students of the goals of the Community School. The sponges, goose-stoppers, the passive resisters, do not make good students in a Community School. It calls for initiative, independence of judgment and action, team work – the same qualities which make sports and 'student activities' such an important part of school life – but extended into the classroom and the study period.

The third member of the team needed to create a Community School is the community itself. Its leaders must understand and accept the aims and methods of the school, and be ready to give the time and thought necessary to open to teachers and students opportunities for observation and social participation. The manager of a store or factor or hotel or newspaper must be ready to let students see the workings of his plant, the public official must be willing to meet with student groups and explain the work of this office, and to answer questions, and to suggest public services which students might

undertake. Parents must understand the departure from familiar routine which often takes the student out of the classroom and into the field, and makes the interview, the recording of observations, and group research, productive educational techniques.

(to be continued)

PROJECT SCHOOLS AND EMPLOYMENT

The core of the W.R.A. policy is to encourage the reabsorption of loyal men and women of Japanese ancestry into productive occupations in permitted areas and thus make them directly available in helping to meet the national labor emergency. Many thousands have been used in harvest operations, and job opportunities now opening up should permit the permanent resettlement of skilled workers in many fields. As people leave the projects for employment elsewhere, new workers must take their places. Already, as project enterprises and activities multiply, there are indicators of possible labor shortages. Project schools must be ready to assume the same responsibility as public schools throughout the country are now taking, and not only train future workers, but organize student resources to assist in maintaining essential services and aid in production.

The U.S. Office of Education has accepted this as one of the important war services to be rendered by the schools, and state departments of education are modifying their requirements to recognize work and work experience as providing credit toward graduation.

The October number of CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS has an article by Dr. Aubrey Douglas, of the California State Department of Education, outlining general principles which should guide practices in awarding credit for work experience:

- (a) "The work experience must be definitely related to the in-school training of the pupil. The type of work experience shall be analyzed in such a manner as to indicate its specific elements of learning."
- (b) "Supervision by a teacher, co-ordinator, or supervisor shall be provided, and shall be of such a nature as to relate a part or all of class instruction to work experience."

Dr. Douglass adds:

"Because it contains values for everyone, properly organized work experience contributes to well-rounded education and is therefore definitely related to the total educational program of the pupil. If organized as a part of a total educational program, time spent at work may therefore be administered as part of the school day."

The W.R.A. in its policy statement on Schools in Relocation Centers, Administrative Instruction No. 23, Supplement 2, defines the relation of the school vocational training program to the total work program on the Projects as follows:

- A. Opportunity and encouragement shall be given to all students to take some vocational training before graduation from high school. At the discretion of the Project Director definite responsibilities should be assigned to schools for some part in the production operations and maintenance programs in the center and the schools should be assigned the use of such land, machinery, equipment and other supplies as are necessary to carry out these responsibilities.
- B. High school students above the age of sixteen specializing in vocational fields may, under the direction of the superintendent of education, spend one-half their time in apprentice training or work experience during the regular school year.
- C. The major part of the vocational training of students in high school must be obtained through work experience in the enterprises, offices, institutions and services in the center, and shall be carried on as apprentice training. The placement and vocational training program of the schools shall be closely integrated with the employment and production program on the project. Project Directors shall make the formulation and operation of the vocational and retraining program a responsibility to be shared by all divisions and activities on the project.

Project school administrators should begin now to work with project employment offices and the heads of operating divisions to discover the part which students may take in the total work program, and should make the adjustments necessary to incorporate work experience into the educational program of the schools as an integral part of the training of the student and the responsibility of the teacher.

Book Review of THE SMALL COMMUNITY by Arthur E. Morgan
Published by Harper's, 1942. Price \$3.00

Most of you already know Mr. Morgan as one of the great social engineers of our time. His experiments as president of Antioch College and as chairman of the Tennessee valley Authority mark him as a scientist in the field of human society. In this book he turns his genius once more to social dynamics and design by helping us to see the significance of the community as the foundation of our democratic life. He is much concerned about the inadequate attention being devoted to the welfare of the community.

In this day and time when the roots of civilization seem very insecure indeed, there are implications in the belief that "the spirit of the community is the key to enduring peace"; for the controlling factors of civilization, as he sees it, are these finer underlying, elemental traits which are learned in the friendly world of the family and the community. Original planning and study are necessary if we are to preserve this basic source of our underlying culture – the community.

This book has great significance to the educator interested in conducting a community school. The author makes it clear that any cultural inheritance which the child receives must finally be in harmony with that which comes from the community. After reading this book one is inclined to believe that the preservation and perfecting of the community is one of the greatest issues facing our times.

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TULE LAKE, CALIFORNIA

Mr. Kenneth Harkness, Superintendent of Education
Mr. Floyd Wilder, Principal, Tri-State High School
Mr. M. P. Gunderson, Principal, Lincoln Elementary School

Enrollment ... 3961

MANZANAR, CALIFORNIA

Dr. Genevieve Carter, Superintendent of Education
Mr. Leon C. High, Principal, High School
Mr. Clyde Simpson, Principal, Elementary School

Enrollment ... 2379

GILA, ARIZONA

Mr. W. Curtis Sawyer, Superintendent of Education
Mr. William F. Miller, Principal, High School
Mr. R. A. Strickland, Principal, Butte Elementary School
Mr. Albert Hutchison, Principal, Rivers Elementary School

Enrollment ... 2499

MINIDOKA, IDAHO

Mr. R. A. Pomeroy, Superintendent of Education
Mr. Jerome Light, Principal, High School
Miss Mildred Bennett, Principal, Elementary School

Enrollment ... 1970

TOPAZ, UTAH

Mr. J. C. Carlisle, Superintendent of Education
Mr. LeGrand Noble, Principal, High School
Mr. Drayton, Nuttall, Principal, Elementary School

Enrollment ... 1718