the OAKES newsletter

An Independent Monthly Dedicated To Improving Public Education
Helen Oakes - Author and Publisher

Vol.XVII, No.1 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania September 1985

SUPPLEMENTARY INDEX TO THE OAKES NEWSLETTER

Index By Subject
and
Brief Summary of Issues
(see page 7)

September 1980 through June 1985

This subject index is designed to help you locate all references to a particular subject appearing in The Oakes Newsletter in the last five years.

Key - volume number: issue number (date) page number
Example: XIV:6(3/11/83)2 = volume XIV, number 6 (March 11, 1983) page 2

Key - volume number: issue number (date) page number

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF ISSUES

September 1980 through June 1985

The summaries briefly describe the contents of each Newsletter. They are listed in chronological order.

"Index To The Oakes Newsletter" - Index by subject, April 1970 through June 1980, and a brief summary of each of the issues published during that ten year period. (September 1980)

"Superintendent A Failure - Must Be Replaced At Once" - Dr. Michael Marcase should be removed from office. Educational leadership not provided. Poor planner. Abandoned merit reward system. Unable to bring people together to resolve issues. Many decisions and actions create mistrust. (September/October 1980)

"Ways To Prevent Drug Use By Young People" - Description of two drug prevention programs that focus on helping students to learn to respect themselves, make decisions, clarify their values and take responsibility for their own actions. How parents and schools can assist. (November 7, 1980)

"Potential Debt Mounts As Superintendent Spends" - Revised budget for 1980-81 relies on questionable revenue. Two major reasons for School District's money problems - revenue does not grow with inflation and superintendent misspends. (December 9, 1980)

"Superintendent's Abuse Of Merit System Damaging" - Almost all recent appointments exempted from merit selection. Under Marcase, school system does not reward excellence and effort. Few black educators in top administrative posts in 1965. Some progress made by 1970. Ethnic organizations formed, in part, to gain promotions for their members. (February 2, 1981)

"Special Education And The Budget Gap" - Description of expansion of special education and those served. State reimbursement inadequate. Costs should be reduced. (March 3, 1981)

"Skills Emphasis Destructive - New Reading Plan Needed" - Reading taught in dreary, mechanical way. Broken down into countless skills and sub-skills. Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading Plan offers alternative. Broad approach focuses on getting children to hear, read and respond to fine literature and to compose their thoughts orally and in writing. (April 8, 1981)

"District Heads For Chaos - Board Refuses To Resign" - Financial crisis of very serious proportions. $224 million budget gap projected. Revenue reflects little growth. Scarce resources unwisely spent. Should have achieved savings. No public confidence in school leaders. (May 6, 1981)

"Schools Must Open - Budget Cuts and More Dollars Required" - Why teachers are striking. Effects of slashed budget. Need for reduced spending and increased revenue. Mayor denies guaranteeing contract and offers plan for long-term financial solution. (September 16, 1981)

"More About The Strike, Cuts, And Mismanagement" - Effects of strike on teachers, administrators and parents. Tables showing dimensions of budget problem over next five years. Developing a survival budget. Why superintendent should be replaced. (October 14, 1981)

"Mismanagement Leads To Legislative Proposals For Change" - State legislature considering new ways to govern schools because of turmoil over School District budgets and teachers' contracts. Proposals described. (November 1981)

"Teenage Pregnancy" - Statistics, causes and adverse consequences of teenage pregnancy. The School District's elective course in "Fertility Control and Contraception." Curriculum to prepare young people for parenthood. (January 8, 1982)

"Music Programs In Jeopardy" - Benefits to participants in vocal and instrumental groups. Financial support eroded. M.L. King High School jazz band is nationally recognized. (February 5, 1982)

"A New Superintendent - What To Look For" - Board of Education should consult with mayor about selection of superintendent. Next superintendent will inherit a legacy of problems. What Board should be seeking in next superintendent. Should person be "insider" or "outsider"? (March 4, 1982)

"Valuable Programs Must Be Saved" - State and Federal funding reduction jeopardizes desegregation program, services to lowest achieving poverty students and prekindergarten programs. (April 7, 1982)

"Adopting The 1982-83 Budget" - Description of spring 1982 budget adoption process. Board of Education amended budget to make modest reductions. School closings not achieved. (May/June 1982)

"Supplementary Index to The Oakes Newsletter" - September 1980 through June 1982. (September 1982)

"The Need to Look Ahead" - The new superintendent. Teachers' Union 1982-85 contract settlement and its financial underpinnings. Students must be prepared for their futures in a complex world. School District must change its operations and administration. (Oct. 22, 1982)

"A Proposal to Reform Public Education" - Paideia proposal advocates a demanding academic course for all students to prepare them to continue learning all their lives, be good citizens and earn a living. Three distinct ways to teach and learn. (November 17, 1982)

"The Expectations and Mastery Learning Projects" - The Expectations Project is a school-wide effort to change the learning climate through the development of standards, monitoring of progress, rewarding of accomplishment and improvement of communications with parents. Mastery learning is a classroom teaching/learning technique based on the belief that all children can learn. (January 12, 1983)

"Students must Read to Learn, Not Learn to Read" - Reading and writing are not being taught effectively because they are divorced from content, e.g. literature and science. Such classrooms contrasted with those where reading, writing and speaking are integrated with subject matter. (February 15, 1983)

"School Closings - Pro and Con" - Reasons that parents, children and staff resist school closings. Further enrollment drop forecast by 37% reduction in number of births. Fewer buildings mean savings and other gains. Work of School Assessment Committee. (March 11, 1983)

"The Rose Lindenbaum Award for Excellence in Teaching" - A description of Dr. John McGovern's teaching and his classroom explains his selection for this award, given annually to ten outstanding teachers. Brief biography of Rose Lindenbaum and origin of her gift. (April 19, 1983.)

"Educational Reform - A Matter of Survival" - Findings and recommendations from the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Also a one-page School District budget update. (May/June 1983)

"School Safety and the Environment for Learning" - Task Force recommendations to provide good environment for learning. Five major issues

addressed: discipline, drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism and arson, graffiti, and neighborhood safety. (September 1983)

"Bilingual Education Should be Valued and Supported" - Arguments advanced for teaching non-English speaking students in their home language as well as English. School District utilizes three different methods and philosophies. Difficult to staff these programs. (October 1983)

"The 1983 Voluntary Desegregation Plan" - Based on striving for educational improvement and the achievement of integration. Has three major parts: Educational Improvement Plan, Desegregation Expansion Strategy, and Effort to Reduce Racial Isolation. (Nov./Dec. 1983)

"Computers - Their Role Should be Reevaluated" - Questions raised about reasons that school districts are investing heavily in computers for students of all ages. Costly undertaking. Computers used for drill and practice, as tutor, and to simulate situations. Used as tool in regular course work too infrequently. (January 25, 1984)

"Proposals and Efforts to Improve Public Education" - 1983 reports and books about nation's schools stress three themes: teaching profession must be elevated, students must learn more, and broad community must be involved in the improvement of the schools. Pennsylvania's action plan. Steps taken in Philadelphia schools. (February 1984)

"Creating a Climate for Learning in the High Schools" - Need to focus on high schools. Discipline code developed to improve climate for learning. Suspension rate too high. Bartram High School's efforts to achieve better environment for learning. At Bartram's Motivation Center, students know school cares about them. (March 1984)

"The Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative" - Teachers meet weekly to talk about children and learning. They find that they themselves have answers to classroom problems. In Cooperative, teachers find support and an opportunity to renew themselves. (April 1984)

"The Standardized Curriculum" - Tells teachers <u>what</u> is to be taught in each subject area at each grade level, but not how or when. New city-wide testing program to be based on goals and objectives of Curriculum. (May/June 1984)

"The Literacy Network Classroom" - Successful method for teaching children to read, communicate orally and in writing, think, and learn. Differs

in the ways material is presented and children participate in their learning. Two Literacy Network classrooms described. (September 1984)

"Ways to Promote Learning" - Students become engaged in their own learning and are helped to find meaning in what they read and study in described secondary school classrooms. Much to be gained from study of controversial issues. Classroom discussion is important. (October 1984)

"The Philadelphia High School Academies" - Students prepared for work in the automotive, business, electrical, and health care fields. School District and private sector in partnership. Emphasis on job preparation. Statistics demonstrate Academies' success. Availability of job limits expansion. (November 1984)

"The Voluntary Desegregation Plan - One Year Later" - 1984 status report indicates 1983 plan was successfully followed. Educational improvements made. Number of desegregated schools increased. Work begun on reducing effects of racial isolation. (January 1985)

"The Literate Environment Kindergarten" - Theories and methods drawn from studies of children who learned to read early in their lives. Literature and books at core of program. Children "read" and "write" from beginning. Children end year viewing themselves as readers and writers. (February 1985)

"The Philadelphia Alliance for Teaching Humanities in the Schools" - Joint effort of corporate community, School District, teachers' union and educational and cultural institutions to support, encourage, improve and expand teaching of humanities. System-wide effort to improve teaching of writing. Poetry and colonial history projects described. Enrichment opportunities created for educators. (March 1985)

"Testing and Evaluation" - New testing program serves dual purpose. Measures students' knowledge of School District curriculum. Makes national comparisons possible. New state test identifies students in three grades needing remedial help in reading and/or mathematics. Effort to prevent narrowing of curriculum. Means for judging system must be expanded. (April 1985)

"Preventing Drug Abuse" - Programs should include decision-making skills, heightening of self-esteem, learning ways to reduce stress as well as information about drugs. Existing programs described. Many students not reached. Suggestions for expansion and greater effectiveness. (May 1985)

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Vol.XVII, No.2 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania October 1985

THE TEACHERS' CONTRACT - 1985-88

The Philadelphia Board of Education has a new three year agreement with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT). Superintendent Constance Clayton, supported by the Board, undertook to negotiate some "educational reforms." The public developed high expectations and they were disappointed with what was achieved. The long protracted negotiations were unfortunately cast in a win-lose mold with the union being seen by most as the winner. However, the union gave more than is widely recognized. Beyond that, it remains to be seen whether there were any winners, because there is reason for deep concern about the funding needed to support the contract.

In evaluating the contract between the Board of Education and the PFT, one needs to look at the significant elements of its terms. These can be divided into those that carry a dollar cost for the School District, those that represent union concessions, and two that are a combination.

There are five terms which will have an economic impact.

1. All pay schedules for teachers and other employees represented by the PFT will increase each year. There was a 4% increase October 15, 1985. There will be a 6% increase on March 1, 1987 and another March 1, 1988.

2. The Board of Education will increase its share of the premiums for Blue Cross, Major Medical and improved Medical-Surgical insurance from 85% to 95% beginning August 15, 1988. However, these increased costs will be counteracted by cost containment measures initiated in 1985. The Blue Cross plan will be modified to include a mandatory second surgical opinion, limitations on weekend admissions to hospitals, greater use of out-patient procedures and a prohibition against receiving duplicate benefits when covered under more than one insurance program. These changes result in reduced premiums and substantial savings.

3. The School District's contribution to the Health and Welfare Fund went from $761 per person to $775 September 1, 1985 and will increase $25 per year in September 1986 and again in September 1987. The School District's contribution to the PFT Legal Services Trust Fund, held at $100 per person since its inception in 1978, went to $125 September 1, 1985. These are particularly grating increases to many since, in a time of scarce resources, the contributions to these funds already seemed high. The PFT argues that these contributions have not kept up with inflation. Further, the Health and Welfare Fund is used to support prescription, dental and vision plans for an aging work force whose needs are increasing.

4. Class size will be reduced in grades 1-3 beginning in September 1986. It will decrease by one pupil each year for three years. By September 1, 1988, 30 will be the maximum class size for these early grades. Class size reduction is costly, so choices had to be made among grades as to which were most likely to result in improved student achievement.

5. Starting salaries, which have been exceedingly low at $13,073 for a teacher coming into the system with a BA degree, will be increased to $16,640 in September 1986. This was an essential change for the School District because there is a national teacher shortage which is expected to worsen. In addition, the improvement of public education rests in part on heightening the public perception of the profession and proving to teachers that they are valued and held in high esteem. This requires higher salaries, competitive with other professions, which will attract the brightest and the best into teaching. $16,640 is a first step.

IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS

There are several new terms in the contract which represent important concessions made by the PFT. Most will have a positive impact on the instructional program.

1. Teachers are required to be in their classrooms at the time that the school day begins and to remain until all students are dismissed. Prior to this, they were only required to have signed in by the contractual time. It could take several minutes to get from the office to a classroom.

2. Teachers who receive an unsatisfactory rating for their performance in the classroom will be required to participate in eight hours of a program designed to correct "the weaknesses identified." Prior to this, the School District could not require participation in an improvement program outside school hours.

3. Teachers will be required to have emergency lesson plans available for use by substitutes should they be absent.

4. New employees, hired after September 1, 1985, will have to have the content of their academic work approved if they are working for the salary differential that comes with a master's plus 30 credits or a doctorate. Prior to adding this clause, any academic work, even if totally unrelated to an individual's teaching, could be used for the credits needed.

In addition to yielding on these four points, the PFT agreed to delay the second and third year salary increases from early fall until March which will result in substantial savings for the School District. Also, the PFT accepted the cost containment measures relating to health insurance.

The School District began negotiations with an extensive list of proposals for changes in the contract. Dr. Clayton pushed extremely hard for clauses which she characterized as "educational reforms." They included regulation of teachers' preparation time, a school day lengthened by 15 minutes before and after the school day for pupils, a school year lengthened to run from September 1 to June 30 to provide staff development days, semi-annual ratings for teachers to permit the School District to dismiss an unsatisfactory teacher at the end of one school year instead of two, and an increase in required attendance at night meetings from two to five. Some viewed these changes as management reforms. Teachers saw them as give-backs.

The demand to control the use of teachers' preparation time was

the most controversial and the most laden with emotion. In contrast to current practice, teachers were to use prep time for educational purposes only, to be subject to a principal's direction as to use of the time, and to be prohibited from leaving the building. In existence for decades in the secondary schools, prep time was a hard won concession in 1974 for elementary school teachers following a long strike. Teachers believed that the demand to monitor and control their preparation time was an assault on their professionalism, integrity and dignity.

Both sides made errors and serious miscalculations during the negotiations. The School District should not have stood adamantly behind a package of "educational reforms" which teachers viewed as unreasonable, unrelated to education, and an effort to gain more authority and control over them. By selecting these issues and placing such great stress on them, the School District set itself up to be seen as the losing side.

The PFT took advantage of the situation. It knew that the school system would be seriously harmed by another strike and would seek to avoid it even at high cost. The PFT proceeded to extract a financial package which presses beyond reasonable limits and exceeds what many believe can be raised from already hard-pressed taxpayers. By refusing to make additional concessions which would have increased the palatability of the taxpayer sacrifices that are going to be required, the PFT made funding of the contract even more difficult.

FUNDING THE CONTRACT

The Board of Education in Philadelphia is appointed rather than elected and, therefore, has no taxing authority. PFT contracts expire Augst 31, but Philadelphia and Pennsylvania tax rates and budgets are set prior to this date, so the School District has often been forced to sign contracts requiring increased revenue without knowing if there would be sources for the funds. This has had disasterous consequences on several occasions in the past.

It was different in the spring of 1982. City Council increased the annual revenue of the School District by $38 million. Combined with other measures designed to bring the budget into balance, this money, plus state money, provided funding for the 3-year PFT contract negotiated later that year as well as covering its impact in the fourth year. Because the last salary increase from the 1982 contract took effect in March 1985, it was paid for only four months in 1984-85 and cost $9 million. That increase will be paid for all of this school year, will require $28 million and is available from existing revenue sources. Therefore, the revenue needed to support the new PFT contract was not swollen by millions of dollars needed to cover obligations from the last one.

The School District made a great effort in the spring of 1985 to persuade Mayor Goode and City Council that the School District should receive an increase in revenue just as it did in 1982. A 6 mill real estate tax increase was cited an an example of the need. (1 mill equals $1 per $1000 of assessed value.) The School District argued that, again, this would set parameters for contract negotiations. The size of the tax increase would be kept down because it would be collected for the maximum number of years. A contract that stayed within these limits would be funded from the beginning. There would be financial stability and the renewed confidence in the School District that has been so painstakingly built over the last few years would be retained. Sad-

ly, Mayor Goode did not support this position and Council did not pass any increased revenue for the schools.

The Board of Education, well aware of the serious consequences resulting from negotiating contracts without revenue in place, attempted to secure firm commitments from the city's political leadership that tax increases needed for a reasonable contract would be forthcoming. At the very end of the bargaining, when varying forces were struggling and pressuring to reach a settlement and avert a strike, the stttlement cost increased to $237 million from the $210 million that the School District believed to be the maximum that could be afforded. With that, Council's commitment to funding, to the extent that it had existed previously, evaporated. The Board of Education has a letter from Mayor Goode dated September 4, 1985 which commits him "to work in the City Council to secure authorization for such additional tax revenues as would be required (currently, we understand the need to be approximately 9 mills) to fund the contract..." There was no such commitment from a majority of the 17 members of City Council. In fact, several expressed their strong opposition to the increased taxes that will be required.

The contract was approved by the Board of Education on a 6 to 3 vote with the problem of its funding left unresolved. Those voting against ratification were not expressing opposition to the contract's terms. Rather, looking to the past, they believed that to sign a pact in the absence of its financial foundation would be destructive. In addition, while no one can predict the future, it seems likely that the city's need for more revenue will be much more pressing by the spring of 1986 than in 1985. That made the postponement of wrestling to find the necessary funds appear to be a serious mistake.

The School District has just experienced three years of labor peace and financial stability when it could concentrate on its essential and challenging task of preparing almost 200,000 students for their futures. It is very unfortunate that this forward momentum is now jeopardized by great uncertainty about the system's financial future. This should be a matter of great concern to everyone who lives, works or comes into the City. In the long run, we are all interdependent and what affects the education of the City's children affects us all.

10/23/85

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Vol.XVII, No.3 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Nov./Dec. 1985

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES - THE PROBLEM

Students face all kinds of health problems that hinder their ability to learn. John is not functioning well in class. He is floundering because of a severe, but correctible, hearing loss in both ears. Melvin complains of headaches and his teacher notes an inability to concentrate on his school work. His worry and stress are related to his parents' impending divorce. For Joe, the problem is related to physical abuse by an alcoholic parent. Linda is a 9th grader who was a good student, but suddenly can't focus on her work. Linda thinks she's pregnant and doesn't know what to do. Mary is out frequently with bouts of asthma which cause her to miss school work and fall behind her classmates. When Mary's breathing difficulties get bad enough, her parents rush her to the hospital emergency room. While Mary can get immediate treatment there, she won't be seen consistently by the same doctor(s) who over a period of time could educate her parents about asthma and help them to adopt a positive outlook and help Mary make the best possible adjustment. Too often, youngsters like these don't get the help they need, or it is delayed for long periods, or the care lacks continuity and coordination.

The Philadelphia School District spends $10 million on health services. Unfortunately, in too many cases, what is offered fails to meet the needs of children with physical and emotional problems. The District is responsible for health services for a combined public, parochial and private school population of 295,000. The Pennsylvania School Code establishes some minimum requirements. School Districts must have a nurse for every 1500 children. Each school child must receive a medical examination upon school entry and in grades 6 and 11. Each child must be tested at certain intervals for tuberculosis, scoliosis (crooked spine), acuity of sight and hearing, and growth rate.

The testing and the examinations result in finding the child who needs glasses and the 12-year old with high blood pressure. Parents are notified and urged to get treatment for their child. If they assume responsibility for the necessary next steps, the system works. However, in the Philadelphia public schools there are tens of thousands of children who come from low income families with no regular source of health care. Some parents don't know how or where to get the medical attention their child needs and are overwhelmed by the additional burden the search imposes. Others cannot take the necessary time from work to get help for their child because they cannot afford to give up a portion of their meager income.

There is a poor fit between children's health needs and the

services rendered by School District health personnel. The 12 doctors spend most of their time doing the required physicals for students who have not been examined outside school by other doctors. They go from one school to another as they try to cover the public, private and parochial schools for which the District is responsible. Each physician is supposed to do twelve physicals in a three-hour work day. The physicians are provided with a medical record which is filled out in advance by the parents who are invited to be present. It includes a brief half-page health history covering immunizations and illnesses and a few developmental questions. Although the American Academy of Pediatrics stresses the significance of a medical history as "one of the most important aspects of the routine, periodic health appraisal" and urges the use of personal interview to obtain it, the doctors are not provided forms with follow-up health history questions and are allotted only 15 minutes per child. The value of the physical is diminished by the brevity of the medical form, the insufficiency of time allowed, and the fact that the physician may only identify problems but may not treat them. The physicians' diagnostic and treatment skills are being underutilized and such limited examinations could be done by a less highly trained professional.

Philadelphia has about 150 nurses who continue to serve as in the past. They perform growth, vision, hearing and other screenings. They do the health record-keeping and the paperwork connected with getting physicals done. They are on call to deal with minor illnesses and complaints and to give first aid, but they are prohibited from diagnosing or rendering any treatment that goes much beyond a band-aid. Most of the nurses' days are spent in performing services beneath their professional level. They are left with little time to utilize their knowledge, skills, or training in the essential follow-up on the children identified as needing further medical care. Conscientious, well-trained health technicians could free up the nurse's time by doing the screenings, most of the paper work, and caring for many of the children who come to the nurse's office.

SCHOOL NURSE PRACTITIONER

The Philadelphia schools have begun to move toward better use of health personnel. There are 78 school nurse practitioners who form teams with health room technicians. Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who have received additional training. This permits them, in collaboration with a physician, to do comprehensive health assessments, diagnose many illnesses, and manage health problems until they are resolved. They also provide education and counseling geared to the prevention, improvement or cure of health problems. The health room technician, under the nurse practitioner's supervision, takes over much of the screening, clerical duties, and caring for children's minor complaints. This enables the nurse practitioner to devote her time to professional duties. When she discovers a child with alarmingly high blood pressure, the nurse practitioner can take the necessary hours to work with a confused mother until she is finally convinced that she must take her child to a children's hospital for treatment. As the program is envisioned, the school nurse practitioner focuses her efforts on preventing illness or restoring children to good health.

Philadelphia has a school health program that is, for the most part, both inefficient and ineffective, but the same can be said for those across the Common-

wealth and the nation. Some promising efforts have been initiated to bring about change. The school nurse practitioner represents a beginning. However, the Philadelphia School District has a long challenging way to go to reassess its philosophy and practice so that it can make a significant contribution toward helping children acquire and maintain good health.

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My decision to write about school health services coincided with a heightening concern about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In an effort to contribute to a greater understanding of what scientists know about AIDS and other HTLV-III infections, I am devoting the last part of this newsletter to this topic. School health services will be continued in the January 1986 issue and will discuss ways to better meet students' health needs.

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AIDS

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a disease that was unknown in the United States until the early 1980's. Patients with AIDS have lost the ability to fight off certain very serious and rare infections and cancers and many suffer from a succession of dangerous illnesses that eventually prove fatal.

AIDS is caused by a virus with a very long name that has been shortened to the acronym, HTLV-III. Infection with this virus affects people differently. Some people get AIDS. Some suffer from a condition that doctors call ARC for Aids-Related Complex. They have symptoms such as swollen glands, chronic diarrhea and weight loss which makes them feel very sick at times. Some of these patients subsequently develop AIDS. A much larger number of people carry the HTLV-III virus but display no symptoms. Anyone infected with the HTLV-III virus is capable of transmitting the disease to others.

In whatever form, infection with the HTLV-III virus is certainly to be feared. However, reactions by individuals and institutions should be based on what is known about the virus and how it is spread. Scientists studying the virus know that it is transmitted in three ways: sexual intercourse with infected partners, injection into the body, and passage from an infected mother to an infant before or during birth. In each of these cases, the virus infects the person by getting into the blood stream. Certain groups of people are at increased risk. These are homosexual and bisexual men because of certain sexual practices, intravenous drug users because many share needles, infants born to mothers who belong to an increased risk group, and persons who received infected blood or blood products in the past. The danger from blood and blood products has been virtually eliminated through a new, routinely-used screening process and by asking those in the increased risk groups not to donate blood. Knowing how the HTLV-III virus is transmitted, it is possible to take precautions that are self-protective.

While scientists know how the HTLV-III virus is transmitted, they also know how it is NOT. It is not transmitted through the air; water; food; urine; feces; or by close contact that is not sexual such as hugging, sharing eating utensils, shaking hands, coughing, or sneezing. The HTLV-III virus is not spread in normal everyday contacts between people and there is very strong evidence to prove this. Studies have been made of family members who have lived with AIDS patients before and during

their illness and of health care workers who have cared for AIDS and ARC patients. No family members have become infected with the HTLV-III virus through this close living. There are a handful of health care workers who have become infected, but in each case the explanation is either that they have inadvertently injected HTLV-III virus-infected blood into themselves, or been members of the high risk groups and become infected with it in that way.

The School District of Philadelphia has recently adopted a policy for students and employees infected with the HTLV-III virus which is consistent with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control. It calls for admitting students to the classroom and employees to their place of employment provided such admission has been approved by a medical screening committee and is periodically reviewed. Decisions by the committee are to be based both on the individual's susceptibility to other diseases and whether s/he presents a risk of infection to others.

The School District will keep identification of HTLV-III infected students and employees confidential, because that status is accorded medical records and also because of the stigma attached to having this infection and the risk of subjecting an individual to discriminatory treatment. In any case, identification would offer no increased protection. There are no special precautions to be taken. For example, there is no evidence that the HTLV-III virus can be transmitted through a bite or exposure to blood but other diseases can, so routine hygienic practices of washing with soap and water and using common disinfectants should be followed for protection against many kinds of infection.

It follows that the most effective public policy is to make every effort to include those with AIDS or infected with the HTLV-III virus in all aspects of normal life as long as their individual health condition or behavior does not pose some special risk to others. If we were to attempt to exclude and isolate them, they would keep their identities hidden and we would not be able to make decisions on a case-by-case basis nor monitor each individual's health.

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Vol.XVII, No.4 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania January 1986

ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH

There are direct links between a child's health and learning. The child with poor vision or a hearing loss has a handicap that reduces his or her ability to learn. The child suffering emotional stress cannot concentrate. The child with a chronic condition like asthma is frequently absent and loses the continuity of instruction. In the interest of learning, their major reason for being, schools have a stake in the health of their students.

Last month's issue of The Oakes Newsletter described the problems inherent in the way that the School District's doctors and nurses render health services. In too many cases, the emphasis is on the identification of health problems. This would work successfully if there were treatment services readily available to the children who need them, but this is not the case. There are tens of thousands of children in Philadelphia who come from low-income families that have great difficulty securing needed care.

Another problem with the School District's health services is that a majority of its health personnel utilize only a portion of their professional skills. Doctors spend most of their time performing physicals that are so limited in scope they could be done by less highly-trained personnel. Nurses invest too much of the school day in activities beneath their professional level leaving them with an inadequate amount of time to use their skills to work with parents whose children need treatment.

The School District has been moving gradually toward a solution of these problems by encouraging an increase in the number of school nurse practitioners. Practitioners are school nurses who have gone back to school and supplemented their knowledge and skills so that they can work more independently and effectively with students. In Philadelphia, they do comprehensive health assessments, identify health problems, and develop and carry out a plan for their management in periodic consultation with a physician. While the school nurse assists a physician doing physical examinations, the nurse practitioner does the physical as part of an in depth health assessment. A school nurse, receiving a child's complaint of abdominal pain, would notify his parents and urge them to take him to a doctor. The nurse practitioner, responding to that same complaint, would ask a number of health history questions, assess the origin, frequency and duration of the pain, and do a physical examination of the abdominal area. The practitioner's training would enable her to detect a serious kidney problem. When she spoke to the parents, she could tell them what she found and explain why immediate medical

attention was essential. The practitioner would work closely with the parents to help them find the needed medical care.

CONVERT TO PRACTITIONERS

The School District should make a commitment to completely change over to school nurse practitioners because this is the best way for the District to provide these services to students. Currently, only one-third of the nursing staff are practitioners. The conversion will necessitate making the decision first, and then working with existing staff, the state, and foundations to develop plans for all nurses to get the additional training within a reasonable period of time.

School nurse practitioners are supposed to have health room technicians working with them to take care of the clerical work, vision, hearing and other screening, and students' minor complaints. They must have people who do accurate work, are conscientious, and relate well to the students. Currently, it is nearly impossible to find or hold such people because the work day is only three hours, the pay is $14.30 per day, and there are few benefits. The position is an important one, because the practitioner can fully function in her professional role only if she has a good technician to rely on. The position should be converted to a full time one with technicians spending two or three full days per week with one nurse practitioner and then working with another the balance of the week. This would involve some additional cost, but it is necessary if the School District is to attract and hold the kind of people needed for the job.

Nurse practitioners must have uninterrupted periods of time in order to do their work. Except for emergencies, they are supposed to have only certain hours when children may be excused from class to come to see them. In schools, where this policy is understood and observed, the nurse practitioner can do health assessments and engage in health counseling with individual children or small groups. She knows that her contribution is valued. In schools where the principal does not understand this new role and special hours are not observed, the practitioner is expected to care for children whenever they have an ache or pain. This does not permit the proper utilization of a practitioner's professional skills and is not in the best interests of the health of school children.

Nurse practitioners are continually striving to improve the rendering of health services to students. The School District should encourage them in this endeavor in the ways already enumerated and by bringing them together several times a year to discuss mutual problems, exchange solutions and learn from and support each other.

Many studies in Philadelphia have pointed to the serious problem of children from low-income families who lack regular medical care. Many could receive quality health care if services came to them and were rendered on school premises or in nearby facilities. The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program is one example of such a service. It is intended to assure comprehensive preventive health care for children from low income families. It uses Federal dollars which are administered by the state and there are unused funds which could support an enlarged EPSDT program. Past attempts to expand this service in the schools to more children have been impeded by an inability to find ways to secure the increased number of needed parental consent and health history forms, and the required verification of Medicaid

eligibility. Because of the benefits to children, it seems that such obstacles should and could be overcome if the School District were committed to work with other agencies and organizations to find a satisfactory solution.

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CLINIC

Nationally, a health clinic housed in a high school, or closely linked to it, is another model for bringing comprehensive health care to those who need it. Although the original impetus for school-based health clinics was the national tragedy of teenage pregnancy, experience has shown that to be successful they must offer a full range of services. Young people, with their parents' permission, must be able to secure regular and sports physicals, immunizations, weight reduction assistance, prenatal care, health education and counseling, pregnancy prevention information, and treatment for illnesses or injuries. Only if well-rounded services are offered do young people develop confidence and trust in this school-based facility and utilize it for their health needs. The experience of other cities indicates that these clinics prove their value in such ways as positively influencing attendance, teenage pregnancy rates and drug abuse and finding many young people with serious health problems that have previously gone undetected.

There is no single solution to the improvement of the delivery of well-rounded health care services to needy school children. Many approaches must be utilized and many cooperative relationships fostered. The School District should work with the many doctors, hospitals, health clinics, public and private organizations and agencies that are deeply concerned about children with poor physical or emotional health, children having children, infant mortality and addicted children.

The superintendent, or the school board, should appoint a high level advisory committee charged with the task of making recommendations for ways to increase quality health care for needy school students. The committee should include representatives from the health departments of the city and state, the Pediatric Society, hospitals, parents, and agencies and organizations concerned with health issues or delivery of service. The School District should not increase its investment of resources or dollars in health care because they are needed for education, but it should cooperate with other agencies and organizations so that school children may receive better care.

The major focus of this newsletter is on health care, but a school district's responsibility extends to two other vitally important health areas. Schools must create and maintain a healthy environment in which the learning process takes place. This stretches from a clean, attractive, properly lit physical setting to providing nutritious meals that promote good health. It includes the creation of a healthy emotional environment in the classroom, the prevention of accidents, and being prepared to respond to emergencies.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Schools should also teach students how to achieve and maintain a healthy life-style. While in school and as they get older, students must make many important decisions relating to smoking, nutrition, exercise and the management of stress. These decisions are vitally important because they can be the key to good health and to reducing the risk of many diseases such as cancer, stroke and heart disease. Equally important for young people are decisions

about whether or not to use drugs, have sexual relations, and use contraceptives. All of these decisions require an appropriate base of knowledge and understanding, but they also depend on a student's degree of self-esteem, view of the future, and skills of communication, goal setting and decision making. A young woman who has established goals for her future is less likely to become pregnant because she will consider the negative impact that the birth of a baby will have on her plans. A young man who has come to appreciate his own intrinsic worth will resist peer pressure to use or abuse drugs. Clearly, effective health education involves much more than giving students facts.

Responsibility for health education rests in the curriculum office of Physical and Health Education where it suffers because it is of secondary importance. Health education should be recognized as the important area of learning that it is, one that can literally mean the difference between life and death. It should have leadership from specialists who have health as their major area of interest. Similarly, secondary school courses should not be taught by physical and health educators but by individuals who have taken extensive course work in health and have this as their major teaching interest.

Just as with the provision of health services, there are numerous public and private groups and agencies concerned with helping youngsters avoid such health-related tragedies as damaging life-styles, drug abuse, adolescent pregnancy and suicide. If more community sponsored and supported health education services were offered in schools, more students would be reached. Here too, a broadly based advisory committee could make a major contribution by devising ways to utilize available community resources more fully.

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The School District should do much more to help its students achieve and maintain good health. It is a priceless possession.

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An Independent Monthly Dedicated To Improving Public Education
Helen Oakes - Author and Publisher

Vol.XVII, No.5 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania February 1986

REPLICATING SUCCESS

Replicating Success is a School District of Philadelphia program designed to help selected schools raise their level of academic achievement. It grew out of the District's desegregation plan which included educational improvement as one of its three components. Seventy-three schools, most in need of upgrading, were given a Priority One designation. The first twenty schools given assistance are in the Replicating Success program.

Replicating Success is rooted in what has been learned from the Effective Schools research of the late 1970's and early 1980's. This research looked for, and found, schools that were succeeding with children from low income families. It proved that schools can make a difference and produce high achieving students regardless of their backgrounds. This finding stood in sharp contrast to the conclusions of the influential 1966 James S. Coleman report which interpreted its data to mean that the background of students controlled whether they would do well or poorly in school. The Coleman study indicated that there was little the schools could do if students came from families with a socioeconomic status characterized by a lack of parental interest, low aspirations for the children, and few or no books in the home. This view reinforced many teachers doubts about the ability of such children to achieve. Low teacher expectation led to less achievement and to a vicious downward spiral. It was not until more than ten years had passed that educators began to look at schools that work for the urban poor and then use their findings to challenge this demoralizing belief.

Currently, there are eighteen elementary and two junior high Replicating Success schools. When they volunteered and were chosen, most shared some common characteristics. Few students were achieving at grade level and many lagged way below. Too much energy and time was being spent on disciplining students for their poor behavior. Many students lacked pride in themselves and their school. The schools lacked support from the parents to get students to work harder and achieve more.

The schools began their thrust to raise student achievement by taking a close look at themselves. This process began with facilitators from the central staff conducting a needs assessment. They gathered statistics on achievement, student and staff attendance, staff stability and the various disciplinary measures utilized. They interviewed each professional and non-professional staff member individually. A survey probed opinions and attitudes. For example, staff members were asked for their appraisal of what parents at their school want for their children. The results were presented

by the facilitator to the principal and then to the school staff. It was a time of soul-searching, assessing weaknesses, strengths and needs, and setting improvement priorities.

Each Replicating Success school has a School Improvement Council which develops short and long range plans and plays an important leadership role. The Council is composed of volunteers from the staff and from the parentbody. There is also a series of committees which work on the academic areas of reading/language arts, mathematics, social studies and science and the other important areas of student recognition, parent involvement, discipline, and professional development.

The academic committees recommend steps to the School Improvement Council that they believe will lead to improved instruction and higher achievement. They establish broad goals and specific objectives such as "90% of children in regular grades will achieve at least one year of growth in reading in a school year." The committees develop strategies and methods of evaluating what they have set out to accomplish.

FIVE ATTRIBUTES

While the purpose of Replicating Success is to raise academic achievement, Effective Schools research shows that to accomplish this there must be a broad, schoolwide effort and the presence of five attributes. They are identified as the creation of a climate in a school conducive to learning, the holding of high expectations of the students by the staff, a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus, the development of clear objectives for teaching so that students' performance can be monitored and assessed, and a school principal who is a strong leader.

These attributes have been built into the Replicating Success program. School staffs create a climate conducive to learning by rewarding achievement, helping students to develop self-esteem and school pride, and positively reinforcing desirable behavior. They also stress with students the importance of developing career goals, meeting standards and getting an education. Systems of awards and recognition are developed. In a Replicating Success school, you are sure to see bulletin boards devoted to identifying the reading and math achievers, the citizens of the week, or students with only A's and B's on their report cards. Doors are decorated with banners given to classes demonstrating high attendance or good behavior. Papers that exemplify excellent work are displayed in classrooms and halls. In one school I visited, the children told me they'd seen a reduction in graffiti, cursing and fighting. They credit the school staff with enabling the students to be successful. "Teachers encourage us a lot to learn more, explore more and read more."

High expectations are an essential element of raising achievement. If students are to learn more, teachers must believe that they can. In Replicating Success schools, staffs are trying to move as many children as possible in the shortest time span to grade level and above. Each year, as they set what they consider realistic but higher achievement objectives, they reinforce the belief that children can live up to high expectations. As teachers strive to motivate and encourage their students to work harder, learn more and increase their expectations of themselves, an upwardly moving spiral is set in motion.

Beginning in 1984, a strong emphasis on instruction was built

into the School District's system-wide reforms inaugurated by Dr. Constance Clayton, Superintendent of Schools. The standardized curriculum, a promotion policy based on achievement, and a new testing program focus the district's attention on its main job of improving instruction so that student learning will increase. With these reforms as a framework, the teaching staffs in the Replicating Success schools intensify the instructional focus through the work of their academic committees and their Councils. Just as important, they convert a centrally driven thrust for achievement to one that originates within the local school.

When the academic committees and the Councils establish clear, instructional objectives that can be monitored, they take a significant step toward achieving them. For example, if the goal for a 5th grade is to learn a certain demanding mathematics curriculum in a year, the teacher has to decide what should be covered each month and press to keep to the timetable. Without such a goal and having thought through what will be required to achieve it, the likelihood of students learning that much mathematics would be greatly diminished. The principal, teacher and the school's mathematics specialist in this case examine the progress of the class at appropriate intervals. If there are problems, they analyze them and develop new strategies to be tried.

Another important attribute of Effective Schools is principals who are strong instructional leaders. This requires them to allocate their time and energy so that improved instruction receives a higher priority than all other aspects of their job. They must set high standards, observe in classrooms frequently and create incentives for learning. Principals set the tone of their schools and provide leadership so that their Councils and committees can function successfully and harmoniously. They bear the ultimate responsibility for all decisions and are entitled to a large measure of credit for the improvements that their schools make.

NO FORMULAS

Clearly, there are no formulas and no checklists that can produce the five attributes. Each school must fashion its own individual climate for learning and there are countless different ways that a principal can provide leadership. These attributes must be translated by a school staff into a process of change that includes attitudes, focus, instructional techniques, and working relationships among staff members and students.

Replicating Success schools are trying to increase parent involvement so that the bond between school and home will be strengthened. The schools recruit "parent scholars" who work for ten week periods helping in classrooms or elsewhere. They try to assist the Home and School Association to increase the number of parents participating in its activities. They endeavor to improve communications and understanding between the classroom teacher and the parents.

Replicating Success makes demands on staff members in terms of time, thought, and a willingness to learn new things and implement change. A great deal of work and effort is involved when short and long range plans are made and carried out. However, there are substantial psychical rewards. There is a sense of investment and ownership in participating in planning for the improvement of the school. When there is progress, the staff knows that they have made it happen. One teacher told me that in thirty years of teaching, this was the first time she had been asked what she thought would improve the learning

environment. Teachers find that their professionalism is being drawn on and their ideas are being implemented. All of this is challenging, but it is energizing and self-renewing and creates new enthusiasm for teaching.

Replicating Success provides each school with certain supplementary goods and services that are essential for the program to work. A facilitator comes one to three days per week to help the school mount its effort, and people are available to provide some staff development. In addition, spread over three years, there is about $10,000 for materials for the four major subject areas, $20 per student as a discretionary fund which can be used for trips, prizes, etc., and $7500 for parent scholars who are paid a small stipend for the hours they work. There is also some additional money to provide stipends for staff members when they stay after school for meetings or staff development.

Having begun their planning process in early 1984, the first ten Replicating Success schools have now completed 1½ years of work with students. It will probably take three to five years to record marked academic improvement, because it takes time for the necessary changes to occur and affect achievement. In any case, because Philadelphia has changed testing instruments, there is at present no way to look at where Replicating Success schools were before the program and where they were a year later. One bit of achievement information, the mathematics levels tests, shows that Replicating Success students have improved more than comparable students. These tests indicate where students are achieving in relation to grade level. Between June 1984 and June 1985, there was an 8% increase (from 12% to 20%) in the number of Replicating Success students in grades 1-6 on or above grade level in mathematics. During this same period in the other Chapter I schools, there was a smaller increase of 3% (from 22% to 25%).

In my visits to three Replicating Success elementary schools, I talked with principals, teachers, students and parents. Based on what I saw and heard, the prognosis for these schools is excellent and the School District has put together a combination of people, programs, resources and efforts that can make an important difference in the achievement of students.

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Helen Oakes - Author and Publisher

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PREVENTING TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The United States has a teenage pregnancy rate that is considerably higher than most other developed countries in the world and Philadelphia's rate is 49% higher still comparing unfavorably with other big cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Boston and Houston. In 1984, 117 Philadelphia girls under 15 years of age had babies. 1700 young women, 15 to 17 years old had babies and it is estimated that another 1700 in this age group ended their pregnancies with abortions.

The nation's teenage pregnancy problem should be of concern because it has high economic and social costs that adversely affect each and every one of us. Mother and baby must often be supported with public funds for long periods because the teenagers are unable to finish school and obtain jobs that allow them to escape from poverty. More often than for women 20 or over, these youngsters deliver low birth weight infants who suffer from serious handicapping defects and require expensive medical care to survive. Many teenage mothers are unprepared to help their babies develop optimally and must raise them alone. As a result, these children begin school less ready to learn and less prepared than other children. Shockingly, on the average more than 7 out of 33 of the students in the classrooms of Philadelphia's elementary schools are the children of these young mothers. Many are more difficult to educate and require costly special attention if they are to succeed. Our economic stake in teenage pregnancy is also forcefully brought home when we realize that today's teenagers and their children are a part of the potential workforce of the future on whom the seventy million people born during the mid-century baby boom must depend for their retirement income.

There also are social costs resulting from the immaturity of these mothers. Some of them have not adequately developed their moral, ethical and social values so that they cannot instill in their children what is necessary to make them good citizens and contributing members of society.

Teenage pregnancy, a problem that crosses all ethnic and economic lines, has reached epidemic proportions for many different reasons. Some young women succumb to peer pressure which pushes them to "do what everyone else is doing." Many youngsters, finding themselves in an unanticipated situation, are not mature enough to consider the consequences and then extricate themselves. Television plays an important role as it bombards youngsters with a glamorous, permissive view of sex and totally neglects to send the message that sex and responsibility go together. Some young peo-

ple, facing academic failure and a loss of self-esteem, lose hope for the future and this removes a compelling reason for delaying parenthood. Many teenagers become fathers and mothers because their parents, the schools, and churches have failed to educate them about their sexuality.

Teenagers around the world are having sexual relations, but in the United States this results in a much higher rate of both births and abortions. A recent international study provides an explanation as to why the United States teenage birth rate compares so unfavorably with other similar countries. Its major finding is that the other countries provide their teenagers with comprehensive sex education programs and easy access to contraceptives while in the United States both are withheld. In the United States there is a prevailing misconception that denying youngsters information and contraceptives will lead to less sexual activity. Teenage pregnancy rates have proved the falseness of this view and it should be abandoned. The other countries have identified pregnancy, not adolescent sexual activity, as the major problem and focused their efforts on helping teenagers avoid unintended pregnancy. This country should do the same.

I think the sound public policy is to provide sex education and access to contraceptives through various public and private agencies and organizations while utilizing many other means to encourage young people to choose to postpone sexual involvement with its attendant risks. It is just as important to work with young males as young females.

There is much that the schools can do to prevent peer pressure, school failure, a lack of plans for the future or ignorance leading to teenage pregnancy. For example, youngsters can be helped to resist peer pressure by beginning to learn in elementary school how to be assertive and say no and still feel good about themselves. This is already a part of drug abuse prevention programs and should be expanded. If counseling services, now in short supply, were increased there could be intervention at the first sign of trouble and many students would not have to experience failure. Students can be taught to communicate, make decisions, and set goals. This gives them some basic tools for successful daily living and making future plans which gives them reason to consider the consequences of motherhood and fatherhood. School-based health clinics that reach many students with health care and counseling have proved to be successful in reducing teenage pregnancy.

SEX EDUCATION

The responsibility for sex education falls to the schools because it is very clear that most parents are not providing it. In September 1986, the Philadelphia public schools will take a step forward. A revised curriculum called "Adolescent Sexuality and Parenthood" will be taught as a part of 10th grade Health Education to all students except those whose parents request that they be excused. Previously, written parental permission was required and communication breakdowns led to a dearth of signed slips with the result that the course was not given at many high schools. There can be satisfaction that next year many more students will be reached than in the past. However, the School District should be moving expeditiously to introduce this subject matter in an appropriate way to younger students. Many young women are pregnant, or at risk, long before 10th grade.

A sex education course should give students the opportunity to

go well beyond anatomical descriptions and examine the difficult issues of feelings, values and relationships. Since puberty comes to girls at age 11 or 12 and to boys a year or two later, how are they to conduct themselves during the many intervening years that come before marriage? What are the moral and ethical values related to sexual activity? In discussions of such difficult issues, other questions dealing with homosexuality, venereal disease, masturbation, and physical attraction will undoubtedly be raised. Teachers who are to lead these classroom discussions must be highly trained and skilled and feel comfortable and secure dealing with such matters. In the case of the revised course, the best way to assure this for next fall is to provide extensive training to a small corps of teachers who would, until more teachers can be trained, spend most or all of their time giving it. Selection of these teachers should be based on their interest, background knowledge, experience, rapport with students and comfort dealing with human sexuality issues. Screening, training, and monitoring should be careful, thorough, and extensive in keeping with the School District's responsibility in this area.

The School District should also help to organize workshops for parents so that they can become more knowledgeable and better prepared to teach their children about sex. Home and School Associations could work toward the same goal by planning programs for their parentbodies utilizing speakers, films and discussion leaders available from public and private agencies.

EDUCATION FOR PARENTING

Another program that serves the cause of teenage pregnancy prevention is Education for Parenting. Started recently in a few public schools, it introduces children to good ways to care for and nurture the development of babies. Its major goal is to sensitize preadolescent students "to the responsibilities of parenting and caring for another" and to give them "the information and skills necessary for assuming those roles adequately and with a sense of satisfaction." It serves to help children understand that infants must have constant care, toddlers must be watched continuously to keep them safe, and responsibility for another life is time-consuming and requires someone to be constantly present. An underlying message comes through. Youngsters realize that they should think twice about having a baby at an early age because a great deal of work and expense are involved.

One of life's most important and difficult tasks is raising children, but parents-to-be receive no education in preparation for their roles. Education for Parenting seeks to help remedy this. The program is based on a mother coming into the classroom monthly with her baby. The children observe the development of the baby and study the growth process. They learn about the vital role parents or caregivers play in the optimum development of a baby. They come to understand the planning and effort that is necessary to provide for a baby's needs and mental, physical and emotional growth.

Before an 8-month old baby girl named Joanne arrived in the 4th grade classroom that I visited, the children made predictions about what the baby would do with a ball, how she would react to calling her name and her mother disappearing from view. In the course of the 45-minute visit, they checked out their predictions and much more. Joanne put the ball in her mouth. (That's the way babies learn about things.) She

smiled when her mother started to read her a book and she helped turn the pages. (You can tell that Joanne's mother reads to her and that it is a pleasurable experience.) When her mother disappeared from sight, although she didn't cry or seem upset, she went to her immediately when she returned. The children will watch these experiences repeated each month and note the differences as the baby matures. Perhaps next month Joanne will drop the ball and be fascinated by its bounce. The children were told that Joanne still doesn't sleep through the night. They asked many questions. Is she crawling, playing with others, or imitating sounds? The period sped by.

Education for Parenting leads to many excellent results and is worthy of broad expansion. Children gain valuable insights that will help them raise their children well. They note that when Joanne noisily bangs a pot against the floor, her mother says no once or twice, then avoids a test of wills by substituting a quiet toy. Children come to understand what it means to assume responsibility for the intellectual, physical and emotional development of a tiny human being. Many come to realize that parenthood should be delayed.

Teachers find that students become more caring of one another in the classroom and are able to establish better relationships with younger children in the school. Many children carry over what they learn to their homes. Relationships between sisters and brothers improve. The 9-year old becomes more understanding of a 2-year old brother who rips up his homework.

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The issues surrounding teenage pregnancy prevention are controversial and divisive, but the costs of inaction are unacceptable. It is way past time that public and private agencies and organizations, families, schools, and churches came together to determine what each can do and how cooperation can provide the necessary services. Prevention must utilize many different approaches if it is to meet the needs of young women who are so varied in their developmental stages, attitudes and values, and family backgrounds.

With this 142nd issue, The Oakes Newsletter completes its sixteenth year of publication. Many thanks to all who have contributed to its support.

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IMPLEMENTING THE MODIFIED DESEGREGATION PLAN

Adopted in 1983, the Modified Desegregation Plan of the School District of Philadelphia is in its third year of implementation. Of the 50 schools targeted in April 1983 for desegregation, 26 have met the criteria and are from 25% to 60% White and from 40% to 75% combined Black, Hispanic and Asian. Currently, there are 77 desegregated schools out of a total of 256. The number of pupils attending desegregated schools has increased by more than 18,000 since April 1983. This represents an increase from 18% to 29% of the total enrollment. This progress can be attributed to the development and maintenance of an array of schools and programs that serve to attract students, along with strong recruitment efforts and an improved, more reliable transportation system.

The Modified Desegregation Plan places a major emphasis on desegregation, but it includes many other equally important components. This year there has been a strong emphasis on the process of integration. Having brought Black, White, Hispanic and Asian children together, the goal is to have pupils associate with one another on the basis of equality and mutual respect, develop friendships and understanding, learn from one another and acquire the skills of citizenship that will make it possible for them to function effectively in the 1990's and beyond.

To further integration in the more than one-hundred partially, or fully, desegregated schools, the School District began a three-year "Adventure in Harmony" program in the fall of 1985. It provides multiethnic groups of students with a 24-hour workshop retreat at Fellowship House Farm which is located about forty miles from Philadelphia. Fellowship House Farm, originally called Fellowship House and located in Philadelphia, has a 55 year record of playing an important role in improving human relations among people from different racial, religious, economic, and national backgrounds. Serving one school at each retreat, there will be at least 50 per year — each one bringing together up to 50 students, 6 faculty members and 6 parents. Major funding is provided by the William Penn Foundation. By June 1988, 7000 Asian, Black, Hispanic and White students will have had this positive intergroup experience.

I was present at Fellowship Farm when a group from a middle school arrived. Space does not permit me to describe the many activities of the workshop, but I've tried to capture its flavor. The students were accompanied by five staff members, two of whom were also parents of students in the group. They were met by an interracial team of three "facilitators" who explained that they had come to have a good time, experience

new things, and make new friends.

The first activity was a group discussion of what the students hoped would happen at Fellowship Farm (e.g., show respect for each other) and what they didn't want to happen (e.g., any booing). The next activity was an ice-breaker. Each youngster was given a sheet of paper which asked him to find someone in the room who "has the same birthday month as you" and five other such categories. The students then split into five small groups, each meeting with a school staff member, to choose a name, develop a handshake, and list some things they are proud of at school and at home. Later each small group reported back to the whole.

IMPROVING HUMAN RELATIONS

Each student and adult was given an orange, a minute to study its characteristics, and a chance to volunteer to speak about its "personality." The eight oranges were then piled together and scrambled. Each person went forward and without difficulty selected his own. The students were asked what they had learned. "Oranges have some differences which enabled us to pick ours out." The facilitator helped them to see that people may also appear to be similar but, when a more careful look is given, there are distinctive differences.

Grouped around a blazing fire, the day's planned activities ended with singing led by a teacher playing a guitar. One refrain expressed our feelings of togetherness very well — "All of us are members of the family of woman and men." The students went to their assigned rooms. Many formed new bonds of friendship before they fell asleep, or after dawn as they investigated the farm and its animals.

The next morning there was a whole-group session on prejudice. During such discussions, there were expressions of innermost feelings. One student reported, "There were a lot of smiles, but also many tears. Some people showed their true feelings while others felt for them." The students broke into their small groups, selected a personal experience with prejudice to role-play for the large group and gave it one ending depicting conflict and a second demonstrating a more constructive approach. One group of students improvised a classroom situation in which the "teacher" called on the "White children" in the class, but ignored the "Black and Hispanic students" who had their hands up. In a replay, the Black and Hispanic students explained to the teacher that they were not receiving a chance to show what they knew and it made them feel bad. After that, the teacher called on everyone equally. The facilitator pointed out that although the students had confronted the teacher, they had been polite and explained to her what they were thinking and feeling, giving her an opportunity to change her behavior.

The students met in their small groups to discuss one way to improve human relations at their school and to develop an action plan. For example, one group recommended forming a lunch time club so that more people could get to know one another. A facilitator emphasized the importance of allies. When a student stands with another against threats, slander or confrontation, together they can help each other to defuse situations, prevent affronts and soften the blow of unfriendly acts.

STUDENTS BENEFIT

Some weeks after the retreat, a facilitator comes to each school to help workshop participants focus on the quality of the school's human relations and to encourage the progress of the im-

provement programs and recommendations. Students are asked to fill out follow-up questionnaires. Their responses indicate that incidents have been avoided, new insights and sensitivities have been developed, and many students have new friendships which bridge the divisions between the races. One student indicated that he "learned to see what was on the inside of a person instead of just looking on the outside."

One principal told me that the students treat each other with more respect and dignity. Teachers report that they have observed students of different ethnic backgrounds together in the halls and cafateria who, without Fellowship Farm, would not have become friends. The Human Relations Committee in one school came back from Fellowship Farm with a feeling of camaraderie that did not exist before their trip. Students report feeling changed. One wrote, "I have learned to get along with more people and understand their feelings." A teacher of profoundly retarded youngsters was one of the staff members at a workshop. When she advertised for help with her students at the Special Olympics, several students who came to know her at Fellowship Farm volunteered. It was an enriching experience for everyone involved and was a direct result of the student-staff relationships that evolve from the workshops. Clearly, this 24 hours can make a difference.

Other steps have been taken by the School District to aid integration and the smooth adjustment and continued progress of students who transfer for purposes of desegregation. These include the welcoming of students and parents at their new school, orientation sessions for parents so that they will know what to expect and how to assist their children to adapt, and the provision of access to further information and support.

STAFF TRAINING

There has been a strong emphasis on staff training. Many workshops, meetings and retreats have taken place and more are planned. This school year transportation personnel received staff development to enable them to better provide this important service that supports integration. Bus drivers received training in how to create a safe, disciplined atmosphere on the bus and better relate to children, parents, school personnel and those working with them on the bus. They received time to familiarize themselves with their routes before the opening of school so that the first trips with students ran more smoothly. Bus attendants had an opportunity to come to understand the importance of their role, share experiences, and state their problems and concerns to someone in authority. Transportation monitors, responsible for the safety and well-being of students during their morning departure and afternoon return, met for a session on child development and reasonable expectations of different-aged youngsters.

For a second year, 300 participants attended a three-day workshop, "Making Desegregation Work: The Teacher's Role." Some of the themes covered were conflict resolution, classroom management, and improvement of student self-esteem. Knowledge and experience in these areas would be beneficial to all teachers, but especially those in the desegregated schools or those in the process of becoming so. Unfortunately at the present rate, it will take a long time to reach all the teachers and, because it is a volunteer program, it is not possible to select those who might need it the most.

In addition to what has been described, the Modified Desegregation Plan has several other

thrusts. It calls for improvement of the education offered through systemwide reforms already in place, of a Standardized Curriculum, a new promotion policy, a revised testing program, and new state-mandated graduation requirements. It calls for a stress on efforts to improve those schools most in need of raising academic achievement. It makes a commitment to maintain desegregated staffs at each school.

As outlined in the Modified Desegregation Plan, the effort to reduce the effects of racial isolation in schools that are almost entirely one race is moving forward. Students are being presented with curriculum, currently undergoing further development and refinement, to increase their understanding and appreciation of the history and contributions of several different ethnic groups. An effort is being made to create additional opportunities to bring students of different races, cultures and backgrounds together to share experiences, such as visits to a Career Development Lab or to museums. The School District is providing leadership and seeking to encourage public and private agencies and organizations to conduct their programs and activities so as to bring together diverse groups of racially isolated students for meaningful, positive experiences.

The School District is moving toward full implementation of the various components of the Modified Desegregation Plan. Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done. Because the Plan is built on the bedrock of educational improvement, equal access to excellence, desegregation and integration, it is central to the School District's mission. Progress will, and must, continue.

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PROGRAMS FOR THE MENTALLY GIFTED

When I arrived, the children were going over the meaning of the words in their story which began, "The Elebird and the Brickidasaurus fell into the icky-sticky Chicoaca." These words drawn from a "Daffy Dictionary" made up by the children, tell us that the elephant that can fly and the dinosaur made of bricks fell into the ice cream. I was in a classroom for the mentally gifted. This assignment was designed primarily to stir the imagination and, incidentally to reinforce dictionary skills.

The 2nd and 3rd grade children in this class range in age from 7 to 9 and represent a broad range of ethnic backgrounds — Black, White, Japanese, Chinese and Philippine. One day each week, these 15 children leave their regular classrooms in nearby public and parochial schools and come to this one for their mentally gifted program.

The teacher introduced something new. For the first time, the children were going to work on a project in groups instead of individually. They began a study of Japan and each group had to select and make one of the following: a diorama of a Japanese home, a map of Japan, a traditionally dressed paper doll or a Japanese lantern. They located Japan's lines of longitude and latitude on a map. The teacher read them a folktale by a Japanese author. They discussed how to get needed information for their group projects and reviewed the bibliographic form for recording the reference books they would consult. They met in their small groups to discuss next steps and what materials they would bring from home.

The depth and breadth of the activities that take place in this classroom, which serves children from kindergarten through grade 6 during the week, can be judged from what is displayed. Resulting from ideas coming from the whole class, there is a chart showing 33 uses for a penny (e.g. button and tracing a circle). There is a display of three dimensional robots made from materials found in the home. There are reports written by individual children on genetics and heredity, Halley's Comet, crystals, mythology and much more.

Philadelphia's program for the mentally gifted, begun in January 1974, endeavors to help students develop the tools they need for learning, such as critical thinking and research skills. It seeks to have students develop the ability to communicate through the spoken and written word as well as with photography and artistic and musical expression. It works to encourage and nurture creativity and to foster independence of thought, decision making, and action. The program tries to help mentally gifted students come to better understand themselves and

others. It seeks to develop leadership skills and the ability to make choices and decisions wisely. It works to help students explore careers, especially at the high school level. Teachers involved with this program feel a special responsibility both to develop the minds, hearts, and spirits of these young people and to give them a sense that they have an obligation to make a contribution to society utilizing their creativity and what they have learned.

Among these youngsters may be someone who will make a lifesaving medical breakthrough or provide the leadership to improve the chance for peace. Society needs the gifts of these young people and their potential should be developed to the fullest. This is unlikely to happen if they only experience an ordinary classroom and are not challenged and stimulated. It is shocking and, perhaps surprising, to learn that many of these high-ability students drop out of school or do poorly in their regular school work. Many youngsters complain that the work is too easy. They become bored and frustrated, get poor grades, and end with a school record that masks their ability. If they are to reach their potential, they must have programs that meet their unique needs.

The mentally gifted program for middle and junior high school students is a one day a week program like that of the elementary schools. In some schools, students are offered a broad choice of semester courses, such as social science, fine arts or environmental science. In each course, the students study the subject as a group, but they also pursue a long-term individual project. Also, students are brought together occasionally to stretch their awareness and knowledge base through the study of a topic, such as the culture of India. Unless students are deeply immersed in an independent study, they are urged to try a different course each semester so that they may acquire knowledge and develop new interests in several different areas.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

At the high school level, the mentally gifted program changes from one day per week to a program that takes place before school, during lunch, or after school for the most part. Students have many options including advanced placement courses, independent study, college courses, externships in a business or agency or organization, after-school or Saturday classes, and many activities. Matched by interest and assigned for the high school years, a "mentor" works with each student to think through his or her selections. Mentors combine the roles of cheer leader, adviser, listener, prodder and supporter. They work on an individual basis with up to 75 students.

A strong mentally gifted program offers a diversity of opportunities which the mentors in the school plan and arrange. Minicourses, such as creative writing and harmony, are taught. There are trips to expand students' awareness and appreciation of art, ballet, music and theater. Students may volunteer, for example, to work with handicapped children. Students are encouraged to participate in the production of publications and to enter competitions ranging from science to creative problem solving. Speakers are brought in who can motivate students, stimulate new interest, and arouse curiosity. Career exploration is encouraged by providing a collection of reference materials, seminars based on interest, trips, opportunities to "shadow" a person such as an ophthalmologist for a day in his work environment, and the choice of a full time internship during the second semester of senior year. Students are inform-

ed about various summer opportunities for study and work and their participation is fostered.

At one high school which places a heavy emphasis on externships, students spend varying amounts of time weekly after school going out to learn in academic enrichment programs, to serve at social service agencies, or to work in businesses where they learn more about a possible career or gain job experience. One student that I talked with spends a part of one afternoon each week observing and talking with a psychologist attached to a children's psychiatric ward in a hospital. Her desire to be a psychologist has been reinforced by this experience. Other students work in such places as a councilman's office, the zoo, and a data processing business. Sometimes there are unforeseen results. The student may find an adult who provides a role model, is an inspiration, or takes a special interest in her. A student who has not been doing well in school may be motivated to try harder and begin to achieve. Some students come to recognize and place a higher value on their own talents and skills.

Many mentally gifted students are self-motivated to excel in their academic work. For those students, the mentor's role is to support their efforts and to encourage them to participate in a variety of activities and opportunities that will broaden them as people and develop new areas of interest. Many other mentally gifted students lack motivation. Then, the mentor must try to find ways to spark an interest that will lead them to work up to their potential.

Philadelphia's program for the mentally gifted serves 5500 students and has many bright spots. In elementary schools, there are fine teachers who meet the goals of the program by developing ways to work with students that cultivate and nourish their giftedness. In secondary schools, there are sites with a wealth of material and human resources that provide rich programs that attract mentally gifted students and serve them well. However, there are other schools where these conditions do not prevail.

DIFFERENCES IN QUALITY

There are two major reasons for great differences in quality between sites. First, the mentally gifted program was without full-time leadership for almost four years prior to last November. Many important matters relating to quality and equality did not receive adequate attention during that long period. Second, in some locations not enough students have been identified as mentally gifted to warrant the staff and equipment needed to have a strong program. School districts are skilled at identifying mentally gifted students who come from advantaged homes in which parents often value and encourage extensive reading and multiple interests and their children do well in class and on achievement and intelligence tests. Districts are much less skillful in finding the mentally gifted when they are among those who are physically handicapped, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, lack proficiency in English or come from low-income families. Although the mentally gifted exist in all groups and communities, many are simply not found. This accounts, in large measure, for some schools having large numbers of mentally gifted students while others have very few.

The success of the mentally gifted program, as all others, rests in the final analysis in the hands of individual teachers. Helen Ericson, a science teacher of the mentally gifted at George Washington High School, has a gift for sparking students' interest in

science. She encourages students to select a project and stimulates them to do scientific research. She inspires students to invest heavily of their time and effort to gain background information, set up a controlled experiment, analyze the data carefully and present it clearly. Many have done work of such sophistication and excellence that university professors, doctors, and researchers have willingly worked with and advised them on their projects.

Helen Ericson's success may be measured in two ways. She interests many students in science as is evident by the large number of her students who pursue research projects and enter them in competitions. She inspires a large proportion of her students to do work of such high quality that many have been winners in local, state and national science competitions. Some have won awards and scholarships competing against the nation's best.

In recognition of her outstanding teaching, Helen Ericson has received several awards. Last December, she was one of six teachers in the city to be given a $2500 ARCO Chemical Company Award for Excellence in Teaching. Helen Ericson gives deeply of herself and demonstrates a high level of skill, knowledge, commitment, and dedication. She has the ability to inspire and motivate and the stamina and will required to set high standards. I've pointed to this exemplary teacher as a way of recognizing and expressing appreciation to her and to all teachers with these attributes who have such a profound and positive influence on the lives of children — be they of exceptionally high ability or not.

THANK YOU

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