

# the OAKES newsletter

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

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

September 16, 1975

## PHILADELPHIA MUST DESEGREGATE ITS SCHOOLS

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission is charged by law with the responsibility and obligation to desegregate the schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It has been forced to produce a desegregation plan for Philadelphia, because the Philadelphia Board of Education has not developed a satisfactory one. So, if you think that a handful of women and men with no personal ties to the Philadelphia public schools are imposing a desegregation plan on the children and parents of this city because they are dogooders or social dreamers, you are wrong.

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act passed by the State Legislature in 1955, as interpreted by the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth, requires the public school systems in the state to be desegregated. In the Chester School District case, the Supreme Court ruled in 1967 that education offered in racially imbalanced public schools is discriminatory whether brought about intentionally or not. The Human Relations Act requires the Human Relations Commission to issue an order to a School District practicing discrimination requiring that District to act to stop the discriminatory practice.

The Human Relations Commission, in June 1971, in keeping with the law, ordered the Philadelphia School District to develop a plan to desegregate the schools. (It

had first requested a plan in early 1968.) When no satisfactory plan was produced, the Commission went into Commonwealth Court to secure enforcement of the order. There the struggle continues today.

Under court order, this summer the School District submitted a plan which once again showed foot dragging and an unwillingness to obey the law. It calls for merging the Philadelphia schools with surrounding suburban school districts thereby mixing Philadelphia's 62% black enrollment with the suburbs' almost totally white enrollment. In the plan's meager 4 1/4 pages, there is no development of the concept only a list of the nearby communities and their black and white student populations. The School District has done nothing to spell out the specific steps that would be required to implement the plan. It has not advocated the idea in discussions with State Legislators who would have to pass new laws. Obviously, its "plan" is not a sincere effort and is, therefore, not being taken seriously.

When the Commonwealth Court ordered the School District to develop a plan, it ordered the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to prepare one too. The Commission's plan is detailed and 122 pages long. It was prepared by a Professor of Education at the University of Miami who is experienced in working out desegregation

plans.

The Commission's plan divides the city's schools into ten clusters. In nine of these, the student population can be combined so as to produce schools that by the Human Relations Commission's definition are desegregated. For example, two elementary schools in a cluster, School A predominantly black, School B predominantly white, are paired. School A is designated to serve all grades 1-3 children from both schools and School B grades 4-6. Both are thus desegregated. Having established feeder patterns for elementary schools that produce desegregated schools, the elementary schools can be combined to feed secondary schools so that they are desegregated also. In general, this method permits pupils who go to school together in the early grades to continue through school together.

Several generalizations can be made about the plan. 1) All kindergarten children continue to attend the school nearest their home as at present. 2) Every effort was made to minimize transportation while achieving maximum desegregation. The trip by school bus to or from school was not to exceed 45 minutes. Because of this constraint, twelve schools in the far Northeast and some in West Philadelphia would remain totally segregated. 3) The burden of travel and of going to school out of one's neighborhood is equitably distributed among the three major ethnic groups (black, Spanish-surnamed and white) in proportion to their numbers in the school population. 4) The plan uses the Human Relations Commission's definition of desegregation which is stated in terms of black pupils only. A desegregated school is one in which the percentage of black pupils is within 30% of the percentage of black students in that grade span in the system. Last year 63% of the pupils in grades

1-9 were black. 30% of 63% is 19%. Therefore, an elementary, middle or junior high school which is from 44% (63%-19%) to 82% (63%+19%) black would be considered desegregated. The corresponding figures for senior high schools are 42% to 79% black. By this definition, 216 schools or 85% are presently segregated. Under the plan, the situation would be almost exactly reversed and 86% would be desegregated.

Many people would not agree with the Human Relations Commission's definition of desegregation which makes it possible to consider schools up to 82% black to be desegregated. Many believe that the 120 schools which the Commission's plan considers to be desegregated even though they are 70% or more black, would in fact be segregated and the reassignment of pupils resulting in these high percentages meaningless. However, the Commission makes a strong case for the value of ending, under their plan, the almost total racial isolation of the tens of thousands of students in the schools that are now 95% or more black or white.

I believe that a plan that is to have long range beneficial effects as well as immediate ones and also offer a strong possibility for stabilizing the school population would have to be based on a different criterion for desegregation. Schools should be desegregated on a non-racially identifiable basis. That is, the student population of a school should be so evenly divided that the school would have no racial identification. It could not be viewed as either a white school or a black one.

Desegregation in Philadelphia based on the Commission's plan would mean spreading white children thinly throughout the system and would result in their being in a severe numerical minority in the schools. Some of the problems

faced by students in such a position, be they black, Spanish-surnamed, white or any other ethnic minority, are their feelings of insecurity, possible oppression by the majority students, neglect of special wants and needs, and a disadvantage in competition of all kinds including leadership roles. Parents, with their own fears, anxieties and hostility, anticipating these problems, react strongly against placing their children in such a position. In a school desegregated on a non- racially identifiable basis, racial relationships would remain a serious problem to be worked through, but the whole set of problems associated with students being in a numerical minority would disappear.

In August, Commonwealth Court Judge Theodore C. Rogers listened to public testimony regarding both plans for desegregation. Several times, the Judge was moved to state emphatically that the question before the Court was not whether there is to be school desegregation, that has already been decided, but how it is to be brought about.

In public discussion and media coverage of desegregation, as with the testimony in Judge Roger's courtroom, the focus is on "busing". Yet transportation to school by bus has been a daily occurrence for years for millions of children across the nation. 59% of the public school children in Pennsylvania travel to school that way. "Busing" is not the real issue. When people oppose busing, they are expressing their disapproval of the "assignment of pupils to a specific school for purposes of desegregation." They do not want the choice of a school and a child's schoolmates removed from their control. It is the assignment of pupils and all that that implies that triggers the protests and the outpouring of emotion. The real questions involved in this issue must be faced and answered. That can't happen

while the focus is on the school bus.

Many people hold the belief that they have a right to send their child to their neighborhood school. However, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in an opinion rendered April 20, 1972 knew of no authority for this view. Its opinion upheld the right of the Board of Education in Harrisburg to assign pupils and transport them for the purpose of correcting racial imbalance resulting from de facto segregation thereby eliminating or drastically changing the preexisting pattern of neighborhood schools. Parents, according to another state supreme court, do not have a vested right to send their children to any particular public school. Lawyers working daily in this field know of no community in the United States where such a right has been established.

After hearing legal arguments this fall, the Commonwealth Court will decide whether to order the implementation or modification of one of the plans or the development of a new plan. If the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission's plan was revised, so that schools were desegregated on a non- racially identifiable basis, I believe there would be a much better chance that it would receive calm acceptance.

A desegregation plan to be successful must have many components beyond bringing black and white students together. First and foremost, the Board of Education and the School Superintendent must express a commitment and dedication to the concept of desegregation and its value to society. They must provide leadership. This is totally lacking in Philadelphia. Second, the plan must incorporate proposals for educational improvements that can be made at the same time desegregation is achieved. Parents must be convinced that students will receive an education

of equal or superior quality to their present one when they are reassigned. Third, the plan must provide for training staff members to work with students so as to promote constructive interracial experiences and to transmit to students new knowledge and understanding about other racial and ethnic groups.

Racial hatred and fear permeate our society and poison it. If the race problem is ever to be solved, and it must be, a logical place to begin is in schools with

children. Desegregation is the law of the Commonwealth and Philadelphia has been ordered to desegregate. Compulsory desegregation of our schools is inevitable. If it is to result in a good experience for students, system-wide educational improvements and staff training must be locally planned and carried out. They cannot be successfully imposed from outside. We should utilize every remaining moment to prepare our community and develop and perfect a plan that will justly serve and equitably educate all of our children.

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The Oakes Newsletter would like to thank DR. MATTHEW COSTANZO

The Oakes Newsletter would like to thank DR. MATTHEW COSTANZO for his twenty-four years of devoted service to the school children of Philadelphia. He was a teacher for 10 years, served as a vice-principal and principal for 4, acted in an administrative capacity for 6 1/2 and was Superintendent of Schools for 3 1/2 years.

I was saddened by Dr. Costanzo's abrupt departure in July, because it represented a great loss to the schools and afforded no opportunity to expose to public view the individuals and events that forced him out.

Dr. Costanzo's contributions to the educational life of the public school children were many. He provided the climate that enabled the schools to show a dramatic improvement in the last test score results. As Superintendent, especially during the 1974 budget fight, he displayed noteworthy courage, stamina and resourcefulness. Many, I am confident, join me in regretting his leaving and in wishing him well.

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# the OAKES newsletter

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Helen Oakes - Author and Publisher

Vol.VII, No.2

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October 15, 1975

## ACHIEVEMENT AND FAILURE

The February 1975 basic skills achievement test scores reflected improvement in reading and mathematics in every part of the city and in every grade. The percentage of pupils scoring below the 16th percentile in reading, the point below which a serious problem is indicated, decreased from 29 in May 1974 to 26 in February 1975. This is a dramatic improvement over the late 1960's when this figure stood at more than 40%. Also, the percentage of pupils scoring at or above the 50th percentile in reading rose from 33% to 37% from May to February. 37% is moving toward the 51% which is the percentage of pupils in the nation scoring at or above the 50th percentile.

This solid evidence of the improvement of basic skills of Philadelphia school children is a credit to all the professionals in the system who have worked hard and long to make it happen. It is not easy to work with great dedication when the results take years to achieve. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to the many who have made great personal contributions to this effort.

In spite of this improving situation, the number of Philadelphia public school students who fail in their course work is staggering. The cost to the students in terms of their present and often their future is overwhelming. While some fail because they

don't attend class or put forth enough effort, others fail and then become truants or dropouts. For others who do go to school, failure translates daily into frustration in the classroom and a diminishing of self-confidence and self-esteem.

The Philadelphia School District has no statistics on academic failure. While there is data on the number of pupils retained in grade, this data is not synonymous with academic failure since a student can receive failing marks in one or more subjects and still not be held back. No one knows how many students in each school failed what. The causes have not been investigated nor has there been any attempt, as far as I can determine, to examine the relationship between academic failure and frequency of attendance.

In one high school last June, 20% of the seniors failed one or more courses and could not graduate with their class. City-wide, 29% of the 10th graders remaining in school in June (12% of the class had dropped out during the year) were retained in grade meaning they had failed two or more subjects. These figures indicate the pervasiveness and seriousness of the problem.

When a student fails, what is the School District's policy? Many people believe that it has a policy of "social promotion", meaning that a student is "promoted" to

the next grade regardless of his level of achievement. Statistics on pupil retention in the elementary schools seems to bear out the fact that with few exceptions children do move along with their classmates. In the secondary schools, however, a very substantial number of students are not promoted. Last June, in grades 9-12, 12,990 students were retained in grade, an average of one out of every six pupils.

Many people believe that "social promotion" deceives the child and his parents by making them think either that he has mastered the essential course work or that there is no need to master it. Further, many believe that if the student fails, he should suffer the consequences and be retained in grade. On the second time around the student will master the material.

The counterargument is that forcing a child to repeat a grade most often does not contribute to his trying harder or learning the material better. (The 1965 Odell Survey suggests strongly that the frustration of denial of promotion is closely connected to dropping out later.) Repeating often stigmatizes the student, separates him from those his own age, exposes him to ridicule and detracts from his self-esteem.

Clearly, the promotion decision is a difficult one with valid arguments on both sides of the question. Two years ago, the Superintendent of Schools recommended that a committee be formed to review promotional policies and make recommendations to the Board of Education. Since it was not done then, I believe the School District policy should be reevaluated now and then restated so that it is clear to students, parents and staff members.

#### PREVENTING FAILURE

What can be done to forestall

failure? First and foremost, intervention to prevent it should begin early in the school year, no later than the end of the first marking period. Efforts should be made by each school to try to determine why each student is failing and what is the remedy. Many questions should be asked. Does the student have poor health, faulty vision or hearing, emotional problems or some other block to learning? Does he have problems at school or at home that prevent concentration on school work? Is the student properly placed so that the work of the class is neither too difficult nor too easy? Does the student lack necessary basic skills? Does he come to school irregularly, lack motivation or interest in a particular subject? Is the textbook poorly written or the teacher unprepared? Is the student finding success in any part of his school experience? Would tutoring help? Is a change in class warranted? Can the student's motivation be increased? Does the student have problems with which he could be assisted?

Parents frequently can aid by providing a place for the student to work, helping him plan his time, requiring good school attendance and behavior and encouraging a strong effort. However, there are many times and circumstances when parents alone can't turn the situation around. The school must be organized to give failing students the attention that will help them to move from failure to success. Someone in the school has to care and has to work with the failing student.

One counselor that I talked with worked last year with twelve students who were failing everything. She helped them to develop goals that were attainable. They made a determination to pass English and mathematics, concentrating their efforts on these two subjects and just doing the best they

could with other subjects. She contacted the teachers involved so that they would be on the lookout for improvement and help to make it happen. All 12 students passed at least one course and 4 passed enough subjects to move on to the next grade. This was a great improvement over what would have been.

Counselors should place a priority on serving failing students, especially in mid-November when the first report card is issued. They should reserve time to meet with failing students to see what can be done to salvage the situation. However, because the numbers of students failing subjects in secondary schools is so very large, counselors cannot give each student the time and attention he needs. If each home room advisor would assume responsibility for working with a few students, that would contribute greatly to helping students in academic trouble.

Some schools have special programs with a negligible failure rate. For example, in a health careers program in one school every 11th grader in the program passed every major subject last year, thereby establishing a school record. This was not a select group, but one in which there ordinarily would have been failures. Some special features of the program are that the students are together with a single teacher for their mathematics and science, the subjects related directly to the health field. They develop a group identity and a strong relationship with a staff member. In addition, they have an opportunity to develop career goals from which may spring the motivation to study more diligently. Programs like this with a low, or no, failure rate should be analyzed, the "keys" to their success identified and then copied in other schools.

Schools should do much more to develop formal and informal tutor-

ing programs. A formal program, with training for the tutors, is being started at one school this year and will use juniors and seniors who are excelling to tutor 9th and 10th graders. At this same school, assistance will be offered in the classroom by older students who will work under a teacher's supervision with individual students. Another possibility is for classroom teachers to encourage student pairing so that a strong student can give some assistance to one who is having difficulty. In the process, both students benefit. The weaker student should improve and the stronger one will know his work better for having taught someone else.

I talked with some teachers who are dedicated, caring professionals about ways to avert student failure. One teacher believes that when children are assigned to her that it is her job to reach them. Quality instruction is based on a teacher knowing her subject thoroughly and carefully preparing her daily lessons. She must come to know the children well and find a way to make each child feel secure enough to participate actively in the work. While this teacher utilizes other resources, including parents and specialists in the school, she assumes the primary responsibility for reaching her students. She works to avert failure by making great demands of herself.

In contrast, other fine teachers feel very strongly that they need parental support to do their job and that very often it is lacking. Parents of students doing poorly do not contact the teacher and do not come to school at report card time for a conference. Often teachers, particularly at the secondary school level, feel isolated and unsupported by the community they serve. Parents, on the other hand, complain that teachers wait too long to let them know that there is a problem and

that particularly in elementary school where parents could assist their children, teachers do not help parents to learn effective ways to do so.

Communication between the home and the school is a very large problem and there isn't space to deal with it here, but a few suggestions can be made. Teachers should, at the very beginning of the year, when students have a clean slate, contact parents to introduce themselves. One way is to have the student, as an early homework assignment, take home a note to be signed and returned to the teacher. The note would introduce the teacher and explain how and when he may be contacted at school. At the secondary school level, it might include a brief outline of what the teacher expects to cover that year and his rules regarding attendance, lateness, homework, quizzes, written assignments etc.

Some teachers contact parents very early in the year at the first sign of a problem and thus prevent serious trouble. Some make home visits. Some call parents when they have something complimentary to say about a student so that parents can share in the good qualities of their children as

well as the troublesome ones. Teachers or schools that encourage parents to come and visit their child's classes are making a strong contribution to the establishment of a meaningful relationship between the home and the teacher.

The failure rate must be reduced, but it must not be accomplished by lowering standards. On the contrary, standards and teacher expectation should be raised so that students leave school better able to read, calculate and express themselves. However, students must be assisted to meet these standards so that they may achieve success in their school experience rather than failure.

Academic failure is another symptom of students' problems like dropping out of school or going to school irregularly. It must be studied and a search made for its causes and its cures. The school system cannot work effectively to serve the needs of the students if no one knows how many students are failing and no one attempts to ascertain the causes. It is essential that there be greater insight and understanding of the problem of failure coupled with increased determination to help students achieve success.

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Helen Oakes - Author and Publisher

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## CHANGES IN TITLE I FOR 1975-76

More than two years ago, the Philadelphia Welfare Rights Organization brought suit against the Pennsylvania Department of Education to force the School District of Philadelphia to spend the federal funds from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as that law requires.\* A new chapter in the long, ensuing struggle was written in August 1975 when a federal judge approved a Consent Decree, an agreement among all the parties involved, and made it an order of his court. Its most important provisions are that all students with low achievement in reading and mathematics in secondary schools are to receive extra instruction, parents of children in Title I schools are to be informed of their children's scores on the California Achievement Tests, and every eligible child in a Title I school shall receive a free breakfast.

For the first time, all secondary students with test scores below the 33rd percentile are receiving reading instruction and in small groups. Depending on their scores on the California Achievement Test and the severity of their reading handicap, these students are in classes of 15 or 20. In junior high and middle schools, these classes meet five times a week, in senior high they meet

three times. These are in addition to their regular English classes.

For this greatly expanded reading program, approximately 225 new teachers had to be employed. There was no possibility that the School District could have found that many reading specialists. However, the School District had a long list of elementary school teachers who had applied for jobs. In most cases, their preparation for teaching included course work in some aspect of reading. The Consent Decree stipulates in-service training for these teachers to further equip them for their jobs. In addition, each school has a reading specialist who will provide them with supervision and support. These teachers will also receive help in analyzing the reading problems of their students and then in individualizing instruction to teach and reinforce skills.

The secondary school mathematics program is much smaller than the reading program. It provides small group instruction for relatively few students. At the junior high school level, a certified mathematics teacher from each school will become the resource mathematics specialist and will spend all of her or his time either working with students who have scored below the 16th percentile or with classroom mathematics teachers to improve their effec-

\* See The Oakes Newsletter, "How Should Title I Dollars Be Spent?" Vol.V, No.1, September 11, 1973.

tiveness with students.

At the 10th grade level, all students in Title I high schools who scored below the 16th percentile will be in mathematics classes of no more than 25 students. Here also there will be a mathematics specialist in each school who will work with the teachers and provide tutorial services to the students having most difficulty with the subject. Instruction for these students will be from a locally developed text which shores up such skills as addition, multiplication and fractions through the use of real life circumstances. Students are taught such practical skills as writing a check, calculating change or the sales tax on a purchase.

In the past, most low achieving mathematics students did not take mathematics after the 10th grade. The Consent Decree sets up one mathematics skills center in each Title I high school and requires all 11th and 12 graders who scored below the 16th percentile on the California Achievement Test to receive remedial instruction in the center in groups of no more than fifteen. Each center serves only 375 students per week at the very most and that provides each student with only one period per week which is completely inadequate. The program would have to be enlarged two to four times to give survival mathematics skills to all 11th and 12th graders that do not have them now.

The reading and mathematics programs will probably have little effect on February 1976 test scores, because students will not have had enough time in small classes to show marked improvement. By February 1977, one would expect to see the favorable impact of the program.

#### STATE REGULATIONS

About the time that the Consent Decree was signed, other reg-

ulations were imposed on the School District's Title I program by the State Department of Education which is responsible for Philadelphia's compliance with the law. The State, pressed by federal authorities to adhere more closely to federal guidelines, insisted on a narrower definition of the children who could be served with Title I funds. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, passed by Congress in 1965, was intended from the very beginning to provide money to meet "the special educational needs of educationally deprived children" who go to schools with "high concentrations of children from low-income families." As time passed, it became clear that if Title I funds were spread thinly over too many programs or students, the benefits to children were dissipated. The law was then amended to require that the programs be of "sufficient size, scope and quality to give reasonable promise of substantial progress" toward meeting these special needs. Also, Congress has made it clear that the program is to focus on basic skills mastery. Therefore, the State demanded that the School District severely limit the number of students who may receive Title I services and concentrate the funds on the students with the most serious educational deficiencies.

The limitations were to occur as a result of precisely defining the "educationally deprived child." The State and the School District came to agreement that the definition for secondary educationally deprived students will be, as in the Consent Decree, those students who scored below the 33rd percentile in reading on the California Achievement Test last February. School-community coordinators in Title I schools, for example, who last year worked with every student in the school who needed their services are working this year only with students on a list

of those scoring below the 33rd percentile. However, the School District is complying on a limited basis and has refused, so far, to follow State direction to limit certain Title I high school programs to this population.

The State and the School District do not agree on a definition for elementary school children who can be classified as educationally deprived and therefore eligible for Title I service. The State is insisting that services be limited to children who are achieving significantly below grade level. The School District however is supplying such programs as classroom and library aides and school-community coordinators to children scoring as high as the 49th percentile. Many children scoring in this percentile range are at or near grade level in reading. This clearly violates the intent of the Act which is to concentrate services on those with the greatest educational needs. The School District has been ordered to modify its criteria, but to date has not done so.

Many staff members and many parents are very upset by the State's newly enforced requirement that Title I services must be restricted to students defined as educationally deprived. There are many situations where several children in a family need assistance, but the school staff member may not serve them all. For example, a school-community coordinator visits a family. She finds two children who need shoes in order to come to school. She can get shoes for one child in the family, but not for the other whose reading scores are "too high" even though his need for the coordinator's service is identical. The restriction can translate into two children coming into the library together for help in selecting a book. The library aide, after consulting a list of Title I eligible children may help one student but

has to refer the other student to someone else. This limitation on those to be served is understandably very difficult for many people to accept. They feel that it puts them in an impossible position and causes bad feelings among the students. On the other hand, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has legal responsibility for monitoring the Philadelphia Title I program. To carry out federal requirements and respond to federal monitors' objections, the State believes that it must insist on these restrictions so that all services will be more concentrated and more effective. If the School District had not attempted in the past, as they continue to do today, to ignore Title I regulations and the priority needs of the lowest achieving students, the enforcement of the regulations by the State might be less rigid.

#### USE OF TITLE I FUNDS

It was the lack of improvement in basic skills of poor children that led the Welfare Rights Organization to bring its suit originally. Later they found that there was no correlation between the dollars spent on programs to help children learn and the percentage of poor children in the school. Often schools with the highest percentages of poor children had the fewest Title I dollars to spend. And just as often, funds were spent without regard to the priority needs of children. This was partially remedied when, through the suit, new priorities were imposed on the School District by a team of outside educators serving on a committee to review and evaluate Philadelphia's Title I programs. The Consent Decree reflects these priorities.

The suit has served as a bludgeon to force the School District to concentrate Title I services on poor children lagging below grade level in their basic

skills. Some people argue that if all Title I resources are invested in the lowest achieving students, all the students above that category who need extra assistance to achieve their potential are neglected which is a disservice to them and the broader community. One answer is that Title I money is for a specific purpose and may not be used for any other. Programs to serve average achievers are essential, but must be developed with other resources.

The inclusion in the Consent Decree of a free breakfast program reflects the Welfare Rights Organization's frustration with the School District's long delay in responding to their concerns. Providing breakfast to all Title I children was considered to be reparations for harm done to children by the delaying tactics. The program is funded with state and federal funds and requires no Title I or operating budget funds.

In retrospect, it seems clear that Title I funds were often used improperly in Philadelphia from the beginning. They were used in myriad attempts to find ways to create a better environment for learning and to develop improved methods of teaching. Many programs embracing creative, new ideas were developed with Title I funds. Some

had broad application to the whole system. Some served children of all ranges of ability and achievement. As a result, some excellent worthwhile programs currently funded by Title I have a focus and serve a population that make funding from this source inappropriate. The State's more stringent enforcement of the law may jeopardize continuation of this funding. That does not make the programs expendable. They should be moved into the operating budget and carried on.

The new Title I programs and changes in existing programs have made the first months of school very difficult for some school staff members. Understandably, some principals have been frustrated and angered by the substantial blocks of time they have had to devote to Title I which represents only a small portion of the activity in their school. Yet, it should be understood that all of this resulted from the School District's refusal over a period of several years to modify their Title I program to conform to the law. The court suit and the State's limitation on who may receive service are the direct result of this recalcitrance.

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The next issue of the Newsletter will be published in January 1976.

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## FOLLOW THROUGH

Follow Through is a federally funded research program designed to examine the effectiveness of different educational approaches to children from low income families in kindergarten through third grade. It grew out of the finding that frequently the gains made by children in Get Set and other pre-kindergarten programs were lost in elementary school. Follow Through's objective was to build on the prekindergarten foundation and continue the satisfactory progress of these children.

Serving about 6100 children in eighteen schools, Philadelphia has the nation's largest Follow Through program. Currently, seven program models are in operation which embrace different educational philosophies, techniques and strategies. The models vary greatly from one another in many ways including their approach to children and how they learn best, the role of the teacher and the curriculum content. For five of these models, (Bank Street, Behavior Analysis, Bilingual-Bicultural, Education Development Center and Florida Parent Education) there is an outside sponsor which is either an institution of higher education or an educational research facility. For the other two, there is a local sponsor. Sponsors are responsible for the orientation and training of the local staff in the theory and practice of the model, the classroom techniques involved and the curricular mate-

rials to be used. Each model began in kindergarten only in the 1968-69 school year. One grade was added each year until by 1971-72 a kindergarten through third grade program was in operation.

There are certain advantages common to all models. Class size is held to thirty children and each teacher has at least one full time aide. Follow Through kindergarten children have a four hour school day which is longer than the regular kindergarten day. The children receive breakfast and a hot lunch. There are supplemental medical, dental and mental health services for them. Training is provided for the teachers, paraprofessionals and parents staffing the classrooms. Parents are involved in the planning and operation of the program.

Philadelphia has been evaluating the seven models for several years, comparing one model with another, and comparing Follow Through children with similar children who are not in the program. When a recommendation was made by the Title I Evaluation Committee that Follow Through be expanded by 80%, it was determined that the Bank Street and the Behavior Analysis Models had been the most successful and should be the ones introduced into additional schools. Twenty-seven schools were added using Title I federal funds and seventeen schools using operating budget funds. I spent a

week visiting classrooms in the original Follow Through schools and the expansion schools. Limited space forces me to confine my comments to the Behavior Analysis and Bank Street models.

In the Behavior Analysis model, sponsored by the University of Kansas, children in small groups receive daily instruction geared to their individual needs from an instructional team which includes a teacher, a full time para-professional and a parent. Frequently taught using programmed instructional materials, reading, mathematics and handwriting are the core subjects in the kindergarten as well as the primary grades. There is an extremely heavy emphasis on learning these basic skills based on the belief that low performance on standardized achievement tests leads to placement in slow moving classes and very often to the dead end of a low paying job.

Behavior Analysis requires the teacher to define specifically what children are to learn in a lesson (e.g. to count from 1 to 20) and to determine in advance how much they already know. The children can be taught more easily if they are motivated to learn. Behavior Analysis assumes that motivation does not just happen, it is taught. Children need incentives to complete learning tasks. Teachers concentrate on praising children rather than scolding them, watch for measures of progress and reward them with a token which can be a button or any small disk. There are "earn" periods during the day when children are working on the three R's and receiving tokens and then there are "spend" periods. After the lesson, the children exchange their tokens for events or activities that they choose. In one kindergarten I visited, a child with a certain number of tokens could play with anything in the room while fewer tokens limited his choices.

Is it in the best interests of children to motivate them to learn by using a token system as opposed to the joy or satisfaction of accomplishment? In terms of long range effects, the jury is still out, but children exposed to the Behavior Analysis model excel on standardized tests of basic skills. There is drill and drudgery and little joy involved in the early decoding process of reading or learning the multiplication tables. The rewarding of each bit of progress with a token helps to make this hard work pleasanter, creates a setting of encouragement and apparently provides the necessary motivation for mastery.

The Bank Street model developed by the Bank Street College of Education in New York City is based on what they have learned about children in more than fifty years. Having observed some Bank Street classrooms and read of their values and goals and their strategies for achieving them, I am impressed with the scope of their approach to the affective, intellectual, physical, psychological and social development of the child.

The Bank Street approach is a way of living and working with children. It requires all the adults on the teaching team to relate to each child as a person and a learner, consistently conveying to the child their respect for him and his world. It requires the teacher to fit what is taught to a particular child's needs, his stage of development. For example, while some kindergarten children may be ready to learn that the word "block" starts with the "b" sound, others in the same group may be unable to distinguish between the sounds of the different letters of the alphabet. Their learning, when the time is right, has to begin with hearing those differences.

In the Bank Street model,

children must learn to read, write and compute. Mastery of these skills is not viewed as an end in itself, but a means, for example, for children to express their ideas and opinions. Bank Street teachers seek constantly to help children stretch and expand their thinking, be creative, be self-motivated to learn, develop a sense of identity and self-worth and interact successfully with other children and adults. They want the school learning experience to be stimulating, satisfying and an important part of the life of each child.

### CHANGES REQUIRED

From even this sketchy description of the two models, it should be clear that teachers moving into them must adjust to many changes. The formal classroom with desks in rows is replaced by one in which tables are grouped in various parts of the room interspersed with spaces equipped for activities such as caring for animals, playing word and number games, or experimenting with scientific materials. Teachers must adapt to new materials, new attitudes toward children, new ways of working with them, and a new role as leader of a team of adults. Instruction must be individualized which means teachers must keep records of each child's progress and plan with everyone on the team so that each child moves along at his proper pace. These are basic, fundamental changes that take time and require considerable staff development and ongoing, on-site supervision and support. In my opinion, this has not been adequately provided for in the expansion schools. I also believe that the expansion schools are, in many cases, not attempting to faithfully duplicate the essentials of whichever model they have been assigned. Schools or teachers are selecting and adopting only those elements which seem to them to be useful.

Inadequate staff training and/or unsound model modifications may delay or entirely negate the good results that should come from the expansion of these models. While there may be good reasons for modifications, they should be made by people with a deep understanding of the models and knowledge of all pertinent research data so that there is a sound basis for the changes. The changes should be limited, uniformly adopted, and thoroughly evaluated.

There are many avenues for parent participation in Follow Through. Parents, who serve on local Parent Advisory Councils and on a city-wide one, play an important role in the planning, development and operation of all aspects of the program. There is a large Parent Scholar Program in which the parent after five hours of training assists the teacher in the classroom three hours per day. He or she is paid a small stipend of \$250 at the end of an approximately eight week period and is then replaced by another parent. Many parents have become aides in the program. Many have gone back to school to reach their goals. A few have become certified teachers. Over the years a great number of parents in the Follow Through school communities have, because of the program, developed their capabilities more fully. This has impacted significantly in many ways on hundreds of children in addition to their own. Schools that lacked parental input entirely a few short years ago, benefit today from informed parental interest, concern and support.

Up until now, strenuous lobbying has prevented the planned phasing out of federal funding of Follow Through. Philadelphia should, however, prepare for that eventuality. Inflation and increasing salaries juxtaposed against standstill budgets require annual decisions about what should be kept and cut. To make these de-



cisions in a sound manner requires data not now available. What components of what models are the essential ones enabling poverty children to maintain the advantages acquired in their prekindergarten experience? Is it the approach to children, or parental involvement, or curricular materials or a combination of components that makes the difference? The answers must come from research data. The School District should give this research a high priority and the interest, support and staff that it needs so that the answers will be forthcoming as soon as possible.

Follow Through has made a difference to the children in the program in many ways. It has provided psychological, medical and dental care and improved nutrition which have contributed to improved mental and physical health. Follow Through children in kindergarten through grade two achieved above the national average and better

than a comparison group of Non-Follow Through children in reading on standardized tests last year. There is reason to think that this level of reading achievement may extend to the third grade this year since for the first time the average child who entered third grade last fall was at grade level.

Follow Through children have more opportunity to develop their ability to verbalize because in their classrooms conversation is encouraged. Follow Through's individualized instruction enhances opportunities for each child to succeed at what he is doing which leads to an improved self-image. Follow Through children, used to the multi-adult classroom, interact with other adults with greater ease. All of this helps these children now, but may contribute even more to their future academic achievement and their ability to take advantage of future opportunities.

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Correction: Changes In Title I For 1975-76, Nov. 20, 1975, page 2.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, in its original form required programs to be of "sufficient size, scope and quality to give reasonable promise of substantial progress." This clause was more stringently enforced when it became clear that if Title I funds were spread too thinly, the benefits to children were dissipated.

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# the OAKES newsletter

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

Vol. VII, No.5

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

February 12, 1976

## SELECTION, RATING AND DISMISSAL OF TEACHERS

An English teacher gives his students spelling lists containing misspelled words. Directions on the board contain grammatical errors. Students study general mathematics instead of algebra because too few members of the staff of the mathematics department in their school are prepared to teach algebra. In many schools, there are teachers who abuse children verbally or physically, can't control a classroom, believe their students can't learn or aren't worth teaching, or have consistent patterns of absence that play havoc with continuity of instruction. Who are these people? How do they get into the system? Once in, can they be removed?

None of these teachers are substitutes. They are all appointed. The English teacher was a provisional, appointed with the understanding that he would complete all requirements for regular appointment within one year. The mathematics teachers who lack the background and confidence to teach first year algebra are appointed, certificated mathematics teachers. The teachers who are abusive or ineffective, who downgrade children or don't come to school from 10% to 50% of the time, are women and men who have gone through the selection process and been considered worthy of placement on a list of those eligible to get jobs to teach.

The Personnel Department of

the School District arrives at this eligibility list by evaluating each applicant on the basis of a comprehensive profile. Points are awarded for certification, student teaching experience in Philadelphia, prior teaching experience, advanced degrees, a local examination and scores on the National Teacher Examination. Selection is heavily weighted towards prior teaching experience since it is generally acknowledged that prior success in the classroom is the best single predictor of future success.

The local examination consists of a written and an oral. The written portion is designed to determine a candidate's fluency in written English and, in many subject areas, to test his knowledge of his teaching area. The oral examination probes a candidate's knowledge of teaching skills, his understanding of the City and its students and "those personal attitudes and attributes which tend to predict teaching success."

Judging by a few of the people appointed through this process, it is not rigorous enough and, in some cases, grossly inefficient. Take again the example of the English teacher. As a provisional teacher, he had completed all requirements for Pennsylvania certification, was appointed at a time when there was no list of eligible English teachers and had either not completed the appropriate ex-

amination procedure or failed some part of it. I question the wisdom of making a provisional appointment unless there is a severe shortage of qualified candidates for a position. In the absence of an eligibility list, the system should wait a few weeks, establish a new list and then employ a well qualified candidate on the basis of merit. Because of this candidate's poor English, his principal made every effort to have him dismissed. In spite of that, and even though the candidate failed the local examination, Personnel extended the one year deadline by more than six months until the candidate somehow managed to pass the test. Now this teacher may be retained permanently.

As for the mathematics teachers who are so weak in their content area that they can't teach Algebra I, the problem stems, partly at least, from a long standing, acute shortage of mathematics teachers. This, coupled with no test in the content area until 1971 and no failing score on the test today, means that the School District continues to appoint teachers with an inadequate understanding and knowledge of mathematics.

The same can be said for other subject areas. Teachers are being appointed who don't know their subjects well enough to teach them. Such people should not get through the teacher selection process. If they take a local written exam which tests them on their knowledge of what they will be teaching and they fail, they should be eliminated from consideration for the job. Instead, all that is required is an average score of 70 on the combined written and oral. In many subject areas, a 60 on the written, balanced by an 80 on the oral, secures a place on the eligibility list. In areas such as English, mathematics and science where there are shortages of teachers, all appli-

cants on the list are offered employment.

Attitudes toward city children, a commitment to teaching and the ability to manage a classroom are impossible to judge accurately in the present testing situation. Oral examiners, especially in the short time they have to interview candidates, can't be expected to fail all those who will later prove to be unsuited for teaching. That unpleasant task must fall, therefore, to principals.

Teachers coming into the system, new to the profession, must be rated semi-annually by their principals for two years. According to the School Code, if their final rating is a satisfactory one, they are granted tenure. Tenure is the right of teachers and others to keep their positions unless there are good and sufficient reasons for dismissal. It guarantees due process. Teachers may retain their jobs unless the School District brings charges based on proper cause and grants the employee a hearing if he requests one.

Rating a teacher "unsatisfactory" is a properly long, arduous process. Whether the teacher has tenure or not, the principal must visit the classroom several times, write up his visits, consult with the teacher, offer and provide appropriate assistance and support. At each of the conferences held with the teacher, the teacher may have a Union representative present to act as his advocate. After the principal has rated the teacher unsatisfactory, his district superintendent must, according to School District practice, observe, rate and meet with the teacher too. Obviously, distinctions are and must be made between new teachers who need and deserve time to develop in their profession and teachers who strike children, come to school drunk or high on drugs, or have a record of excessive absenteeism.

## DISMISSALS OCCUR TOO INFREQUENTLY

If the district superintendent concurs with the principal, the rating and recommendation for action are forwarded to the Associate Superintendent for Field Operations who makes a final recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools. When the recommendation is for dismissal, it should almost without exception lead to dismissal. Unfortunately, in this school system, it does not. The many administrators that I talked with complained bitterly that in most cases such a recommendation results in an administrative transfer to another school. That simply means a bad teacher is transplanted and a different group of students is adversely affected. Incredibly, an unsatisfactory rating by the second principal and district superintendent with a recommendation for dismissal usually leads to still another transfer.

The substitution of the administrative transfer for dismissal results in the granting of tenure to teachers who should have been weeded out of teaching at the end of one semester or one year. It has led to the retention of a teacher with a drinking problem who was absent more than 90 days in scattered blocks of seven to ten days in each of the last two years.

Unbelievable — but true — is the story of a mentally ill teacher whose unpredictable, bizarre behavior earned him several unsatisfactory ratings and saw him transferred to ten different schools. It was only when a principal threatened to go to the newspapers that the teacher was dismissed.

As in any other job or profession, teachers with excellent past records develop mental illness, become alcoholics or break down under the stress of events. The school system should make every

effort to help such people by offering support and assistance of all kinds, and a leave of absence when that might be helpful. In those cases where all of this is tried and fails, the teacher must be dismissed. The practice of transferring unsatisfactory teachers from one school to another represents a total abdication of the School District's responsibility to the students.

## MANY EXCUSES

When I asked why the school system does not dismiss those found to be unsatisfactory, I was given a long list of barriers that are viewed as making dismissal almost impossible. One was a strong Union that fights tenaciously to protect the job security of its members. This is an appropriate Union role easily counterbalanced by School District representatives who should battle equally hard to remove teachers who don't belong in the classroom. Others were tenure laws, collective bargaining agreements and past practice. All of these, while guaranteeing teachers' rights to due process, do not preclude dismissal. If you strip the excuses away, what remains as the primary obstacle to dismissing teachers is a spineless, defeatist, immoral attitude toward the problem on the part of the decision makers or their advisers. The continuation in the classroom of teachers deemed unsatisfactory by principals and district superintendents who have observed them and worked with them is a crime against children and should cease forthwith.

Solving this serious problem will require action by the Board of Education. It should instruct the Superintendent of Schools to initiate a vigorous effort to remove from the system unsatisfactory teachers whose continued service has been judged to be damaging to students. Personnel with expertise in labor and law should

be brought in from the outside to implement this effort. The Board of Education should receive and enter on the public record semi-annual reports by district, stating how many teachers have received unsatisfactory ratings, how many have been recommended for retention in their original school, how many for transfer or dismissal and finally the disposition of the cases.

The necessity to improve and perfect the teacher selection process increases as the dollar shrinks and reduced resources must meet public demand for improved performance. At a time when there is, in most areas, a surplus of teachers, ways must be found to select the best people. The present teacher selection procedure, newly adopted about three years ago, should be evaluated. Is there a correlation between those who rank at the top of the eligibility list and those who turn out to be the best teachers? Such a study is being planned. It should be vigorously pushed.

As this Newsletter has pointed out, some changes in the teacher selection procedure and retention should be made immediately. Written tests should be used to deny entry into the system to those who lack competency in their field. There should be more extensive probing into the candidate's ability and skills. Applicants could be asked to teach in a real or simulated classroom situation. They could be interviewed by panels that include parents and students in addition to professionals. A more extensive selection procedure based on performance could substantially reduce the risks of the present system.

Granted an improved selection procedure, it is vital that the two year period preceding tenure be used to help teachers develop their skills and talent. That period should also serve as the probationary period it is intended to be and those who prove to be unequal to the job, or unwilling to do what is required, should be denied tenure and dismissed.

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Note: Refer to The Oakes Newsletter for more information about:

1. The profile selection system. See "Personnel Policy Decisions", Vol.IV, No.9, May 21, 1973.
2. Tenure, rating and dismissal. See "The Tenure Law", Vol.V, No.9, May 22, 1974.

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# the OAKES newsletter

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

Vol.VII, No.6

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

March 11, 1976

## CONTRACT CLAUSES NEED MODIFYING

The present contract between the Board of Education and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers expires August 31, 1976. Negotiations began last October and are currently in progress. In the past, issues such as class size and preparation time have occasionally surfaced as major stumbling blocks to agreement, but other important issues were never publicly discussed or understood. Because some of these lesser known clauses impact significantly on the schools, it is important to know what they are and how they might be changed to bring about improvement in the administration of the schools.

There are three clauses in the contract which combine to erode principals' authority to make and enforce decisions.

1. Principals are required to meet at least once a month with an elected committee of union staff members from their school, referred to as the Federation Building Committee, "to discuss school operations and questions relating to the implementation of" the Agreement.

2. Principals are restrained from initiating changes of all kinds by the past practice/working condition clause. As presently interpreted, it gives the Federation a basis for demanding adherence to the status quo. The clause reads, "The Board and its representatives shall take no action

violative of, or inconsistent with, any provision of this Agreement or any policy or practice governing working conditions of employees existing on the date of the execution of this Agreement. The Board further agrees that it and its representatives will not...take any action affecting other working conditions of employees without prior adequate negotiation with the Federation."

3. The grievance clause permits teachers or the Federation to lodge a complaint against a principal for any change in a past practice which they oppose. This clause defines grievance in the broadest possible manner. "A grievance is a complaint involving the work situation, that there is a lack of policy; that a policy or practice is improper or unfair; or that there has been a deviation from, or a misinterpretation or misapplication of a practice or policy; or that there has been a violation, misinterpretation, misapplication, inequitable or otherwise improper application of any provision of this Agreement..."

Taken together, these clauses lead to situations like the following. An elementary school has three first grades with children grouped homogeneously into above average, average and below average ability. For several years, the principal changed the teachers' assignments annually so that they rotated through the three groups

of children. In July 1975, two of the teachers left and were replaced by inexperienced teachers. After discussing the reorganization with the Federation Building Committee, the principal decided to place the one experienced teacher with the above average children. One of the new teachers, finding that she "replaced" the teacher who was to have had the above average class, demanded that the past practice of rotation be continued and that she be assigned to the above average children. The principal who believed that he had assigned the teachers so as to best serve the students stuck to his original plan. The teacher brought a grievance challenging the principal's decision and caused him to become involved in the time consuming grievance process.

In another elementary school, for several years three people had supervised the school yard before the opening of school each day. The school's enrollment increased by 100 this year. The principal discussed this with the Federation committee and then announced that it would require four people to provide adequate supervision. Someone on the staff brought a grievance, citing the past practice of assigning only three people to supervise and challenging the principal's judgment that a fourth person was needed.

Clearly, assigning teachers to the first grade or personnel to insure safety on the playground are decisions that should be made by the principal who must take full responsibility for the running of the school. Federation leadership states that it is very important that the principal be held responsible for the administration of his building. That being the case, his decision-making authority cannot be shared with a committee.

It is essential that the past

practice clause be limited in some way so that schools can utilize new or different methods and procedures to meet today's problems. Two of the approaches to such a limitation are —

1. The past practice clause as presently written would be removed. In its place would be a statement that no past practices, policies or agreements governing working conditions will be recognized except those specified in the contract or outlined in an attached letter of understanding.

or

2. Past practices would be limited to "system-wide" ones. The clause would then read, "The Board and its representatives shall take no action violative of, or inconsistent with, any provision of this Agreement or any system-wide policy or practice governing working conditions of employees existing on the date of the execution of this Agreement. The Board ...will not...take any action affecting other system-wide working conditions of employees without prior adequate negotiation..."

With either approach, the "past practices" which require negotiations prior to change would be more clearly and narrowly defined. The school system would have more flexibility at the individual school level and less controversy and friction in making changes to meet new circumstances and needs. At the same time, teachers' rights would be adequately protected because negotiation would have to precede changes in the specified practices or all system-wide ones.

Limiting "past practices" would also decrease the number of grievances since the basis for them would be narrower. This would benefit principals and the system in two ways.

1. It would save time for

principals since the grievance procedure is a lengthy one. Principals may be required to write up the situation and render a written opinion. They often have to attend a series of meetings. The various steps may include informal and/or formal meetings with the principal, the district superintendent, a hearing officer and finally, if it is carried that far, an arbitrator.

2. Principals would be freer to make decisions and stick by them. Now some capitulate to the Federation to avoid a grievance or never take the step that might cause them to be challenged because they find the prospect of a confrontation too difficult and unpleasant to face.

The requirement that principals meet with the Federation Building Committee to discuss the running of the school can be healthy, foster a good working relationship and bring a diversity of ideas to the solution of problems. However, it should be recognized that the principal is meeting with union leaders whose goals on occasion may be union discipline rather than the best possible program for students. For example, there was a proposal to offer choral singing as an after-school activity. As unionists, the Committee opposed it since it would have awarded extra pay to a teacher who crossed picket lines in 1972. If they had reacted as teachers, they would have supported it as a sound educational decision.

#### VICE PRINCIPALS

The responsibilities of vice principals in secondary schools should be expanded. The present contract, as interpreted through arbitration or developed through past practices, prevents vice principals from assuming some responsibilities that would give them more authority, enable them to assist more effectively in the administration of the school, and

result in the principal having more time to devote to providing educational leadership.

It was decided by an arbitrator in May 1974 in response to a Federation grievance that vice principals may not attend meetings of the principal with the Federation Building Committee unless the Federation gives its permission. Therefore, the principal is alone when he meets with the Committee, which may include up to five teachers plus one representative each of the non-teaching assistants, secretaries and paraprofessionals. In some schools, there is harmony in this relationship and there are few problems. In other schools, there is an adversary relationship and constant friction. This may have its roots in the strike conflict of 1972-73, an autocratic principal, or a Federation Building Committee that is trying to run the school. In any case, having to discuss issues and problems in an eight to one situation is one-sided and gives the Federation a decided advantage. Having a vice principal present would give a little balance to the sides. In addition, principals could call upon the expert knowledge and opinions of their vice principals who may have major responsibility for an area under discussion. The new contract should provide for vice principals to attend these meetings.

Participation of vice principals in the rating of teachers is very limited. Past practice seems to be the major obstacle preventing them from assuming increased responsibility. Vice principals are certificated as principals, possess the same qualifications and have comparable duties and responsibilities. Often their subject matter specialties differ from the principal's so that they are in a better position to evaluate teachers' lessons in some fields. Their increased partici-



pation in rating would greatly improve the quality of teacher supervision. Principals should be able to delegate at least two-thirds of the documentation, conferences, assistance and support required for an unsatisfactory rating to a vice principal. Principals would still have to observe and confer with teachers to reach their own independent judgment of a teacher's competence, but much of the necessary back-up could be done by a vice principal. The new contract should give vice principals this added responsibility.

\* \* \* \* \*

Clearly, most of those represented by the Federation have lost financial ground during the four year life of this contract. While some have received increases ranging from 19% to 31% or more since September 1972, a majority have received a 16% increase in salary. Meanwhile, the Consumer Price Index as of January 1976 had increased 31.7% and there were still seven months of the fourth year left. In fairness, teachers and other employees should receive

cost of living raises. This would represent a sizeable increase in the School District's budget and a serious, distressing burden for the taxpayers.

While teachers' dollars were shrinking, the School District was losing management rights at an equal pace. While many of those rights were given away or surrendered unnecessarily, many can only be regained by writing explicit clauses into the new contract. Justice dictates that the taxpayers' sacrifice to give teachers their due must "purchase" badly needed modifications in the contract such as the return of decision making to principals and enlarged responsibilities for vice principals.

It is a fact of life at the bargaining table that contract clauses advantageous to a union are not surrendered unless something of equal value is received in return. Another fact of life at that table must be that for every dollar of increased salary or fringe benefits, the School District must receive needed contract modifications.

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# the OAKES newsletter

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

Vol.VII, No.7

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

April 23, 1976

## EXCELLENT PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS FOUND IN MANY SCHOOLS

The problems involved in balancing the School District budget, getting agreement on a new Teachers' Contract and developing a desegregation plan are very large and serious. However, let's not become so enmeshed in these problems that we lose sight of why it is important to solve them — namely 263,000 school children. Producing literate citizens capable of developing their abilities, talents and interests benefits not only the individual but society as a whole.

People often make sweeping, pessimistic appraisals of the schools. They are run down and overcrowded. The children graduate as functional illiterates. The schools serving the poor are neglected and lack basic necessities. The teachers are just collecting paychecks. While the above may be partly true, it is unfair and inaccurate to generalize. Most schools have been upgraded physically over the years. Thousands upon thousands of children are learning the three R's as demonstrated by improved standardized test scores. Many of the schools serving low income and/or low achieving children have many added resources — special reading and mathematics labs, Benchmark and Checkpoint classes and teacher's aides. Often, the equipment, materials and ratio of adults to children in these schools is impressive. Many teachers give of themselves far beyond the requirements

of their job.

In describing the people, classrooms and programs that follow, I am not saying that they are the best in the city because my search was very limited and that was not its purpose. Rather, I believe that one can find good people and programs almost anywhere you look. The following are samples of the high quality that is to be found in many places in Philadelphia.

\* \* \* \* \*

I visited the classrooms of three teachers in the John Welsh School in District 5 who the principal feels do an especially fine teaching job. He had several reasons for considering these teachers to be excellent. I observed much of what he outlined in the short time I spent in each classroom. Each teacher provides for individualization of instruction within a structured classroom, meeting the needs of individual children in a way that gives students a sense of security. They know what the limits are and what is expected of them. All three teachers have attractive rooms with colorful bulletin boards and pictures. All have a sense of humor. All have a positive manner and a good relationship with the children. There is mutual respect between teacher and students.

All three teachers plan their work well. When a reading group

of children comes over to work with the teacher at the easel, they will find a big piece of paper already containing the letters "ir" to which they are to add letters before and/or after to make words like "stir" and "chirp". The assignments for the other children in the room are up on the blackboard and the duplicated sheets they need are ready too. These teachers use varied instructional materials, some that they make themselves, some commercially produced. These teachers know how to work effectively with other adults assigned to them. Reading aides, for example, feel they are an important part of the team and know in advance exactly what work to cover with the children assigned to them. It is this combination of competencies and personal qualities that enables these teachers to do a good teaching job.

In each of the classrooms, I saw a reading or a mathematics lesson in progress. I was impressed, as I have been before in many other schools, with the very systematic way that these two basic skills are being taught in Philadelphia. In classrooms all over the city, teachers follow a set progression in teaching children to decode words and enlarge their vocabularies; understand and infer the author's meaning; develop study skills and appreciate and enjoy literature. It is the same with mathematics. Materials and methods have been developed so that teachers can follow one of several prescribed paths in teaching these complex skills step by step.

\* \* \* \* \*

At Martha Washington Elementary School in southwest Philadelphia, Mrs. Cassie Stuart shares her special love, enthusiasm and knowledge with all the children in the school. She has turned a basement room that used to be the coal bin into a combination zoo, museum,

biology lab and indoor garden. The kindergarten through grade six children who come to her for Science are surrounded by growing plants, living fish and animals and scientific devices for weighing, measuring or examining tiny objects. But most important, the children who enter her room are exposed to a person with enthusiasm for nature, a reverence for the rhythm and beauty of life, and an understanding of the interdependence of air, water, plants, animals and people. Her students, viewing life through her eyes, see the diversity and complexity of the natural world. Some must come to share her awe and amazement.

This room with huge ducts, pipes and pillars has been turned into an attractive classroom. There are murals with a rain forest and a fall scene currently being added. The overhead pipes are painted bright colors. One side of the room houses hanging plants, a small improvised greenhouse and many plants set in pebbles on the floor. Zero, a stray dog, lives next to the rabbits and not far from the snakes and turtles. Nearby cages house white rats, gerbils, hamsters, mice and birds. There are goldfish and tropical fish in the aquariums. The museum table displays a student's model of a volcano, a cross section of a large tree showing the rings, a small model of the human skeleton, a bird's nest woven on a branch and a small, stuffed alligator.

I observed children using magnifying glasses to take a closer look at seeds, wood shavings, drops of water from the aquarium and leaves of the plants. They talked about whether the magnifying glass really makes things bigger or just makes them appear bigger.

When another group of children came to the science room, they talked about Zero, the dog who had been saved from freezing to death

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27 pages. Data for each school includes average class size, percentage inexperienced teachers, racial composition staff and students, absentee rate staff and students, reading scores. Cost - \$2.75 (includes postage)

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earlier in the winter, and how he refused to live peaceably with Donna, the duck. Mrs. Stuart and the children discussed ways to help Zero to accept Donna so that dog and duck could coexist more peacefully. She swung the discussion over to similar problems among people and the effect on members of the community when some people have no respect for the property, possessions and the rights of others.

When I visited Mrs. Stuart a few weeks later, she was showing the children two moths that had emerged the day before from their cocoons. The students will be able to watch over the next few weeks the complete and amazing change of these insects. The moths will mate and lay eggs which will hatch into larva. These will grow until it is time for them to spin their cocoons, disappear inside and then reappear some days later as moths. On the other side of the room, other kinds of eggs were incubating and soon the children will be able to watch baby chicks hatch.

Events connected with the science room have had school wide significance. Heathcliffe, a monkey that was known and loved by the children, got pneumonia and died. He was mourned by everyone. His loss stimulated healthy discussion of life and death. Last year, a friend at a slaughterhouse gave Mrs. Stuart three lamb fetuses in their amniotic sacs with the placentas attached. Students in the school had a chance to learn

more about birth and the newborn and to ask all kinds of questions. They were fascinated and enlightened by this experience which the whole school shared.

Mrs. Stuart gives a rare gift to the many school children that she meets each week. She enriches their lives immeasurably. At the same time, she helps to create a future generation that will understand, appreciate, enjoy and preserve the natural world around them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lastly, I'd like to describe a small program which in helping to mitigate a community human relations problem, indicates the value of bringing children together so that they can come to know and respect one another. In a section of West Philadelphia, there are three elementary schools - one public and two parochial. The public school, whose enrollment is 76% black, is located in a white community. One parochial school has an all white population and the other is almost entirely black. Although there had been rivalry and hostility between the public and parochial schools when the schools were almost entirely white, the situation became uglier when the racial composition changed.

There were fights among the children going to and from school, the library and the playground. Hostility was displayed toward children coming into the neighbor-

hood to attend school. They in turn came prepared for trouble. There was minor vandalism. All of this added up to tension, unhappiness and enmity which was damaging to everyone involved.

Three years ago, a program was developed to relieve these problems. The schools hold afternoon programs which provide activities for mixed groups of children. For example, one school has a ceramics class and a cooking class with girls and boys from each of the three schools participating. Another school offers crocheting and sewing, woodshop and an arts and crafts activity. In some cases mothers lead the activities, in many cases, teachers do. In every case, there are mothers from a school other than the host school assisting in the class. When the children first come to an activity, they tend to sit with their friends from school, but soon they are involved in admiring newly fired clay pieces or sharing freshly cooked French fries. In the process they are making new friends and getting to know one another.

The planning for the program and the program itself has brought administrators, teachers and parents together broadening adult exposure to people of different ethnic backgrounds. While the number of children involved in the program is very small, they carry

their attitudes over to others. Older children in a family are changed when younger sisters and brothers are in the program and enjoying their activities at another school.

Because the time that can be given to this activity is very short, the interracial and intergroup understanding for many children does not go very deep. However since the children are no longer strangers to one another, attitudes and feelings have been changed. Stereotypes and prejudices have been affected. There has been a lessening of community tensions and hostile acts and Philadelphia is a little better place in which to live.

\* \* \* \* \*

This Newsletter is written as an expression of faith and confidence in the people who are responsible for educating the children of Philadelphia. There are countless teachers who work with dedication, commitment and professional skill to teach their students. There are programs large and small, traditional and experimental that contribute something significant to children. There are people, in and out of the classroom, who impact positively in special ways on those whose lives they touch.

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# the OAKES newsletter

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

Vol.VII, No.8

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

May 19, 1976

## THE SCHOOL BUDGET FOR 1976-77

At this time each year the financial problems of the School District come to the forefront, because the Board of Education must adopt a balanced operating budget by the end of May. The goal for 1976-77 should be the development of a budget that meets student needs to the greatest extent possible while remaining within the range of revenue that can reasonably be expected to come to the School District.

The School District has strayed from sound fiscal principles on many occasions over the last several years. In 1970, it borrowed \$28 million to keep the doors open. This had to be repaid with interest over the following five years when the funding problems were equally severe. In 1972-73, it appeared that the School District would run out of money and have to shut down. Instead, a long teachers' strike closed the schools. Students didn't learn and teachers weren't paid, but the School District was rescued from financial disaster. In several different years, the School District has adopted a budget balanced either by depending on revenue it had only a slim hope of obtaining or by a paper reduction in expenditures based on a shortened school year. Each time this has been done, cuts have been made in the budget, some city or state funds have been found, the schools have completed the year and usually there has been a deficit car-

ried over to complicate the finances of the following year.

Last year at this time a \$70 million deficit in this year's 1975-76 budget was predicted. It was eventually reduced to \$15 million through a decrease in expenditures of \$9 million and an increase in revenue of \$46 million. However, thirty-six of the \$46 million was a payment in advance from the State of Pennsylvania for vocational education, a one time assist to the budget which must be paid back next year.

The School District expects to end this year with a \$16 million deficit and projects a deficit for next year (1976-77) of \$88 million plus whatever may be needed to cover contract negotiations currently in progress. The School District is pointing to the \$36 million pay back to the State as a substantial part of the cause of the huge gap in the 1976-77 budget. While this is true, it masks the facts. This year's budget had in it more than \$49 million worth of increased personnel costs. These costs are the cause of the problem, not repaying the State "loan."

Where can \$88 million and more reasonably be expected to come from? I know of no answer to that question. The only approach I can see to the problem is a combination of more revenue, cuts in the budget and great restraint in contract demands.

School children deserve a high priority for funds and it is in the best interests of the entire community to place a high value on the education of the city's children. More money must be found for the schools.

## REVENUE

Local taxes should be increased. We cannot expect more State support unless we are prepared to increase our local effort. Because three-quarters of the School District's local revenue comes from the real estate tax which divides the burden relatively equally between individuals and business, it is the logical one to raise. The present tax is \$47.75 per \$1000 of assessed valuation, with \$28.00 going to the School District and \$19.75 to the City. For a \$20,000 house assessed at \$8000, the present tax bill is \$382 ( $\$47.75 \times 8$ ). Unfortunately, the City is looking to the real estate tax to partially fund its huge deficit which makes the School District's problem even more difficult. However, because the City has let its fiscal house deteriorate is no reason to deprive the schools of increased revenue from local sources.

State support should be increased too. It could be in the form of an instructional subsidy increase or that combined with greater or total support of State required health and transportation services to public and non-public school children.

However, even if all of these measures are taken they will not provide enough new revenue to balance next year's budget. It must be reduced. This can be done in many ways, all painful, some less so than others.

Annual leaps upward in the budget have been largely due to a greatly improved salary schedule with increased fringe benefits combined with increases in the number of people employed. In

1971-72, the average teacher earned \$13,000 with fringe benefits costing the School District an additional 11%. This year, an average teacher earns \$15,500 and fringe benefits are 15%.

The initiation of preparation time for elementary school teachers required the addition of 800 teachers to the payroll and the contract provision mandating reduction in maximum class size from 35 to 33 added nearly 650 more. In addition, special programs and projects have proliferated. Since 1971-72, enrollment has dropped by 17,000, dictating a decrease of more than 500 in the instructional staff, yet the staff has increased by 1750. (This excludes the Special Education program which is completely reimbursed by the State and had no part in pushing the budget out of balance.

The addition of new programs and projects has substantial dollar impact. Each one means more administrators, offices, equipment, staff and special materials and supplies. Many different programs have been developed to deal with the same problems. They have not been assessed with the objective of dropping some, expanding the most successful, and learning from all. Tough decisions must be made. Rational examinations and critical appraisals of programs must lead to a reduction in their number. This would lead to lowered costs without necessarily reducing proven effective services to children.

## BUDGET REDUCTIONS

The budget has to be cut and sacrifices have to be made by everyone. For example, Board of Education members should give up their chauffeur driven cars in spite of the relatively small saving involved to set an example and symbolize their resolution to make the difficult cuts that are absolutely essential.

The Board of Education should

make the following money-saving decisions:

1. Pay the City a percentage of the yield on taxes collected for the School District instead of paying \$4.8 million for post-audit and tax collection functions performed inefficiently by the City with patronage employees. This wasteful use of School District funds should cease at once. Saving - \$2.3 million

2. Advocate the collection of local real estate taxes twice annually. At present the tax is collected once, just prior to the end of the School District's fiscal year. To pay its bills, the School District has to borrow from the banks during the year against this revenue. If payments were made in fall and spring, borrowing could be greatly reduced resulting in substantially less interest costs. Saving - \$1.5-\$3 million

3. Provide transportation only to those covered by the partial State reimbursement, i.e., students who must travel hazardous routes to school, elementary students living  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles or more from their school, or secondary students living two miles or more. The School District is currently providing transportation to public and non-public school students in grades 1-8 who live as close as one mile to their school. Saving - approximately \$2 million

4. Close all twenty-four non-fire resistant schools and serve displaced students in existing underutilized schools. This would reduce administrative, operating and maintenance costs, but its most important effect would be to remove children from combustible structures that threaten their lives.

5. Reduce the amount of space rented by the School District for offices and educational programs by moving many of them into school buildings.

6. Make a strong effort to reduce excessive absenteeism which is extremely costly for the students as well as the budget. The average rate of absence for teachers last year was 7.6% or 14+ days. This means that on the average each teacher's class had a substitute one day for every twelve days the regular teacher was there. For all School District employees the average rate of absence was 9%, or one day out for every ten days in. \$8 million is budgeted for substitutes next year.

Of course, there are many employees who are absent infrequently and some that are out for long periods ill, but the high rate indicates that many routinely use their ten days sick leave and three days personal leave as if they were guaranteed vacation days instead of income protection to use only when absolutely necessary. Administrators have a rate of absence that is about 4%. There would be a saving of at least \$3.6 million if absences for all employees could be reduced to that figure.

If absenteeism is to be reduced, then the present health insurance plan which is a part of the contract will have to be changed. 90% of the employees carry it. Under present circumstances, employees get ten days sick leave and when that is exhausted, they can rely immediately on their health insurance. It pays them 75% of their salary but being tax exempt is the equivalent for most people of 100% or more of salary. Therefore, there is NO economic incentive to employees to reserve their sick leave days for illness. A five day waiting period between the end of sick leave and the beginning of health insurance would provide such motivation. It is regrettable that it is necessary to advocate such a step, because it penalizes everyone not just the abusers, but the educational and monetary cost of the



present system is intolerable.

Another component of the major effort needed to bring the budget into balance is union restraint at the bargaining table. It is to be hoped that employee groups will recognize the gravity of the financial situation.

Many people believe that all employees covered by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers Contract have fallen way behind inflation because they have received only 16% increases for the four year period. This is true for employees not at maximum if their annual automatic increases in salary (also increased by 16%) are not counted. However, all those at maximum have received increases ranging from 19% to 40%. For example 2400 teachers with BA degrees have received a 19% increase. 4000 teachers with MAs or above have received at least a 28% increase and all non-teaching assistants at maximum have received 33% increases. In addition, employees

have received some additional protection against inflation from the prescription, optical and dental benefits derived from the new Health and Welfare fund into which the School District pays \$470 annually for each employee. In negotiating salary increases, the varying percentages gained since 1972 should be taken into account.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the next few weeks, the Board of Education must make hard and unpopular decisions about cuts and changes. Many of those affected will undoubtedly fight to have the decisions reversed and the status quo maintained. Board members should recognize that the size of this deficit represents a crisis. It can be minimized by taking certain logical, rational steps. If they are not taken, the eventual unavoidable consequences will be across the board cuts in staffing and programs or a shortened school year that affects all children and all employees adversely.

#### REMINDER

School-By-School Statistical Analysis of The Philadelphia Public Schools  
27 pages. Data for each school includes average class size, percentage inexperienced teachers, racial composition staff and students, absentee rate staff and students, reading scores. Cost - \$2.75 (includes postage)  
Publication of this 1976 "Analysis" was made possible by a grant from the Thomas Skelton Harrison Foundation.

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# the OAKES newsletter

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Helen Oakes - Author and Publisher

Vol.VII, No.9

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 17, 1976

## MATHEMATICS

Mathematics instruction has improved greatly in Philadelphia in the last several years. The curriculum has been reorganized to provide a highly systematic, sequential, step-by-step guide to teaching. Better, more effective and diversified programs have been adopted or created to meet the needs of students of varying ability and interests. Teachers have endeavored to individualize instruction so that students can progress as quickly and as far as they are able.

The content of the mathematics curriculum for the elementary school emphasizes concept development and understanding, the building of basic skills, the discovery by pupils of facts and relationships, and pupil involvement in activities. The basic program divides mathematics instruction into teaching levels which follow a logical sequence. What is learned today builds on what was learned yesterday and is the foundation for what is to be learned tomorrow.

At each level, the material is divided into six major areas: number systems; addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers; the four operations (+, -, x, ÷) with fractions; measurement; organizing and interpreting data; and geometry. Under number systems children learn to read and write numbers and count. They learn, for example, what numbers come just before and after 1000,

how to read the numeral 36,009 as thirty-six thousand and nine or how to read Roman numerals. Children spend a great deal of their time learning to add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers, fractions and decimals. Under measurement children are taught about length, weight, time, volume, etc. Organizing and interpreting data includes tables, charts and graphs. And under geometry, students learn about shapes such as rectangles and circles, area, angles and line segments.

Teachers use drill to teach number facts and operations, but they also use many other methods to create interest, excitement and motivation in children. There are games played with cards, chips and dice which help students strengthen their basic skills. In one classroom I saw "Color Math" being used. The teacher had letters of the alphabet in red, blue, green, yellow and white. Each color had a value: red was 16, blue 8, green 4 etc. She put letters up on the board to spell different children's names and then the students added the value of the colors in their heads to see whose name had a greater value. The children were practicing mental addition, but greater interest was created by using the letters of their names.

To help students fully understand mathematical concepts, they are provided with materials they can handle and games they can play.

When you hold in your hands 10 tongue depressors tied together and 5 individual ones, it becomes easier to understand that 15 is one ten and five ones. A child understands better and learns more quickly about counting by twos or adding sets of two if he can work with concrete objects such as plastic squares, triangles and circles, in different colors, sizes and thicknesses with two identical pieces of each.

When I visited elementary schools preparing for this Newsletter, I was struck, as I have often been before, by the heavy emphasis and intense, extended concentration of staff and students on mathematics and reading. Basic skills mastery clearly receives top priority in the classrooms. A heavy dollar investment in personnel, materials and supplies underscores this. Therefore, when I read in the papers, or hear officials say, that schools are going "back-to-the-basics", I am dismayed by the lack of understanding of what schools are really like in 1976. Any new elementary school model, including the much heralded "Academics Plus School", will be in the mainstream, not departing from it, when it emphasizes the 3 R's. The term "back-to-basics" is a totally meaningless phrase when applied to reading, writing and arithmetic in Philadelphia's public schools.

## SECONDARY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS

A curriculum guide for grades 7 and 8, based on levels, has been completed recently. In contrast to moving through a textbook with all students in lock step, use of the levels approach provides continuity of instruction, encourages teachers to determine what their students know before they begin instruction and then move ahead from there. The needs of more students would be met if this approach were widely adopted by middle and junior high schools.

In many secondary schools when students reach ninth grade they reach a fork in the road. If they choose algebra, they retain the option of going on to college preparatory geometry, second year algebra and elementary functions. If they choose General Mathematics I, they will learn more about handling money and accounts; using graphs and statistics; using linear, square and cubic measure and go on to General Mathematics II in 10th grade. While it does not have to be, the General Mathematics courses can be pretty dull, presenting the same material to students that they did not grasp previously either because they found it very difficult or were disinterested.

There are alternatives for such 9th graders which should be widely adopted. The School District has developed a soft cover textbook called "Mathematics For Today - level blue". While it focuses on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percent, it is in the context of ninth graders' interests and practical situations which are relevant to them. For example, the student learns how to calculate the costs of discounted tapes and records as if he were a salesperson in a record store. He learns how to compare the costs of paying cash for a car with buying it on the installment plan. Practice in percentages comes from calculating completed passes in professional football. There are students who have never really tried to learn mathematics who enjoy the way this material is presented and are challenged to apply themselves so that by the end of the year they have mastered the fundamentals necessary for Algebra I. Too often, however, unless students take the initiative, they will end up in General Mathematics II. Most high schools do not seek out these students and encourage them to take algebra in 10th grade.

There is another alternative that serves many students well. It is first year algebra taught over a two year period so that students who might have had difficulty with it can learn it at a slower pace. By starting algebra in 8th grade, students can complete the course in junior high school and move into the academic mathematics sequence in high school if they so choose.

More students should be channeled into the two year algebra course or into Algebra I than is presently the case, because they could be successful. Algebra, particularly because of the thought process involved, is an aid to a better score on many different tests for jobs and a student who doesn't study it is at a distinct disadvantage.

"Mathematics For Today", written for 10th graders, is also designed to motivate and catch the interest of underachievers or mathematical non-achievers. Students learn mathematical survival skills in the context of a variety of real life situations — filling out application forms, figuring sales tax and change, maintaining a checking account, calculating the taxes on a pay check.

#### DEVELOPING POTENTIAL

To provide challenge and stimulation to students in the top achieving group and to identify them early, the School District adopted in 1971 a Unified Mathematics Program for 7th to 12th graders. This program, instead of dividing mathematics into separate studies of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry reconstructs the mathematics of these branches, along with some newly discovered mathematics, to make one unified study. Philadelphia has had students prepared to take advantage of many special opportunities, including some for potential engineering students, because of the early identification of

talented mathematics students and the challenge of this course.

The School District encourages the entry of students at all levels from all schools into mathematics contests. Districts hold contests, sponsored by different businesses, for students as young as 4th through 6th grade. There is a Mathematics League which holds contests at three levels — grades 8 or lower, 10 or lower, 12 or lower. There are three winners per district who attend a luncheon in late spring and receive prizes. Also, there is a Mathematics Marathon in which each entering high school fields a team of five for three afternoons of competition in the spring. Lastly, students have the opportunity to enter regional and national competitions.

As in athletics, competition heightens interest, encourages and rewards excellence, stimulates students to practice and to measure themselves against others. An effort is being made to extend participation in the contests, but a major stumbling block is that secondary school participation depends on a teacher volunteering time after school to coach students. In some schools, there is no volunteer, either because no one has the time, or because the staff as a whole disapproves of individuals taking on responsibility without remuneration. It seems clear that in the immediate years ahead, budget problems will cause further reductions in services. Therefore, this program can expand only if school staff members are free to volunteer their services and skills if they choose to do so.

The School District faces two equally serious problems in seeing its carefully planned, diversified program implemented across the city. First, Philadelphia has a shortage of mathematics teachers which has been a chronic problem of long standing. In April 1976, there were 31 mathematics vacancies in the secondary schools. In

spite of the shortage, great care should be exercised to fill the positions with well qualified candidates who can meet the needs of students in the classroom. If this is not done, students will suffer now and for years to come. There should be a greater effort made to encourage young people to go into the mathematics field and then to recruit them for teaching.

Second, funding to improve mathematics instruction is inadequate and does not compare with that provided for reading. Most of it is Federal and therefore limited to Title I schools. Every district has a Reading Project Manager with a staff and a budget, but there is no counterpart for mathematics. Every elementary school has a reading teacher supported by the Operating Budget. Since 1972, Federal funds have provided Mathematics Resource Teachers but only to Title I elementary schools. There are 83 non-Title I elementary schools badly needing but totally without this service. The Mathematics Resource Teacher provides leadership to the school faculty, introduces new materials and activities, demonstrates lessons, helps teachers to diagnose and prescribe for individual children and works with small groups of children. Because grade teach-

ers are not mathematics specialists, these services make an especially important contribution to the improvement of mathematics instruction.

In September 1975, a Mathematics Specialist Program began in the Title I secondary schools. At this level there is a heavy emphasis on remedial work with small groups of students. Because these specialists are creative, caring teachers with ingenious ways of helping students understand mathematics, they are having an impact. The need for this service is just as great in non-Title I secondary schools. Even in Title I schools, the need is greater than can be met by the very limited number of specialists.

Clearly, mathematics instruction would be greatly improved and more students would receive the help they need if the Operating Budget funded mathematics specialists for all schools and Title I funds provided extra services. Classroom teachers have to be assisted if they are to learn new methods, implement new programs, utilize new curriculum guides or perfect techniques of individualized instruction. The School District commitment to basic skills demands a greater allocation of funds to mathematics.

1976 School-By-School Statistical Analysis 27 pp. \$2.75 (includes postage)

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