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HOW ONE CITY SCHOOL SERVES ITS COMMUNITY

by

JAMES PALMER

*Counselor, Murray High School
St. Paul, Minnesota*

The school I am writing about is a good, small, city school. It is so considered by the bulk of the community and by the accrediting organizations. It offers four years of Social Studies and English, three foreign languages, regular college preparatory science and mathematics as well as an honors program in these subjects. The teachers and students take a healthy interest in the humanities and the fine arts. The community around the school is interested in formal education. From fifty to sixty percent of the graduates of the school matriculate in colleges and universities. A sizeable number of these graduates distinguish themselves in the college courses they enter. The P. T. A. and other community groups continue to exert pressure on the administration of the school to up-grade and improve the academic quality and quantity of the traditional course offerings. In evaluating the quality of the work of the students we find that the school maintains a position in the top ten percent of the national norms of good standardized achievement tests. The members of the staff meet regularly to discuss this and collectively worry about setting standards that are sufficiently challenging to the students.

From this evaluation can we say that the school is doing a good educational job in and for the community? Is the school really meeting the needs of all of the children? Is the school really meeting the needs of the community?

The elective courses of Business and Commercial Education, Industrial Arts, Home Economics are avoided by many of the students because they lack the prestige value of the more academic subject offerings. With the exception of the very small minority of students in the commercial courses, no student in the high school has been directly prepared in a specific job to go to work upon finishing high school.

A few examples will serve to illustrate the problem. The school is located near the third largest truck transportation center in

the country. A very few students have entered any of the many phases of this fast growing industry, nor does there seem to be recognition of such areas as accounting, traffic management or sales in which there are many opportunities in the trucking industry. One of the major industries in the city is printing. There is no opportunity within the school for training or exploration within the graphic arts. The city supports a flourishing nursery and floriculture industry. Other horticultural pursuits such as commercial vegetable and truck farms, turf management enterprises for golf courses and the like, and landscaping all offer challenging employment opportunities for the vocationally oriented student. The city contains hundreds of opportunities within a large variety of light manufacturing industries, yet no child is studying welding, electricity or mechanics within the school. Nor are the non-college bound students getting a grounding in the principles involved because the content of the Physics classes are designed to prepare students to take college Physics. The thriving electronics industry is not served well because the students who would serve them as technicians are not able to keep up the pace in the senior high mathematics which is required. In fact, recent pressure from college math departments has changed the content and methods to such an extent that most math courses are designed solely to prepare students to take math in college. Mathematics are becoming increasingly abstract and less and less concrete. This tends to eliminate all but the most academically able from getting any practical value from the courses.

One may argue that the need is less in our kind of school for courses that will be vocationally oriented. More than one half of our students go on to college. However, this must be discounted by the fact that a sizeable proportion of those who do go on are not fitted by aptitude or preparation to do college work. They go on to college because of pressure from their parents and

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THE STAFF

HARRY KITTS	GORDON SWANSON
R. PAUL MARVIN	STANLEY NELSON
MILO J. PETERSON, <i>Editor</i>	

the industrial leaders who will soon be crying for their skills as technicians. The school is continually bombarded with propaganda to change it back into the exclusively college preparatory institution it once was. The schools are sensitive public institutions. They will attempt to become what the people demand them to be. The trouble is that the most articulate and vocal people who make demands are largely the white collar people who, in the tradition of the American Dream, demand that the school be so designed that their children have even whiter collars than they have. No one can deny that our industry and our nation's welfare have great need of the "Egg Head." When we find one we should lend every effort to his care and feeding. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the "Egg Head" is a Humpty Dumpty unless all the king's men have knowing hands.

Some suggestions

1. Realize and admit that our high schools are still largely college preparatory in both curriculum and method.

2. Understand that we must change both the speed and the method of subject presentation if we are going to prepare the large majority of young people who will be going into the trades or directly into the labor market. We have found that many

more children can learn traditional Algebra if we allow them two years to learn it rather than one year normally provided for the college preparatory child.

3. Investigate the possibility of changing the school organization to allow for differences in speed of learning.

4. Seek new means of motivating children to work closer to their full potential. We should have learned by this time that fear of failure is only effective with those children who were not likely to fail in the first place.

5. Furnish adequate and interesting occupational information to parents, teachers and children so that we can stress the worth of all kinds of work.

6. Investigate the possibility of organizational changes which would make use of facilities in more than one school. We now do this in cooperation with the St. Paul Vocational School in many areas. The difficulty lies in the fact that the facilities are so limited that only a few children can take advantage of this opportunity.

7. Encourage cooperation between the schools and the labor unions so that it is possible for a student to enter the apprentice program without needing a relative or influential friend to get him in. Only a minority of trades are available to our youngsters through the present vocational school and despite the expansion planned in this area many will still be excluded.

8. Face up to the need for curricular reform to include at least a minimum of vocational education to prepare interested and qualified students for the world of work.

9. Make available monies for basic research in learning so that we can reach boys and girls more effectively and complete basic phases of their education in a shorter time than presently required.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY

by

DENNIS LEHTO
Agriculture Instructor
Evansville, Minnesota

Editors Note: The following article was prepared by Mr. Lehto for his local newspaper.

What is the future of a small town such as Evansville? If we would believe all the opinions we read such as the report on Vandalia, Ill. or the report issued last winter by the Committee on Economic Development (CED) the natural thing to do would be to assume that Evansville is a dying town and has no future. Both of these re-

ports cast a gloomy picture for the future of rural America.

The leaders in towns which are situated in agricultural areas are well aware of the problem of existence which the small agricultural town is facing. The common byword in these towns seems to be "new industry" Surely, industry and new business is a boost to the economy of any town, whether it be small or large. These efforts should be continued to preserve small town

America. However, many of the towns and villages in rural areas are "missing the boat" to some degree due to the fact that they are not actively developing the BIG industry they already have. Yes, BIG industry . . . In fact, Evansville has a multi-million dollar one right on their back porch! A multi-million dollar industry which is located on the three-hundred plus farms in the Evansville area.

Let's take another look at this big industry. These three hundred farms have an average investment of from 40,000 to 50,000 dollars, employ from 1 to 2 people each, gross an average of \$10,000 to \$40,000 and spend from \$5,000 to \$30,000 on their farm business alone. The operators of these 300 farms also market milk and grain, buy gas and oil, have their feed ground; and buy drugs, veterinary service, hardware and groceries in Evansville. In other words, these farmers are the backbone of Evansville economy.

What can be done to develop and strengthen this basic industry which the small town depends on? The Evansville Public School is taking one course which should benefit this part of our economy. This course of action is through a strong, active vocational agriculture department in high school and adult farmer work. The ways in which your vocational agriculture

department is doing this is by helping young men get established in farming, assisting young farmers in making an adequate income, and through farm management instruction which helps adult farmers increase their farm income.

With over three hundred farms in our high school area and fifty students enrolled in high school vocational agriculture, it is simple to note that this is not a one-man job. It seems certain individuals in our community question the need for two men in our vocational agriculture department. Such a question is normal, but in view of the fact that agriculture is the primary industry in Evansville, it would seem that the item of primary concern would be to strengthen agriculture in this area.

Looking at this further, it would seem to indicate that our community could use TEN MEN teaching agriculture if it would affect the economy of the community, rather than have to justify two men, even when the greater portion of the salaries are paid through state and federal funds . . . Or perhaps the Evansville population should believe all reports, forget agriculture, roll up our main street, close up our stores, educate all our children to become taxpayers in metropolitan areas, and move to the big cities and live off our unemployment checks with the urban population.

IF I WERE STARTING A NEW YEAR

by

DR. A. M. FIELD

Editors Note: Thirty-one years ago the late Dr. A. M. Field addressed the teachers of agriculture in Minnesota on this topic. Those of us fortunate enough to have studied under Dr. Field will remember his faith in vocational agriculture, his vision and his courage. The high points of his message to Minnesota agriculture instructors are reprinted here because his ideas are as sound now as they were in 1932.

I would decide definitely to do my teaching and all other work better than any previous year.

I would try to recognize my points of weakness and to devise ways of making improvements.

I would try harder to consider my job the greatest job in the world and would apologize for it to no one.

I would learn how to get more real joy and personal satisfaction from my work.

I would expect some grief and disappointments, but I would learn to capitalize

on these as bases for new courage and greater effort.

I would spend some time every day in thoughtful consideration of teaching problems and how to make improvements in my teaching.

I would learn to smile in the face of adversity and discouragement.

I would be interested in all worthwhile community improvement activities.

I would not select activities on the basis of selfish interest or from selfish motives.

I would try to realize that dreams are useless unless they find expression in realities.

I would recognize that in the long run it is the quality of a man's work that counts most.

I would realize that there is no substitute for hard work.

I would aim at progress and not at perfection.

I would have faith in myself, in my

work, in my fellow beings, and in the possibilities of the future.

I would not leave for tomorrow that which should be done today.

I would try to do more than is expected of me.

I would cooperate with my colleagues and others in all worthwhile activities.

I would try always to make good my promises and try not to offer excuses.

I would become well acquainted with my students and be ready to share their joys and troubles.

I would be loyal to the school in which I teach and to its traditions.

I would cultivate the personal friendships and confidence of the parents of my high school students.

I would try to master the technique of being liked and of getting along well with people.

I would try always to be honest and fair in my dealings with others.

I would make and cultivate new friendships with worthwhile people.

I would cultivate wholesome, altruistic attitudes toward life and toward my fellow beings.

I would read a carefully selected number of professional books and magazines to

insure my professional growth.

I would cultivate a regular habit of doing some reading outside my field of technical and professional interest.

I would base my teaching content selection on the farming programs and the recognized vocational needs of my students.

I would set up definite objectives for each unit of instruction and for each lesson I teach.

I would make careful daily preparation for all of my teaching.

I would learn to know my community and the people who comprise it as intimately as possible.

I would develop as strong and as effective a program of supervised farming practice as possible.

I would do everything necessary to keep physically fit and in good health.

I would find some time each day for wholesome recreation and I would develop at least one important hobby.

I would continue a definite, systematic plan of saving a part of each month's salary.

I would be complete and accurate in all my reporting and would make my reports on time.

SURVEY OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE GRADUATES

by

DAVID R. McCLAY,

Head, Department of Agricultural Education
The Pennsylvania State University

This survey was conducted in the spring of 1962 for the purpose of learning the current employment status of high school vocational agriculture graduates of the classes of 1956, 1958, and 1960. Vocational agriculture teachers of 90 schools in Pennsylvania completed and returned the survey forms for the data shown in the table below. This included a total of 2378 graduates from schools in all sections of the state.

It should be noted that 698 graduates were employed in farming at the time of the survey. Four hundred sixty-one (461) graduates were employed in farm based occupations, or a total of 1159 graduates (48.8%) were employed in the field of agriculture.

Of the 2378 graduates reported in the survey 22.4% were employed in non-agricultural occupations.

Current Employment Status of a Sample of 2,378 Youths
Who Completed the Vocational Agriculture Curriculum in
High School from 1956 to 1960 in Pennsylvania High Schools

Employment	June 1956		June 1958		June 1960		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Farming	207	29.4	205	25.8	286	32.4	698	29.4
Farm based								
Industry	160	22.7	166	20.9	135	15.3	461	19.4
College	22	3.1	50	6.4	66	7.5	138	5.8
Military	109	15.5	200	25.3	238	27.0	547	23.0
Other	206	29.3	171	21.6	157	17.8	534	22.3
Total	704	100.0	792	100.0	882	100.0	2378	100.0

} 48.8