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ABSTRACT

The National Project on Ethnic America has been focusing considerable attention over the past few years on the multi-cultural dimensions of American education, and particularly those areas in need of revision, reform and innovation. We have designed an approach which extends beyond "ethnic studies," to a more comprehensive rubric that we call "ethnicity in education." It pursues three major activities: (1) devising new curriculum materials; (2) raising the consciousness of teachers and other school personnel; and, (3) designing programs. Last fall we wrote to the 50 state education agencies, requesting information on the status of their activities in the ethnic studies area. Thus far, we have heard directly from about 40 states. With the help of additional statistics gathered by HEW's Office of Education we compiled a preliminary report: In some states, there is no apparent interest whatsoever in ethnic studies. In others there is a considerable amount of legislation and policy on the books, but limited evidence of implementation. And in still others, with no law or policy, there is a tremendous amount of local activity. Thirty-three states publish materials including curriculum guides, teaching supplements, bibliographies, textbook listings and audio-visual aids which they distribute to local school boards. Twenty-six states have formal policy statements on ethnic studies which are purportedly implemented by local school districts. Moreover, 13 states currently have laws on the books which mandate the inclusion of ethnic studies in the curriculum, and four more have passed bilingual laws. (Author/JM)

NATIONAL PROJECT ON ETHNIC AMERICA
A Depolarization Program of THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Institute of Human Relations 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

EDUCATION AND THE NEW PLURALISM:

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF RECENT PROGRESS IN THE 50 STATES

by

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Director of Community Relations

Presented to

The 1973 Annual Meeting of the National Coordinating
Assembly on Ethnic Studies
held in conjunction with Ethnic Conference IV
Ethnic Heritage Center
Detroit, Michigan

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INTRODUCTION

In this post - "melting pot" era of our society, educators, social philosophers, academicians, journalists, human relations professionals and a wide range of other institutional policy-makers are still groping for new ways to re-define the social realities of America. Finally, we are coming to grips with the fact that ethnic, racial, and cultural differences are, always have been and surely will continue to be major forces in our society.

The dynamism of the Black struggle of the 1960's, along with the parallel identity struggles of Spanish-speaking Americans, American Indians and Asian-Americans, paved the way for the flowering of the search for identity among white ethnic Americans, and for their own struggle to confirm the validity of their different cultural and communal life styles.

In the 1970's, it is widely evident that group differences are, in fact, becoming continually more accentuated. But what do those differences mean? How do they affect our lives? How can institutions deal with them honestly and openly, while reducing conflict or conflict-porducing situations?

The complexities of intergroup dynamics in our multi-ethnic society, particularly as they are played out in our metropolitan areas, are enormous. An indication of the extent of existing confusion, even at the most basic level of defining terms, is reflected in a manual for human relations courses for teachers, Multi-Ethnicity in Intergroup Education, which the National Project on Ethnic America developed in cooperation with New York City's Board of Education.

Words that are common to us in every day usage -- prejudice,

discrimination, race, nationality, culture, religion, ethnicity, stereotypes -- had to be carefully defined early in the course to avoid misunderstanding. Many of those words are still emotionally charged and connote different meanings to different people. Newer and even more ambiguous terms -- cultural pluralism, group power, ethnic group interest, intergroup conflict -- were defined at the outset as well, to assure common denominators in the use of language.

As a society, we are still far from articulating a lucid and widely accepted self-definition. Irving Levine, Director of the National Project on Ethnic America has put forth one theoretical framework which we feel provides a working definition for realizing the best of America's potential. "The new pluralism," he has said, "is a social process which accepts individual and group uniqueness, which allows for balance between identification with a small group and commitment to the society as a whole, and in which individuals who do not wish to identify with any group are also fully accepted."

At the same time as we are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of ethnic group identity to millions of Americans, other factors have begun to play a more pronounced role in the broader framework of group identity. The different life-styles, concerns and needs of the young and the elderly, of the poor, the working-class, the middle class and the rich, and of men and women, are just beginning to be sorted out in our national consciousness.

We are still largely ignorant of how sex-typing affects the life goals of young girls; how growing up in a working-class environment affects the aspirations of working-class youth; or how being categorized as a "senior citizen" affects the way in which a person who reaches 65 will spend the rest of his or her years.

As we continue to grope for better comprehension of all groups of Americans, and for clearer understanding of the impact that a variety of group identities has upon us all, we necessarily look to our schools as the instrument for implementation of these new concepts, definitions, and realities. More than any other institution in our society, our educational system can contribute to building healthy self-images in our children, and consequently a more productive use of individual potential and more healthy intergroup relations amongst adults.

As will be evident in the content of the attached speech -- made to an audience of educators, ethnic group relations specialists, academicians, and ethnic group leaders -- our educational system has come a long way in an extremely short time span toward recognizing the reality of our multi-ethnic society and reflecting that reality in the way children are taught. There is still quite obviously a long way to go, in regard to both the ethnic dimension and to the other components of group identity, but significant and perhaps irreversible changes have been made, and a new foundation has been laid.

Education and the New Pluralism

Many of us who are professionally engaged in fostering the "new pluralism" are repeatedly asked to define our terms with precision. People ask "how does it differ from the theory of cultural pluralism espoused in the earlier part of the century?"

A quote I ran across in a publication distributed by South Carolina's Board of Education illustrates the new pluralism better than any definition I have yet heard. An Indian named Mohnanda Gandi said: "I do not want my house to be walled in. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

If the new pluralism is to become a reality in America, our educational system will of necessity be a vital mechanism for its application. The National Project on Ethnic America has been focusing considerable attention over the past few years on the multi-cultural dimensions of American education, and particularly those areas in need of revision, reform and innovation. We have designed an approach which extends beyond "ethnic studies," to a more comprehensive rubric that we call "ethnicity in education." It encompasses three major concerns:

1) devising new curriculum materials to reflect the realities of ethnic group life and group identity in America.
2) raising the consciousness of teachers and other school personnel to be more fully aware of their feelings about their own ethnic identity as well as that of their students.

3) designing programs to enhance intergroup relations, diminish group conflict, and establish relationships between schools and their surrounding communities.

State Legislation and Policy on Ethnic Studies

The federal Ethnic Heritage Studies Program was looked to by many as a means to making progress in some of those areas. When it failed to receive funding last year, the Project decided to focus attention on the State level as well. We wanted to find out how much progress had been made in the area of State legislation and policy, and to help determine where the greatest efforts still needed to be made. Last fall, we wrote to the 50 state education agencies, requesting information on the status of their activities in the ethnic studies area. Thus far, we have heard directly from about 40 states. With the help of additional statistics gathered by HEW's Office of Education, we compiled a preliminary report. (A full report should be available next fall.)

The picture which is beginning to emerge is an extremely interesting one. In some states, there is no apparent interest whatsoever in ethnic studies. In others, there is a considerable amount of legislation and policy on the books, but limited evidence of implementation. And in still others, with no law or policy, there is a tremendous amount of local activity.

Recent history has brought about a heightened awareness of the value of legislation as an agent of change. The Civil Rights Acts and the resultant progress for minorities over the past decade provide the best testimony. In the area of ethnic

studies, the obvious advantages of State legislation -- good legislation -- are several:

1) In cases where new curriculum is mandated, new research will be generated, new textbooks published, and new fields of study stimulated at universities.

2) New forms of teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, will determine the success with which the new curriculum materials are utilized. Universities, once again, are brought into the process, and new thinking and sensitivity are extended to the entire area of education.

3) Funding becomes available to implement the new State laws at the very least, and to encourage additional experimental programming at best.

Of course, that kind of progress can sometimes be made without legislation. The law simply provides a kind of guarantee that it will happen, and happen within a reasonable period time.

Since 1969, there has been some evidence of far-reaching change across the nation in the area of ethnic studies. In that year, the Federal Office of Education reported that just over half of the fifty state education agencies in the country had any materials for teachers which provided guidelines for teaching about Negro history (or the history of any other ethnic group). Only a few more were producing or planning to produce materials. None provided course outlines.

Today, 33 States publish materials, including curriculum guides, teaching supplements, bibliographies, textbook listings and

audio-visual aids which they distribute to local school boards. Twenty-six States have formal policy statements on ethnic studies which are purportedly implemented by local school districts. Moreover, thirteen states currently have laws on the books which mandate the inclusion of ethnic studies in the curriculum. And 4 more have passed bi-lingual laws, three of which stipulate or intend the inclusion of bi-cultural studies as well. In 1969, by contrast, only 6 states had passed laws, none of which related to bilingualism.

Cultural Diversity - Language and Reality

It is perhaps appropriate at this point to define the terms a bit more precisely. The language in most of the legislation I am referring to is distinctly the language of cultural pluralism, diversity, and intergroup relations. Interestingly, it is the same language used to describe the philosophy of cultural pluralism, adhered to by many intellectuals and political leaders early in the century. At that time, it was applied to the vast array of largely European immigrant groups flocking to America, and their interrelationships with the dominant culture. Now, however, with very few exceptions, the term cultural diversity is applied, somewhat misleadingly, to officially recognized minority groups alone and their relationship to the rest of American society.

In states with large concentrations of several minority groups, the term generally refers to Blacks, Hispanic groups, Orientals and American Indians. In other States, it may only refer to one or more minority groups. In general, however, whites are still lumped together in that great, big, homogeneous, monolithic whole. The term "majority culture" is mentioned repeatedly in the publications of many

states, referring to white people, and implying that there are no distinctions between them.

While the time is long overdue for America's minority groups to be given concentrated attention in our educational system, there is always an inherent danger in overemphasizing a black-white or a minority-majority dichotomy. The polarization and backlash which often result threaten the continued acceptability of minority studies or extra-curricular activities.

An example of that kind of backlash arose around the official observance of Black History Week in the State of Virginia, apparently to the exclusion of similar recognition for other groups. A January 1973 memorandum from the State Office of Education to School Superintendents reads as follows:

> "We realize that one of the best approaches for coping with past problems associated with Black History Week is the development and implementation of year round multi-racial-cultural curriculum in all of the public schools. If this becomes a reality, the need for a special week of this nature will diminish."

Although there is considerable logic to the memo, the loss of Black History Week would surely be experienced by Blacks as retrogressive.

While most state documents infer the relationship between white and minority groups when they refer to cultural pluralism, there are some notable exceptions. Illinois is an outstanding example. It has consistently proven to be the most farsighted state in this field. In 1967, it passed the first state "ethnic studies" act in the nation, spelling out clearly and precisely that the intent was a truly multi-ethnic one. It reads in part:

> "The teaching of history shall include a study of the role and contributions of American Negroes and other ethnic groups including but not restricted to Polish, Lithuanian, German, Hungarian, Irish, Bohemian, Russian, Albanian, Italian, Czechoslovakian, French, Scots, etc. in the history of this country and this State." (By 8th grade)

The then Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois, interpreted the law as follows:

> "It is not an instrument which forces upon the schools 1 week of study of the Negro, or the unit of such study... Rather, we accept this as a statement of the need of a systematic study of the Negro and other ethnic groups throughout the year...Such study will result in an integrated approach in which all Americans are considered without reference to their exclusion on the basis of race, religion, or previous condition."

Again, last year, the State of Illinois' Office of Public Instruction led the way in this field. Michael J. Bakalis, the present State Superintendent of Public Instruction created a special Ethnic Studies Section within his office. In his words:

> "It will be responsible for the development of curriculum and instructional materials designed to foster an intellectual and emotional acceptance by young people of diversity and the growing interdependence of mankind. Our objective will be to heighten every student's perception of his place and his relationship with others in the scheme of things."

That office has already generated some important innovations in the field of ethnicity and education in Illinois. It has made

extensive use of the media, films, television and radio in particular, in furthering an understanding of pluralism in school districts throughout the State.

Hawaii, "ethnically speaking" one of our most unique states, passed a law in 1972, requesting the Department of Education to institute a more comprehensive program of ethnic studies, including the study of:

> "...Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Samoan, Portuguese, and Caucasian-Americans as peoples of Hawaii, concentrating on their differences and problems as well as their similarities; the pros and cons of their assimilation into the dominant culture; and their interrelationships."

It also calls for study of the relationship of the Labor movement and ethnicity, and for the use of the vast resource of the people of Hawaii in curriculum and program development.

Pennsylvania, which does not have a law, includes in its policy a call for an emphasis upon Afro-Americans, as well as those customarily excluded from the curriculum: American Indians, Mexican-Americans, Orientals, Puerto Ricans, Southeastern Europeans, and Jews.

With a few other exceptions, however, the overall implication, in the materials of most states, is that the majority culture is made up of whites -- period, while the "minority culture" can be ethnically and racially differentiated.

Texas, in one of its State Department of Education's publications makes reference to the European enclaves which still exist there -- the Czechoslovakians, Germans, Scandinavians and the British -- and describes Texas as a microcosm of the U.S. Then,

however, it goes on to point out that Indians, Afro-Americans and Mexican-Americans have cultures and life-styles which differ widely from that of the majority. The implication, which is somewhat contradictory, is that the white ethnic enclaves, as distinct as they are from one another, still are part of an undifferentiated majority culture.

While the language of pluralism is widely evident, and an attempt is made in several instances to include white groups in that pluralism, the human relations intent of most state ethnic studies programs can be described by the following statement, again taken from a publication issued by Texas:

> "Majority culture children should learn to better understand their neighbors; minority group children should be able to better develop their own sense of self-esteem."

Variations in State Legislation

Variation in the quality of State legislation is considerable. It ranges from a 1972 Tennessee law, which states simply ---

> Public school instruction shall include at some appropriate grade level or levels, as determined by local boards of education, courses and content designed to educate children in Negro history and culture and the contribution of black people to the history and development of this country and the world.

--- to the laws of California which are, to the best of our knowledge, the most extensive and comprehensive in attempting to correctly portray the role of minority and ethnic groups. California's statutes include the development of the following over the next few years:

1) Textbooks which correctly portray the role and contributions of Black Americans and members of other ethnic groups, and the role and contributions of the entrepreneur and labor in the total development of the U.S. and the State of California (also, men and women in all types of roles, including professional, vocational and executive roles).
2) Instruction in social sciences (and social studies courses) on the role and contribution Black Americans, American Indians, Mexicans, persons of Oriental extraction, and other ethnic groups to the economic, political, and social development of California and U.S.A.
3) In-service teacher training preparation in ethnic backgrounds for teachers at schools with 25% or more students of diverse ethnic backgrounds.
4) Approved courses of which the Department of Education will develop a list, and be responsible for coordinating efforts of school districts and colleges to develop adequate course offerings to satisfy certification requirements.
5) Pre-service teacher training programs on the history, culture, and current problems of students

of diverse ethnic backgrounds with an emphasis on intergroup relations.

Many other states have made important legislative progress. Kansas passed a law in 1969 which mandates the development and distribution of curriculum, including the history and cultural backgrounds of ethnic and minority groups and the circumstances and relationships of those groups to current Kansas communities.

A 1971 Maryland law stipulated that all public schools shall include in programs of studies, either as part of curriculum or a separate course, appropriate instruction for developing understanding and appreciation of ethnic and cultural minorities. It mandated the State Department of Education to develop guidelines to assist local boards in developing curriculum, and criteria for local boards in evaluating and selecting materials. It also calls for the State Education Department to require regular reports on implementation.

In 1969, Connecticut passed a law pertaining to social studies texts. It states: "each town or regional board of education must use textbooks which present the achievements and accomplishments of individuals and groups from all ethnic and racial backgrounds."

Official Policy

Some of the official policies adopted by education agencies in states which have no ethnic studies legislation are extremely impressive. Texas' policy, an outstanding example is quite extensive and in many respects provides an excellent framework for the "new pluralism" in education.

It is based on a unique concept, called the Concept of Confluence of Texas Cultures in Curriculum Planning. It states, in part:

> "Each child should find in these courses material which would help him identify with the whole national, historical and cultural pattern, with justifiable pride in the contributions made by his group, or individuals from it.
>
> "It is erroneous to identify cultural conflict solely in terms of color; it has arisen within color groups as well as between them. It is suggested that cultural conflict is a national problem which should be of equal concern to us as Americans, rather than solely as members of a special group...."

A 1970 memo from the state education agency to school administrators recommends that the following elements be emphasized in the curriculum:

1) the richness of cultural diversity
2) the individual achievements of the many groups
3) an identification of the cultural sources of "American" customs
4) an examination of conflicts, past and present, how they arose, and how they were resolved
5) a study of the results of unresolved or poorly resolved cultural conflicts
6) the recognition of cultural conflict as a reality of our history and its resolution as a necessity of our future

The design for implementing the Texas confluence concept in public school curriculum calls for:

-- Preserving and strengthening various languages spoken in Texas;
-- Using historical resources which will provide accuracy and balance in Texas and U.S. history regarding multiple cultures;
-- Analyzing dialect and culture patterns in Texas and developing instructional attitudes and materials for bidialectalism;
-- Extending bilingualism through bilingual education for the native English speaker and for the speaker of another language;
-- Promoting international education as a means of implementing the confluence concept.

From the few examples of law and official policy I have just cited, it becomes clear that an educational framework for the "new pluralism" already exists in many states. Despite the fact that the existing programs most often focus on principal minority groups, rather than on multi-ethnicity as we would define it, the obstacles to expanding program content and definition would seem to be quite possible to overcome.

Local Initiatives

One of the most interesting and encouraging findings of our preliminary study is the extent of initiative taken by local school districts and often by individual schools, in the absence of state legislation or any official policy. The problems inherent

in bringing about change without the benefit of state support make the gains which have been made even more impressive.

Increasingly, resource materials and teacher training programs are being designed independently by local schools or school districts to reflect the ethnic and racial population mixtures and needs of their student bodies. This seems to be particularly true in large cities where there are large numbers of immigrant, migrant, and ethnic groups.

Curriculum Tailored to Local Needs

Perhaps the example of local innovation best known to those of you here today is the work of the Detroit Board of Education, in cooperation with Otto Feinstein and Wayne State University. Their collaboration has resulted in a wide range of ethnic studies monographs, including a Detroit Ethnic Studies Bibliography, and Ethnic Studies: Teaching and Research Needs in Detroit.

In addition, in 1972 the Detroit public schools developed an experimental working draft of a teachers guide for senior high school courses in ethnic studies, which were mandated by the local school board. The guide, which contains course outlines, suggested teaching methods, and resource listings, deals with virtually all of the major ethnic groups in Detroit: Afro-American, American Indian, Chinese, Irish, German, Italian, Jewish, Latin American, Mexican, Polish, Puerto Rican and Yugoslav.

Dade County, Florida, has published extensive multi-ethnic curriculum and resource guides, one of which is entitled "The People of Dade County."

"The Cultural Heritage of East Baton Rouge Parish," published by the East Baton Rouge Parish Schools, is a multi-disciplinary

resource guide for 8th grade Louisiana studies, which concentrates on the Indians, the French and the Blacks who originally settled the area.

In Freeport, New York, a program known as REAP (Racial Ethnic Action Project) which concentrates on grades 5-10, produces materials which reflect the needs of local groups - white ethnic, in addition to Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Indian groups. One 8th grade teaching guide, for example, deals with race and multi-ethnicity in the American Revolution. REAP also publishes a monthly newsletter called "Bulletins," which contains such articles as "Irish and Italian - American Stereotyping."

The Greenwich (Connecticut) School board has distributed a multi-cultural 5th grade Social Studies teacher's supplement entitled "Approaches to the Study of the Immigrant in American Experience."

The Laredo (Texas) Independent School District has designed a publication called "The Spanish and Mexican Influence on the Cultural Development of the Southwest," a curriculum guide and text on the contributions of the Spanish-speaking.

The list of such examples of locally designed multi-ethnic curriculum materials is, quite clearly, extensive. I have mentioned only a sampling of some of the most interesting ones I came across.

In the area of ethnic studies, devoted to the cultural needs of particular ethnic groups, some fascinating projects have been undertaken beyond the scope of the more widely known minority studies. In Lewiston, Maine, for example, the St. Dominic Regional High School has developed an elective course and a cultural center for Franco-Americans, with materials donated by the Quebec Ministry

of Culture.

In Utah, the Uintah School District has developed an ethnic studies and language program for Ute children. In cooperation with the University of Utah, the district designed a Ute history course with a companion workbook, and a Ute language course for which an orthography is being developed.

Another significant development in the area of curriculum designed at the local level might be described as the "trickle up" theory. There are a number of cases in which materials generated by school districts or by individual schools have been adopted by state education agencies for use in schools throughout the state.

In South Carolina, for example, where there is no law or official policy of any kind, a teaching guide was developed by the Charleston school district, with the help of a social studies consultant from the State Education Agency. After 2 years of study and modification, the guide was adopted by the State Agency and distributed to all local school districts throughout the state. The guide focuses on Blacks, Indians and West Europeans -- the groups who were most responsible for the settling and development of South Carolina -- and attempts to put them in perspective, with discussion of the relationship of English settlers to French and Spanish, Indians, and Blacks, while drawing broader and more universal parallels to European-American relationships.

In Montana, a parallel development took place, stimulated by the work of a single school. The Helena Junior High School published a course outline and bibliography on the American Indian, which was then adopted by the State Education Agency and distributed to all local districts.

Local Approaches to Teacher Training

In the area of teacher training -- the single most important element to the success of this new approach to education -- some significant new models have been implemented.

With the technical assistance of the National Project on Ethnic America, New York City's Board of Education published an in-service human relations teacher training manual entitled "Multi-Ethnicity in Intergroup Education." Focusing on the six largest groups in the City's school system -- Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, Irish and Chinese -- the manual, used in conjunction with films on each of the six groups, helps teachers to deal with the affective aspects of learning. The program emphasizes both a cultural and psychological understanding of the impact of ethnic identity upon a student's self-image and behavior, and it encourages teachers to verbalize their feelings about their own identity.

A number of cities in the state of Iowa have made important inroads in this area. Sioux City has developed an in-service teacher training program to deal with what they have termed the "culture clash" resulting from desegregation. The Des Moines Education Association distributes a publication called Helps in Teaching, designed by the Human Rights Commission and the Urban Education Section of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction, in cooperation with Drake University, to help teachers foresee problems in teacher-student relationships where both are unfamiliar with each others' cultures. And in Cedar Rapids, a program called MERA (Multi-Ethnic Race Awareness) includes in-service teacher training in ethnic awareness, which calls for local meetings and

workshops involving parents, and retreats to provide a positive climate for introspection. The goal of MERA, which also includes innovative curriculum design, is to "reflect accurately the pluralistic nature of our society," emphasizing the individual child, how he (or she) is placed in groups, and how he (or she) sees others.

It is clearly impossible to adequately portray here all of the developments, in all of their various forms, in all of the different parts of the country and in each state. What I hoped to accomplish was to simply highlight for you some of the more interesting and encouraging trends. From what we have already seen, I think it is fair to say that much more progress has been made on both state and local levels in the area of ethnicity and education than we had anticipated.

There remain, however, a number of important areas in which considerable work is needed, and which will require political as well as educational expertise.

Targets for Future Concentration

First, the definitions of ethnic studies, cultural pluralism and diversity, and the way they are reflected in our textbooks, must be broadened to be fully inclusive. Proponents of the educational needs of white ethnic groups have a long way to go in helping to redefine what is now, more often than not, referred to as a homogeneous "majority" culture.

Second, much more attention must be paid to the manner in which ethnic studies courses are taught. It has long been apparent that when they are taught as individual electives or as program supplements, and do not include all groups in a school population, they often polarize groups and sometimes lose the interest of

those for whose benefit a particular course is intended.

Along with highlighting special ethnic studies curricula, and broadening the scope of the content to embrace cross-cultural studies, another positive and productive way to approach the ethnic factor in education is by making it an integral element in all aspects of curriculum. A resource guide published by the Kentucky Department of Education makes an outstanding conceptual contribution in this area. Although it focuses on a single group, Black Americans, the approach is readily adaptable to a multi-ethnic strategy.

In a section called "Intergroup Education: A Pervasive Emphasis" it makes extensive suggestions for including intergroup education concepts in all curriculum areas -- from American and World History, Economics, Sociology, Civics, Geography, Problems of Democracy, Psychology and Kentucky history, to English, Speech, Journalism, Foreign Languages, Mathematics, Science, Music, Art, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Health and Physical Education. It goes on to outline the use of intergroup relations education in student council activities, assembly programs, school newspapers, clubs, the library and even the lunchroom.

Third, the issue of bi-lingual education is becoming increasingly important, both educationally and politically. Four states have already passed laws regarding the use of bi-lingual teaching, and in many more states, it is used in school districts where necessary and appropriate. The Massachusetts law, perhaps the most well-known, is an excellent model which provides for both bi-lingual and bi-cultural education as a transition to full fluency in English and to American culture.

The difficult kinds of political problems which can arise

around this issue are exemplified by the State of Maine's legislation which provides for bi-lingual but not bi-cultural education. While the former was viewed as a needed teaching technique, the latter was feared by a majority of the State's legislators as devisive and polarizing. Newspaper accounts explained this fear as a result of Maine's proximity to the Canadian experience, and the possible influence of the Quebec sepratists.

In New York City, the issue of bi-lingual education has become highly politicized. Puerto Ricans are facing resistance to their fight for comprehensive bi-lingual education on the part of large numbers of non-Puerto Rican teachers. The latter fear they may lose their jobs if the Puerto Rican community insists that bi-lingual and bi-cultural courses be taught by native speakers.

Some Specific Next Steps

While I have outlined some of the major concerns on the agenda of all of us here today, they are certainly not the only ones. What we are talking about, in essence, is fundamental change in our educational system -- the kind of change which will utilize group identity constructively, in contrast to common past practice, where it was either ignored or treated as a liability. To accomplish that kind of change, we will have to join ranks and be prepared for a long struggle ahead.

In states, regions, and cities whose educational systems have been slow to respond to change, there is a need to create a public awareness and understanding of the group identity factor in education, to stimulate a new kind of dialogue in this area, and to build problem-solving and programmatic coalitions, on a multi-ethnic and multi-disciplinary basis.

Ideally, such coalitions should involve relevant school faculty, teachers' unions and professional associations, vocational and guidance counsellors, administrators and teacher training institutes, as well as school board and parent associations, community social service agencies, ethnic organizations, and any other interested community elements.

Ultimately, a working coalition might set up a variety of consultations at city, county and state levels; initiate both pre- and in-service teacher orientation institutes in conjunction with local colleges and universities and school boards; serve as a clearing-house for useful programmatic resources; work with the media to increase awareness and to generate new programming; and help to improve existing legislation and/or lay the groundwork for new legislation.

The National Project on Ethnic America has had a number of successful experiences in these areas, and is prepared to assist local coalition-building efforts in any way we can.

Finally, the Project will be publishing an in-depth study of the status of ethnicity in education in the 50 states. The publication will include an analysis of the best features of both existing and recommended State legislation. We would welcome suggestions and contributions from all of you.

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