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ABSTRACT

The small rural school's foremost and largest problem is providing an adequate curriculum for students in a changing world. Often the small district cannot or is not willing to pay the per-pupil cost of curriculum specialists, specialized courses using expensive equipment no more than one period a day, and remodeled rooms to accommodate new teaching techniques in order to provide the same variety of classes available in a large school. An additional problem is hiring teachers who are prepared in several major curriculum areas. Some small rural schools have found ways to combat huge expense for specialized programs and curriculum deficiences by cooperation between schools, shared services, greater use of audiovisual aids, and inventiveness in meeting their special problems. Other methods used by some small schools throughout the United States to fill many gaps in an otherwise meager curriculum are expanding the curriculum to include vocational and career education to prepare the students for living in either a rural or urban environment, inservice teacher training, better guidance and counseling services, and utilization of community resources. (NQ)

Small Rural Schools Can Have Adequate Curriculums

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Preface

The small school may have many advantages over the large district, but it also has many problems, and providing an adequate curriculum for students in a changing world is its foremost and largest problem.

The per-pupil cost of curriculum specialists, specialized courses using expensive equipment no more than one period a day, and remodeled rooms to accommodate new teaching techniques are often more than the small district can or is willing to pay in order to provide the same variety of classes available in the large school. An additional problem is hiring teachers who are prepared in several major curriculum areas -- a problem the larger school district seldom faces because its staff members can specialize in one or two areas of study.

However, there are distinct advantages in a small school system. Many administrators, teachers, and board members of large districts envy the closeness of the small community, the lower percentage of "hard core" discipline problems, and the degree of control exercised by patrons of the small school, a phenomenon unheard of in large districts.

Small schools have found that cooperation between schools, shared services, greater use of audio-visual aids, and inventiveness in meeting their special problems have filled many gaps in an otherwise meager curriculum. The small school also has a greater degree of flexibility that allows it to take advantage of one time educational opportunities for its students, but most important is the fact that the student in the small school is still an individual and not just one of the mass.

This document provides information on how some small schools throughout the United States have met their curriculum problems. Addresses of each program are given at the end of the document.

Dr. Everett D. Edington
Director, ERIC/CRESS

SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS CAN HAVE ADEQUATE CURRICULUMS

WHERE DO YOU COME IN?

Education is not something that people can assume will just happen, preparing their children for life, giving them the tools needed for happiness, security and success. Education is the major responsibility of the entire community, and the best, most adequate education can be offered only through a close teacher-student-parent-community relationship. Education serves the entire community, and its content therefore is of primary concern to all its members. For maximum benefits, citizens must first understand their own needs, possibly through a process of study, exchange of ideas and planning, and then must communicate those needs to educators. Together, they can improve the curriculum and respond to the needs of both students and community.

The Meeker, Colorado Project is a successful and very

encouraging example of community participation in the area of vocational needs and training. A program was implemented which actually involved the resources, both humans and facilities, of the entire community. Local businesses participated by providing short-term job experiences and an "exploration" of vocations to students, but without offering actual wages. The practice is still in existence, serving 40 high school students annually. This introduction to occupations project was used to justify to the Ford Foundation, Meeker's participation in the Western States Small Schools Project. It also led to identification of the special needs and circumstances existing in the rural schools and the community.

Concerned citizens and school personnel who want to do something to save the small school and offer an adequate education to rural youth, must work together in attacking the problems head-on; it must be a joint effort to be successful.

WHAT ARE THE ASSETS?

Community awareness and action are absolutely necessary in order to make small schools and rural education not only adequate, but dynamic. And they certainly can be, a fact proven by numerous successful examples.

The small school has a lot going for it. Although rural populations have grown smaller, this picture now seems to be changing. Migrations to the city have slowed and there are some signs, in large metropolitan areas, of migration from cities to rural areas! One third of our nation's population is "rural."

The accepted measurement for an urban environment is a population density of 1,000 or more per square mile, and 500 for suburban areas. Seventeen states do not contain a single county with a population density of 500 persons per square mile. Twenty-three states have a population density of less than 50 persons per square mile, and 37 states have a density of less than 100 persons per square mile. Rural life has always been a primary part of our history and offers an alternative to the bustle and rush of city living. The enrichment of rural life should obviously begin with enrichment of rural schools.

"Smallness," seen as a liability from one point of view, can also be a tremendous asset from another. In a small school, individualized instruction is possible and there is a closeness of students, parents, teachers and community. It is thus also possible to keep a degree of local control. There are fewer problems of student discipline and a more relaxed, personal atmosphere which can be very favorable to learning. The student can develop and grow within his own natural setting. Finally, the small rural school can greatly contribute to rural redevelopment and enrichment of rural life, involving rural inhabitants themselves, using adult education and co-ordinating educational policy with rural development needs.

PROBLEMS TO BE TACKLED

Many rural schools have closed, mainly because of isolation and decreasing rural populations. Educational needs could no longer be provided for at reasonable costs.

In many cases, student aspirations have also risen, and

when the educational curriculum cannot fulfill expectations or offer realistic alternatives, students become frustrated or apathetic, and often drop out.

Upgrading and expanding curriculums of course means larger and better-trained staffs and educational aids, but this also boosts per-pupil costs clear out of range. There are also fewer students to absorb the high costs, due almost as much to high drop-out rates as to decline in rural population. Then there are the added problems of how to deal with special education for the mentally and physically handicapped, the exceptional students and the poor. Ethnic minorities are also demanding their share and their rights to equal educational opportunities. Unfortunately, well-trained teachers to fulfill these needs tend to head for areas providing better facilities, teaching aids and of course, higher salaries.

The problems of poverty and high drop out rates in rural areas have been documented by the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, which found that 30 percent of our population lives in rural areas, but 40 percent of the nation's poor lives there. Drop-out rates are extremely high. In 1960, reports showed that more than 700,000 adults in rural America had never even enrolled in school! About 3.1 million had had fewer than five years of schooling and more than 19,000,000 had not completed high school. More than 2.3 million young people (aged 14 through 24) had dropped out before graduation.

FINDING THE ANSWERS

The main goal of education, be it rural or urban, is to develop the potential of every child and adult to the fullest, preparing him or her for life in either a rural or urban setting. The big problem is to determine just what is an "adequate" program and then how to provide it at reasonable cost.

The teacher-student relationship has also been shown to be a pivot point on which a sound education may ultimately depend. In an ideal situation, the teacher is a catalyst who inspires the student to think and to pursue further learning on his or her own. The teacher supplies the guidance, the resources and the support the student seeks and can make education exciting, dynamic, relevant and on-going, or a dull and tedious chore. Obviously we must have good teachers.

THE IDEA OF "SHARED SERVICES"

"Shared Services" have shown that it is no longer necessary to offer a great variety of programs at huge expense. School districts can remain separate, but cooperate in sharing services and activities. The main idea is that additional programs of frequently higher quality can be provided to rural school districts at a lower per-capita cost. By 1970, there were some 215 or these programs in operation. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon, is a successful example. Within this program, an Educational Development Center in Caldwell, Idaho is especially concerned with the school attendance of migrant farm workers' children. They have employed bilingual teacher aides and used programed teaching materials especially suited to the needs of migrant youth.

In Austin, Texas, statistical data is compiled to aid various school districts in identifying the extent of their drop-out problems. They can thus find areas which have the largest problems, and determine a course of action.

A Pupil Personnel Director in Eastman, Georgia, serves six school systems, working directly with students and parents and acting as liaison between the school and other community agencies such as the health department, child welfare agency and community action programs. Teacher morale has improved, since they have a source of help when trouble arises.

In Plymouth, Wisconsin, brochures pointing out the advantages of teaching and living in the area are designed and produced by a Cooperative Educational Service Agency and distributed to teacher placement agencies and colleges. In this way, lack of finances for attracting personnel can be overcome.

A central office provides guidance personnel to 63 school districts in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Services include workshops to train school staff members for vocational counseling, special talks to students by college counselors and industrial representatives on career opportunities, consultant services to teachers, guidance to elementary youth and testing and interpreting test data.

A center in Compton, California, pools problems, resources and solutions on a cost exchange basis for programs to aid the cerebral palsied and students with severe visual and hearing difficulties.

The Western States Small Schools Project, begun in 1962 and supported by the Ford Foundation, involved five states:

Colorado, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Nevada. Although each state worked on solving its own individual problems, they cooperated in finding answers common to all.

Centers for coordination of Shared Services also offer such aids as professional library services, providing loan access to books, journals, filmstrips and reference materials. Shared Services Centers can also offer consultant services with specialization in many areas. The Northeastern Utah Multi-District Educational Cooperative provides special consultants in language arts and mathematics to teachers, schools, entire departments or even entire districts.

Results of Shared Services have been unquestionably beneficial. It was found that isolated administrators can be aided in finding new solutions to existing problems. There is a renewed interest in education among local citizens, since they become personally involved in cooperative sharing of both facilities and benefits. Cooperative Shared Services do cost more, but at the same time cost less than individual supplementary programs, and represent a lower per-capita cost.

USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

One resource which provides many answers and which has been adapted and widely shared is audio-visual aids. Through their use, with good administration and good teachers, both students and community may find education to be more dynamic and relevant. All 50 states have some form of audio-visual centralized media facilities. The Umatilla, Oregon co-op, for example, developed a broadcast studio and cable distribution system for 22 schools

in two counties so that they could receive a state-operated channel five hours per day, even in remote areas.

The Western States Small Schools Project also adopted a form of amplified telephone instruction whereby an inexpensive amplifier was placed on the telephone so that groups of students could listen to and even converse with a person located miles away. A lecture series was also offered, so that teachers in five remote rural communities could take a course in "Crucial Issues in Education." Students were able to have person-to-person conversations with famous people such as the astronauts through this method. Amplified telephone was also used to teach an art course simultaneously in 11 high schools in four states, supplemented by filmstrips and allowing 2-way conversations with any student. In all cases, cooperative efforts and sharing of costs made the media more available and effective.

Schools in Arkansas, Alabama and Utah use educational TV for enrichment of curriculums. In Hensley, Arkansas, ten teaching specialists give television presentations in music, science, art, speech, history and current events. In Gadsden, Alabama, live microwave television production has offered large-group instruction in five areas to seven high schools to help equalize the curriculums. Production costs were estimated to be minimized through live broadcasts. The Utah network for instructional television was formed in Salt Lake City and cooperated with the State Department of Public Instruction, several school districts and local television stations in the exchange of materials and use of existing facilities for curriculum enrichment. Fifty-three elementary and secondary courses and two and one-half hours of

inservice teacher education each week were offered throughout the school year. Thus teachers could also keep in touch with the newest and best methods for working with the media.

The Gunnison Watershed School District in the Colorado Rockies came up with a very interesting use of audio technology. Many of the 1,513 students in the district spend more than 40 hours per month traveling to and from school. The school district therefore adapted a passenger bus by adding electronic gear, including a seven-channel audiotape deck and headsets, each with separate volume and channel selector controls, for each passenger. The channels are programed for different age levels and listening guides for the programs offered are made available each week. There are also tapes for supplementary and enrichment work, and tapes of appropriate special events at the community and school.

Mobile communication laboratories have also been highly successful. Technologically equipped one-room mobile units were used for children of Butler County, Alabama, who were having difficulties with the language arts, reading, speech and self-expression. The units contained facilities such as tape recorders, record players, individual booths with earphones, projectors, slides and film strips, which helped teachers provide individualized and small group instruction. Teachers, feeling a need for increased competency, also formed a steering committee from each grade and administrative level to study county-wide needs and to develop plans.

Mobile facilities have also been used for preschool instruction programs by the Appalachia Preschool Program and the Florida Mobile Early Learning Program, as an approach to preschool

education for migrant children.

Even the newspaper has proved to be an invaluable educational aid. In rural Georgia, The American Newspaper Publishers Foundation studied the effects of using daily newspapers by elementary school students on their general and newspaper reading skills. Five social studies teachers taught 50 50-minute lessons over a period of ten weeks using three local dailies as instructional materials. Lessons were designed in accordance with the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation Newspaper Test, and were rated at junior high level. Students were pre and post tested and scored significant gains on all the post skills, showing that real gains during the project were in basic skills rather than in quickly forgotten trivial information.

EXPANDING THE CURRICULUM

An NEA-sponsored report on Improvement of Rural Life noted that "Every good community school will have a curriculum which is based on the needs of boys and girls growing up in the community and will use the community as a laboratory for learning." The curriculum, to be "adequate," must then relate to the every-day lives and problems of the students, giving them instruction and information which they can apply to situations which they encounter. The traditional courses such as reading, writing and arithmetic are of course important, but are not enough, as the world becomes more complex. Both community and educators have a great responsibility here, for they must identify the needs of both the community and of the child. They should also

see that text materials relate to both rural and urban environments.

A summer program for rural disadvantaged youth in Nelson County, Virginia, was conducted to raise the level of student aspirations for higher education, but it also provided experiences to broaden cultural interests and aid in academic achievement. Ninth graders were given experience in fine arts, 10th graders in natural science, and 11th graders in critical thinking and independent study in the humanities. The program produced some inspired teaching and active interest and participation of students in new experiences.

Another important consideration in program development, is of course, preparation for living in either a rural or urban environment. This covers a lot of ground from occupational pursuits to social and cultural areas.

A study at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, 1970, considered problems of this type and found that many rural residents who migrate to the cities are unprepared for the urban environment and become the hard-core unemployed. They also stated that the immediate problem in rural areas is to match the skills in the labor force with jobs available, and a closely related problem was the need to provide each individual youth and adult with the education and training with which to develop his resources and abilities to the fullest.

Even preparation for rural life is not always adequate since it is limited, and many teachers simply do not understand the needs and possibilities for teaching about rural life. For example, possible courses for enrichment and development of the rural

environment can also be extremely beneficial to the community and may include agricultural economics, rural ecology, rural business and management, rural history and folk lore, community relations, local government, social problems of the rural community, rural health and safety, rural culture, including music, literature, arts and crafts, budgeting, rural transportation problems, etc. Courses of this type can be exciting, useful and can give a stronger sense of rural identification and potential for development.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress of Young Americans reported that rural schools tend to convince students that they will have to migrate, but do not prepare them for that either. Little or no formal course work on rural living was found to be available, with the exception of vocational agriculture courses.

VOCATIONAL AND CAREER EDUCATION

Vocational education, as an integral part of the curriculum, can teach job skills and methods of modern agriculture. Students also learn principles of decision-making and management, and supervisory techniques necessary for proper exploitation of economic resources. Career education focuses the students' attention on careers beginning in first grade and continuing on through high school. For really effective vocational and career programs, maximum use of modern communications media and local demonstration techniques are needed. Here, again, the community can be of great help, pooling resources and cooperating where possible to provide professional contacts and demonstrations to explore career opportunities and job possibilities.

For example, in Springfield, South Dakota, 1971, Southern University's Trajectory Occupational Program, STOP, funded by the South Dakota Division of Vocational and Technical Education, conducted a six-week program of practical and realistic career exploration with 81 junior high school participants. For the period of the project, students lived in the college dorms and were given choices of a number of vocational areas to study. They then had the opportunity to examine and experience many aspects of their fields of interest through some technical introduction, field trips and personal contact with workers and professionals. The project kept a high level of interest and participation, and also contributed to personal and social development through the learning situation.

A comprehensive program of vocational education in the rural, economically depressed area of Hamlin, West Virginia, introduced career awareness in grades one through six, career orientation activities in grades seven and eight, career exploration in grades nine and ten, and finally intensified occupational guidance, counseling and job placement, with intensified skill development activities for students ending their formal education. Evaluation of the project showed that some teachers had problems correlating various disciplines with study of occupations. It was then recommended that they use career education materials to supplement existing texts.

This was also done in Meeker, Colorado. Teachers themselves received special inservice training through attending meetings and workshops and a special class with college credit as an added incentive. The classroom situation then became more

innovative and individualized. The eighth grade teacher had students apply for social security cards in order to fill out job applications, as prerequisites to a research paper on careers.

The commercial teacher used units on telephone answering, appearance, job applications, and recorded units on life styles on her steno dictation machines which generated more interest and enthusiasm as well as practice.

English classes were directed toward increasing basic skills through materials which also increased knowledge about careers and society.

A driving instructor developed units on mortgages, loans and interest rates as applied to buying an automobile or motorcycle. He also used units on sales and selling.

Human relations classes held small group discussions on life styles and communities.

A biology teacher developed units on range management and ecology, and business mathematics were directed toward consumer-related topics.

Modular scheduling was used for this program, which constructed classes from 20 minute time periods, making possible time blocks of 40, 60, 80, or 100 minutes, etc. A large amount on non-scheduled time, (averaging 30 and 40 percent) was made available to each student to be utilized for lab work, study for regular classes, or for doing independent study projects.

The positive results of vocational and career education have been obvious but need stronger emphasis. A three-year activity-centered program involving 27 boys at the University of Illinois prepared the disadvantaged students to succeed in

high school vocational programs. After determining that most of the boys were interested in animals, this interest was used to promote more interest in biology and agriculture. Animals were housed in pens and students cared for a bred gilt sow, observing her development and learning to care for the young pigs as they were born. They also had the opportunity to observe and care for rabbits, ewes, lambs, a groundhog, pheasants, bees, etc.

Students also actively engaged in reproducing plants sexually and asexually, growing vegetables, seeding and tree planting. In mechanics they engaged in woodworking, metal working, and disassembled and reassembled a small internal combustion engine. They read and wrote about related problem areas, discussed and kept notes. The applied biology and agriculture instructor also worked with the mathematics teacher to provide practical problems requiring the use of mathematics for solution.

Students involved in the program improved in attendance and showed a positive change in attitude toward learning and learning involvement. Their reading, speaking and writing abilities also improved.

Thus at a time when statistics show the drop-out rate to be especially high, often due to boredom and underachievement, vocational and career education can help to reawaken interest and personal involvement in learning, showing students where and how they can "fit in" and helping them to become productive members of society. This, of course, requires the collective efforts of community, students and educators.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

Rural schools also face the problems of providing adequate

curriculums not only for economically disadvantaged students, but for racial and ethnic minorities as well. Our country is no longer a "melting pot," but a "pluralistic society" of many cultures. This has been shown by social unrest and the demand for equal educational opportunities. The content of history and literature courses in particular must include background and contributions of the rest of the world and not just those of western civilization. We do not want to change the cultural patterns of minorities, but rather emphasize the use and mutual harmony of those patterns. Such action benefits all the students by presenting everyone's part in our nation's history. There is also a reduction of racist and separatist attitudes which present materials tend to reinforce. Students who relate to their studies also develop a more positive self-image and maintain more interest and participation in educational activities.

The Commission on Ethnic Bias in the Preparation and Use of Instructional Materials has stated that those materials must be inclusive and reflect the true national heritage, goals, and aspirations.

Materials, however, are not the only issue. The teacher plays a pivotal role, just as in nearly all areas of teaching. To fulfill that role adequately, the teacher must have the ability to interact happily with children, including those of another culture and to be wholly open, aware of one's biases and determined to cope with them.

The University of New Mexico offers student teaching in as a part of its Teacher Education program two grade levels and within two socio-economic communities.

Eventually, students replace the classroom teachers, who join the college faculty for a time. In this way, teachers learn to adapt to both rural and urban, affluent and poverty situations, becoming more aware of and responsive to many teaching problems. Through relating all the various areas of study, they learn to modify rules and norms that "get in the way" and prevent the curriculum from touching the lives of the real learners - the students. They also work with ethnic leaders who help to identify ethnic materials and suggest how to use them effectively.

A producer of educational resource materials in Austin, Texas, offers ungraded multiethnic educational aids to language arts and social studies, to be used with children in project head start, nursery school, kindergarten and elementary school. The aids consist of rural education studies albums (oversized photographs on heavy cardboard), published in sets of eight, each with a separate teacher's guide. A comprehensive teacher's guide then provides background studies, specific information and key concepts charts for each of the eight albums: "Growing is..." "A family is..." "A rural community is..." etc.

With regard to other teaching problems, the Council for Exceptional Children, in Arlington, Virginia, offers an excellent report on administrative concerns of programs for the educable mentally retarded children in small school systems. Information is given on identifying these children, evaluating them, implications of their characteristics and criteria for placement in special classes. Also discussed are organization of classes, related problems, and development of curriculum and program activities. An appendix lists State Associations for the Retarded, curriculum

and text resources, educational films, suggested equipment and supplies, and parental resources.

THE NEED FOR INSERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

One of the most important aspects of a good education, as already mentioned, is the student-teacher relationship. A good teacher can make a child want to learn and do his or her best, and a poor teacher may cause a child to become bored, rebel and eventually drop out.

Curriculum needs and inadequacies point up a lack of good, trained teachers and counselors, with the educational preparation to teach the broader range of courses and deal with a broader range of problems. Manpower is in short supply for isolated rural areas which can offer only limited facilities and limited salaries. There is also a high rate of teacher turnover. Teachers not equipped to deal with the attitudes of students, administrators, parents and the community, feel a sense of frustration and hopelessness.

Supplementary workshops can provide sensitivity training to help these teachers identify and deal with their own problems as well, and can take place in the summer or as short courses at near-by colleges on a joint or cooperative basis with local school districts. Cooperation between local schools and colleges encourages the spreading of information and visits to observe working programs. Teachers learn to examine new roles for educational techniques, to influence publishers to offer comprehensive text materials, to exchange ideas and to influence all groups who have a voice in the curriculum.

The 1969 Rural Education Project of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools showed that the opportunity for rural

teachers to observe, analyze and evaluate their own teaching behavior (as recorded on videotape) produced improvement in instructional skill, pupil interaction and teacher attitude, which was unaffected by sex of teachers, level of teaching position or length of teaching service.

An ESEA Title I project in a rural area of Virginia conducted an eight-week summer program for the training of 16 special education teachers and a six-week summer instructional program for 194 educationally disadvantaged students in grades one through eight. Regular classroom teachers who showed potential for teaching handicapped children received both practical experience and demonstrations, as well as suggestions on using instructional materials and equipment. The student program was planned around a core of field trips. The project was judged to be successful, since 12 of the teachers continued as special education teachers the following school year.

Another program that cooperates with college facilities involved 53 school districts in Idaho. Long-time residents who had at least two years of college education and who remained in each of their districts, were trained to provide continuity to each school's professional staff. Courses needed by trainees to fill in deficiencies in major and minor teaching areas were made available by extension services, correspondence study, or summer courses. Courses could thus be completed in the local communities with off-campus supervision from the College of Education.

A grant-funded teaching improvement project in ten predominantly black school systems in Georgia offered professional assistance to 120 teachers for one full year. The project

utilized summer conferences, seminar activities and bi-weekly contact with a member of the University of Georgia staff. Using field experience rather than laboratory conditions, teachers tried more appropriate classroom instruction methods, were updated in their content areas and gained more positive attitudes about themselves.

Inservice training for teachers makes them more willing to accept and deal with new ideas. General teacher morale is raised, since they are now better equipped to handle difficult situations. School boards and teachers then tend to become more interested in and dependent upon research for curricular and instructional decisions, and can communicate this information to local communities.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

Guidance refers to the attempts of teachers and counselors to present students with alternatives for the future within the range of their capabilities. Guidance and counseling services are relevant to both elementary and secondary levels, but unfortunately those services in small schools practically do not exist. Where they are provided, it is often by an understanding teacher who has had very little training if any, in the field.

High schools in Mesquite, Nevada and Patagonia, Arizona, have been involved in a career selection program developed by the Western States Small Schools Project. The program uses community resources, much on the order of the Meeker, Colorado project, coordinated with guidance services, to aid students in making realistic career selections.

Cochise County, Arizona, is attempting to provide an adequate guidance program in their secondary schools, using

computer terminals and shared services to coordinate their efforts and supply needed contact with career and guidance professionals.

Effective guidance counseling can thus be provided through centers and shared services, but intensive inservice teacher training can also be related to familiarity with and adoption of various materials and techniques to be coordinated with vocational and career education courses.

DON'T FORGET COMMUNITY RESOURCES!

The schools not only need community support, but can use positive community attitudes as a force for development. The people need to have a voice in educational policy and control, to set goals and objectives and then see that these are met. In order to do this effectively, communities must "keep in touch" with their schools and with their youth. The community may also contain a good deal of untapped talent and skill that could be used to provide supportive services to local schools, as carried out for example, in Everett, Washington. The schools receive needed services, and the community has a more direct stake in the quality of the school system.

Good teachers are expensive and their time is valuable. Therefore, it is just poor business to have them taking attendance, assembling teaching materials, proctoring exams, filing, supervising halls and cafeterias and doing things which do not require an instructional decision. Recruiting teachers' aides for such jobs not only gives the teacher time to help individual students and keep in contact with parents, but also helps students who work with other students to identify their own problems. At Hagerman High School in Idaho, aides were usually students working under

the direction of a trained teacher. Their experiences gave them greater insight into student and teacher problems and teachers benefitted in better understanding of the students.

Paraprofessionals (aides) from the community can be directly involved in programs such as the Appalachia Educational Laboratory's educational television project. They made home visits to view educational telecasts with three to five-year-olds, observing and recording their responses to determine positive and negative reactions. This information guided changes in presentation techniques, content and emphasis in pre-school TV programs.

At Rocky Boy Indian School in Montana, aides were women who had come from the reservations to work. They were given more insight into the lives of the children and helped break down communications barriers that had been a major problem. Their work also provided some much-needed income to their families.

ON TOWARD RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory found that schooling and educational policy, when designed to join rural schools with their communities, are truly powerful forces for rural development and redevelopment. Rural schools can provide the base for skills and competencies necessary to utilize, coordinate and direct resources to revitalize rural areas. Teacher training is also important here, since many of the teachers do not understand the community development process.

The NWREL project concerned environmental improvement for rural children, and employed trained consultants in the rural schools to help with curriculum planning and reforms in policy.

A guide produced by New Mexico State University's College of Agriculture and Home Economics states that community development must become a part of the agriculture education curriculum. The guide also suggests basic steps to follow in planning, and gives detailed information on analyzing community resources and needs. The student then better understands the community and its functions and becomes personally involved in them as well.

Subject areas suggested for the curriculum include analyzing jobs, manpower planning, vocational training, community health services, planning and zoning, financing community development, etc.

Agricultural innovations increased production and decreased labor needs on the farm, but now automation has helped decrease the need for industrial labor supply and jobs in urban areas are not so plentiful. Congested living in cities and interest in environmental quality have led to a renewed interest in the countryside. Although urban areas have drained many rural people from the land, recent trends for reversal put even greater emphasis on rural redevelopment, which obviously includes education. It involves the creation of a viable economic base and institution-building, in order to provide community facilities and services, and a more adequate basis for permanent and beneficial growth.

Agricultural education can train rural people in nutritional and health needs and train more people for jobs in agribusiness. Adult educational programs should be extended to all rural residents, since <u>access</u> is the key word.

The Appalachian Adult Education Center at Morehead State

University in Kentucky, produced a report on rural adult education needs in relation to a national policy of rural industrialization. The report was based on the Center's five-year program of experimenting and demonstrating of improved practices in basic adult education, (ABE) especially with unique Appalachian populations in a 13-state region. It was recommended that adult education badly needs to be improved, and that a broader method of entire community education needs to be developed.

There is also need for education on community organization procedures, all of which might be offered through cooperative extension services, short courses, and conferences on important topics, possibly employing community-organization specialists. Educated citizens make greater contributions than those who are not educated. Resistance to changes which are not understood and thus seem "too modern" or "too expensive" is also easier to overcome by involving parents and community members through active participation in the programs!

WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

Financial problems, which with resistance to change and innovation underlie most of the problems of rural schools, are certainly not insurmountable, as so many of the successful projects have shown. The idea of cooperation and shared services offers many school districts just what they need at far less than individual cost. Also, the returns, in terms of improved rural environment and development, not to mention the development and utlization of human resources, are well worth it. Rural education needs community support and guidance, adequate facilities, instructional materials, qualified teachers with a low rate of

turnover, more, and more effective special services, lower drop-out rates and adequately prepared, employable graduates.

The most logical mechanism to provide necessary funds and direction seems to be the taxing and spending authority of the federal government. Federal monies have been made available (i.e. the National Defense Education Act of 1950, the Vocational Education Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) but actual changes have often met with resistance and therefore failure in the long run. This again points up the need for community involvement and inservice teacher training. Monies and grants are useless unless they produce the desired result.

When teachers and administrators are hopeful and motivated and parents and community become personally involved, there is a stronger possibility of broadening the tax base. More money can then be invested in an institution where the returns will be maximum not only in terms of rural redevelopment and improved environment, but also in human resources.

HOW DO WE START?

Rural America obviously exists. And it obviously has problems. It is also obvious that those problems can and must be solved. Although many innovations have actually taken place, some have failed, typically because they were not comprehensive, according to an NEA publication on curriculum.

1. The first step is community awareness and involvement, and a determination for positive action. With cooperation from community and educators, a survey or study should be made, probably with professional aid from the State Department of Public Instruction, reports

and survey guides, or professional agencies, to determine exactly what is needed, including short-range and long-range goals. Students themselves should also have some voice in curriculum planning. Thus change and innovation originates with the people and is suited to their particular situation.

2. The second step must take into consideration the best and most feasible ways of providing for needs outlined. Existing programs should be studied, community and other resources listed, and possible sources of financing and cooperative efforts examined.
3. Once the program has been planned, and has the needed local support, the next step is implementation. Evaluation should actually take place as the innovations are being developed and implemented so that mistakes do not become ingrained in the program and can be corrected as soon as they are discovered.
4. Final evaluation of the program is equally necessary and change can again build upon those evaluations. Programs and results should also be made available to aid others working to provide adequate curriculums and a higher quality of education for all students.

RESOURCES

The following list of resources in areas discussed provide more specific suggestions and points of departure for curriculum development in small rural schools.

RESOURCE REFERENCES TO SMALL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Page 1-2 Meeker School District RE-1
Meeker, Colorado 81641

Page 7 Western Nevada Regional education Center
Lovelock, Nevada 89419

Page 9 Appalachia Preschool Program
Southeastern Educational Labatory
3450 International Blvd.
Atlanta, Georgia 30354

Florida Mobile Early Learning Program
Southeastern Educational Laboratory
3450 International Blvd.
Atlanta, Georgia 30354

Regional Curriculum Project
156 Trinity Avenue, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Page 11 Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama

Nelson County Public Schools
Lovingston, Virgina 22949

Page 13 Lincoln County Schools
Hamlin, W. Virgina 25523

South Dakota University
Springfield Trajectory Occupational Program (STOP)
Springfield, South Dakota 57062

Page 14 Division of Agricultural Education
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Page 16 College of Education
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

Page 17 Council for Exceptional Children
1411 S. Jefferson Davis Highway
Suite 900
Arlington, Virgina 22202

Page 19 Teacher Education in Georgia
Department of Education
Georgia University
Athens, Georgia 30601

RESOURCE REFERENCES CON't.

Page 20 Arizona State University
Bureau of Educational Research and Services
College of Education
Tempe, Arizona 85281

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, W. Virginia 25325

Western States Small Schools Project
Herbert R. Steffens, Coordinator
Nevada State Department of Education
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Page 21 Hagerman High School
write to:
Department of Education
Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho 83201

Page 22 Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
400 Linsey Building
710 S.W. Second Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97204

Page 23 Appalachian Adult Education Center
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky 40351

College of Agriculture and Home Economics
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

WHERE TO TURN FOR RESOURCES, MATERIALS AND PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE

1. Local School Superintendents
2. County or Intermediate Service Centers
3. Bureaus within the State Department of Education
    a. vocational education
    b. special education
    c. school buildings and facilities
    d. adult education
    e. finance
    f. curriculum and instruction
4. Educational Officers
5. Community groups and service organizations
6. County Extension
   (may be found at local, state or national levels)
7. Private Industry

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools

ANNOUNCES

HOW WELL DO THEY REPRESENT YOU: A HANDBOOK ON RURAL SCHOOL BOARDS FOR PARENTS AND OTHER CITIZENS

The handbook should provide the rural school administrator, parents and other citizens with guidelines, existing programs, and resources helpful in bringing about changes in their local school districts. Emphasis is on population growth, consolidation, retention and recruitment, collective bargaining, standardization, and community involvement.

The handbook is available from:

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education
and Small Schools
ERIC/CRESS Box 3AP
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

Price:	Single copy	$1.00
	25-100	.75 per copy
	100-500	.7 per copy
	500-5000	.50 per copy
	5000-10,000	.45 per copy
	10,000 →	.40 per copy