This is a standard resolution test chart (USAF/ERIC microfilm test target) showing various resolution values:

1.0

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1.25   1.4   1.6

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3.2   2.2

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1.8

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Editorial Viewpoint

special issue on community education

Educational Considerations is proud to present this collection of articles on the community education movement. This issue provides an overview of the philosophy and history of community education as well as some views regarding its future.

Future issues of **Educational Considerations** will include additional articles on the subject of community education. The editorial staff would also like to continue the practice of occasionally focusing on one subject for an in-depth review. If you have suggestions for topics or material you would like to submit, we'd be happy to hear from you.

educational considerations

Volume II, Number 2: Winter 1974

In the 1970 version of community education, as opposed to earlier models, community education is not added on to the school's primary responsibility of educating children Instead it is the conceptual base for the entire schooling program

community education: where we have been and where we're going

By Jack Minzey

jack D Minzey is director of the Center for Community Education Development at Eastern Michigan University He is a past president and secretary-treasurer of the National Community School Education Association. His wide range of achievements also includes that of Regional Director of Continuing Education at Michigan State University and associate director of the Mott Institute for Community Improvement He received his Ed D at Michigan State University, his master s at the University of Michigan, and his bachelor's from Eastern Michigan University

The history of Community Education varies according to who is doing the telling While the "Flint Story" probably is the best-known throughout the country, there actually were several developments taking place simultaneously in community education. The literature of community education reveals that a great deal of writing on the subject took place in the 1920s and 1940s and that one could find community education experiments in California, Georgia, Tennessee, Michigan, Connecticut, Nebraska and indeed in many other places in the United States.

However, even though community education is not entirely a Flint, Michigan phenomenon, the history of the deve' opment of community education in that city provides some important lessons in the current perception of the community education movement. These lessons are primarily related to the changes which have taken place in community education, for it is these changes which not only affect the present interest in community education but cause a great deal of the misunderstanding related to the concept. It is, therefore, important that we look at the historical development of community education in Flint, Michigan in order that we have a better understanding of what is happening in community education today.

The present perception of community education did not emerge as a fullblown concept at its inception. When Frank Manley proposed to C.S. Mott a plan for community education in the 1920s, he was only interested in one idea— the use of public schools as recreation centers for school-aged children. It was not until a few years later that such recreation programs were expanded to include other activities for students, such as remedial and enrichment programs, and still later when these programs were made available to adults. Thus, community education was actually an evolutionary process which grew and changed to meet some existing needs and by the 1950s, could be defined as programs for youth and adults, over and above the regular school day, making maximum use of school facilities

This definition of community education continued to be used through the late 1950s and early '60s and is probably the basic component of most community education programs throughout the country. In the 1960s, however, several persons advanced a "broader" base for community education and, as a result, a new definition with new responsibilities and greater potential began to creep into the community education movement.

If one were going to identify a primary difference between the 1950 model of community education and the 1970 version, it would be related to the intensity of the role of public schools in the community education movement. In the 1950 version of community education, the movement was primarily interested in the programmatic aspect of community education. Community education programs were those activities which were added onto the regular school day and included such things as recreation programs, adult activities and various types of classes and programs which were operated over and above the school day on a self-paying basis. Schools favored such activities as long as they did not interfere with the daily programs of the school's primary task—that of educating school-aged children.

The 1970 version of community education has replaced the program aspect of community education and adopted community education as the philosophical base on which schools operate. Instead of community education being an "add on" program, it is the conceptual base for which schools exist. As a result, the schools adopt a much broader view of their responsibilities in the community and *commit* themselves to these new responsibilities rather than merely *tolerate* the old community education programs. The schools continue to provide for the training of school age children as they have in the past, but in addition they accept a leadership and catalytic role in providing for other needs of the community. This new role charges the public schools with the following responsibilities:

1. To provide for the education of the kindergarten through 12th grade youngsters.
2. To make maximum use of school facilities by the members of the community
3. To provide programs for children and school-aged youth over and above those offered in the regular school day.
4. To provide similar programs for adults in the community.
5. To assist in the delivery of existing community services to community members.
6. To provide leadership in the area of community development

The immediate reaction of many educators to this new role for public schools is often one of dismay and rejection. They cite the fact that the role of the schools is to teach the "three r's" and explain that schools cannot be "all things to all people." The fact is, however, that the impact of community education over the past few years has been impressive.

1. There are in excess of 700 communities with community education.
2. There are 61 universities with community education centers for the promotion of the concept
3. There have been 750 persons trained in Flint through a year-long intern program and 2,000 trained in short-term training programs there. These figures do not include those persons trained at the various university centers.
4. There are six states which have supportive community education legislation.
5. The federal government has passed national community education legislation
6. There is a national community education organization and 14 state and regional organizations
7. Community education has been the focal point of several national publications and is one of the most written on themes in current literature.
8. Community education is a part of the national platforms of the Parent Teachers Association and the Junior Chamber of Commerce and is actively supported by several other national groups.

It is hard to say why there is such interest in this concept. Some people in our society feel that our schools are just not doing all they are capable of doing. Others feel that community education can help restore participatory democracy. Some feel that community education is really an answer to the hypocrisies of education while others think that it just makes good economic, educational and social sense. In any event, our changing social structure requires new roles for our existing institutions and many communities are demanding that their schools adopt the community education concept.

Whatever the reasons for the current interest in community education, it does appear to be a forceful movement with which educators must cope. Communities feel that community education offers hope for making positive changes in our social setting which can help meet some of the pressing community needs and educationists are going to find it necessary to react to the pressures of communities for such programs.

"Americans delight in the ease with which they can get things done, but we owe it all to the simple device of having abolished every social mechanism for weighing actions in advance."

Philip Slater, **Earthwalk**
Anchor Press-Doubleday, Garden City,
New York, 1974, pp. 25-26.

The community school concept sees the entire community as an educational institution Likewise living in a community is a full-time educational experience. Community education is the program which brings school and community together

community education: is it possible?

by Everette E. Nance

Everette Nance is assistant professor of education administration and director of the Midwest Community Education Development Center at the University of Missouri in St Louis He has served as a consultant to a number of school districts as well as regional coordinator of the Institute for Community Education Development at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind He has an Ed D from Western Michigan University, a master's from Central Michigan University and a bachelor's from Knoxville College, Knoxville, Tenn.

"Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step: only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find his right road." Dag Hammarskjold

The Power of Education

A persistent theme running through educational literature is the charge that our educational system is not meeting the needs of an ever changing and complex society. At the same time, educators at all levels have been indicted for the failure of our schools. While educators must and should accept a portion of the blame if indeed the accusation is true, the community must also bear part of the blame and accept the responsibility for upgrading our system of education. The intention here is not to suggest that citizens have not been concerned with the problems but that they have been apathetic toward helping to solve them.

This apathy has expressed itself in many ways. It is frequently manifested at the polls. The failure of many school districts to pass tax levies attests to this fact. Whether this and other negative actions reflect discontent with our educational system or a confused citizenry is a question we must answer.

The question is difficult to answer because the issues are cloudy and other variables must be considered which have an important impact upon the educational scene. I am speaking of the general mistrust which exists in the United States towards most of our established institutions. Coupled with this mistrust are the mistakes we have made and continue to make in dealing with societal problems in general.

Some might say that some action is better than no action at all. I say that action without direction is pure folly and most often fruitless. I believe that in order to clarify the issues and remove the nuisance variables we must adopt a new type of educational process — a process which considers not only problems which relate to the school but to the total community. By considering the whole we can then isolate its parts. We can clarify each variable acting upon the educational scene and begin to work on the problems related to each situation.

This cannot be achieved if educators continue to work in isolation from the community. I believe in the power of education but I also believe in the power of involvement. Educators must involve themselves in the community and citizens must involve themselves in school affairs. The entire community must become the educational community and all resources at our disposal must be used to deal with our

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problems The educational process which is capable of achieving this end is community education The delivery system is the community school.

Education's New Direction

More and more public schools are becoming the focal point for community action—and well they should Schools represent the largest local capital investment, and citizens are demanding that this investment be used to its maximum potential The new and rapidly growing concept, community schools, attempts to make these demands a reality

Before getting into a discussion of community schools, community education should be defined It might be defined as a process through which people are involved in determining their wants, needs and interests and then initiating programs to meet those wants, needs, and interests utilizing all of the physical, financial and human resources at their disposal The community school, on the other hand, might be defined as one of the agencies in which the process of community education is facilitated.

The Community School

In a community school the basic effort is to bring the school closer to the community and the citizens closer to the school. Human resources accompanied by flexible facilities make the school the logical coordinator of activities for its immediate constituency. It has the ability to help create and direct partnerships between children, youth, and adults. Such unions should lead to the mutual analyzing and exploring of particular community needs and problems, to the formulation of possible solutions, and to the generation of direct action aimed at improving total community life.

The community school must be flexible in its structure. Such flexibility is appealing because it allows each community to work independently to solve its own self-identified problems. However, there are ideally four components involved in any community school academics, recreation, social services, and civic involvement Each component is developed by local citizens to meet local needs.

Academic services should provide for pre-schoolers and senior citizens, school drop-outs, and the handicapped, with "after hours" providing for basic adult education, homemaking, vocational training, business education, job retraining, and other programs adapted to the local need. The provision of late-hour sessions for the general citizenry broadens community involvement. Day pupils are encouraged to participate in other than academic programs of the system. With a stimulated demand for learning opportunities, personnel resources can be fully exploited by drawing technicians from industry, business and volunteer associations within the community for part-time teaching in the classroom Ideally, such activity will stimulate a more relevant day school curriculum

Community activities should be conducted in cooperation with local recreation departments and other appropriate groups. Citizens of all ages will be encouraged to take part in informal activities, arts and crafts, drama, music, dance, and other cultural pursuits, as well as the more traditional sports, physical fitness, and swimming programs. Because the school cannot be contained within a building but is ideally the

community itself, the resources of both public and private agencies would be integrated within the educational process.

Community services should include programs in health, safety, counseling, employment, law enforcement, mental health, legal aid, and other similar services.

As centers for civic affairs, the community school's citizens participate in solving local problems in cooperation with the officers of the municipality In addition to this, school facilities would be used for meetings of city-wide groups, clubs, and special interest groups Here also the citizens have the opportunity to become acquainted with local civic processes, learn how to use and modify them, and to share in the responsibility for successful operations

The term community must be examined in its many aspects A school community embraces all persons who live in a particular attendance area There are also the larger communities composed of the city, the county, the state, the nation, and finally, the total world community. Skills developed through the community school should lead to better decision-making at all levels, personal and group security, and hopefully, better interpersonal relationships through understanding.

The full implication of the community school concept points to two basic ideas First the concept is a process designed to induce change, and second it assumes the change is toward valued goals or conditions which represent a stage in development better than that occupied by the person or community before the change takes place.

Thus we hope to dispel the notion that education is exclusively the task of the schools and that it is a limited activity occurring between the hours of eight in the morning and four in the afternoon It is also more than a class or an activity that is time bound in any particular scope.

The entire community, therefore, should be conceived as an educational institution The goals of this broadened educational institution would be problem solving, conflict resolution, the representation of the under-represented and the community-wide use of the educative process Such a posture would place the function of the school in proper perspective and give all relevant persons and agencies a responsibility and opportunity to educate for the common good.

The Community School versus Traditional School

The focal point of the Community Education process is the community school There are vast differences between community school and traditional school philosophies as they relate to the child, the school, and the community. Listed on the next page are a few of the differences as viewed by Brookover in his book, A Sociology of Education.

Certainly, it is not the intent here to degrade the traditional school program. Rather, community education must be viewed as a complement to (completes or makes perfect) the traditional school program It gives meaning to the traditional program by using the community and its resources as a laboratory Further, community education serves all people, including adults.

The problems of society are certainly not the total responsibility of education Yet educators are increasingly called upon to suggest ways to alleviate problems arising

AMERICAN SCHOOL ORIENTATION

	Traditional School	Community School
Major Orientation	Book Centered	Life Centered
Concept of Child	All children much the same, concept of average child	Individual differences relate to most effective community participation
Concept of Human Nature	Children naturally bad	Children neither good nor bad; environmental conditioning
		Group achievement
Major Child Motivations	Discipline	Group achievement
Teacher's Role	Assign lessons and hear recitation	Direct learning process for most effective group participation
Methods	Memorization Cover subject matter	Group responsibility
	Mastery of facts and skills	Group planning geared to community concern
		Working on solutions to community problems
	Development of abstract intelligence	Development of responsible community participation
Curriculum	Rigid; discipline subjects	Flexible,, based on social process and community needs
Relation to Social Action	No interest in social action, authoritative approach	Training and experience in community action programs
Relation to Life Activities	Unimportant	Major emphasis mainly in community activities
Relation to Local Community	Ignored completely or largely	Civen major emphasis
Belief about Social Order	Fit child to existing social order, teach to maintain status quo	Education for a more democratic social order starting in local communities
Measurement of Outcome and Achievement	Standard tests of learning based on subject matter mastery	Subject matter and personality values plus achievement in community information and participation

from many situations concerning not only educational matters but conditions which exist in the broader community The community education concept has emerged to become one of the most efficient models of community problem solving to date because it allows for cooperative community planning

The full impact of the educational process upon community development and upon the solution to social problems will not be realized until the schoolhouse lights go **on** all over America For too many years we have neglected to use our school facilities as centers of service to assist people to fulfill their unmet educational, recreational, and social needs We have neglected to provide professional leadership sufficient to enable school and the education process to bring about the degree of community unity and development necessary to the solution of community and social problems

The community school, then, is that school which becomes a center of service to all people in the community regardless of their age, race, creed, or socio-economic circumstance As a social instrument, it offers its greatest service when its facilities and staff are available to all people of the community for assistance in fulfilling their basic needs.

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"When Rebecca lived in her village and needed to get water for the household, she went to the well. At the well she met the other women of the village; she heard the gossip, she met her fiance there, as a matter of fact. And then what happened? With the progress of democracy and technology, running water was introduced; and Rebecca stayed in the kitchenette of her eighth-floor apartment. She turned the faucet on and got the water out of the faucet; she didn't have to go to the well any more. She had only the telephone to help her collect gossip and she would have to find other ways to meet her fiance. This is a parable of the problem of centralizing sources of everything."

Daniel J. Boorstin
Democracy and its Discontents:
Reflections on Everyday America
Random House, New York, 1974, p. 113.

An understanding of the scope of the concept can be gained from a list of the characteristics of successful community education programs

indicators of
community education

by Barry F. Semple

Barry F Semple is with the Department of Education for the State of New Jersey where he serves as director of General Adult/Community Education

Community education is the most exciting and relevant philosophy currently being discussed by the educational community. The focus on community involvement in educational planning and programming, as well as maximizing use of local talent, buildings and other resources makes sense in many ways. However, common understanding of the total concept is much like "common sense," not very common.

There are numerous reasons for continued misconceptions about the concept One primary reason is erroneously confusing community education with such emotional issues as decentralization, regionalization and community control. A second reason is because some aspects of the concept are threatening to educators, such as community involvement in decision making and greater use of school facilities.

The purpose of this article is to identify some indicators of local community education developments. The development of such indicators has been an activity of the Office of Community Education, New Jersey Department of Education, during the past three years. Although they are not used to measure either legislation or state regulations, the indicators have been helpful in clarifying the concept for training purposes, and for providing a response to the statement, "we are already doing it." The community education indicators have also provided educators with a means of measuring strengths and weaknesses for more effective planning.

Community education is defined by Dr. Jack Minzey of Eastern Michigan as follows: "Community Education is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all of the educational needs of all of its community members. It uses the local school to serve as the catalyst in bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living and develop a community process toward the end of self-actualization."

Obviously measuring the extent to which such things as "sense of community" and "self-actualization" have been developed requires both subjectivity, and the identification of areas to measure. I would suggest one way scholars and practitioners can assess community education status is by identifying indicators of the concept. The following list is an attempt to state some of the areas of community education that lend themselves to measurement.

1. The existence of, and level of involvement of, citizen advisory committees.

2 The amount and quality of communication and cooperation among the educational organizations and agencies in the community.

3 The comprehensiveness of educational offerings for all ages

4 The existence of a community education staff position

5 Board policy that reflects the concept

6 The extent and type of building utilization

7 The amount and source of financial support.

Before discussing each indicator of community education development I must explain that the concept by definition, should not and does not take the same form or have the same substance in every community. Initiation and development are significantly influenced by both interpretation and the types of unmet needs existing in the school district when the concept is adopted as worthy of implementation. Because of these factors the concept could start as an educational planning effort (hopefully based on community input), as programs to meet specific needs of one or more age groups, as an effort to coordinate community resources, as a system for improving school-community relations, or in numerous other ways. Regardless of initial form the essence of the concept is in establishing an on-going process of "bringing community resources to bear on community problems," and requires continuous assessment. I propose that these "indicators" provide a basis for measuring the quality and quantity of both process and outcome goals of community education.

1. The first indicator pertains to the level of citizen involvement and can be assessed by asking such questions as:

How many and what types of lay advisory councils are functioning?

Are their ideas requested and utilized by the school board and staff?

Do they represent a cross-section of the community?

2. The second pertains to the very difficult, but vital task of improving communication and cooperation among organizations

Are they kept informed of current program efforts and areas of need?

Is consideration given to their inclusion on advisory councils?

Are district-wide planning sessions held to identify areas of unmet needs, and possible areas of service duplication?

Is there an up-to-date listing of the educational services being provided by the various groups? And is it being disseminated?

3. The extent and range of program offerings is usually the easiest to measure. This is a necessity however, as usually major gaps do exist.

Are program opportunities provided closest to those most in need, such as senior citizens, day care for working mothers, etc ?

Are costs for tuition, fees, etc. prohibitive?

Is enrollment in a course perceived as an end in itself or as a

means of involving the community in the community education process?

Are opportunities for lifelong learning really available?

4. The fourth indicator is a simple one to measure, but a vital component of successfully implementing the concept.

Does a position in the school system have responsibility for establishing advisory councils, identifying local resources and administering programs for all ages?

Is adequate time, status and pay given the position(s)?

Has the individual(s) received training in community education?

Does the individual(s) have meaningful interaction with and impact upon the "K-12" operation?

5. The school system's policy manual or operations procedure is usually very indicative of the impact of the concept.

Are community education principles a major part of the philosophy statement?

How difficult and expensive is it for the community to utilize the schools for legitimate recreational, cultural and educational purposes?

Do the duties and functions of staff members reflect the principles of community education?

Does the educational decision making process provide for community input?

6. Since the concept assumes school utilization as community centers, this measurement is a basic one.

How many schools are being used by all ages before, after and during school hours?

Is adequate parking available?

Are entrances and exits adequately lighted?

Are appropriate security measures taken?

Are new facilities being planned with community use in mind?

7. Although I have never known financing to be the dominant reason for either the success or failure of community education, it is obviously a factor for consideration.

Are administrative or building use costs dependent upon a state or federal g · t? If so, would loss of this aid cause the program to be curtailed?

Is there some level of local tax dollar commitment to the concept's growth and development?

Do the sources of revenue reflect broad community support for the concept?

Hopefully this list will serve as a starting point for the development of a community education assessment format that will help clarify the concept and serve as a basis for planning. Although more refinement and specificity is required in an assessment design, consideration must also be given to relating the design to local interpretation of district. However, regardless of such flexibility a sound method of assessment is required if we are to more effectively communicate the concept and document outcomes.

Federal funding is on the horizon for community education and this means more training centers and more staff to meet the demands of this exploding program.

a new era: community education goes nation-wide

by Leroy R. Watt

Leroy R Watt is the Executive Secretary of the National Community School Education Association whose headquarters are in Flint, Mich In addition to college teaching, his experience includes positions as school superintendent, high school principal, and high school teacher in Michigan, Ohio, and West Virginia. His Ed.D. is in educational administration and labor management from Akron University. His master's is from Wayne State in Detroit and his bachelor's is from Central Michigan.

On August 21, 1974, President Ford signed into law legislation permitting the Federal implementation of *community education* nation-wide.

President Ford's signature, which was preceded by a favorable vote in the U.S. Senate of 81 to 15 and a similar vote in the U.S. House of Representatives of 323 to 83, emphatically suggests that the Federal Government has endorsed the concept of "community education" and has taken a giant step towards making public education in the United States a life-long experience.

This action must provide a great deal of satisfaction to the family members of Charles Stewart Mott and the Board of Directors and the staff of the Mott Foundation. The Mott family and the Mott Foundation staff have labored for nearly forty years providing leadership and funds, believing always, that the educational experiment which began in Flint, Michigan, and became known as "community education" would succeed. Life-long education as practiced by the Community Education Concept model can have merit throughout the entire nation.

With such a small beginning in one city, support for community education development has grown to the point where today six states (Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Utah and Washington) support the movement and fund community education programs on a shared basis. State legislation supporting community education is being considered in seven other states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana and Massachussetts) and in the last few months the state boards of education and state superintendents of public instruction in Nevada and Hawaii have begun implementing community education programs in their states.

Today, across the United States, there are 500 school districts and more than 5,000 individual school communities involved in the implementation of the community education concept. The attendance areas of these 500 school districts encompass 20 million people.

It must be pointed out that this record of participation has been and is being accomplished without federal funds. If the recorded growth and development by private funding and local initiative is an indication of the interest and need for community education, federal funds could bring undreamed-of growth.

A major attraction surrounding community education, and obviously not overlooked by the U.S. Congressmen, is the

10

return of every dollar invested. On the average, community schools' programs cost 2%-8% of the net cost of the regular K-12 program Yet, with the community school program, the buildings and facilities are used approximately three times as many hours as before and by the entire community, thus providing needed services and programs to many, many times the total K-12 school age population.

Today across the nation, there are community education training centers operating without federal funding. At last count there were some 65 regional and cooperating centers for community education development sponsored by the Mott Foundation and individual colleges and universities. The new federal legislation provides additional funding for college and university training centers. This nation-wide training complex coupled with the pending federal training funds suggest a basic foundation of trained community school directors to support local school district development.

The present local school district development and the university training centers are backed by a national association known as the National Community Education Association located at 1017 Avon Street in Flint, Michigan. This association with members throughout the entire nation provides an information link with all segments of the community education movement The association provides a Community Education Journal, newsletters, national meetings and seminars, a yearly national convention, and an information clearinghouse and data bank as support activities.

In practice, community education is a way to provide, through the community school, educational, recreational, cultural, social services, and other activities requested by residents to meet needs identified by themselves.

The community education movement has the basic ingredient of community members participating in the process of meeting personal and community needs. Such experiences suggest that individuals want and will help develop a "new sense of community." The community education concept with its experience and new national emphasis is one way that a sense of community with renewed individual effort can provide better use of human and physical resources.

Community educators are a dedicated and energetic bunch—who accept the NEW ERA with some trepidation fearing that communities and school districts may jump on a new bandwagon without sufficient preparation or without a qualified community educator to guide the local development. Be that as it may—if enthusiasm, energy, dedication and hard work are ingredients for success—the development of community education nation-wide is assured.

"Logical systems tend to be a bit simple. A substantial proportion of bureaucratic rule-making, for example, consists of efforts to prevent a single unfortunate event from recurring by the crude device of eliminating some category to which it belongs. A public scandal or threatened lawsuit will almost guarantee the promulgation of new regulations (each of which erodes the vitality of the organization) to ensure against an event whose probability of recurring is infinitesimal. If a scandal occurs in a particular room, that room will be declared off limits henceforward; if it occurs after hours, doors will be locked and time checks instituted. If an embezzler uses green ink, green ink will be banned. Security is sedulously pursued by the futile device of using bigger and bigger conceptual nets to catch smaller and smaller particularized fish."

Philip Slater, **Earthwalk**
Anchor Press-Doubleday, Garden City,
New York, 1974, p. 54.

Four important areas of the community/school relationship should be analyzed to determine the potential acceptance of community education programs by the local community.

strengthening the school-community relationship

by James W. Satterfield and G. Kent Stewart
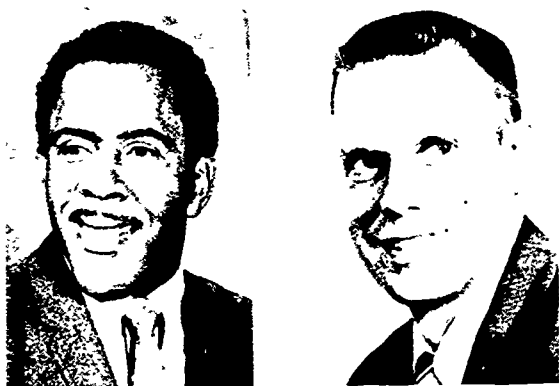
As director of the Center for Community Education at Kansas State University, Dr. Satterfield specializes in community education and educational administration. He has taught at Eastern Michigan University and also in public schools in New Jersey. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, master's degree from Eastern Michigan University, and a bachelor's from Norfolk State College He is a member of the National Community Education Association Board of Directors

Kent Stewart spent 18 years in public school work before coming to K-State in 1973. His experience includes teaching in Illinois and Indiana, a principalship in Indiana, a directorship in the Delaware State Education Department, and a 7-year tenure as director of facilities in a Maryland school district where he was responsible for planning and constructing 48 new schools He holds degrees from Indiana State University, the University of Illinois, and Indiana University

Forward-looking boards of education, school executives, and teachers have accepted the reality of community involvement in educational decision-making. Similarly, the concepts of community education and the community school are maturing rapidly in most urban and suburban school systems and are enjoying a high level of assimilation into rural school districts.

Secrecy, as the traditional *modus operandi* shrouding schools for decades, has given way in many school districts to a new spirit of cooperation between educational and community leaders. In these districts school and community are integrating into a functioning social and political entity. Effort in educational and community endeavor is aimed at strengthening and refining what appears now to be a solid new relationship.

In grappling with the challenges resulting from this union—the press of time and the frustration of "administrivia" being two of the more prominent—there is need to assess quickly community characteristics and interests in relation to educational priorities. Reduced to its most common terms, the challenge is one of determining what the school administrator needs to know about the community in order to effect the highest level of commitment to community education.

Reflectors of the Community

Basically, there are four areas of commu   required to provide data to make good decisir   school-community education.

1. **Community Power Structure.** What is the established organizational (power) structure of the community? To administrators in some school systems, this can be a misleading or perhaps lightly received question. For instance, some believe that a new community or a new subdivision within a larger community is not very well organized This is seldom the case. In fact, in some situations, the newer the community the stronger and more vigorous is its organizational structure. The authors have worked in newly established communities which were organized and tuned to a high level of political finesse. These types of communities are located usually within suburban school districts. In older more established communities the organizational power structure is present, but may be more difficult to define clearly since ultimate decision-making power is often obscured from general public view. This need not be of too

great a concern however, because the more visible agents of community power provide cues and directions for decision-making and are relatively easily observable.

The identification of power is an area of real concern and can be accomplished by observing closely those in leadership roles among the various publics of a community and school system Examples of various active publics include: the music public (band boosters), the cultural arts public (art, history and orchestra activities), the vocationally oriented public (vocational school advisory groups), the agricultural public (farm bureau, grange, vocational agriculture and agribusiness advisory groups), the basic education public (the 3 R's), the athletic public (athletic boosters club), union leaders, business (chamber of commerce), and the various service club leaders to name a few.

If each of these areas of power interest is charted, a series of pyramids is formed. Each pyramid represents a school or community interest. At the peak of each pyramid is the person or persons who holds greatest authority within the organization. The researcher is well-advised to be cognizant of the fact that the individual at the peak of the pyramid is not necessarily an officeholder in the organization. Often the power holder remains in the background, but nonetheless directs the major decisions of the organization.

If those at the peaks of the power pyramids are identified, they are often the principal participants in decision-making relative to community-wide and educational priorities. These are the individuals with whom the school executive needs to establish a positive relationship. Often this relationship is established vicariously, yet effectively, through more visible school and community workers.

By studying the organizational structure of the overall school community, the educational executive is provided with the names of recognized community leaders and decision-makers. These individuals almost always have an input into community-wide decisions affecting program and finance priorities.

2 **Trade and Professional Employment Profile.** What are the various trade and professional groups represented in the school community? To answer this question it is necessary to collect hard evidence concerning the community employment profile Once the data is obtained, predictions can be made relative to probable levels and areas of support and interests in school-community affairs.

For example, a professionally-oriented community made up of high-salaried executives and upper-income professional people may take for granted involvement in educational decision-making and be more than ready to organize and support an outstanding program of community education and even a community school at the highest level of its definition In fact, the leadership in this kind of community might think it strange indeed to learn that other communities are ahead in any area of educational leadership or innovation.

At the opposite end of the employment profile continuum, a community which is made up of low-paid operatives and unskilled workers may find it difficult or of little importance to spend much time in educational goal setting in relation to community needs and interests In this case, leadership for community involvement in educational program develop-

ment must begin with strong executive effort at the school level. Parent-teacher association and service club involvement is an effective place to begin. After a program plan for involvement is initiated, leaders and interested individuals in other community organizations such as those mentioned earlier can be included. Eventually, through consistent and positive effort an organization is formed and a commitment to school/community program activity emerges.

To develop a community employment level profile the school executive needs to obtain from every employer the types of jobs and relative salary levels of each of the job-type categories. This is not entirely private data and can be obtained rather easily. From the chamber of commerce or similar organization, data relative to professional and private employment can be obtained. From this data the employment and income profile can be charted.

3. **Age Groups Within the Community.** What are the various age groups represented in the school community? This is a critically important question because the interests of individuals comprising a school community vary according to age of the population and, to a degree, even the geographical location of the community.

By obtaining data relative to this question, the school executive can discover facts which go far in understanding types and levels of community-wide support for community education programs.

For example, the school executive might learn that the average age within the community is quite young and that interest in education is high because the young supporters have school age or pre-school age children. This age group may represent a vocal power structure often at odds with the older, wealthier power structure. Sometimes the latter group is conservative, especially in the realm of community education or community school organization. Here lies the potential for effective school-community leadership by the local school administrator; because it is possible to blend an older conservative leadership with a younger and perhaps more liberal leadership to obtain a positive force for educational change and improvement.

Generally, the older and more conservative element of the community will support an educational endeavor such as community education or the organization of a community school program if it can be demonstrated that the program will have long-term benefit for the community.

Community education is an economic consideration for profit-oriented and forward-looking community leaders. They are aware of the fact that better schools make better communities; and better communities mean better jobs which in turn mean more money in circulation for even better schools and so on around the economic circle of the profit motive. This is the real world within which the modern educational executive must relate if community education programs are to become a reality.

Data relative to age can be a bit more difficult to obtain than that for employment. Two principal sources are the chamber of commerce records and the United States Bureau of Census records. The latter contains accurate information which can be plotted on school district maps which have superimposed census grids. By assembling such a map, the

problem of determining the location of various age groups within the community is solved, thereby easing the task of determining population distribution in relation to educational facilities for housing community education programs.

4. **Attitudes About the School System.** What are the attitudes of community members toward the school system? This has been a popular topic of formal opinion research; yet, a number of school executives give only token attention to this important facet of community study The authors have asked practicing school administrators how their respective communities feel about education and the school s⁻ ⁻tem. Also, they have posed the same question to community leaders in the various communities. The differences in responses were amazing. Too often the superintendent of schools will reply, "all is well," while community leaders in the same school district will reply emphatically that, "the administration just isn't very responsive to community interests." This is indeed unfortunate and can lead to conflict within a school community and certainly has the potential for weakening the channels of communication and cooperation necessary to embrace and nurture the concept of community education.

To avoid these kinds of problems the school administrator should conduct attitude surveys within the school community. It is here that a basic level of community involvement in educational decision-making can be initiated effectively. By involving community leaders in development and application of attitude surveys, the potentiality of token involvement is avoided Once initial involvement activity becomes a meaningful project, then the future effectiveness of the school-community marriage is virtually assured

Action research at the local school district level generally follows the pattern of a questionnaire mailout where citizens are asked to react to questions and express observations concerning major facts of the school system—organization, finance, staff, curriculum, public relations, and co-curricular activities.

As a follow-up study based on findings from the community attitude survey, some school executives publish a budget study handbook which lists and describes various ongoing and proposed programs for the regular educational and the expanded community education programs. Each

program contains a statement of dollar cost required to continue, upgrade, or initiate each described program, and citizens are invited to react to each program prior to budgetary decisions. This is a very effective means of soliciting and utilizing community input into educational programming and priority assessment.

Implications for the Board of Education

The board of education is the decision-making body which controls the programs and the direction of the school system. The data obtained from the four areas of inquiry described above should be shared with the board. Obviously, some of the data are confidential as shown in the following tabulation:

Inquiry	Level of Confidentiality
1. Community Power Structure	Very Confidential
2. Trade and Professional Employment Profile	Semi-confidential*
3. Age Groups within the Community	Public Information
4. Attitudes About the School System	Public Information

* Dependent upon the design of the profile in relation to community size and potential for invasion of privacy.

Armed with this battery of information, school district personnel and community personnel are able to join effectively into a team organized to bring school and community into a relationship which will mutually benefit one another.

Administrative leadership, community leadership, individual and group effort, and school board and municipal government support are all required if the objectives of community education are to be achieved. Through this type of dedication, a new level of school and community achievement can be effected. It has worked, it is working, and it will continue to work throughout America's 17,000-plus school districts. These are the prerequisites for continued strengthening and developing of the already successful marriage of school and community.

"There is a cybernetic law that states that the more probable a message is, the less information it provides. The information contained in a message, for example, decreases with its repetition. This creates a curious dilemma for any group: the longer its members are together, the less they have to say to each other—at least about the group's own relational structure. Since the circuitry of the group is known to everyone, the information value of what is being communicated is going downhill all the time. The more effectively a group communicates about itself and its constituents, the more quickly it will stagnate in the absence of inputs from outside."

Philip Slater, **Earthwalk**
Anchor Press-Doubleday, Garden City,
New York, 1974, p. 69.

17

The quest for quality leaders in great quantities could be the nemesis of the community education program. The injection of large doses of federal funds demands serious planning for the training of future community educators

federal funds for community education: a mixed blessing

by Clyde LeTarte

Clyde E. LeTarte is associate dean of the Graduate School at Eastern Michigan University. In 1966 he served as the first president of the Community School Education Association. He received his bachelor's degree at Hope College, his master's and Ed D degrees from Michigan State University

At long last—federal funds for community education. While I often stated publicly that this would someday happen, I must confess that there were many days when those tiny flickers of doubt would force themselves into my consciousness. The many problems and obstacles faced by community education gave cause to wonder whether the entire movement would survive, let alone obtaining financial support at a national level. Well, that's in the past now. We have our funds and the resulting recognition and "legitimacy" that result from it.

As I think about what has happened, I know that I should be elated, exhilarated, and even ecstatic. I find, however, that I am not. Some of those same flickers of doubt that initially appeared regarding whether or not community education would find its potential still linger. The reasons for the doubt have changed, but the concern remains.

As we move into an era of expanding federal support and increasing national visibility, the growth potential for community education takes quantum leaps. Within the next four to five years literally thousands of school districts will establish themselves as community school or community education districts. Many of them will do so because they believe in the concept. Others will do so because they want to bring additional funds into their districts or simply get on the bandwagon. For whatever reason, a thing called "community education" will be established around the country and people will form perceptions of it based upon whatever is done in its name.

What community education will be is going to be highly dependent upon what community education leaders in various communities perceive it to be This recognition is the source of my single greatest concern. Who will be establishing these community education programs throughout the country? What individuals will be selected to initiate, develop, and lead community education in the many communities that will soon establish it? Where will these people come from? Certainly, current training programs are not adequate. While I recognize that we are training more community educators each year, I find no reason to believe that we can meet the future needs for trained personnel at any satisfactory level. We appear to be in a position similar to that of the wage earner in our inflationary economy. While he may obtain a five, six, or seven percent salary increase, he continues to slip further and further behind in an economy with an inflation rate of eight to twelve per cent.

While we may produce more trained personnel than ever before, we will fall further and further behind because the demand will increase so rapidly. The question that this raises is obvious What will districts do when they can't obtain trained personnel? I think the answer is also obvious. They will employ untrained people and hope for the best. The employment of untrained community educators on a mass scale could virtually destroy community education. As people are employed who have little or no understanding of their role, have few of the necessary skills to carry out the task, and have little or no commitment to meeting the potential of community education, programs will fail. If hundreds and hundreds of community education programs are established and find either failure or limited success, support for community education will fade rapidly. Like OEO and HUD, community education might well become one of those federal support areas that is dropped as quickly as it was initiated Should that happen, community education as a viable concept would be virtually eliminated in this country.

The history of education is replete with educational movement and innovation that was started with a strong, viable philosophic base and was ruined with misapplication of principles. Most of John Dewey's ideas in education are not rejected because of the things he believed, but rather because of the misapplication of his ideas. If untrained community educators attempt to apply the principles of community education without understanding them, we face a similar demise.

In discussing my concerns regarding the new federal support for community education, I am concerned that I am striking an altogether too pessimistic note. While the concerns are real, the potential for growth and improvement that these funds bring is also real. Let me now turn to what I believe to be a positive direction and positive utilization of the funds. The federal legislation that presently exists focuses upon the need for training. It recognizes that we do need trained leaders in community education if the program is to succeed. Financial support is available, then, to universities to greatly expand and increase their training programs. Assuming a continuation of this basic premise in the legislation for the next several years, we should be able to meet a large percentage of the demand that will develop. The major determinate to success or failure obviously lies in the federal government's willingness to continue its emphasis on training long enough to assure a cadre of qualified people.

Certainly, the problem of developing an adequate quantity of trained people is crucial to the success or failure of community education Achieving adequate numbers, however, is only one side of the training problem The quality of those trained must also be considered. This problem cannot be resolved as easily as the first; by continuing a funding direction that has been established.

Leaders in community education have had great difficulty agreeing about what community education is, resulting in training programs that produce "community educators" with vastly divergent views on what their role should be in a community. Much greater agreement must be reached regarding what community education is before some consistency in the quality of training programs can be reached.

While this problem will not be resolved easily, some progress has been made toward resolution. Dr. Jack Minzey and Dr. Don Weaver have provided a major contribution in establishing the role of community education and the training components that should be incorporated into any training program. From their work we are beginning to recognize certain key aspects of community education as universal, and draw from them some of the specific skills required of any community education leader. Weaver, for example, feels that understanding of and competence in some of the following areas is essential for the future community educator:

> organizational analysis and management
> leadership theory and application of principles
> communications theory and practice
> public relations
> group process participation and analysis
> group leadership and analysis
> social problem analysis
> community organization analysis
> program development
> survey research techniques

While these components may not receive agreement from all community educators, they do provide a first step in establishing some consistency in what a good training program should include.

How a specific training program is structured will vary with the individuals and institutions responsible for providing it. Diversity is appropriate and necessary. Within that diversity, however, there must remain some consistency regarding what community education is and what constitutes a trained professional in the field.

In summary, it appears that as this budding community education movement is about to flower on the national scene, two critical problems emerge—that of quantity and that of quality. It is essential that we both train enough people to provide community education leadership in local communities, and that these trained people share a similar understanding regarding what their responsibilities are, with training appropriate to those responsibilities.

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