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EDUCATION PROGRAM

in

WAR
RELOCATION
CENTERS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

EDUCATION PROGRAM IN WAR RELOCATION CENTERS

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FOREWORD

Following the removal of restrictions on the residence of loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry, it is anticipated that relocation will be accelerated and that many school students will be leaving the WRA Centers to enter schools in various parts of the United States. The material in this bulletin has been prepared as one means of indicating to superintendents and other school officials that the War Relocation Authority has endeavored to help these pupils continue their normal educational progress in the relocation centers. You will note that the bulletin deals with aims, purposes, organization, and administration of schools on all levels; namely, nursery, elementary, secondary, and post secondary schools. This monograph is designed to present a general overview of the education program in WRA Centers and to answer at least some of the questions which doubtless will be raised when Superintendents of Education are faced with the problem of adjustment of these pupils in their respective school communities. There has been no attempt to document completely the educational program. We trust that this bulletin will be helpful to responsible school officials dealing with an unusual school adjustment problem.

LESTER K. ADE
WRA Director of Education

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EDUCATION PROGRAM IN WAR RELOCATION CENTERS

The War Relocation Authority established by Executive Order No. 9102 was directed to provide for the relocation and to care for the needs of persons excluded by military order from the Western Defense Command area. Pursuant to this order the Authority developed in the States of Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming ten relocation centers for the people of Japanese ancestry who had been evacuated from the West Coast area.

The population of these centers included approximately 27,700 school children, American citizens by birth, who could not under our national pattern be denied normal educational privileges. The various states had no obligation to finance this educational program. This and the lack of transportation and of facilities in the nearest state public schools made it necessary for the War Relocation Authority to set up complete educational units on each center.

AIMS AND PURPOSES

The primary purpose of the War Relocation Authority schools was to enable these young citizens to make acceptable educational progress while temporarily withdrawn from normal American communities. Since the school pupils were partially isolated from outside life the schools gave much attention to maintaining an understanding of American ideals, institutions, and practices. The schools were organized to aid the individual pupils to overcome the shock of evacuation and to adjust to center living conditions. The centers were established on a temporary basis; hence, one of the major educational aims was to prepare the pupils for reabsorption into normal community life and for re-entrance into outside schools without an undue loss of time or of scholastic standing.

ORGANIZATION

The relocation center schools were organized as community schools and as such had a stabilizing effect on center life and served as centers around which many people, some of whom were perturbed by the disruption of their normal living plans, could organize for cooperation along lines of common interest.

To some extent the schools provided incentives to relocation in that the parents were definitely interested in the future welfare of their children, and the children with resilience of youth often change quickly to plans for relocating in new areas. Parents who otherwise might have remained in the centers relocated that their children might again enter the normal flow of American life. Through parent-teacher and other community organizations the schools serve as a background for community participation of various types. Parents who never before had felt free to participate in planning for and in open discussions of the school program and of the educational outlook for their children with school leaders and with each other now took advantage of this opportunity.

SOME ORGANIZATION PROBLEMS

The evacuation brought to the War Relocation Authority centers many families who resented the evacuation and many pupils and parents who were dismayed in new and strange surroundings. There was much discouragement. The school, an institution with which the people were familiar, and which served as a connecting link with the cherished past could now be extended to link the present to the anticipated future, to arouse new hopes, and to combat apathy and resignation.



A group of evacuee students changing classes.

There were no comparable precedents in American education planning. Community customs and mores had not evolved. School faculty coherence came slowly. Obtaining supplies and equipment for complete new institutions in war time, and the development of semi-acceptable housing facilities taxed the ingenuity of the school officials.

Pupils came from many schools and with varied backgrounds. Some came from schools with semester promotions, others came from schools with annual promotions. Most of them left their previous schools during the school semester without completing their courses.

To aid in this task of moulding quickly a school program that would preserve and extend forward the varied educational experiences of these pupils preparatory to their acceptance in many states and areas the War Relocation Authority brought the experience and assistance of recognized educational leaders either as full time employees or in an advisory capacity.

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

The school organization in the relocation centers was typical of those found in most American communities. The elementary schools extended from the kindergarten through grade six. The secondary school, grades seven to twelve, inclusive, were divided into junior and senior high school units. In addition to the regular elementary and secondary programs, the War Relocation Authority found it necessary to provide some intensive nursery school education. This was particularly true for those children who came from homes where the English language was used incorrectly, if at all, if these children were to be enabled to make normal progress when they entered the elementary grades.

THE FACULTY

In order to avoid disrupting school programs in neighboring schools, teachers were recruited on a nation-wide basis. Teachers were required to have valid teaching certificates covering the type of work for which employed. Each teacher qualified for and was employed as a war time civil service employee. Continued recruitment by the Washington and field offices aided in assembling satisfactory, and in some instances, exceptional school faculties. Over 35 percent of those employed had Master's degrees or the equivalent, an added 55 percent had

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Baccalaureate degrees, and about 9 percent had less than 120 semester hours of college training.

The teaching loads established were 40 pupils for each elementary and 35 pupils for each secondary teacher. An attempt was made to secure evacuee teachers, but few of these were or could qualify for state certification. However, the work of the appointed elementary and secondary teachers was supplemented by that of evacuee teacher assistants, many of whom had college training, although they could not qualify for certification. In addition, all nursery school and general or vocational adult classes were taught by evacuee teaching assistants.

THE SCHOOL TERM

The school year covered eleven months. The school day was, at the various levels, about the same as may be found in outside schools. One hundred eighty days constituted the regular term. During two of the summer months opportunity was offered for some pupils to make up work and to eliminate fractional credits, and for some others who were not employed on the center to extend their educational experiences through a summer program.

THE SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Some of the pupils unemployed and not needing to do make-up work had few home or community duties. The summer activities program provided for these pupils an opportunity to extend their educational development. In this program particular attention was given to providing opportunity for the improvement of physical health and skills; self expression through plays and dramatization; exploratory work experiences singly and in groups; and group experiences in civic betterment or other projects of common interest.

LIBRARY SERVICE

Lacking access to outside library services, the War Relocation Authority established joint school and community libraries under the supervision of the school librarian assisted by evacuee library employees. Branch libraries were located in the elementary and secondary schools. Many donated books of general value were supplemented by books and periodicals needed in the schools and obtained by War Relocation Authority purchase.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Although financed and directed by a federal agency, the schools were in most respects operated as were neighboring public schools, and in accordance with accepted educational standards of the states of their location. In each case a consulting council of state lay and professional leaders, selected by the State Department of Education, was appointed to advise the center school officials on school plans, the program, and relationships with the other schools and the state program.

COOPERATION WITH STATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Where available, competent local school administrators were selected to direct the Center schools. The Manual of War Relocation Authority Instructions stated that:

"The WRA should consult the State Department of Education and/or other educational leaders in the selection of key personnel, in determining school standards, teacher qualification requirements, and curricular content and organization."^{1/}

Likewise the schools were required to meet state standards:

"The War Relocation Authority schools shall meet the local state requirements in....teacher qualifications, courses of study, and graduation from elementary and high schools; and will provide the usual courses needed for admission to local State colleges and universities. The War Relocation Authority schools shall also conform to state requirements for attendance...."^{2/}

Under these arrangements the State Department of Education and/or other accrediting agencies advised on the school program and provided the usual state supervision. Schools in the relocation centers were approved and accredited by the States of their location, thus enabling the graduates to enter other schools and colleges without loss of credit.

^{1/} WRA Manual - Education 30.3.2-B

^{2/} WRA Manual - Education 30.3.3

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

As one means of maintaining local interest and of promoting some degree of the democratic control common to most school districts advisory school boards of resident evacuees were selected. These boards brought to the school officials a closer contact with the desires of the people and aided in interpreting the school program to the patrons.

THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Pupils came to the Centers from many outside schools. Some of them had transferred several times before arriving at the final Center destination. In most cases their plans for the future and particularly their educational plans had been disorganized. In many cases the pupils and their parents were depressed and needed help in planning for their return to normal American community living. As an aid to these pupils the Center schools organized an extensive counselling service. This program was directed by the guidance counselor with the assistance of home room teachers, principals and others. Pupils and parents soon took an active interest in the educational program and in planning future programs. In some cases evacuee organizations provided funds to send some of the graduates to college.



Pre-school activity--physical manipulation and mental reactions are involved.

The nursery school program embraced activities and experiences for pre-school children who are soon to enter the elementary grades. The elementary program included the kindergarten through grade six. The nursery schools were housed in various available rooms throughout the Centers. The elementary schools were conducted in army type barrack buildings which were altered to provide housing facilities for the children.

NURSERY SCHOOLS

The nursery schools were conducted in daily double sessions of about two and one half hours each throughout the school week. Where feasible the younger children attended during one and the older children during the other half day session. Where age divisions were not feasible the separation was usually on the basis of location.

SUPERVISION

Direction of the pre-school program was under the supervision of the elementary principal. In most cases the principal selected some well-qualified primary teacher and provided an evacuee helper to assist her in her own room that she might have time to supervise the pre-school program. This teacher helped to adapt local policies to War Relocation Authority standards, aided in the selection of and directed and supervised the work of the evacuee nursery school teachers. She also coordinated the pre-school parent community relationships and activities. In this program she was aided by an evacuee assistant supervisor, who helped interpret the program to the patrons, and the community to the supervisor. The assistant supervisor substituted for absent teachers, assisted in workshop activities, in the distribution of supplies, and in record maintenance. Other War Relocation Authority staff members experienced in the fields of health, music, art, and other activities conducted classes for pre-school instructions or otherwise cooperated in program improvement.

NURSERY SCHOOL INSTRUCTION

Appointed teachers were not available for the pre-school program, hence all instruction was by evacuee teachers under the title of teaching assistants. One teaching assistant was provided for each ten to fifteen nursery school pupils. In the



Group activities combine interest and learning.

early days of War Relocation Authority many of these teaching assistants were college graduates and a few of them had made special studies of pre-school education. Since most of these teachers relocated early, classes have been held to help English speaking mothers and recent high school graduates qualify as nursery school instructors. These instructors evinced much interest in and in some cases specific aptitudes for nursery school work.

HOUSING FACILITIES

Bare rooms, unpainted and unattractive, with uncurtained windows and floors with large floor cracks, and poorly adapted equipment which were available when the program was started were converted into attractive nursery school units by the patrons and instructors. Parents painted the walls and enameled the furniture. Apple or orange crates and scrap lumber were converted into shelves, toy cabinets, movable screens, cabinets, and play equipment. Bulletin boards were provided, fences were erected around play areas and guards around the stoves. The mothers curtained the windows and useable equipment was provided. These aided in providing the wholesome environment essential for pre-school education.

USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

An attempt was made to provide opportunity for quiet play and to foster the child's social, intellectual, aesthetic, and physical development. However, a major emphasis was placed on creative activities and particularly on free use of the English language. The latter was of special importance to many children, who were able to speak English imperfectly if at all. Improvement in the use of English was essential that these pupils might be enabled to make normal progress when they entered the elementary grades. Stress was placed on the story hour, the use of pictures, plays, games, and songs in the teaching of English. The phrase, "Tell it in English," was used often to encourage free English expression.

HEALTH PROGRAM

Specific attention was given to the development of desirable health habits and to the prevention of disease. Immunization against smallpox, diphtheria, and typhoid was provided where possible. Regular routines for inspection, toileting, handwashing, active and quiet play periods, rest, and sleep were scheduled. Floor mats were provided. Center hospital and the school supervisors provided all possible assistance in the pre-school health program.

PARENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

Pre-school parent teacher organizations were active in promoting the nursery school program. These organizations sponsored the development of English classes for parents who could not speak English. They encouraged the enrollment of all eligible children, promoted the health program, and assisted in room decoration.

The parent teacher organizations provided parents an opportunity to understand the American school system, the needs of the child, and the importance of having the child properly oriented into the school. Parents were encouraged to cooperate with the nursery school in developing in the child a sense of security, a feeling of belonging, and a confidence in his ability in preparation for his entrance into the elementary grades.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The daily hours of attendance for the various grades of the elementary schools were the same as those usually required in outside schools. School attendance was compulsory for children in the kindergarten and grades one to six.

SUPERVISION AND INSTRUCTION

The War Relocation Authority elementary schools were limited to one appointed civil service teacher for each forty pupils. However, the principal had the assistance of a supervisor of student teachers, a librarian, and one or two head teachers to aid in service and supervisory problems. The head teacher devoting part time to Atypical Education organized and carried out a program of special aids for the hard of hearing, physically handicapped, partially sighted and mentally mal-adjusted children of school age. She cooperated with the health and welfare sections in this program and had the assistance of certain evacuees having some skill in the education of children of this type.

In addition the principals had the assistance of a selected group of evacuee teaching assistants. At first it was possible to select evacuees having some college education. As these relocated others with less preparation had to be used. Under the supervision and with the instruction of the supervisor of student teachers these assistants provided a needed service in the elementary program. This assistance was particularly important since in wartime it was not always possible to obtain and retain a full faculty of appointed teachers.

HOUSING

The elementary schools were housed in army type barrack buildings, erected originally for family residences. Partitions were moved and the buildings remodeled to provide rooms housing forty pupils each. Appropriate furniture and instruction materials were provided. The rooms were heated by army type space heaters. The art classes aided in decorating the rooms and gradually attractive school homes were developed.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The teachers, the parents, and the War Relocation Authority medical section cooperated in protecting the health of the

children. Frequent inspections, first aid for injuries, quarantine for children with communicable diseases, and the requirement that children absent because of illness return only with the permission of the nurse or other person designated, helped to protect all children. Attendance statistics indicate that absence because of illness was lower than is usually anticipated. Parents were encouraged to promote good health practices in the home.

PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS AND OTHERS

Parent teacher organizations contributed to pupil morale and interest in the school, to the development of out of class learning activities, and to securing the interest and cooperation of many parents and other Center organizations in the school program. The parent teacher organizations were in most cases affiliated with the State and/or the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. In some cases the executive committee of the Parent Teacher Association served in lieu of a local board of education.

SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE

Library service for the pre-school and the elementary grades was available in all Centers. Fiction, non-fiction, history stories, and supplementary reading materials were provided. Suitable children's magazines were available. Evacuee assistant librarians had charge of the elementary libraries.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Group cooperation and team work was encouraged in the elementary schools. Pupils were offered opportunities to participate cooperatively in various types of social, cultural, physical, and semi-commercial activities that might contribute to their whole knowledge and their participation in democratic procedures. Numerous school ground beautification projects were carried to completion. School patrols were organized to protect the children and to teach safety habits. Pupils cooperated in writing material for and publishing in mimeographed form an elementary school paper. Some of the elementary schools organized cooperative stores directed and operated by pupils under the supervision of a teacher. Class and out of class music groups were provided opportunities to perform before audiences.



Elementary pupils planned and carried out a landscape program, later resulting in a thriving greenery near their school building.

Class and club organizations provided opportunities for democratic participation. Special interest and dramatic clubs gave an opportunity for self expression. Where facilities were available visual education opportunities were provided.

Throughout the entire elementary program specific attention was given to the problem of preparing these pupils for a return to and participation in the democratic society of a normal outside community. Pupils unable to use the English language clearly and fluently were given special drills. They were encouraged to speak English in the home. The program was planned to help the pupils develop self-control, initiative, appreciation and an awareness of others, and a feeling of community responsibility. With a realization that these concepts could not be developed by precept alone the teachers made use of various activities and the facilities of the community that the pupils might learn the principles of working and living together in an American community.

Where possible the pupils were given an opportunity to work with the hands. Scrap lumber, modeling clay, soap, the school grounds provided laboratory facilities and materials brought into use frequently. Participation was encouraged.

The fundamental function of the school throughout at least the War Relocation Authority elementary and secondary school period was essentially the same, and the nature of the educational process did not warrant a radical break or change in emphasis throughout this period.