

1973

Notes from the DPI

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NOTES FROM THE DPI

April 26, 1973 - A dinner meeting of the State Science Supervisors and Coordinators. Dr. Leslie Trowbridge, President of NSTA 1973-74, will address the participants. His topic will be "Trends in Science Education."

April 27-28, 1973 - Iowa Academy Meeting at Grinnell. Dr. Leslie Trowbridge, President of NSTA 1973-74, will speak at the Friday, April 27, 4:00 o'clock general session. Address: "Science Education Looks at Itself Through National Assessment."

May 5, 1973: Teachers' "Field Day" Workshop in Western Iowa. Place and time will be announced later.

May 11-12, 1973: Earth Science Teachers Workshop at Ames, Iowa. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Mr. Ken Frazier, Workshop Coordinator, Project ECO, 102 So. Kellogg, Ames, Iowa 50010.

May 19, 1973: Teachers' "Field Day" Workshop in Eastern Iowa. Place and time will be announced later.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT: A MODEL FOR IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

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Historically, schools have been passive in their roles in helping to facilitate change hence improvement in society. This is a paradox when we consider that schools, and the communities they serve, need major revisions. The disenchantment by certain groups of students in the schools and the citizens within the community might very well focus some light on some of these needs. What then, are our schools and communities not doing in allowing for full growth and needed change to occur? Why do schools remain shackled to an old order that somehow doesn't and hasn't worked effectively? Why do communities remain strapped to worn-out machinery that only serves to maintain the status quo? However, even the last statement could be questioned in light of a deteriorating quality of life for most citizens. What then can schools and communities do?

It is my contention that they must join hands in helping to improve the quality of life for all the people that they serve. If there is to be improvement, a new alliance must be formulated that will bring about a collective approach to solving problems that confront society. This alliance will induce change and I must admit that such change will cause some concern for those who feel comfortable in what they are already doing. Change and its effect is not always comfortable. Change implies adaptation and adaptation requires energy. It is easy for some people to let the world go by without their becoming a part of things. However, this is precisely the problem we are facing! We, as educators,

must help to facilitate maximum involvement by citizens in improvement efforts for a better life for not only ourselves, but more importantly, for all the people with whom we must reside. How can this be accomplished? There are many ways to approach the problem!

First, we must place the single greatest priority on recognizing that schools are for all students and that communities are for all people. When we have done this, we are ready to begin the larger task--that of improving these two environments. Beginning with the schools, we must relate what we are teaching to the real world which also includes that world within the school itself. Secondly, we must activate young concerned minds for the purpose of improving the total of the community in which the school is found. Specifically, teachers must begin to initiate environmental improvement efforts within the school and the community. However, a renewal of practices by staff, students, and other citizens will be required. Within the schools alternatives in education for students must be provided. Student involvement in school policy must also be forthcoming. Future educational practices must be examined in light of present student needs. When all these changes come about, schools might then perform the functions that were intended by their founders.

At the community level, students must be allowed to explore ways which can help to bring about changes for the improvement of the lives of everyone within the community. If the city government is not performing its function, then it is up to students to help catalyze concern and action among citizens about such malpractice. If the elderly or disadvantaged are not cared for properly, then students must become active in helping to bring about an awareness to others about this problem. If the construction of an interstate highway has a higher priority than housing or medical care then satisfactory solutions must be found to rearrange these priorities. In my way of thinking, schools could almost dismiss their traditional role--and turn toward a totally relevant educational practice which deals with real problems and not the abstract irrelevant kinds of experiences that may or may not make a difference anyway.

How does one begin to initiate this kind of education? In order for students to become actively involved in determining the quality of their school and community environment, they must be provided with various research