

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

To the School Committee and Citizens of Reading:

I herewith submit the report of the Superintendent of Schools for the year ending December 31, 1958, it being the sixty-sixth in a series of such annual reports.

Enrollment

The enrollment of the public schools as of October 1, 1958, was 3679, an increase of 180 pupils, or 5.14% over the total enrollment of a year ago. This increase was distributed as follows: 46 Elementary; 98 Junior High; 30 Senior High; and 6 pupils in Special Education. The new school districts established a year ago, following the opening of the Birch Meadow School, remained approximately unchanged and pupils were distributed to the various buildings as follows:

| School | Grades | Rooms | Enrollment |
|--------------------|--------|-------|------------|
| Lowell | 1-4 | 4 | 97 |
| Prospect | 1-4 | 4 | 113 |
| Pearl | 1-6 | 16 | 441 |
| Highland | 1-6 | 13 | 397 |
| Eaton | 1-6 | 18 | 523 |
| Birch Meadow | 1-6 | 17 | 487 |
| Junior High | 7-8 | 19 | 591 |
| Senior High | 9-12 | 42 | 1030 |

Staff

During the year it was necessary for the administrative staff to recruit a total of 27 teachers; 12 elementary and 15 secondary school teachers. Of the 27 new teachers, 14 were without experience; 13 had previous experience in other school systems. Four additional teachers were added to the staff, and 23 teachers were hired to fill vacancies due to resignations for the following reasons:

To accept positions in other school systems

| | |
|--|----|
| In state | 4 |
| Out of state | 5 |
| Left teaching for various reasons | 10 |
| To Military Service | 1 |
| To universities for advanced study | 3 |

Acting on the recommendation of a special committee appointed by the School Committee to study the program of physical education and athletics, a new position was created, designated as Director of Athletics for the Reading school system. Effective September 1, 1958, Mr. Walter Hawkes, who has served for the past 25 years as a successful teacher of physical education at the Junior High School, assumed the duties of the Director of Athletics.

During the year 97 teachers and administrators were enrolled in two special in-service training courses, one course in the teaching of science in the elementary schools taught by Miss Martha Ryder, a member of the staff of the Birch Meadow School; the other course being

a workshop in Mental Health under the direction of Dr. Libbie Bower and staff of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. In addition, many of our teachers were enrolled in summer school courses in various universities for the purpose of professional improvement. For those who are familiar with the work of the Reading schools, there is considerable pride and satisfaction in the high quality of instruction taking place in most of the classrooms of our various schools. Good teaching accounts in a large measure for the over-all excellent scholastic achievement of our boys and girls throughout the school system.

Instruction

The year 1957-58 may prove to be the end of one era, and the beginning of another for education as a whole in America. It is now an accepted fact that all the children of all the people should have the opportunity to complete twelve years of education at public expense. This fact has resulted in the phenomenal increase of enrollment in our Secondary Schools during the past quarter of a century. We have made great efforts and substantial achievement in meeting the quantitative problems of housing and providing a comprehensive program of studies to meet the needs of all the children who crowd our high schools. There seems now to be a growing public interest in the quality of our program of education, and a genuine desire to improve and strengthen all aspects of our school system.

During the year important projects have been undertaken on the national level. Dr. Conant's study of the comprehensive American high school, with its concern for educating the able student properly; the M.I.T. physics project, which involves the development of an up-to-date physics curriculum for secondary schools; the Rockefeller Fund report on education, with its emphasis on "excellence"; these are but three examples of the kind of thoughtful appraisal and constructive effort that is under way.

At the local level, there has been considerable effort and progress made in the task of up-grading the quality of our instructional program. Reference is made in some detail in the separate reports of our administrative staff to the following items:

1. Effective in September 1957 all elementary schools were equipped to take full advantage of educational television programs.
2. The program in physical education and intramural and inter-scholastic athletics has been strengthened through the addition of a director of physical education and a director of athletics.
3. The Rinehart Functional Handwriting System was re-introduced after a lapse of three years to aid all those teachers who need special help in connection with the course outline in penmanship.
4. In February 1958 a class in special education for children of primary school age was opened at the Birch Meadow School.
5. During last July and August the School Department, with the cooperation of the Reading Parent-Teacher Council, operated a 6-week summer school program for 130 elementary and Junior High School pupils who needed remedial instruction.

6. In the Secondary Schools several enriched and accelerated courses were organized in the subject areas of foreign language, social studies, and mathematics. For many years children have been grouped according to ability in the Junior High School to facilitate instruction. It is now generally accepted that every effort should be made to identify the bright child at an early age and provide him with a challenging program of instruction that is commensurate with his ability.

7. Special school exhibits and programs were presented throughout the year for the purpose of acquainting parents and citizens with the work of the schools. On March 26th the Senior High School held an all day Exhibit and Science Fair. In June special concerts were presented by choral and instrumental music groups at all grade levels. Under the direction of Mrs. Lyster and Miss Hagman an unusual music and art program was presented at the Joshua Eaton School in connection with the May meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association.

8. The overall testing program in the Reading schools continues to be excellent and second only to a very few other communities in the Commonwealth. In 1958 the Reading Memorial High School served as a center for the administration of the College Board Examinations.

9. During the year the staff of the Senior High School has been at work in preparation for the special evaluation program now scheduled for April 1960 and to be conducted by the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

10. At present nearly every high school in the state conducts a course in Driver Education. This program requires 30 hours of classroom instruction plus at least six hours of actual behind-the-wheel driving. Each year 150 to 160 pupils receive this instruction carried on during the school day as well as after school and Saturday classes in driving training. This is a costly program of instruction but one that is demanded by the general public.

School Plant

Due to the hard work and conscientious effort of Mr. Macdonald and our custodial staff, all of the schools are in excellent condition. During the year all the items that were planned for in the budget were completed. These items included several major projects, as follows:

1. On January 2, the Highland School reopened ten months after a fire that made necessary major repairs and alterations that now make this school, built in 1896, a thoroughly satisfactory and attractive elementary school.

2. During the summer the Lowell Street School was completely renovated and remodeled. The work was done by Mr. Macdonald assisted by Mr. MacMillan, Mr. Serrentino and Mr. Petroni of our custodial staff. Local contractors were employed to provide new lighting, plumbing, metal and masonry work.

3. After numerous difficulties, a new play field and football practice area were finally made available, late in October, for use by Senior High School students.

4. Additional bleachers were purchased and installed at the Birch Meadow football field bringing the seating capacity to 2500 for home football games.

5. At the Junior High School, brickwork, checks and arches in the fire boxes of all three boilers were replaced.

6. Fire alarm and automatic detector systems were installed in the Prospect Street and Pearl Street Schools.

7. Additional hottop was provided for play areas at Joshua Eaton and Pearl Street Schools.

8. New floors were installed in rooms 206 and 207 at the Pearl Street School, and the basement classroom remodeled and repainted.

In addition, a long list of items of general maintenance of an unforeseen nature were completed. We are getting to the point where we are doing something about preventative maintenance. It is our aim to make greater progress along this line in the future. We have an excellent staff of custodians and matrons who are conscientious about keeping their buildings in good condition. They are a credit to the School Department and the Town.

On January 26, 1959, the special committee appointed by the Town to provide additional Junior High School facilities will make its report to the Town Meeting members. This committee, under Mr. Lawrence Partelow as chairman, has spent many hours investigating all phases of the problem. After thorough study, this committee voted unanimously to recommend the building of a new junior high school on a site located off Birch Meadow Drive.

Reading schools continue to receive the generous support of the parents and citizens of the community. Those of us who have the privilege of working with the fine group of boys and girls in our schools believe that these children deserve this moral and financial support. A society that is unwilling to invest in the future of its young people will not survive in today's world, and is probably not worth saving anyway.

ROBERT F. PERRY,

Superintendent of Schools

REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

I. Enrollment — September 1958 — 1031

Last year at this time our total enrollment was 1006. Studies of our projected high school enrollment, which have been most accurate thus far, indicate that our future enrollment in 1959-1960 will be 1068; in 1960-61 it will be 1160. By 1961-62 our high school enrollment will increase to 1248. Since the capacity of our school is 1125, it can be readily seen that we shall be overcrowded by the school year 1960-61 unless additional school facilities are provided in the meantime for our growing secondary-school population. ✓

II. Staff Changes

Since January 15, 1958, Mr. Alton C. Bennett has been capably serving as Assistant Principal and Dean of Boys. For the school year 1958-1959 Mr. James Aldrich has been appointed Head of the Social Studies Department, taking Mr. Bennett's place.

Miss Hazel Percy is now the Head of the Mathematics Department; Miss E. Jane Reed serves in a similar capacity as Head of the Business Education Department. Mr. Walter E. Hawkes joined our staff this year as Director of Athletics and has brought energy and enthusiasm to the expansion of our program of athletics and intra-mural activities.

Miss Helen Hart and Mr. John Pacino are now teaching only two classes a day and are devoting the remainder of their time to guidance activities and counseling under the direction of our able Guidance Director, Mr. Ara Karakashian.

This year our school was able to fill all of the teaching vacancies on our staff with promising, enthusiastic, and well-trained teachers. Seventy-eight percent of our new teachers have had considerable teaching experience in other schools. Repeating my observation of last year, I should like to state that the high school pupils of Reading are fortunate indeed in having a new, modern high school staffed by an able, dedicated group of teachers.

Reading High School's instructional program continues to be aided by the moderate size of its individual classes. Our annual study of class size during the current school year indicated that our average class (exclusive of Music and Physical Education) consists of between twenty-three and twenty-five pupils — an ideal situation for both pupils and teachers.

III. Educational Highlights 1958-1959

During the current school year the faculty and staff have been hard at work examining existing school practices and constantly striving to improve the curriculum of our school and its educational effectiveness for all of our students. In this worthwhile task they have been aided in countless ways by the loyal and enthusiastic cooperation of our entire student body.

This year a modest beginning was made in offering accelerated and enriched courses for able, entering 9th grade pupils in Latin, Science, and Algebra. These pupils were given extra work in the 8th grade and were then kept together when they entered the 9th grade in our school. This experiment shows real promise; we hope to do more of this type of subject revision so that our gifted pupils may be challenged to work up to the level of their intellectual capabilities. As time goes by, we shall try to introduce more Advanced Placement Courses into our junior and senior years.

This year our Social Studies Curriculum was reorganized. More pupils are now taking United States History in Grade 11. A new course, Problems of Democracy, is now being taught in Grade 12. We have also introduced an Advanced Placement Course in U. S. History this year. Mr. James Aldrich, the teacher, and his pupils are finding this experiment most challenging and stimulating.

In the last year we have encouraged our pupils to enrich their programs by taking a fifth subject, preferably in art, music, home economics, or shop. As a result, we have fewer pupils in study hall and have been able to reduce the use of our auditorium and cafeteria for large study groups. Our Home Economics course of study has been revised, making it possible for more pupils to take Foods, Clothing, and a new course inaugurated this year, called Home and Family, which has a substantial enrollment of girls from Grades 11 and 12.

We are emphasizing this year the importance of Physical Education which is required of all pupils except those excused for medical reasons. Ninety-nine percent of the freshman class is taking gym; a few classes are taking it three times a week instead of the customary two periods. Two pilot classes, one of boys and one of girls, are devoting this third period each week to the study of First Aid, using the materials and instructional aids supplied by the American Red Cross.

The laboratory equipment of our science department, already quite good, has been augmented by the acquisition of additional items among which are 17 new microscopes. With the generous help of Mr. Philip Broeg and other interested citizens and parents, we have been able to put into actual operation a short wave transmitter and receiver. Whenever new money becomes available from the new federal National Defense Act, we plan to add further to our science equipment. On March 26, 1958, our science department combined with the teachers of Art, Home Economics, and Shop to present a most interesting and extensive all-school Exhibit and Science Fair which was well attended by large numbers of parents and citizens. Our mathematics curriculum was revised and modernized this past year; the fourth year course in advanced mathematics has been changed along the lines suggested by the College Board Committee.

IV. The Future Evaluation of the School by the New England Association.

In 1955 the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, of which Reading High School has been a member for many years, became a regional accrediting association. All member schools were henceforth required to be re-evaluated at intervals of not more than ten years for continued membership. Such an evaluation first requires a self-evaluation by the school's faculty using the Evaluative Criteria published by the Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards, followed by an evaluation of a visiting committee which has been scheduled to come to Reading High School on April 5, 6, and 7 of 1960.

While this self-evaluation of our school by our own staff will entail hours of hard work and careful, advance preparation, yet it will be a valuable educational experience which will permit the teachers and administrative staff to take inventory of our own school, to analyze the validity of our educational objectives, to study the soundness of our courses of study, to assess the effectiveness of our work, and to make any changes necessary to render an even greater service to the community.

V. Conclusion

In the last year there has been a more critical appraisal of public education everywhere in the United States. In some cases this sputnik sputtering has been all buzzing and no honey. In other cases sincere individuals, properly concerned, have constructively aided teachers and school administrators to bring about desirable changes, already in progress, which would improve our schools and challenge all of our pupils.

A study by the United States Office of Education recently revealed that less than 15% of high school students in the United States are studying foreign languages, while half of our high schools — the smaller ones — offer no modern foreign language at all. A study made at Reading High School in April 1958 revealed that 538 pupils, or 55% of our student body, were studying foreign language. Twenty-two percent were enrolled in Latin; 20% in French, with 12% in Spanish.

Mr. Sloan Wilson in an article in *Life* charged that on the basis of his (somewhat questionable) statistics only 12% of our high school population was taking any mathematics more advanced than 9th grade algebra. In March 1958 our school had 301 pupils, or 31%, taking second, third, and fourth year mathematics. Seventy-nine percent of our student body was taking some type of mathematics, with 55% enrolled in college preparatory mathematics.

In the last year we have frequently heard the complaint that the high schools in the United States were not challenging the able pupil. To find out whether or not this might be true at Reading High, Mr. Karakashian made a careful study of the 80 pupils in our present senior class who were in the top three ability groups in the 8th grade of the Junior High School four years ago. This study of our able pupils revealed that:

- 96% have pursued a college preparatory course.
- 84% have had three or more years of college preparatory math.
- 50% have had three or more years of laboratory science.
- 91% have had two or more years of laboratory science.
- 65% have had four or more years of foreign language.
- 82% have had three or more years of foreign language.
- 50% or more have had three or more years of social studies, while everybody has had at least two years.

While all of us here at Reading High realize that our school is far from perfect, we do feel that we are headed in the right direction. It is a real privilege and a challenge for a principal to be associated with a school of this type where the teachers, the office staff, and the custodians work together with enthusiasm and loyalty to maintain and to increase the excellence of our institution.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM W. RODGERS, Principal

REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL W. S. PARKER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Our enrollment this year — 590 — is approximately 100 more than it was a year ago.

As noted in last year's report, we will be well over our established capacity in the fall of 1959. At that time we will have about 700 pupils in a school whose capacity is 600, based on the Massachusetts Department of Education standards. This presents a serious problem. At the present time every classroom in the school is in use, with class size ranging to an undesirably high 35. There are various alternatives for handling this large enrollment, none of which is as good a solution as having more classrooms available in addition to our present facilities. Of all the alternatives the least unsatisfactory, in my opinion, is having a double session for Grade 7. All proposals for other solutions have features which seem to me to offer greater drawbacks than a double session does. At the present time Grade 7 is in double session in Wakefield and Woburn on a plan almost identical with that for Reading.

We had an extremely small teacher turnover this year. One teacher left to accept a 2-year fellowship at Cornell; one left to be married; and Walter Hawkes, after 25 years as an outstanding member of our staff, became Athletic Director for all Reading schools. We have secured good replacements.

As in previous years our teachers are meeting by departments with the purpose of constantly seeking to find ways of improving techniques, material, and evaluation methods. This year each department is completely reviewing its entire program, and making new and up-to-date outlines.

Teachers also meet regularly with grade chairmen to make plans for home room periods. Time is provided for a considerable amount of both group and individual guidance. In Grade 7 most of this consists of orienting pupils to the new school, its aims and regulations. In Grade 8 considerable time is given during the second half of the year to helping pupils with programs of study for the High School. Results of the Differential Aptitude Tests, taken by members of Grade 8 in December, are used in counseling students. Mr. William O'Keefe, the Youth Adjustment Counselor, attends many of the homeroom teachers' meetings as a part of his activities in helping youngsters make proper adjustments.

In addition to our usual testing program, new tests are being introduced this year. In October the English Department gave the Gates Basic Reading Tests to members of Grade 7. This test was used to discover those pupils whose reading ability was not up to their general ability so that appropriate action might be taken with them. The Iowa Language Ability Test will be administered to Grade 7 in January. Among other things this will indicate which pupils are properly equipped to elect a foreign language in Grade 8. Girls in the clothing section of Home Economics will receive a test at the end of the half year designed to discover whether or not they have attained the objectives of the course. It might be noted here that our course in Home Economics includes much more than just cooking and sewing, and that consider

able equipment, including audio-visual material, is used.

Interest in our Industrial Arts or Shop Program is at its highest in several years. Under the direction of Mr. Hackett and Mr. O'Gorman all boys in both grades work in the shops for wood, metal, and graphic arts during the year. The two elective groups for Grade 8 boys are filled to capacity and many return after school to work on projects. Among other things the boys learn how to plan and carry through various projects, the purpose and use of several kinds of material and equipment, and the basic construction in wood, metal, and type. The personal satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment a boy receives from the articles he makes are an important concomitant of this course. Several of the girls have demonstrated an interest, and last year Mr. Hackett gave up most of his lunch period to teach some 8th Grade girls the simpler skills of wood working. This year Mr. O'Gorman has 18 girls in wood shop during the activity period, and many more for whom there was no room were interested in taking part.

Our two activity periods offer a wide variety of service and interest activities. The activities this year are as follows:

Engineers, Traffic Leaders, Student Council, Glee Club, Orchestra, Crafts, Junior Red Cross, Chefs, Camera Club, Dramatics, Girls' Shop, Current Events, Newspaper, Teen Age Books, Clerks, Remedial Reading, Remedial Mathematics, Square Dancing.

One period a week is ordinarily reserved for an assembly period for the entire school as a part of the educational plan. Our first five programs involve our school elections, in which pupil candidates for office first take out nomination papers and secure signatures. Following the primaries, two candidates for each office conduct a campaign which leads up to speeches by them and their managers in which their qualifications and platform are outlined. The elections are concluded by an impressive ceremony at which the members of the Student Council are inducted into office. At various times during the year each department prepares a program in which pupils participate, and individual teachers tell of their trips to interesting places at home and abroad, illustrated by slides. The pupils also prepare and present appropriate programs at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Memorial Day. We also will have this year seven paid programs by people with outstanding talent of some kind, or who have interesting experiences to share with us.

Again this year we have had four meetings of our PTA. The number of parents who attend these meetings is a gratifying example of the interest they take in the school and in the education of their children. It apparently has become an annual event that at our first evening meeting in the fall the parents shall follow a modified pupil program for the equivalent of five class periods. At this time teachers explain the aim and subject matter of the course, materials and methods used, and in general try to give parents a better understanding of what each subject involves. The fact that we have an extra large number of parents present that evening indicates they are interested in a program of that type.

ALBERT H. WOODWARD, Principal

REPORT OF THE SUPERVISING PRINCIPALS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The opening of the elementary schools on September 8, 1958, was preceded by an intensive 3-day workshop period in all schools. The focus of the workshop period was on the improvement of instruction and coordination of the educational program within each building. This pre-school meeting of all teachers was a valuable method of introducing new staff members to the particular building routine, curriculum, and other responsibilities of teaching personnel.

Careful and specific planning for this school year was especially necessary since this was the first year within recent years that a stable organization pattern of Grades 1-6 was an actuality within each of our large elementary buildings. The 1957 fire at the Highland School had prevented a full realization of the projected plan to house Grades 1-6 in each of our large buildings.

Our elementary school population continued to grow in Reading and it was again necessary to do a small amount of redistricting at the Prospect and Birch Meadow School areas this fall. Despite the fact that a new eighteen-room elementary school was opened in September of 1957, this year found the elementary schools with only one extra classroom. Some crowding still exists at several grade levels throughout the town.

Staff

As is true in every community throughout the country, the Reading elementary schools had some turnover in its staff. Eleven elementary teachers were hired to replace staff members who resigned for various reasons. Two additional teachers were hired; one to assume responsibility for teaching a special class which was organized at the Birch Meadow School, another to handle increased enrollment at the Pearl Street School. The elementary school administrators have felt that our new staff members have justified our pre-employment estimation of their ability.

The salary schedule in any community is an important factor in providing adequate classroom instruction. As the State Legislature has increased minimum salaries, communities have been faced with the inevitable task of providing competitive salaries which are comparable to surrounding towns, Reading has not been an exception. In the desire to provide the key to a good elementary education — the teacher — careful interviewing and screening of a large number of prospective teachers has been annually undertaken by the elementary principals. It is our considered opinion that the new elementary personnel, some of whom have had prior teaching experience, are of superior calibre.

Mental Health Workshop

A fifteen-week Mental Health Workshop for Teachers was held this fall under the direction of Dr. Libby Bower of the Massachusetts Mental Health Association. Approximately sixty members of the teaching and

administrative staff participated in this worthwhile program. The small group atmosphere proved to be most effective and much was gained by the teachers in the friendly interchange of ideas and in the discussion of mental health problems as they apply to all grade levels throughout the school system.

Instructional Program

In this era of Sputniks and the Space Age, we are constantly appraising our instructional program. Greater emphasis is being focused on the continuous evaluation process. Each classroom activity is examined for its intrinsic value to the educational progress of each child.

Our pupils in grades 2-6 have been taking full advantage this past fall of the educational television programs being broadcast each morning over WGBH-TV, Channel 2, Boston. Through the efforts of each of the local P.T.A.'s, there are now a total of ten TV sets in our elementary schools.

The television programs have served as both supplementary and enriching experiences for the pupils. Programs being currently televised to a different grade each day are as follows:

- Grade 2 — MUSIC — Folk Songs and Instruments
- Grade 3 — LITERATURE — Book Talk and Story Telling
- Grade 4 — SOCIAL STUDIES — New England Heritage
- Grade 5 — NATURAL SCIENCE — "Discovery" Programs
- Grade 6 — PHYSICAL SCIENCE — Demonstrations and Experiments

Although all of the programs were not of equal caliber, the first year of programming has been most satisfactory and well worth the twenty-five cent per pupil investment that Reading has made in this new educational venture.

The physical education program has been strengthened through the addition of an elementary school physical educational supervisor. A well-planned program has been instituted at the intermediate grade level. Classes meet with the supervisor on an alternate-week program. Definite skills are taught for each major sport area.

The Rinehart Functional Handwriting System was again added to the school curriculum this September after a lapse of three years. This system adds impetus to the regular penmanship program in the schools through monthly teaching guides and test papers, and regularly scheduled practice sessions. Considerable improvement has already been noted in the many classrooms throughout the system.

In February of 1958, a Special Class for children of primary school age was opened at the Birch Meadow School. Under the leadership and guidance of a teacher experienced in the field of Special Education, the pupils in this class pursue a program that, although limited in scope, provides a firm foundation in the basic skills to children who cannot follow the course of study offered in the regular classroom situation. At present, nine boys and girls are attending this class where they profit from individual and small group instruction.

During the last summer, the School Department, in cooperation with the Reading Parent-Teacher Council, operated a six-week summer school program at the Highland School for all pupils in the Town's elementary schools. The prime purpose for the organization of this program was to offer to pupils the opportunity for additional work in skill subjects. Upon recommendation of the building principal and classroom teacher, parents were urged to send youngsters to the summer school, especially those youngsters who were not producing the quality of performance which their ability indicated was possible.

Approximately one hundred students pursued the course offerings at this summer school. Under the guidance of several of our regular staff, pupils attended school for a morning session of three hours; special diagnostic and remedial materials were provided to discover specific weaknesses of each pupil. Careful pre-planning and continuous communication by the summer school staff resulted in substantial gains for many pupils who were able to attend this program.

Because the School Department is unable to operate any program on a tuition basis, the P.T.A. Council acted as the official sponsor. Each pupil, therefore, was required to pay a sum of Thirty Dollars tuition to cover the cost of educational materials, general supplies and staff salaries. The success of the summer school during its initial year indicates that an expansion of the program in the summer of 1959 is almost a certainty.

Respectfully submitted,

R. HILDA GAFFNEY
WILLIAM E. SIM
ELEANOR M. SKAHILL
ERNEST SPENCE

Supervising Principals

REPORT OF THE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

Ara A. Karakashian, Director

During 1958 the Guidance Department functioned in much the same way that it has in the past but with somewhat greater effectiveness. The increase in effectiveness was in direct proportion to the increase in time made available for individual counseling of pupils.

At the elementary level, Mr. William O'Keefe, working full time as our Youth Adjustment Counselor since September of 1957, has done an excellent job in expanding counseling services to pupils and parents and in establishing better lines of communication between the school, the home, and various community agencies.

At the beginning of the year there were four part-time counselors in the High School devoting two periods per school day and additional time after school to guidance duties. A counselor was assigned to

each class with the understanding that he would continue to work with the same group of pupils until they were graduated or were otherwise terminated. The thinking behind this arrangement was that the counselors would get to know their pupils better and would be of greater service to them because of continued contacts over several years. Personnel turnover and reassignment has forced a modification to this plan which I hope is only temporary. Since September of 1958 the staff at the High School has consisted of Miss Helen Hart, Mr. John Pacino and myself. Both Miss Hart and Mr. Pacino now devote four periods during school hours and additional time after 2:30 p.m., to guidance duties. Miss Hart is counseling the pupils with whom she began in September of 1957 and who are now juniors. Mr. Pacino likewise is counseling sophomores. I am trying to counsel both seniors and freshmen and find this an impossible task. It becomes increasingly evident that when the pupil-fulltime counseling ratio is in excess of 300 to 1, some pupils are going to be sadly neglected. It is important, therefore, that we plan ahead and provide adequate numbers of full-time counselors at the secondary levels.

Another great and continuing need in personnel is a fulltime clerk or secretary assigned to the Guidance Department. Even with substantial (about halftime) use of a member of the regular administrative clerical force and part time help on the part of clerical students, counselors are finding it necessary to spend an inordinate amount of their time on clerical detail. We are still woefully weak in such important areas of guidance service as placement and follow-up and longitudinal evaluation. A fulltime guidance clerk would help tremendously to unify and expand piece-meal and diffuse efforts in these important areas.

Because of personnel shortages we have tried to supplement individual counseling of pupils with group guidance in homerooms. We are most thankful for and appreciative of the assistance and cooperation of homeroom teachers in this respect. We feel, however, that group guidance is effective as a means of providing general information and instruction to pupils, but can never supplant individual guidance.

During each of the past three school years we have benefited somewhat by having a qualified graduate student from the Harvard Graduate School of Education serve a practicum with us. These students devote ten hours per week for one semester to guidance activity in our schools. Miss Sally McIntyre, who worked with us in 1957, is now a fulltime guidance counselor in the Newton system. Miss Naomi Trachtenburg, who served with us in '57-'58, is similarly employed at Groton, Mass. Miss Carol Cheney will be working with us starting at the end of this year and continuing through the first half of 1959.

In-service training of Reading teachers who had previously obtained Binet certificates was held during the winter and early spring of 1958. Mr. John Morabito of the Eaton School, Mr. Louis Adreani of the Junior High School, Mr. Normal Seifel of the Pearl Street School, and Mrs. Nellie Greene of the Highland School, were regular members of this training program, the purpose of which was to develop uniformity

in the reporting of test results to supervising principals and teachers who had referred pupils for individual testing. It was agreed administratively that these teachers would be released from regular teaching duties on occasions when testing was required. Unfortunately, Mrs. Greene has since left the system and Mr. Adreani's duties at the Junior High School do not permit for easy use of his services at elementary schools lacking a qualified tester.

The over-all testing program in Reading Schools continues to be quite good and second only to a very few other communities in the State. We are continually examining and experimenting with tests to find those that will provide us with the most meaningful measures. During 1958, with the able assistance and direction of Miss Barbara Hill, Supervisor of Reading, fifth grade teachers and supervising principals examined several sets of reading tests for the purpose of determining which one would yield the best diagnostic clues and decided to use the Iowa Silent Reading Test in lieu of the Sangren-Woody, which had been used for several years. During 1959 a pilot study is planned for the use of new achievement tests at the seventh grade level. The testing program at the High School was expanded this fall to include the grade-wide use of the School and College Ability Test and the Thurstone Temperament Schedule at the tenth grade level. The School and College Ability Test, which is produced by the Cooperative Test Division of the Educational Testing Service, yields scores of academic aptitude in verbal and quantitative reasoning which are useful in predicting probable performance of students on College Board Aptitude tests. Because this was the first year we had used the SCAT it was administered also to the entire junior class. As the name implies, the Thurstone Temperament Schedule gives counselors and pupils some useful insight into the temperamental likes, dislikes, and tendencies of the pupils.

In 1958 Reading Memorial High School served as a center for the administration of the College Board Tests for the January, February and March dates. In 1959 we shall serve as a center again for the January, February, March and May administration of these tests.

Work that was begun in 1956 in preparing local norms has been continued sporadically as time allows. Scores on the Stanford Achievement Tests for the past three years for each grade level, at each school, and for all schools together, have been combined but results have not been thoroughly analyzed or reported.

There has been a great deal of future and excitement in recent months regarding the adequacy of American public education in meeting the challenge of the Soviets. Much has been written and even laws have been passed to enable early identification and encouragement of able pupils to go to college so that they may make greater contributions to the total defense effort of our country. As far as we in Reading are concerned, early identification of the able is not a problem. As a matter of fact, identification is the easiest aspect of a highly complex process which involves educational philosophy and organization. What many writers and legislators overlook is that it is domestic

and other environmental influences which deter many of the able who do not go on to college from doing so. After such a pupil has been identified, considerable counseling is necessary to counteract negative attitudes more often found in the parents than in the pupil. It is unfortunate that the National Defense Act does not provide funds for the employment of additional counselors even though it provides money for the training of new counselors.

Together with the identification of able pupils is the problem of providing adequate and challenging educational experiences. Establishment of Advanced Placement courses in high school require careful articulation of enrichment or acceleration programs at the lower grade levels. We have long advocated homogenous grouping at the extremes and possible departmentalized teaching of subject matter as early as the fourth or fifth grade. In order to prevent injustices that may arise from early labeling of pupils, and in order to hold to a minimum the formation of passive or negative attitudes and work habits on the part of less able pupils, great care must be taken to provide for a sufficiently flexible pupil placement program. This would entail more continuous observation and evaluation, and where necessary case study and follow-up counseling services.

Respectfully submitted,

ARA A. KARAKASHIAN,

Director of Guidance

REPORT OF THE SUPERVISOR OF HEALTH

Margaret B. Clewley, R.N.

All essential health services — testing of vision, hearing, and physical appraisals, with the attending notices of failures and parental conferences — were completed for the school year ending in June 1958. The annual report on vision and hearing testing, submitted to the Department of Child Growth and Development, State Department of Public Health, is as follows:

| | Vision | Hearing |
|--|--------|---------|
| Number of pupils tested | 3499 | 3499 |
| Number who failed | 86 | 46 |
| Number seen by specialist | 85 | 43 |
| Number accepted as correct referrals ... | 85 | 43 |

The program of physical examinations was completed for the school year 1956-57 by Dr. Wakeling and all recommendations were explained to parents in home visits, telephone conferences, or by letter. The increase in school enrollment, plus the increased number participating in athletics, has added materially to the number to be examined during this school year.

246 children were cared for at the Dental Clinic. The children receive a high quality of service from the Dental Hygienist and Dentist. There has been a sharp increase in legitimate requests for dental service, beyond what can be done under the present budget.

The annual program of inoculation with Triple and Double Antigen (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) was held in the elementary schools in the spring. The practice of offering a booster shot to the pupils of grade 9 was resumed and was widely accepted. This is in accordance with the best public health thinking, and will be an annual procedure. Four clinics for infants and children were held in the Town Building. A total of 355 school children and 36 babies were cared for.

The annual census of the physically handicapped, due each November, contained the names of 50 children this year, 24 of these being new to our schools. Much time is spent on behalf of these children. There are two children reported on the annual census of the blind.

Arrangements have been made for nine pupils to receive home teaching, as they were physically unable to attend school.

Care of the injured or ill in school is, of course, a function of the health staff. 102 children were taken to the doctor's office for care, or, at the doctor's request, to the hospital or x-ray laboratory. The need for fulltime health counseling in the High School grows. 400 pupils have been seen since September.

The contribution of the nurse to the promotion of health programs for school children is well recognized. She plays an important part in all phases of the school health program, health services, health instruction, safe and healthful school environment, and in the active development of home and community relationships.

Respectfully submitted,

MARGARET B. CLEWLEY, R.N.

Director of Health

W W D 'BABY BOOM'

READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AGE-GRADE TABLE — OCTOBER 1, 1958

| Age | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | Total |
|----------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Grade 1 | 53 | 270 | 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 338 |
| Grade 2 | | 67 | 271 | 25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 363 |
| Grade 3 | | | 58 | 245 | 21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 324 |
| Grade 4 | | | | 60 | 237 | 20 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | 319 |
| Grade 5 | | | | | 69 | 239 | 38 | | | | | | | | | | | 346 |
| Grade 6 | | | | | | 93 | 242 | 22 | 2 | | | | | | | | | 359 |
| Grade 7 | | | | | | | 116 | 192 | 21 | 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 335 |
| Grade 8 | | | | | | | | 57 | 164 | 22 | 4 | 2 | | | | | | 249 |
| Grade 9 | | | | | | | | | 187 | 60 | 12 | 3 | | | | | | 262 |
| Grade 10 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 5 | 201 | 75 | 8 | 1 | | | | 291 |
| Grade 11 | | | | | | | | | | | 4 | 207 | 42 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 260 |
| Grade 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | 98 | 88 | 26 | 4 | 1 | | 217 |
| SE | | | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 16 |
| Total | 53 | 337 | 345 | 333 | 329 | 355 | 398 | 275 | 189 | 220 | 271 | 394 | 141 | 31 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3679 |

1946

St. Agnes' School

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|-----|
| 1 | 15 | 69 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 87 |
| 2 | | 16 | 71 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 90 |
| 3 | | | 19 | 39 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 59 |
| 4 | | | | 13 | 47 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | 62 |
| 5 | | | | | 12 | 35 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | 51 |
| 6 | | | | | | 15 | 27 | 7 | | | | | | | | | | 49 |
| 7 | | | | | | | 21 | 24 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 46 |
| 8 | | | | | | | | 8 | 26 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | 37 |
| Total | 15 | 85 | 93 | 55 | 60 | 52 | 52 | 39 | 27 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | 481 |