

Phys Ed Facilities Fit Into Education Plan Three Ways

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A. Whitney, director of the school system's physical education program, in an interview with this reporter, wears a dress and a boy for variety football because our largest bus can not transport more than that number.

"THERE IS another aspect for those students who participate in this phase which is not evident to the other two. This is the element of competition. One progresses at fast and as far as his own ability allows. "In other words, there are some variety sports, not all where pure ability and little else is the determining factor for performance. "Perhaps at this time it should also be noted that there is another part of the physical education area, which is so closely coordinated by the use of the same facilities, the same instructors, and many of the same methods that it should be considered a part of the total picture. This comes under the program offered by the Recreation Board and is supported by the Board of Education and City of Birmingham.

"IT IS HOPED that these facts are self-evident from the broad outline presented," continued Whitney. "They are: "1) The time spent in physical education activities during the school day is required by State law. "2) As much opportunity as possible by use of staff and facility is made available for all students during the school day, after school evenings, Saturday and summer. "3) Triple use is made of physical education facilities through a three fold program, two thirds of which occurs after the close of the school day. "4) Unlike facilities for the academic and vocational part of school life, physical education facilities are also used on a year round basis. "The Birmingham board of education has taken other steps to provide for the total development of those attending its schools.

"SOME WHICH concern the physical education program are: "1) Variety sports (after school participation) is limited to a two hour per day average so that this very popular phase of school life does not interfere with academic requirements. "2) Very little loss of school time is involved in the athletic program through the scheduling of contests after school, evenings and Saturdays. "3) Students participating in the program must be passing in their academic subjects and a credit to the school. "4) One of the several reasons that spectator seating is provided is that it creates an additional source of revenue. "5) There are specific contributions to the physical, social and emotional development of the student which can not be attained in the classroom. These must come by the way of the work-shop

created by the gymnasium, playground, and pool.

"THIS MAY NOT be in order, went on the director, but when the report on the Russian system was released in Washington, Whitney and Cry went up from parents that U. S. schools ought to beef their science and math program and cut down on physical education. It was apparent that few people read the complete report. "In Soviet schools, students actually receive a full program of physical education grades through 10. In fact, Russian children receive 75% more physical education in the elementary grades than do Birmingham children. About the same is taught to both on the secondary level. Some of the facts are: "1) Physical education is a compulsory subject at elementary and secondary school levels as well as in colleges and universities. "Programs include gymnastics, sports and games for 2 to 3 compulsory lessons each week.

"2) SCHOOL TOURNAMENTS, mass sports competitions and festivals are arranged during winter and summer vacations. In 1956, over 20 million pupils participated in school elimination contests. "3) To improve the skills of young Soviet sportsmen, Russia provides 100,000 teachers and 350,000 volunteer assistants. Approximately 10,000 physical education teachers are graduated annually. By comparison, the U. S. graduated 8,406 physical education teachers in 1956. "4) Sports facilities are being built at breakneck speed throughout Russia to meet the growing demand for places to play. New facilities are well planned, well built and include gyms, basketball courts, and swimming pools, plus ample seating capacity. At present, there are 1500 big stadiums in Russia, 23,900 football fields, and 150,000 playgrounds. "5) What are the results? Russia points to its booming sports and physical education programs as its principal source of national strength and pride. In Russia, there is no cutting down on physical education budgets to put a

few more test tubes in the science laboratory.

"BOTH SCIENCE and sports get top priority in Russia. As a result, Russian athletes now hold 68 of the 167 recognized world sport records. There is a very good possibility that the Reds still believe in the old saying: 'healthy bodies build strong minds.' "Discussing the Birmingham school district's swimming program, director Whitney pointed out that Michigan has the longest fresh water coastline of any comparable state in the world, and our county of Oakland has more than 400 lakes within its borders.

"THESE FACTS alone, he em-

phasizes, justify to the thinking individual that one of the outstanding results of local education should be that of graduating students who are accomplished in swimming methods and water safety methods. The Eccentric has carried past stories of life-savings which were the result of children taught in the Barnum pool to further emphasize the point.

"Today's swimming pools are constructed of three types," explained Whitney. "These are the indoor pool, the outdoor pool, and the modified indoor-outdoor pool. The proposed pool for the New Junior-Senior High School as recommended by the Citizens' Committee is to be of the latter mentioned.

"FUNDAMENTALLY, it will be an attempt to combine the best facilities of the indoor pool with those of the outdoor pool. These briefly can be mentioned as follows: "1) The psychological feeling of confinement of dead walls, pool deck and seating area is eliminated by a sight line which includes the spacious out-of-doors. Ask anyone who has used the indoor pool and the desire was 100 percent in favor of the latter. "2) Use of the new type can double the numbers of persons using the facility at the same time because of the freedom of move-

ment allowed by the addition of valley ball, table tennis, social dancing, bait casting, badminton, shuffleboard, etc. "3) During summer months when the dividing doors are open, it is not necessary to run the ventilating system nor is it necessary to depend upon artificial lighting. "4) The recreational use of the pool attached patio has not been touched by our local program. They could be used for spectator seating for summer day or night exhibitions; a "stage" for acts to accompany water-shows; and combination "beach-water" activities such as Whitney.



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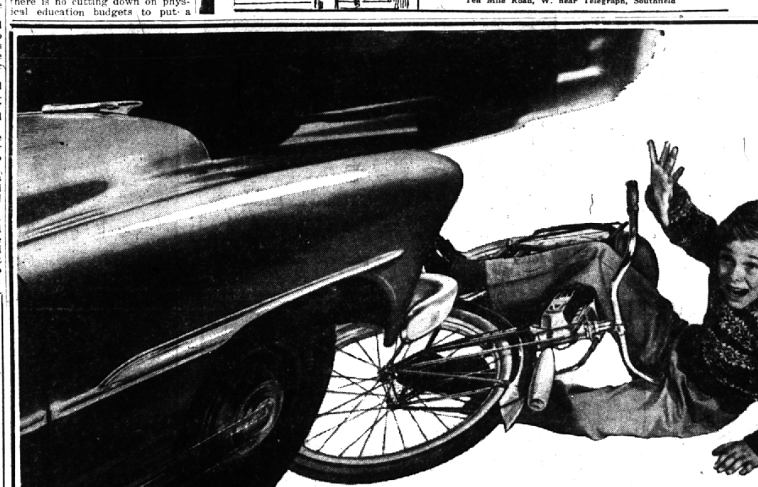
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"IT IS VERY natural to find that the patio will not be used during school time because of the instructional nature of the activity being offered. This will hold true in periods are devoted to this end. "However, they are appreciated and used by the adult recreational swimmer who needs a breather between efforts," concluded director Whitney.

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