

The attribute of dependability is more than an aid to earning money. . . it also can earn one the gift of friendship. To accept a responsibility, whether it be the doing of your job, promising to be at some place and then being there, and similar conditions . . . can result in less mental tensions, fewer need for alibis, happier living.

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SECTION D

## B'ham, Hills, S'field Junior Highs Compared With Conant Report

### B'ham, Hills, S'field Systems Evaluated

By SAVILLA SLOAN

Special Writer

How well do junior high schools in this suburban area measure up to the best educational standards practiced in other parts of the country?

An evaluator at Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Southfield junior high schools is possible on the basis of a recently published report by noted educator Dr. James R. Conant, former president of Harvard university.

The report is the result of a year's study of 237 schools and 90 school systems in 23 states. Under a grant by the Carnegie foundation. It is a sequel to the Conant report on high schools, which received widespread recognition when published almost two years ago.



Savilla Sloan

Based on "the best practices found in schools I visited", Dr. Conant has made recommendations in 14 specific areas of seventh, eighth and ninth grade education.

The Birmingham Eccentric asked each of the three local school systems to state their educational practices in these areas. Since the report also stressed quality of teaching in these crucial grades, The Eccentric added a 15th point—determining factors for selection of local junior high school staffs.

Conant also made recommendations on desirable size of three-year junior high schools, so a 16th inquiry covers school student load.

The reader can make his own evaluation of local educational practices by following The Eccentric's point-by-point analysis.

Point 1. In the seventh and eighth grades, English, social studies, mathematics and science should be required subjects—given one period a day for five days a week. English should lay heavy emphasis on reading skills and composition. Social studies should emphasize history and geography.

In addition, all students should receive instruction—not necessarily daily—in art, music, physical education, home economics for girls, industrial arts for boys.

2. A SMALL fraction of pupils should start algebra (or one of the new brands of mathematics) in grade 8. Some, if not all, pupils should start the study of a modern foreign language on a conversational basis in grade 7.

3. Instruction is basic skills, particularly reading and arithmetic, should be continued in junior high school as long as pupils can gain from this instruction. Extra instruction should be provided pupils who are below grade level in reading and arithmetic. Ability to read

should be stressed, and trained reading teachers provided for remedial purposes.

4. Group activities including musical and dramatic activities, assembly and homework programs, interest clubs, INTRA-MURAL athletics, and student council.

5. THE TRANSITION of the pupil from elementary school to secondary school should be eased by the use of one block teacher (who has the child for at least a two-subject period of time) in grade 7, at least. Otherwise pupils in grades 7, 8 and 9 should have teachers who are specialists in the fields they teach.

"An endorsement of 'block' teaching does not presuppose endorsement of 'core' teaching—which is combining the teaching of two subjects in relationship with each other, rather than separately."

6. In order to provide flexibility to daily class schedule, to provide time for elective or remedial classes, seven-period day, with 50 minute classes, is recommended.

7. Children should be grouped in classes according to aptitudes, with particular emphasis placed on correlation of reading ability. There should be three groups—one for the accelerated, one for the slower pupils in the bulk of the pupils in a large middle group.

8. A FULL-TIME specialist, or the equivalent, in guidance and testing should be available for every 250-300 pupils.

9. Meaningful homework is profitable in junior high school. It should range from 1 hour in grade 7 to 2 hours by grade 9. Teacher cooperation in assigning homework in various subjects should be developed.

10. In the ninth grade, the curriculum should provide for a sequential elective program as well as the continuation of the required courses in general education.

11. Facilities should include a well-stocked library, a gymnasium with locker rooms and showers, specially equipped home economics and industrial arts rooms, an auditorium or assembly room handling at least half the student body, cafeteria space for one-third the student body. Restrooms are special art, music and science rooms.

12. Whatever the organization of the school system, there should be careful coordination in each subject area from kindergarten through grade 12.

13. Average teacher-load should be 125-150 pupils per day over five periods. English teachers

should be responsible for no more than 100 pupils, while gym teachers may handle as many as 200 pupils.

A BALANCED staff of 50 professionals for every 1,000 pupils is a minimum acceptable ratio for an adequately staffed school system.

14. A principal must have sufficient administrative help in the form of assistant principals and clerical help. A full-time assistant principal should be available for every 750 pupils, a clerk or secretary for every 250.

15. Because of the transitional nature of grades 7 and 8, teachers with unusual combination of qualifications are needed in Grades 7 and 8 certainly should not be viewed as training ground for senior high school teachers.

16. For really efficient educational and financial operation, something like 150 pupils are needed in a three-year junior high school. Conant would question an enrollment of more than 1200 students in a junior high.

## Educational Practices in Birmingham Junior Highs

1. Required subjects for seventh and eighth grade students are one and one-half periods of English, one-half period of science and one period each of arithmetic and social studies (world geography in seventh, world history in eighth).

Emphasis in English is on reading, composition and a deeper probing into literature. Students also are required to take physical education, music, art and homemaking and shop.

2. An ACCELERATED arithmetic program is offered approximately 10 per cent of students in the seventh grade. Algebra is offered this group in the eighth grade. This allows math majors

to take analytical geometry and calculus during their senior year in high school.

No foreign language is offered, at present, in seventh or eighth grade. However, next year, one foreign language will be included in eighth grade curriculum.

3. There is one remedial reading teacher in each of Birmingham's three junior high schools. Children behind two years in reading ability receive special instruction in this area in grades seven and eight. A remedial English program is also a part of Birmingham high school curriculum.

4. There is no remedial program in arithmetic offered.

5. There is a full intramural athletic program for all three grades. There is a student council, glee club, dramatic club and

interest clubs at each junior high school.

Eighth and ninth grade students do participate in interschool athletics. There is no marching band at junior high school level.

There is no graduation ceremony.

6. "BLOCK SYSTEM" is used in seventh grade. There is definitely no "core" method of teaching used.

In eighth and ninth grades, students are taught individual subjects by individual teachers, who are specialists in the subject they teach.

7. At present, junior high schools have six periods of 45 minutes a day. It is planned to return to a seven period day.

8. Youngsters are grouped on basis of ability in reading, academic subjects. The separation

into groups is based on individual achievement test scores (for which reading ability is one segment), past performance on reading tests and recommendation of sixth grade teacher.

9. There is a full time guidance-testing specialist for every 300 students.

10. Use of block system shows an average of one-half hour of homework in seventh grade, one and one-half in eighth grade and one and a half to two hours in ninth grade.

11. All school facilities meet Conant standards. In addition, there are special art, music and science rooms.

12. There is coordination of all subjects from kindergarten through senior high school in the Birmingham system.

13. Having the coordination program is Donald Nesbitt, director of curriculum. An assistant to Nesbitt is being added this year.

A curriculum council, composed of the superintendent, teachers, principals and special education teachers, serve in an advisory capacity to Nesbitt.

14. The COUNCIL is hand picked in order that teachers may give enough time to the council and still have their classroom schedule uninterrupted, a half-day substitute is furnished 15 times a year for each teacher, freeing that teacher for curriculum coordination and subject meetings.

15. AN ATTEMPT to "try to find the teacher that best fits

the job" is the basis in hiring junior high school teachers. The nature of the pre-adolescent child requires particular handling teachers for these grades, and it is difficult to find teachers trained for junior high school.

Elementary teachers are not promoted to teach in junior high schools because of certification restrictions.

An attempt is made to maintain balance of male teachers over female teachers at junior high school level.

Some teachers are transferred to senior high school from junior high school, because of ability to work with senior high rather than junior high school students.

16. All three junior high schools have between 750 and 1,200 students.

## Bloomfield Hills Standards and Program

1. In the seventh grade, a period a day each of English, arithmetic, science and social studies is required. Also required is homemaking or shop one semester of art, one semester of music, gym and a 13-week program of study skills, speech and health.

2. Required in eighth grade is English, social studies, arithmetic, science, gym and a 13-week program of reading skills, speech and educational guidance. Shop, homemaking, arts and music are electives.

3. SOCIAL STUDIES in the seventh grade includes geography and history of the Eastern hemisphere and in the eighth grade, American history and geography.

4. Reading skills are emphasized in both seventh and eighth grades.

5. A new Scott-Foreman arithmetic series, in which elements

of advanced mathematics are introduced, is being used at the seventh grade level this year, and the program will be carried forward to the eighth grade next year. There is no eighth grade algebra class.

6. Conversational Spanish is offered in the seventh grade to students selected from the upper third of their class in language skill ability, with a corresponding IQ classification.

7. Both Spanish and French are offered as electives to all students in the eighth grade.

8. In addition there is an experimental program—teaching French to elementary pupils—being carried on for the third year in lower grades in the school system.

9. THERE ARE four reading-specialists at Bloomfield Hills junior high school.

10. In the seventh grade, reading and study skills are emphasized. In grade eight, reading rate and comprehension are developed, and in the ninth grade a reading and writing laboratory is a part of the English curriculum.

11. For students below average in reading ability, there are remedial reading sections in grades 7 and 8. Individual instruction for individual reading problems is available as well.

12. Basic arithmetic is taught daily in grades 7, 8 and 9, but there is no remedial arithmetic program.

13. 4. Except for student council and student assemblies, the varied extra-curricular activities at the junior high school are carried on after school hours. These include, band, stringed instrument groups, glee club, choir, dramatic club, math club, future teachers club, newspaper club, bowling, chess club and other in-

terest activities.

14. THE ATHLETIC program in seventh and eighth grades is limited to the ninth grade students do participate in inter-school sports.

15. There is no marching band and no graduation ceremonies.

16. Two block teaching periods of English-social studies and math-science are scheduled in the seventh grade. In the eighth grade, English and social studies are "block" taught. Other subjects are taught by individual teachers, who are specialists in their teaching field. In the ninth grade, pupils have individual specialist-teachers in all subjects.

17. There is no "core" teaching. It would not be opposed, however, if teachers expert in this method were available.

18. There are seven 47-minute periods a day.

19. Children are grouped according to ability on a subject-to-subject basis, except where block teaching prevents division of two subjects.

20. Teacher recommendation, corroborated by testing results, determines the grouping. There is an accelerated group, a large regular group and a remedial-class group.

21. THERE IS a full-time guidance personnel to pupil ratio of 1:250.

22. Home work assignments range from one hour in grade 7 to two hours in grade 9.

23. Block teaching in grades 7 and 8 help apportion home work assignments. The teaching staff also spread due dates of major projects and exams, so students do not get difficult assignments at the same time.

24. Children are held back strictly on the basis of evaluation as

to whether it would be worthwhile for the student. Social, psychological and academic factors are considered in promotion and non-promotion.

25. There is a sequential program in these fields: science, speech, creative writing, dramatics, typing, drafting, commercial art and design, choir and instrumental music.

26. REQUIRED SUBJECTS are social studies, mathematics, English and alternating courses in physical education and reading skills and educational guidance.

27. A biology course is offered to students who have shown outstanding ability in previous general science courses.

28. Facilities meet Conant requirements.

29. THERE IS curriculum coordination of all grades from kindergarten through high school.

30. A complete curriculum study in process at the moment; and, when concluded, each teacher in the school system will be able to examine exactly what is taught in each subject in each grade. There are curriculum committees organized for each subject, meeting once a month, with teachers from all levels represented on each committee. School is dismissed for teacher workshops seven times a year.

31. IN GRADE 7, average teacher load for all major subjects is 85-115 pupils. In grade 8, the teacher load is 85-175 pupils and in grade 9 it is 140-170.

32. There is a six-period teaching day for teachers.

33. THERE IS a pupil teacher ratio of 21.7 students to each teacher. English teachers have a pupil load of 148 students per day. Physical education instruc-

tion is the basis in hiring junior high school teachers. The nature of the pre-adolescent child requires particular handling teachers for these grades, and it is difficult to find teachers trained for junior high school.

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## Southfield's Junior High School System

1. Southfield junior high schools include only grades 8 and 9.

2. Grade 8 requires English, math, science, social studies and physical education. Home economics and industrial arts are electives, as are art and music.

3. Reading skills, composition and literature appreciation are emphasized in the English program.

4. Eighth grade social study in American history, world history and Michigan geography are taught in ninth grade.

5. Students with higher math ability are given an enriched arithmetic program that includes basic introduction to geometry and algebra.

6. There are no foreign language courses offered in the eighth grade.

7. The English program is varied to encompass all students at whatever grade level they are reading, with a testing program to determine reading levels. One teacher at each junior high school teaches remedial reading classes under the supervision of a director of reading.

8. Basic math classes are held to approximately 20 students, so that help can be given to stu-

dents with math difficulties on an individual basis.

9. Extra-curricular activities include girls athletic association, student council, pep club, chess club, ping pong club, chess club, French club, science club, art club and other student interest clubs.

10. Southfield junior high schools are members of the Little Oak league and do participate in modified interscholastic athletic programs with individuals of the same age and grade.

11. There is no marching band or other school ceremonies.

12. There is no "block" teaching in junior high school. In-

stead, teachers are assigned to their field of teaching on the basis of their major field of study in college.

13. THERE IS a seven-period day, with 50 minutes in each period.

14. Separation of students on the basis of intellectual capacity and reading ability is limited to remedial reading classes and enriched English classes for the academically talented. Students selecting algebra and biology at the ninth grade level, and those selected for advanced math in the half of the eighth grade, also contribute to separation by

intellectual ability.

15. There is a guidance-testing specialist for each grade at each junior high school. The ratio is one specialist for every 375 students.

16. Specialists initiate individual group orientation programs on a grade-to-grade level and also help students with personal, social and academic adjustments.

17. There is an average of one to two hours of homework assigned in eighth and ninth grades.

18. Teachers work together by department and faculty council to determine policy and procedure on homework.

19. THERE IS a continuing program for electives as well as required subjects at the ninth grade level. All students may continue with shop, home economics, art and music, so that they may be acquiring "marketable skills" in these fields.

20. Latin, French and Spanish are introduced at ninth grade level with a continuing high school program in these subjects.

21. Required subjects in ninth grade are English, math, general science, art and physical education.

22. Facilities meet Conant requirements.

23. Coordination of subject matter is the direct responsibility of the superintendent's office. The elementary program is assigned to a director of elementary education, who plans with the junior high school principals for systematic curriculum development. Establishment of permanent study committees with representatives from elementary, junior high school, and high school staffs, has been accomplished.

24. THERE IS a pupil teacher ratio of 21.7 students to each teacher. English teachers have a pupil load of 148 students per day. Physical education instruc-

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