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The Need of a Vocational Guidance Program in A. J. Moore High School Waco, Texas

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THE NEED OF A VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM
IN
A. J. MOORE HIGH SCHOOL
WACO, TEXAS

I. Introduction

A. Waco

1. Location
2. Population
3. Economic conditions
4. A. J. Moore High School

B. Vocational Guidance

1. Explanation of terms
 - a. Origin
 - b. Growth
 - c. Purpose

II. Need for Vocational Guidance in the School

III. Method of meeting program

- A. Conferences
- B. Surveys
- C. Pageants

IV. Results of Guidance

V. Conclusion

THE NEED FOR A VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM
AND SOME OF THE RESULTS IN A.J. MOORE HIGH SCHOOL,
WACO, TEXAS

Introduction:

Vocational guidance is an educational service and as such should be considered an integral part of the educational program carried on by the recognized educational agency of the community. Helping the youth to obtain reliable and significant information upon which to base a choice of occupation, aiding him to find a suitable opportunity to begin work in the occupation of his choice, and giving him additional assistance as needed during the period of adjustment and further training after employment begins, are just as truly educational service as teaching the same youth history or mathematics. The former service often has a more vital bearing upon his satisfaction in life and his contribution to society than the latter. When we consider the question of guidance, we are considering not something which is to be added to education, not something which exists outside, but something which is really in the very center of education itself.

American democratic ideals demand not only that all should have as nearly as possible equal opportunity for education, but also that all men and women should be employed in that form of work to which they may contribute

most of their own happiness and to the common good. Hence if the high school is to prepare its students to be vocationally efficient, there is need for guiding them so that they will be equipped to make the optimum re-adjustments in this complex world of economic and social changes.

Waco:

Waco, the largest city on the Brazos River, is located in South Central Texas, McLennan County. The Brazos River is one of the largest and longest rivers in Texas over which is the longest and highest highway bridge in the Southwest. It has four railroads and seven highways. It is the center of a great agricultural, livestock and poultry region, making it the main trading place for farm products. It has a city area of 17.5 square miles and a county area of 1049 square miles.

The population of 1937 was 650,000; of this number 9000 are Negroes. The chief industries in which Negroes are engaged are iron foundry and the Katy and Cotton Belt railroad shops. In the fall a great number of persons go out to pick cotton.

The A. J. Moore High School is located in the southeastern part of the city near the Brazos river. The high school and ward school are combined. There are fourteen high school teachers, fourteen elementary teachers, and the student enrollment is about 1262 of which 700 are high school students. In the high school the literary

subjects offered are mathematics, English, science, social science and foreign language. The vocational subjects offered are Home Economics, Manual Training and Commercial subjects. Music is the one subject in fine arts that is taught.

Explanation of Term:

Vocational guidance must include the following:

1. Aiding those who are faced with the problem of choosing an occupation to obtain reliable, significant, and adequate information upon which to base their choice.
2. Providing them, as far as practicable, with suitable try-out experiences in order to test their fitness for occupations in which they have a special interest.
3. Helping them to evaluate and interpret information and try-out experiences in relation to their personal qualities and limitations in making the choice.
4. Aiding them in planning and making their preparation for the occupations chosen, and in planning their further training after employment begins.
5. Giving help to those who need it in working out necessary or desirable occupational re-adjustment after employment begins.

Origin: -

Vocational guidance is by no means confined to recent decades. Plato considered the subject in his Republic.

An elaborate vocational guidance book was published by T. Waller in 1747. Some scientists gave excellent analyses of the requirements of the various occupations in the early years of the nineteenth century and attempted to aid young people in vocational choices by analyzing their cranial qualities. During the late middle age and early in the modern period the guilds exercised a selective influence; and always the system of apprenticeship has served as a trial-and-error method of guidance. The present movement of vocational guidance may be said to have begun with the work of Frank Parson in the North End Settlement in Boston in 1907. At that date the vocation bureau was organized to facilitate his work. In 1909, his "Choosing A Vocation" appeared and laid the foundation of a voluminous literature dealing with every phase of the subject. Mr. Parson's work was continued and enlarged by Myer Bloomfield, whose various books have had a wide influence.

Growth:-

The idea of vocational guidance spread rapidly and in 1916 there were one hundred and fifty high schools listed in the Bulletin of the National Vocational Guidance Association which claimed to have made beginnings in organized guidance, and two years later there were nine hundred.

The first conference of Vocational Guidance met in Boston in 1910, and the National Vocational Guidance Association was organized in Grand Rapids in 1913. Since that

time there has been an annual conference, and the Association has done much to stimulate interest in the general problem, to spread literature concerning vocational guidance, and to encourage schools to establish courses for training guidance experts. The first organized course offered in a university was given in the Harvard Summer School of 1911. Since that date courses have become so popular that they are now practically available in most of the larger teacher-training schools of the country. The vocational guidance magazine was established in 1911 and has served as a publishing medium since that date.

Purpose:-

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Vocational guidance furnishes the pupil with a knowledge of occupations, particularly relating to conditions of employment opportunities for advancement, and requirements for entrance to, and success in, occupations in the way of education, of traits of personality and capital.

It gives pupils an opportunity to discover and reveal to himself his general and special capacities and aptitudes, his interest, and his traits of personality and character as related to vocational life.

It also furnishes the pupil with a point of view and a method of study of occupations which will assist him in making his vocational decisions.

Needs:-

The underlying philosophy of the guidance movement rests in the attempts to meet the needs, capacities and interests of pupils at an early period and provide for proper differentiation of activities to foster the most effective development of the individual's powers. It also grants that there is a marked variety in inborn gifts; that the greatest happiness and the highest efficiency results from exercise of native talents. To give each of the members of the A. J. Moore High School an opportunity to find himself, the guidance movement was begun September, 1926. The general term "guidance" is used, although the work is largely confined to educational and vocational guidance.

The ultimate aims of the guidance program are to provide an educational and vocational service adapted to the needs of its pupils, and to enrich the school's service through an adequate articulation with home and community. It hopes to do this by studying, and as far as possible, understanding the individual; by providing adequate classification of pupils with respect to subjects and activities; by promoting the life career motive so that all will be exceedingly interested; by cooperating with the home to secure normal home contacts which will result in better preparation of school work and more careful attention given to the health of the children; by providing counseling both

educational and occupational and follow-up for pupils in the schools by helping those graduates who are pursuing higher courses and those who are seeking occupational adjustments and re-adjustments; by providing a more complete cooperation with those agencies in the community which can contribute to the development of our guidance service; by providing information and an explanation of leisure time activities and by stimulating self-guidance.

Guidance services on the part of the secondary school are rendered necessary by at least four conditions. The character of the demands for modern secondary education; the changes in the social and economic order to which the secondary school pupil must adjust himself; the needs of the adolescent for counsel and guidance; and the necessity of avoiding waste in process of education.

The secondary school of a generation ago had a narrow curriculum, designed chiefly to prepare young people for college. The decision to send or not to send a youth to high school was at that time usually made by the family. The individual who presented himself for admission to a secondary school generally knew what he was seeking. After admission the individual was primarily responsible for his own failure or success. He knew in advance the nature of the opportunities offered by the school and successful accomplishment on his part was assumed. If he failed to meet the requirements of the school, he either tried again or voluntarily withdrew. It was taken for granted by the

individual that the family sacrifice should not be made in vain and that the secondary school was not maintained for those who could not profit from the academic opportunities provided.

Today the situation is greatly changed. There is enforced a compulsory education law and the public sentiment for secondary education is so strong that virtually all children under eighteen years of age are enrolled in the secondary school, as a result the school has had to make marked changes in organization in an attempt to meet the needs of its varied personnel. Instead of a required curriculum designed to prepare chiefly for admission to college, curricula are now offered from which the pupils may select. The increase in course offerings represents an effort on the part of the secondary schools to meet the various needs of their pupils personnel.

The adjustment of pupils of high school age to the complex world in which they live is no simple matter. The individual's world today is vastly larger and more complex than it was a generation ago. Important changes in the social and economic structure render both social and vocational adjustments difficult. The rapid shifting of population from rural to urban life has complicated the processes of social and economic adjustment. As a results, the individual at the threshold of his entrance into college or industry and adult community life is frequently overwhelmed by experiences which he does not fully understand and can not clearly

interpret. Since the home is usually unable to provide the guidance needed in the interpretation of many experiences encountered by the youth, the secondary school is compelled to assume a portion of the function formerly discharged by the home. If the school fails to assume this function, the individual is apt to flounder for want of guidance and may fail to find himself with respect to his interests and capacity or to take full advantage of the opportunities offered in school and society for his growth and development.

Methods:-

Some of the methods used in the school are assembly talks. These talks given in assemblies or smaller groups have operated to set high school pupils to thinking seriously about their vocational futures and to furnish very useful information and procedures of approach in thinking about vocational choices. Usually one individual may be found to give a talk on each of the main divisions of vocational pursuits which high school boys and girls are likely to enter.

Try-out courses have proved very good especially in the general shop. The problem of studying self and vocation may be raised with pupils at the junior high school age, leading to search for, and use of, information and experience to be had from all manner of sources in vocational choice thinking. The pupil may profit from the opportunity to ex-

plore his potential interests and skills in the mechanical field. He realizes that he must become self-supporting.

Extra-curricula activities: -

Each home room teacher has an activity period each in which to carry on extra-curricula activities. Talents and interests of many a boy and girl have been disclosed to the young people themselves as well as to advisers as the results of participation in debating and in art and in dramatic, journalistic, musical, athletic and other types of activities.

The class-room teacher and regular subjects: -

These opportunities may be of three types: opportunity for bringing into the course and emphasizing the guidance relation of readings and discussions which furnish information about occupations and future educational activities; opportunities for stimulating and guiding pupils in the study of their own abilities and capacities; opportunities for bringing pupils to face the fact that they must make important vocational decisions, and that their happiness in life depends largely upon making these decisions wisely.

Clubs are very essential as an aid in vocational guidance. There are several different clubs in the school such as sewing, art, cooking, dramatic, thrift, health and activity, radio, woodwork and home economics club, the pupils are allowed to select the club of their choice, in this way they are able to choose some vocation they would like to follow.

There is no organized placement bureau established, but the placement of students is carried on through the principal and vocation teachers. The boys are able to secure employment in printing establishments, electrical shops, in the construction of buildings, and sign painters. The girls have been placed in dressmaking shops, delicatessen shops, cateress, and in business places as stenographers.

Results:-

The graduating class of 1937, A. J. Moore High School, made a survey of occupations of graduates. Out of about seven hundred questionnaires sent out three hundred and thirty-eight were returned. Out of this number thirty-seven took some special course while in school. The employment problem is as follows:

Seventy-two were employed while they attended school.

Three hundred and one have had jobs since leaving school.

One hundred eighty-three are satisfied with their present jobs.

Eighty-seven stated that the schooling aided in their vocation.

Sixty-five stated that vocational training helped them to secure their present job.

Ninety-seven had some special training in high school for their present job. These included sewing, music, cooking, nursing, carpentry and housekeeping.

In twenty-three instances school authorities helped the individual to secure his job.

Another outstanding feature of the results of the guidance program was the construction of a public address system by the students of the school. Some of the boys became interested in electrical engineering. That course was not offered, only in a small degree in the building of radio sets, however, these pupils, with help of literature and instructions of the manual training teacher, progressed at an amazingly rapid rate. They became able to repair minor electrical irregularities occurring in the school.

The cabinets for this public address system were constructed by some of the advanced students in the manual training department. One of the boys, after finishing high school continued the study of electrical engineering in a creditable institution. The high school boys, with the aid of this young man, did the wiring. This project gives perfect service at a minimum cost.

Conclusion:-

There is a splendid opportunity for the school to assist pupils in developing interest and the ability to satisfy them which will tend to insure pleasurable and profitable expenditure of leisure hours in ways not inimical to the interests of others.

In addition to these opportunities for service, the school through its regular teaching staff as well as through specially appointed advisers, may assist pupils aiming at

solutions of various perplexing questions of an intimate and personal nature.

The school should provide young people with experiences and counsel which will enable them to make intelligent choices in decisions about their educational problems and their vocational futures, also, as a results of the greatly increased percentage of boys and girls of high school age who now go to school and the greatly increased need for moral guidance owing to the changed conditions of present day society and the lessened contribution of home and church in this direction, the high school may perform a most valuable service in providing guidance of a nature calculated to make for clean and wholesome living, private and public.

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