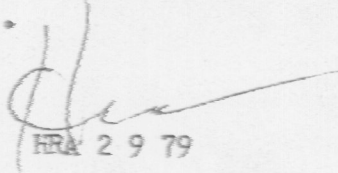


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*typed
from first
draft
notes*

Ruth --

The rough draft was
not clearly marked, but it
seems to me that everything
up to middle of page 10 may
have been intended to be at
the end rather than the
start.


HRA 29 79

This, then is one man's suggestion for the near term future, perhaps I should say the present future, of schooling in America. It is, I think, a suggestion of some power, for not only does it fit in with the long term trends of American public education but it addresses a number of the elements embedded in the developmental history of education such as universal basic achievement, social interdependence, transmission of common values and culture, relevancy, and insulation among age groups, and, just as importantly, it can be done now -- today, if only we are willing.

But what about the long term trends in American public education? After all, I did promise you I would talk about the future of education. Let me apologize if all that I have given you is a practical school man's response -- a suggested direction for the present future -- for I must confess, given the length of time that it takes for change to occur in our social institutions, I am afraid that even if this present future suggestion were to be accepted across the nation today, it would be some time in the distant future before anyone could recognize it in local school operations.

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However, there are some observations about the long term trend that I would like to share with you. Most will jump immediately to the domain of technology when speculating about the future of education, but the first of my observations is that all things bright and technological are likely to be of only secondary importance when considering those events, outside of education, which will impact and shape the course of education in the future. It is true that we will have to learn to cope with technology in education (we are struggling to try to do that now) and in time we may even learn to utilize it effectively and come to accept it for what it is. The potential for individualization, the efficiency of man-machine interaction, the reduction of time spent on routine, and the power of addressing incredible complexity are certainly attractive. But perhaps more compelling at the moment and at the same time more threatening to education is the potential economy of technology, the economy of bringing information to the learner wherever he is instead of bringing all the learners to a single seat of information.

Consider for the moment:

- 3 -

- o At KEDI (the Korean Educational Development Institute) they are now building a system of TV transmission towers instead of school buildings. From a single source they can now reach directly into the homes of 65% of the population at one time. However, they are the first to tell you this is not education. In fact these developers almost plead with educators to get into the game and develop the software and compatible social, interpersonal, enrichment and humanizing systems and activities that are lacking in what they are doing. They are careful to point out that all they can do is transmit information and that this is not enough to be labeled education.
- o According to a recent U.S. News & World Report article students at the University of Maryland can hear a full semester of history lectures from an electronic console, without even seeing a teacher, even doing exams.
- o A New York Times article reports that at Dartmouth music students use a computer that can reproduce

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dozens of musical sounds ranging from the human voice, piano, and brass to electronic music. A student who composes a piece of music, for example, can hear how it sounds on the computer, before it is played by a group of live musicians.

- o In many large corporations, workers are continually being retrained to keep up with advancing technology. The American Management Association now estimates that nearly \$2 billion is being spent annually on education and training in the workplace. And it is becoming more common to find faculty members splitting time between the campus and classrooms in factories and office buildings.
- o Another recent NY Times article reports that AT&T spent \$700 million on education and training programs for its employees last year -- more than three times the annual budget for M.I.T. As might be expected though, corporate education is closely related to the role employees play in contributing to corporate earnings. And while employees may be

keeping up with technology in such cases, such narrow job-specific vocationalism can hardly qualify as a long term alternative to education.

Consider also for a moment a byproduct of this age of technology that has taken its toll on education policy and decision making, I refer to the development of a stultifying form of accountability that attempts to reduce to a few qualifiable measure or to a single dominant statement a complex of human activity, events and judgements that simply do not lend themselves to such treatment. All of this is not to denigrate the use of technology or education but simply to underscore that it is not yet the panacea that was promised and that as such, it may some time yet before it has a determinate effect on the future of education.

As we consider the future, let us turn instead to that independent variable in the school equation, the family -- the bedrock of the neighborhood school and local control, in which we all so fervently believe. We are aware, historically, of three fundamental purposes of education inherent in the founding of the public school. We are also told that the major impetuses for change in education have come from events occurring outside the system rather than from within education. We have touched lightly upon one of these purposes or goals for American education, keeping up with

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advancing technology and are aware of the dramatic impact that Sputnik and the race into space had on education, beginning in the 1950's. Another and perhaps even more fundamental goal of American education dating back to notions of the common school, if not before, is the egalitarian motif of equal educational opportunity. And we are all aware of the traumatic events of the civil rights movement beginning in the 60's and the use of school integration, busing, and compensatory education, carrying on through the 1970's. A third great purpose of American education, also inherent in the founding of the public, school was the goal of social control through an enlightened public, or in another way of putting it, social stability for the nation. Let me suggest that the deterioration of the American family and the consequent threat to social stability will be the determinant impetus for change in education and schooling for the decade to come.

Urie Bronfenbrenner, in his many studies, presents a grim picture of the modern American family and its increasing fragmentation and isolation in its child rearing roles.

- o Over 51 percent of married women with children between the ages of 6 to 17 now enter the workforce.
- o Mothers of school age children are more likely to work than married women without children.
- o The most rapid increase is occurring for mothers with young children. One-third of all married women with children under 6 were in the labor force in 1974. Three out of 10 with children under 3 were in the work force in 1975.
- o Two-thirds of the mothers who had jobs were working full time.
- o The number of adults in the home of school age children is declining rapidly, giving rise to the new phenomenon of "latch key children".
- o One out of every 6 children under 18 was living in a single parent family by 1974.
- o The remarriage rate is considerably lower than the divorce rate, particularly for mothers of school age children in single parent families

The teenage pregnancy rate is up. The rate of illegitimate births is up. The correlation of all of these statistics with growing urbanization, years of schooling, family income, and age group is high. Moreover, as Bronfenbrenner points out, when controlled for race, there is significant evidence that these phenomena are steadily moving outward from the inner city poverty stricken areas into the middle class, suburban, and rural sectors of society. The impact of all of this on the child and its implications for social stability and learning is profound, and one need only reflect for a moment on juvenile crime rates, school vandalism, declining test scores, youth alienation, suicide rates, the use of occultism, a decline in values and the insulation between generations to realize the power of this trend of deterioration in the family and the alarm it pretends. My point is that we are all aware of the importance of early childhood growth and development, of early childhood education, and of its significance to future learning and the lifetime expectations of the individual.

Heretofore the family unit has been the guardian, the primary teacher, and has shouldered the responsibility of this social domain. But as this breakdown continues and it becomes apparent that society cannot tolerate its impact, it is my speculation that, as has been demonstrated in the past, social forces will turn to the American school for remediation and as a vehicle for providing assistance to the child and the family when such breakdown occurs or is imminent.

For the school, perhaps more than any other social institution, has the greatest continuity and intensity of contact with the family unit.

Jerry Debenham and Michael Parsons in a recent Kaplan article provide one scenario as to how this might come about. They point out that for most of this century the institution of the family has been amending the schools, that the Progressives sought to "reorganize the school on an extended family model," that they were to become "more personalized and child-centered." At the same time, they argue, a number of functions previously thought to be family functions, such as vocationalism and character education, were to be professionalized and brought into the school. Now, they suggest, with the continuing deterioration of the family, we may see more amending of family behavior by the school in the areas of early childhood growth and development, education, nutrition, and health. They foresee the professionalizing of parenting as a conscious social program conducted through the schools, with appropriate economic, governmental, and social support. In summary they forecast a scenario where "schools will become more like families and homes more like individually based learning centers... where parents in the future will be required to make a special commitment and take special training in early childhood growth and development and the distinction between professional educators and amateur parents will become increasing^{ly} blurred."

To reiterate, while technology will undoubtedly play a significant role in the future of American public education, the greatest impact on change in the school in the decade ahead will more likely derive from what's happening to the American family.

In any attempt to consider the future, one must always be mindful of the context out of which the future is rising. This is true whether one wishes to examine the present future or to speculate about alternative futures of the far term. Historians have suggested that next to the Declaration of Independence, the next single most important contribution of the brave new world called America to the history and development of western civilization is not 20th century technology but the founding of the public school.

Stand here? In 1832, when Abraham Lincoln announced his candidacy for the Illinois State Assembly, he declared that:

"Upon the subject of education...

I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in."

o o o

To the immigrants who came to this land of promise

- o It was education -- rather than Ellis Island -- that was the real gateway to America.
- o To them, learning was synonymous with progress.
- o And getting an education was as essential as getting jobs.

o o o

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III

Because of public education

- each new generation has moved
dramatically ahead
- and we have made spectacular
progress on almost every front.
- illiteracy has dropped from 11
to 1.2 percent, since 1900.

Because of education our industries have flourished.

Because of education --

- o We have cracked the genetic code.
- o We've played golf on the moon.
- o We've given the world abstract expressionism.
- o We've virtually conquered polio, tuberculosis,
whooping cough, and rheumatic fever.
- o We've built a network of free public libraries all
across the Nation.
- o We've led the world in biomedical research.
- o Over the past four years, the United States won
10 of the 11 Nobel Prizes in medicine and physiology.

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o o o

These dramatic leaps are rooted -- not in ignorance --
but in education.

Henry Steele Commager declared that "no other people
ever demanded so much of education -- none was ever served
so well by its schools and educators."

o o o

The point is this:

America must have a network of public schools to serve
all children, not just the selected few. This vision of
universal education -- which dates to Thomas Jefferson -- is
the most audacious and enlightened dream in human history.

And any talk about

- o deschooling our society,
- o or closing down our schools,
- o or deciding that some children should be arbitrarily
cut off from further education --

Such talk --

- not only shockingly denies our heritage --
it also darkens hopelessly our prospects for
the future.

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III

Here I'd like to strike an optimistic note:

As I go about the country, I sense, in spite of the disturbing headlines, a changing mood toward the public schools -- expectancy.

There is a determination not only to support our schools but to push for excellence as well.

o o o

Twenty years ago, America faced another kind of crisis in public education.

- o Sputnik had just been lifted into space,
- o and, near panic, many thought our schools had failed.

During this dramatic moment in his history
James Bryant Conant

- o focused on both school content and school structure.
- o and the now-famous Conant report shaped our schools for decades.

o o o

Twenty years have passed and we are now in -- what might be called -- the Post-Conant Era.

- 1⁴ -

During the past 20 years -- which seems more like a thousand --

- o We have become more mobile and less stable.
- o Television and travel now compete on equal footing with the classroom and the book.
- o Today Archie Bunker is better known than Silas Marner, Fellini is more influential than Faulkner, and the six o'clock news is more compelling than the history text.
- o Today students are more restless and less respectful of the school.
- o And today the old elementary, junior high and high school structure -- with the 6-2-4 lock step -- has largely lost its meaning.

IV

I'm convinced the time has come to ask again the fundamental questions.

- What are the purposes of public education?
- How should our schools be structured?
- How does education relate to our other social institutions?

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I believe it's time to sort out just what the public schools can and cannot do. And focus once again on 3 fundamental purposes:

The Basic School

First -- we need a basic school -- a time to teach each child the fundamental skills and focus especially on the effective use of language.

- o After all, language -- is the connecting tissue which binds us all together.
- o Language -- gives us our identities and our meaning.
- o Language is essential to all future education.
- o All we know
all we fear
all we hope
are created and conveyed -- through symbols.

And the effective use of language must be a central academic goal.

o o o

Unhappily there are today --

- o so many ways in which language is diminished

o so many occasions which distract us from the
printed page

And in our video culture

--with its emphasis on speed and ease--language
increasingly has become more fleeting and less valued.

o o o

It is a startling fact that today young children watch
television

4-5000 hours

before they ever go to school.

o They soak up messages and stare at
pictures without formulating messages
of their own--

--without extending their own
vocabulary

--or developing the capacity for
coherent thought.

For many of our student this has become the age of
the flash and the zap
the hour-long epic
the 30-minute encyclopedia
the 5-minute explanation
the one minute sell
the 2 second fix.

o o o

In this context teaching children how to read--and also
how to write and speak with clarity--becomes at once more
difficult and more crucial.

- o Every child must be taught not only how to receive messages -- but how to send them too.
- o And each child should also understand that we communicate--not just with words--but with
 - the visual arts
 - and mathematics
 - and music
 - and computers
 - and with dance as well.

Language is essential to all future learning and I propose that--as a National goal--every child in school should be taught to read and write effectively by grade four. Schooling cannot be endlessly postponed. High schools and colleges should not be teaching students how to read.

I'm convinced this goal is within our reach.

After all, every child--before he or she ever goes to kindergarten--has learned to speak, a process through which the sending and receiving of messages is established.

But here I must raise a flag of caution. Schools cannot do it all alone.

Parents are the first and most important teachers, and they must be partners in the process.

The harsh fact is that children will not become good readers

- o if no one reads at home,
- o if our so-called "bookshelves" are filled only with knickknacks and plastic flowers,

- o and if TV watching is the preoccupation of parents every night.

To reaffirm this partnership between the home and school

- o I'd like to see parents turn off the TV and read aloud to children, and rediscover the beauty of the written and the spoken word.

Good homes make good schools, and I'm convinced this partnership must be aggressively affirmed.

The Middle School

Following this focus on the fundamentals -- which is the means, not the end, of education -- I propose that we focus the Middle School on a common core of study and introduce the knowledge and the understandings which all students should possess.

Today the so-called junior high school is spliced in awkwardly between two other schools and seems to have no clear-cut purpose of its own. We need to rediscover what I'll call the common core.

But let's not confuse the issue here.

- o To propose a core of study for all students is not to push for a single set of courses.
 - o Nor is it to suggest a national curriculum -- a notion which is, of course, unthinkable.
- Education is the responsibility of the States and local school districts.

- o A core curriculum does suggest however that--
as human beings--we do share some things in
common and that students very early must begin
to understand our heritage, gain perspective
and begin to understand just how their own
origins and wants and needs are inextricably
linked to the origins and wants and needs of
others.

T. S. Eliot reminds us of the hazards of a fragmented,
shapeless education.

In the Waste Land he asks:

"What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images...."

Here's the point: While we rejoice in our individual
differences we still must find

- o those themes and issues that unite us
...as a people.
- o We must discuss the core experiences which
our schools have the responsibility to
pass on. Of course we can only begin this
process in the middle school.

These key ideas and issues will be pursued
through all the years of formal education.

But there must be a beginning.

Here I have three suggestions to propose.

First, we share a common heritage.

- o And if our schools do not help keep the past alive
- o and if they fail to introduce students to the people, to the ideas, to the literature, and to the events which have contributed consequentially to human gains and losses
- o if we do not confront our common heritage-- we not only will have lost our past, we will have lost our future, too.

Second, we not only share a heritage, we also share the challenges of a common present.

- o It has always seemed quite curious to me that so many of our educational experiments have focused exclusively--almost compulsively--on the past, ignoring very frequently the experiences we share in our contemporary world.
- o Clearly during their years of formal education students should also look at their existence here and now, focus on those circumstances which daily shape their lives.

Again, let me suggest several examples to illustrate the point.

First, all of us are caught up in a world of social institutions: towns and villages and governments and schools and banks and clubs--and on and on it goes.

- o No education is complete unless it clarifies just how these structures came to be, how they work and how they should be changed in light of changing social needs.

On a more practical level, students should be taught how to cope with our complex culture.

- o A recent Office of Education study reports that more than 20 percent of American adults are not able to fill out forms and function effectively on their own.

I happen to believe that young people before they leave the middle school should have mastered such essential skills.

Let me suggest a third component to the middle school curriculum. Not only must we focus on our heritage and on contemporary social issues and institutions. We must focus on the future, too.

I understand that to propose a study of the future may be startling at first. But the truth is that there is no sharp distinction between the future, past, and present, and educators--all too often--have failed to grasp this essential fact.

Again it was T. S. Eliot who reminded us that

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future is contained in time past.

The harsh truth is that

- o the human race continues to expand at a rate of 200,000 people every day. That's 73 million more people every year.
- o And every day more than 800 million people face gnawing hunger, living literally from hand to mouth.
- o Tensions over resources grow more acute,
- o and the quality of our environment is threatened.

Students should begin to confront the interdependence of all life and look at the relationships among science, technology, and the quality of our life.

- o Where will we get our food, and how can it be appropriately distributed?
- o What about our energy supply, and how can it be equitably shared?
- o How can we reduce the poisons in the atmosphere?
- o Can we have a proper balance between population and the life support system of this planet Earth?
- o And how can we live together, with civility, in a climate of constraint?

I happen to believe that today's young people are ready to think about these serious academic issues. Teaching a common core of knowledge which includes our heritage, contemporary issues, and alternatives for the future should be the central mission of the middle school.

Without the first level of learning--the fundamental skills--the work of the middle school is meaningless.

But without a middle school to follow it, the work of the basic school is chronically incomplete--a subject urgently in search of a predicate with meaning.

The Transition School

Finally -- as a capstone to formal education -- I propose a "Transition School" --a three-year period, perhaps, in which students are offered many options and begin to move into the world beyond the classroom.

By their middle teens, most young people are restless. They are eager to break out of the academic lock step which seems a time of endless incubation -- and they mature much earlier than they did 50 years ago.

For too long we've asked all students to leap together over the same academic hurdles.

For too long we've assumed that there is something sacred about the walls of the school building.

For too long we've assumed that a student who stepped outside of the conventional academic program was irretrievably lost.

o o o

Rigid academic patterns must be broken down. Students should begin to flex their muscles, to test their talents, and move into the learning places which can be found beyond the academic walls.

o o o

Specifically, I propose we break up the high school into a network of smaller units.

o o o

The pattern which I have called the "Transition School"

--recognizes that students do, in fact,

differ from each other

--and that in the upper years of school

they should be free to specialize

somewhat and test their unique talents

o not only in the school,

o but also in the communities outside.

I also propose that each "school-within-the-school" not only have a special focus, but also have its own off-campus connection to the outside world.

Let me illustrate the point.

- o A high school art center connection must be made, offering apprenticeships at community theatre groups, and internships in galleries and museums and orchestras;

- o A "school-business" partnership, in which local business and industry adopt a school, and provide on-the-job training for students who are eager to be out working and honing their skills;
- o A social service school with ties to community institutions so that young people could work with retirees and in hospitals and old age homes and parks.
- o A "university in the schools" concept in which a local college would offer advanced academic work to high school students -- both on the grounds of the high school, and on the campus as well.

Here I must stress one important point. High school students will continue to spend most of their time in school pursuing academic subjects. But if the basics are learned well in the early grades, there would be time in the upper grades for students to spend a half day or two per week beginning to relate education to experience beyond the campus.

What this adds up to is making all of our schools-- Community Schools--places where students are in touch with learning sites in the neighborhood beyond the school and where outside groups come to the school to use the facilities and to offer their support. The school would be an open, not an isolated institution.