

I. INTRODUCTION

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is supporting this first, major meeting of school and college leaders for one simple yet powerfully important fact.

- o Schools and colleges in our nation have a common agenda -- a commitment to achieving excellence in education.

During the past two years as Carnegie President and my previous two-and-a-half years as U. S. Commissioner of Education I visited schools across the country and I've found the commitment to excellence as strong perhaps as it has ever been.

- o Yet, frankly, I was dismayed by our fragmented academic structure.
- o The truth is presidents and deans rarely talk to principals and district superintendents.
- o College faculty simply do not meet with their counterparts in public school.
- o And, curriculum reforms at every level are planned in total isolation.

Time and time again I am reminded of that insightful quote by Henry Clinton Morrison who -- over 50 years ago -- declared that

- o "As a people, we do not think in terms of education; we think in terms of schools.
- o We have no educational system; we have an elementary school, a high school, and a college."

We cannot pretend we can have quality in higher education without working with the schools which are -- in fact -- the foundation of everything we do.

Most recently, though, I've heard from many people who have told of programs that give me some encouragement.

- o Schools and college people, in some instances, are moving beyond pious platitudes,
- o and actually are running valuable collaborative programs in the schools.
- o They offer hope, yet the secondary school remains our most troubled learning institution.

At the Carnegie Foundation we are now deeply involved in a study of the American High School and it's already very clear that if we are to achieve academic excellence

- o the purposes of education must be clarified
- o school leadership must be strengthened
- o curriculum must be more sharply focused
- o and somehow the rigid, four-year lockstep must be broken.

II. THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

As we search for ways to ensure excellence in the eighties, we'll have to achieve the goal within the context of a changing pattern of enrollments -- of an increasingly diverse student population.

We must become fully aware of the new school demographics and their potential impact on quality.

- o Not only is the quality of schools at stake but the quality of society as a whole.
- o Caught by surprise in the sixties, our radicalized campuses were overwhelmed by sheer numbers of the post World War Two baby boom.
- o They responded in a manner that diminished excellence. And the nation suffered.
- o This need not happen again. Our schools and colleges this time can be prepared.

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You've all heard and read perhaps more than you care to of the coming decline in the nation's youth population. Over the next ten to fifteen years, it will drop between 20 and 25 percent.

- o The fact of the declines is old news,
- o What is occurring within the declines, however, is not something that has received the attention it should,
- o These changes within are portentous for both high schools and colleges.

Two essential facts emerge from careful analysis of the student demographics of the eighties --

- o We need to improve our schools so that more students can successfully complete high school.
- o If we fail to make school progress, the impact on colleges and universities of the new demographics will be far worse than anticipated.

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III. THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

The drop in the number of eighteen-year-olds between 1979 and 1993 by approximately 25% means--

- o That there will be fewer young people of traditional college age who will be available to enroll in college.

The decline in the youth population will have a doubly serious effect upon potential college enrollments because of the implications of the needs of the military.

- o Since 1973, when the all-volunteer Army began, the military has needed approximately 350,000 men each year.
- o While the 350,000 figure was approximately 24% of all eligible 18-year-olds in 1979, the same figure will be approximately 32% of all eligible 18-year-olds in 1993.

- o If the draft is reinstated, a distinct possibility, the figures will be even more dramatic.

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The population as a whole is aging.

- o In 1970, the median age was 28.
- o In 1970, the median age had risen to just over 30.
- o By 1990, the median age will have jumped nearly 33 years.

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On the whole, our minority population is much younger than our white population.

- o In 1980, the median age for whites in this country was light over 31. The median age for blacks, 25, and Hispanics, 23.

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Although the population as a whole is aging, there are important differences by age for each ethnic group.

- o For example, while 28% of all whites are under 18, 37% of all blacks are under 18, and 42% of all Hispanics are under 18.

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The number of households with school-age children had declined considerably over the past 20 years.

- o In 1960, nearly one-half (48%) of all households had school-age children.
- o In 1970, 45% of all households had school-age children, and that proportion had dropped to 39% by 1979.

There are differences, however, by ethnic group.

- o While only 39% of all white households had school-age children in 1979, 49% of all black households and 61% of all Hispanic households had school-age children in 1979.

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Many of our urban school systems have increasingly minority enrollments.

- o The proportion of black high school students in New York rose from 30 to 40% between 1970 and 1980.
 - o Hispanic high school enrollments increased from 21% to 26% in the same time period.
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- o In Milwaukee, white students comprised 75% of all high school enrollments in 1970.

- o Whites dropped to 34% of high school enrollments in 1980, and black enrollments climbed from 22% in 1970 to 39% in 1980.

In Miami, a refugee population has swelled minority enrollments in the Dade County schools.

- o In 1970, white students comprised 61% of all high school students; today the high schools are 36% white.

- o Hispanics were 18% of Miami's high school enrollments in 1970, but today that percentage is 38.

- o Black enrollments have risen from 21 to 25% between 1970 and 1980.

While no data for 1970 are available for Los Angeles, it is evident that the minority population has swelled in the Los Angeles schools.

- o In 1980, only 34% of the high school students were white, while 26% were black and about one-third (32%) were Hispanic.
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We've looked at only four urban centers in some detail, but if you examine the school demographics in our leading cities across the country, for the most part the statistical patterns are generally similar.

- o School enrollments are increasingly black and brown.
- o Of the top 20 cities in population in America, only one-fourth have school

enrollments of majority white
population.

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Now, let's examine what has happened to the 18- and 19-year-olds in this country in 1979.

- o The first section of the graph shows the percentage of these young people who dropped out of high school without graduating.

- o Next to the dropouts are those young people still enrolled in school at age 18 and 19. It's unlikely that many of these youth will complete high school--most will become dropouts.

Now we come to those students who have more success in our education system.

- o Among white students, 75% graduated from high school in 1979.
- o Just under half of that group, or 35%, went on to college.
- o Among black students, only 56% graduated from high school, and just under half (26%), enrolled in college.
- o Among Hispanics, only 54% graduated from high school, and about half (25%), enrolled in college.

Of those students who do go on to college, minority students chose to enroll in two-year colleges at rates that far exceed enrollment rates of white students in two-year colleges.

- o Among white, full-time students, 27% enrolled in four-year colleges, while only 8% enrolled in two-year colleges.

- o Among blacks, 17% enrolled in four-year colleges, while 9% enrolled in two-year colleges.

- o For Hispanic full-time students, 15% enrolled in four-year colleges, and 10% enrolled in two-year colleges.

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Dropout rates for students attending two-year colleges are much higher than dropout rates for students attending four-year colleges, especially in the case of minority students.

- o A longitudinal study of students who graduated from high school in 1972 and enrolled in school that fall showed that, two years later, students attending two-year colleges had dropped out at the following rates:

--Whites.....38%
--Blacks.....47%
--Hispanics.....45%

o Students attending four-year colleges
had dropped out at the following
rates:

--Whites.....23%
--Blacks.....27%
--Hispanics.....24%

Ethnic Composition of School Districts of the 20 Largest Cities--1978

	<u>W</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>Nat.</u> <u>Amer.</u>	<u>Asian</u>
1. New York	29%	39%	30%	0%	3%
2. Los Angeles	30	25	38	1	6
3. Chicago	21	61	16	0	2
4. Philadelphia	31	62	6	0	1
5. Detroit	14	84	2	0	0
6. Boston	40	44	12	1	3
7. San Francisco	21	29	15	1	35
8. Washington, D.C.	4	94	1	0	1
9. Dallas	34	49	16	0	1
10. Nassau-Suffolk, NY	(NO DATA AVAILABLE)				
11. Houston	29	45	24	0	1
12. St. Louis	25	74	0	0	0
13. Pittsburgh	52	48	0	0	0
14. Baltimore	22	77	0	0	0
15. Minneapolis	74	18	1	6	1
16. Newark, NJ	9	71	19	0	0
17. Cleveland	61	38	0	0	1
18. Atlanta	74	25	0	0	1
19. Anaheim	84	1	12	0	3
20. San Diego	62	15	16	0	7
Seattle	62	20	4	3	11
Kansas City	29	66	3	0	1

III (A) THE MEANING OF THE NUMBERS

Highlights and implications of the school demographics of the eighties:

- o Educational policymakers, who are older and predominantly white, will be making decisions for a youth population composed of an increasing proportion of minority children

- o Shifts in the age structure of the population mean a larger proportion will no longer have personal stake in the success of the education system; they will no longer have school-age children.

- o Public spending levels for education may be jeopardized as a result of the increasing minority makeup of school children.

- o Unwillingness of voters to maintain public spending levels is already evident in states such as California, Massachusetts, and Michigan.

- o The ability of many colleges to avoid large enrollment declines depends to a great extent on their ability to recruit, retain, and educate minority students.

At the same time, in order to ensure the pool of high school graduates is as large as possible in an era of declining enrollments, our high schools must work to reduce dropout rates and to increase the number of high school graduates of all racial and ethnic groups.

It is also clear that --

- o Colleges have a direct stake in the success of high schools.
- o They need to begin now, before it is too late, to work with high schools -- to help schools ensure the educational success of their students.

IV. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Once, in the not too distant past, our schools demonstrated that they knew how to deal with a dramatically changing pattern in the makeup of the student population. At the turn of the century, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Polish and other eastern European immigrants flocked to our shores.

- o These people were very different, not by virtue of skin but of language, culture, and outlook.
- o Our largest cities to which they flocked took up the educational challenge they represented.
- o They did so with confidence and pride.
- o And the children of these immigrants gave back to the nation in productivity and cultural enrichment the educational investment in their parents.

This successful pattern can and should be repeated again today. But we need to proceed carefully, recognizing that there are some important differences between then and now.

- o At the turn of the century, the poor and downtrodden were viewed as a potential asset not a burden.
- o We had a shared vision of America.
- o Today the vision is blurred. We're less certain of what it means to be an "American."
- o And we've so focused on differences that we've lost sight of what we share in common.

But not for a moment do we need to give up the special qualities and valuable insights that our "differences" provides.

- o They are assets both to our people as individuals and our nation as a whole.
- o Our differences, indeed, can be nurtured and cherished.

- o The only segment of the youth population that is increasing is the very segment that is the least well served by our society and our schools.

- o The increasing minority segment of the youth population, especially those attending schools in urban areas, are likely to be from low income families which is linked to lower educational achievement.

Final conclusions:

- o Despite the increasing numbers of minority students attending college, we still have not found the way to help them graduate at rates similar to their white counterparts.

- o The demographics of our youth population make one point especially evident --

At the same time, we cannot afford to so worship at the shrine of individuality that we lose sight of the value of our commonality.

- o We can be independent and inter-dependent,
- o Individuals yet part of a collective whole with a shared vision.

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In our pell-mell race earlier in the century to "Americanize", to "homogenize" our people we lost something, too, by stripping people of a sense of roots. Now the pendulum has swung too far the other way. We need to nurture and cherish that which we have in common.

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V. COMMON LEARNING

But what are those areas of interdependence that should be studied by all students? Several months ago at a Carnegie colloquium on general education at the University of Chicago we presented our study, A Quest for Common Learning, which offered some suggestions.

We identified six broad themes which we feel are indispensable if students are adequately to understand themselves, their society, and the world in which they live. There was an immediate and substantial interest on the part of colleges and universities. Now, we're finding the themes we offered for consideration are also of interest at the high school where the search for purpose is most acute.

The fundamental skills of reading, writing, and computing need to be acquired by the student in the earliest grades. By the time students move on to secondary education, they need to be ready to deal thoroughly with word and numerical symbols.

They need to, first, come to understand the shared use of symbols

- o Language is the connecting tissue that binds society together and we propose that all students

- o From the first formal years of schooling, learn not only to "read and write," but to read with understanding, write with clarity, and listen and speak effectively.

- o In addition, all students should become proficient in the use of numbers, which constitute an essential and universally accepted symbol system, too.

The mastery of these skills is the foundation of common learning. Without them, the goals of general education will be fatally undermined. But developing language skills, as important as they may be, is not enough.

- o Students should also come to understand why and how language evolved.

- o How messages reveal the values of a culture.
- o How words and thoughts interact, and how feelings and ideas are conveyed through literature.

Study of a second language is particularly important here.

- o Not just because of its direct utility
- o But also because such a study helps students view language freshly and see how language reflects cultural values and traditions.

Students should explore, as well, how we communicate nonverbally.

- o Through music, dance, and the visual arts
- o They should understand how these forms of expression convey subtle meanings, express intense emotions.

- o And how, uniquely, the arts can stir a deep response in others.

We are convinced, too, that in the days ahead, the language of computers merits study. Every generally-educated student should learn about this pervasive tool signal system that increasingly controls our day-to-day transactions.

Second, all students should understand their shared membership in groups and institutions.

We are born into institutions, we pass much of our lives in institutions, and institutions are involved when we die. The general education curriculum we have in mind would look at origin of institutions; how they evolve, grow strong, become oppressive or weak, and sometimes die.

In addition to this broad-gauge approach, we suggest a more inductive study, one that looks more penetratingly at a single institution -- the Peace Corps; the Teamsters Union; a city council, or one related, perhaps, to a student's special field of interest.

- o How did the institution begin?
- o What were its initial purposes?
- o What new missions has it assumed?
- o To whom is it accountable?
- o Is the institution still vital, or is it being maintained only because of tradition and ceremony.

The goal should be to help students see that everyone shares membership in the "common institutions" of our culture.

- o Those social structures that shape our lives,
- o Impose obligations
- o Restrict choices
- o And provide services that we could not obtain in isolation,

Third, students should understand that everyone produces and consumes and that, through this process, we are dependent on each other.

Specifically, we propose that students explore the significance of work in the lives of individuals and examine how work patterns reflect the values and shape the social climate of a culture. Such a curriculum would ask:

- o What has been the historical, philosophical, religious, and social attitudes toward work around the world,
- o How are notions about work related to social status and human dignity?
- o What determines the different status and rewards we grant to different forms of work?
- o Why is some work highly rewarded and other work relatively unrewarded?

Fourth, all life forms on the planet earth are inextricably interlocked, and no education is complete without an understanding of the ordered, interdependent nature of the universe.

General education means learning about the elegant, underlying patterns of the natural world and discovering that all elements of nature are, in some manner, related to each other,

K. Daner Clouser, "Philosopher-in-Residence at Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, says that most students, even after an introductory course in biology or chemistry "have little grasp of how it (science) works, of what its genius consists, what its theories are, how they are tested and what defeats them.... Science is, for them, a catalog of facts...,complete and beyond question,"

We believe students should be introduced not just to the "facts" of science, but also to its process,

- o They should understand how science is a process of trial and error,

- o How, through observation and testing, theories are found, refined, sometimes discarded, and often give rise to other theories.

- o They should learn about applications of science.

- o See how scientific discoveries have led to a flood of inventions and new technologies that have brought with them both benefits and risks.

Fifth, all students should understand our shared sense of nature.

Our common heritage is a bridge that holds us all together in ways we hardly understand. It is more than this. It is what Edmund Burke termed "a pact between the dead, the living, and the yet unborn."

It is essential that the human race remember where it has been and how, for better or worse, it got where it is. An understanding of our shared heritage should be expected of all students.

We propose a study that focuses on the seminal ideas and events that have decisively shaped the course of history. More than a collection of facts, this approach would emphasize the convergence of social, religious, political, economic, and intellectual forces.

In such a study, no attempt should be made to worship coverage.

- o Choices must be made,
- o To select a few themes carefully and explore them intensively across disciplinary lines is entirely appropriate to the goals of common learning.

One further point,

- o All human beings look in two directions,
- o We recall the past and anticipate the future,
- o Both perspectives determine, at least in part, how we behave today.

"What do we predict for the 1980s?" or "What will life be like in the year 2000?" could only be asked by those with a sense of shared tomorrow.

Finally, all students should explore our shared values and beliefs.

Inherent in our relationship with others are patterns of agreed-upon behaviors -- laws, customs, and traditions that reflect widely shared beliefs. In traveling around the world, one is struck more by the similarities than by the differences of people, more by the predictability than by the unpredictability of human behavior.

- o All individuals and societies are continually making choices.
- o Debating "right" and "wrong".
- o Deciding what is currently good and what is best.

A study of the personal and social significance of shared values should be the capstone of common learning.

- o Each student should identify the premises in his or her own beliefs,
- o Learn how to make responsible decisions,
- o And discuss the ethical and moral choices that confront us,

Such a study relates directly to the general education themes we have just discussed. In every one of these shared experiences, moral and ethical choices must be made.

- o How, for example, can messages be honestly and effectively conveyed?
- o How can institutions serve the needs of both the individuals and the group?
- o On what basis is a vocation selected or rejected?
- o Where can the line be drawn between conservation and exploitation of natural resources?

These are only a few of the consequential ethical and moral issues that a common learning curriculum must confront.

In the last analysis, we are persuaded by Bertrand Russell who said:

Without civic morality communities perish,
without personal morality their survival
has no value.

We do not suggest, of course, that colleges and universities should seek to impose a single set of values. Rather, the aim of general education should be to help students --

- o Think clearly about how values are shaped

- o How each one of us must build, and periodically review, an authentic, satisfying value structure of our own.