

Teachers

“Ideal” Content of High School Presented by U.S. Education Secretary

“Saying that Americans share a common view of what high school should accomplish, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett [recently] unveiled a proposed core curriculum that would strengthen course requirements and stiffen content.

“Contained in a document titled to honor James Madison, the fourth President and primary architect of the Constitution, the curriculum stresses the acquisition of language skills and ‘a shared body of knowledge,’ and is

rigorous in its demands of schools and students.

“In Mr. Bennett’s hypothetical ‘James Madison High School,’ students would spend up to three-fourths of their time in required academic coursework, including four years of English, three years each of mathematics, social studies, and science, two years of foreign language, and one year of art and music. [See Figure 1.]

“‘I believe that there remains a common ground that virtually all schools can reach and inhabit,’ he says in the report. . . .

“‘Our children need to learn about continental shift and quadratic equations,’ he said at a press release marking the report’s release, ‘about Gothic architecture and the Gettysburg Address; about what a symphony is and about who Shakespeare is and what he wrote.’

“Responding to Mr. Bennett’s curricular outline, educators generally praised its academic toughness, but questioned whether such a program would be useful to the many students unwilling or unable to master it.

“But the Secretary argues that all students—not just those with high ability or motivation—should be exposed to such a curriculum. Low-achieving students, he said, would respond if schools raised expectations for them.

“The fact that many students lack the preparation for such coursework, he writes, indicates that elementary- and intermediate-school instruction needs to be improved, not that high-school standards should be lowered.”—*Education Week*, vol. VII, Nos. 15/16, January 13, 1988. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 1
A Four-Year Plan

Subject	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
English	Introduction to Literature	American Literature	British Literature	Introduction to World Literature
Social Studies	Western Civilization	American History	Principles of American Government and American History & the American Society	
Mathematics	Three Years Required From Among the Following Courses: Algebra I, Plane & Solid Geometry, Algebra II & Trigonometry, Statistics & Probability (1 sem), Pre-Calculus (1 sem), and Calculus AB or BC			
Science	Three Years Required From Among the Following Courses: Astronomy/Geology, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics or Principles of Technology			
Foreign Language	Two Years Required in a Single Language From Among Offerings Determined by Local Jurisdictions			
Physical Education/Health	Physical Education/Health 9	Physical Education/Health 10		
Fine Arts	Art History (1 sem.) Music History (1 sem.)			
	ELECTIVES			

SOURCE: James Madison High School

Changes Foreseen in Job Training by Year 2000

“By the year 2000, according to [a] report by the National Alliance of Business, the number of young people in the workforce will shrink by two-fifths, while three out of four jobs by 1990 will require some education or training beyond high school. . . .

“As a result, the report says, students may begin to see more clearly the utility of education in finding a good job. And employers will be demanding workers increasingly able to think and learn. ‘Everyone who enters the workforce is going to have to learn the same job seven or eight ways, or to do seven or eight different jobs in order to remain employable throughout their lifetime. . . . therefore, literacy becomes fundamental,’ the report states.”—*Education U.S.A.*, November 3, 1986. Reprinted by permission from *Education U.S.A.* Copyright 1986, National School Public Relations Association.

Teachers

Early Semester Calendar Gains Popularity

The early semester calendar made a significant gain on college campuses in 1987-1988, with all other types of calendars—traditional semester, quarter, trimester, 4-1-4, and "other" sustaining losses. The early semester calendar picked up a net gain of 45 institutions, giving it 55 percent of the total.

The report comes from an annual study of college and university calendar changes, based on data gathered for the *List of School Openings and Other Dates: 1987-1988 School Year* by the College Stores, Oberlin, Ohio.

Three percent of reporting colleges made some change in their academic calendar in 1987-1988. (This year 3420 institutions participated in the survey, 98 fewer than the previous year.)

Of the 238 institutions using the traditional calendar, 63 percent are located in New York or California. Twenty-nine states did not report any colleges using the traditional semester calendar.—Reported by the AACRAO *Data Dispenser*, VII:5, January 1988.

Saving Energy

A new classroom guide on energy efficient technologies, *Alternative Energy: A Guide to Free Information for Educators*, lists 200 resources to aid discussion of hydropower, solar and thermal energy, and other technologies. They are arranged by topic and grade level, and bulk rates are available. Contact Center for Renewal Resources, 1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20036.

Catholic School Students Excel in Reading

"Reading skills of elementary and secondary students enrolled in Catholic schools are 'significantly higher' than the national average, according to research prepared for the National Catholic Educational Assn.

"Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that Catholic school students outperformed their peers in the fourth, eighth and 11th grades. The research also claims advantages for blacks, Hispanics and students from poor families who attend Catholic schools. . . .

"Researcher Valerie Lee said the results refute the 'selection bias' outlined in the *High School and Beyond* study, which credited Catholics schools' superiority to higher selectivity. 'On the average, Catholic school students do more homework, watch less television . . . and

select more courses in high school in academic areas that relate to school achievement,' said Lee."—*Education U.S.A.*, February 10, 1986. Reprinted by permission from *Education U.S.A.* Copyright 1986, National School Public Relations Association.

Graduates of Black Colleges "Learn How to Operate Within the System"

"The graduates of black colleges are among the best paid and most highly motivated of their race, according to *The Black Elite*, a report from Dillard University and the United Negro College Fund.

"The graduates of black institutions have learned how to operate within the system,' said Donald C. Thompson, the author of the report. . . . 'These graduates subscribe to the widespread belief that blacks have to be better than whites in order to compete with them as equals.'

"The report was based on a three-year study of more than 2,000 alumni of more than 100 traditionally black public and private institutions in the United States. . . .

"*The Black Elite* draws a profile of people who graduate from traditionally black institutions from 1940 to 1982. The average age of the alumni surveyed was 43.

"'Almost all of those who graduated before 1960 were the first in something,' said Mr. Thompson. . . . 'In addition, they seem to be more ambitious than one can expect from one human being,' Mr. Thompson added. . . .

"As a result of the accomplishments of the blacks who graduated before 1960, Mr. Thompson said, the black middle class has experienced a 'tremendous increase in size and influence.' . . .

"In the course of his study, Mr. Thompson found that nearly 90 per cent of the alumni held professional positions in medicine, nursing, teaching, dentistry, and law. Eight per cent of them held white-collar jobs as, for example, secretaries, salesmen, and office managers. . . .

"The average annual income of the families headed by black-college graduates . . . is \$32,000, over \$10,000 more than the average income of families headed by persons who did not attend college.

"More than 50 per cent of the graduates of black institutions have received master's or doctoral degrees; 9 per cent have entered graduate school but have not yet received their degrees, the report said.

"Most of those who earned advanced degrees received them from predominantly white institutions out-

Teachers

side the South. . . . Nearly 10 per cent of the alumni with post-baccalaureate degrees received them from Ivy League institutions. . . .

"[Mr. Thompson commented that] 'The fact that traditionally black colleges prepared them to compete successfully at such prestigious institutions speaks well of the academic programs at black universities.'"—*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 24, 1986. Reprinted with permission. Copyright 1986 by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Free "Reading Is Fun" Booklet

"Tips for Parents of Children Age Birth to 8 Years," designed to prevent illiteracy in the U.S., which was published under a grant from General Sportswear, is available free from M. Richter, CM & L Public Relations, 315 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10016.

Profile of the Effective School Board

School Boards: Strengthening Grass Roots Leadership says an effective local board:

- Addresses most of its time and energy to education and educational outcomes.
- Believes that advocacy for all students is its primary responsibility.
- Concentrates on goals and uses strategic planning to accomplish its purposes.
- Ensures an adequate flow of resources and achieves equity in their distribution.
- Encourages diversity as a strength, integrates special needs into the goals of the system, and fosters both assertiveness and cooperation.
- Deals openly with controversy.
- Leads the community in matters of education, seeking and responding to many forms of participation by the community.
- Exercises continuing oversight of education programs and knows enough about the issues to ask the right questions.
- Works out and periodically reaffirms the separate areas of administrative and policy responsibilities of board and superintendent.
- Determines the mission and agenda of each of its committees, ensuring coherence and coordination of policy and oversight functions.
- Establishes policy to govern its own policy making and policy oversight responsibilities, including making explicit budget provisions to support these activities.
- Invests in its own development, using diverse

approaches that address the needs of individual board members and the board as a whole.

- Establishes procedures for selecting and evaluating the school administration and evaluating itself.
- Collaborates with other boards through statewide groups to influence state policy.
- Develops procedures for media contact that avoid manipulating media attention for personal gains.—From Institute for Educational Leadership.

Students Hold Unrealistic Expectations of Work, Family Relationships

What sort of expectations do the next generation of working parents—today's college students—have for their future? Are they prepared for the problems that await them?

No, according to a recent study. Most college students have an extremely unrealistic view of what their work and family lives will be like.

Social psychologist Hedwin Naimark and researchers at Catalyst, a national nonprofit organization promoting women's career development, interviewed 152 men and 225 women from six colleges around the U.S. They asked the students questions about their expectations for career, salary, and parenthood. All of the students were enrolled in credit courses covering either career or personal-life planning.

The results of the survey revealed that students initially had a limited view of the trade-offs involved in combining employment and family and were somewhat naive in their ideas of how to get along in the workplace. For example, 22 percent of the men and women polled thought women should take off at least two years when their first child was born, yet they made no corresponding reduction in their salary or career expectations.

When asked about the most important quality for getting ahead in their careers, students chose "superior performance" and highly rated other personal attributes. They placed other factors such as "playing office politics" low on their lists.

After completing the course design by Catalyst to promote a more realistic view of career and family life expectations, the students had a somewhat more accurate view of the working world. Awareness of the strain work places on personal life increased, and the students became more sensitive to the tradeoffs involved in being employed while raising a family.—Reported in *Psychology Today*, November 1987.