

TITLE II-A COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

School-College Orientation Program in Pittsburgh

The Problem

There are many students who have college potential, but who, because of poor motivation, low level of aspiration, or poor preparation would not normally think of college or prepare for it. In Pittsburgh the condition seems more prevalent among Negro than white students.

There is a need to improve procedures for training high school students who are underachieving in such basic skills as reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

SCHOOL-COLLEGE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

There is also a need to provide a comprehensive diagnostic service in order to explore the reasons for failure to achieve. Such diagnosis must include physical, psychological, and psychiatric examinations.

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Carnegie Tech, starting in July, 1964, joined with the Pittsburgh public school system to develop a pilot project to aid intelligent, underprivileged students who were underachieving to attend college. The plan was financed by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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There is a need to improve procedures for training high school students who are underachieving in such basic skills as reading, writing, speaking, and the understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts. There is also a need to provide a comprehensive diagnostic service in order to expose the reasons for failure to achieve. Such diagnosis must include physical, psychological, and psychiatric examinations.

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The program is planned for a two-year period starting with a six weeks' summer program at the close of June when the pupils have completed their tenth year in public schools in Pittsburgh. This is

followed by a weekend program extended through the academic year when pupils will be in the eleventh grade in regular classes. A similar arrangement is followed during the senior year. Pupils live on campus the final week of the first summer and during the entire six weeks of the second summer.

Approximately one hundred pupils who meet preliminary qualifications are recommended by counselors in the various high schools of Pittsburgh. Forty-three students were selected for this program. As indicated later, the Director of Research of the Pittsburgh Public Schools is developing improved methods of evaluation involving complete psychological and physical testing procedures that will aid materially in the final selection of participants.

English, mathematics, and biology are the subjects presented during the first year. These programs complement and supplement the work done in the regular school classes with careful coordination by the SCOPP staff, the teachers, and counselors of the public schools. Parents are encouraged to visit the University to observe classes, meet with counselors, and when necessary, talk with the psychologist, psychiatrist, or a member of the medical staff.

It is planned during the second year to substitute history for biology. As noted in the budget a reading specialist will be used as most pupils selected have major or minor reading problems.

A considerable amount of counseling and social work is essential with the pupils and their families. As a rule, the greater the degree of poverty, the greater the need for professional skill which will be necessary for analyzing and correcting problems not usually encountered in pre-planning for college entrance.

Cultural needs are recognized by various methods. Thirty dollars are provided for each pupil for starting a personal library. These books are purchased under the direction of the English department. An additional thirty dollars per pupil provides for programs of plays, symphonies, and other cultural activities. This amount is expanded greatly by the use of the many cultural resources of Carnegie Tech which are made available at no additional cost.

Selected public school teachers are employed to do the teaching while college professors--heads of their departments--serve as advisors. However, this past summer the college professors became so interested they spent from 50 per cent to 100 per cent of their time with these pupils.

An Advisory Board under the chairmanship of Dean John R. Coleman meets regularly to advise the regular staff on methods for improving the program. The Board is composed of representatives of the University, the Board of Education, and the public at large. Dr. Richard L. Day, Director of Childrens' Hospital, was added to the Board this past month because of the recognized need for more complete knowledge of physical handicaps among underachieving, underprivileged children.

It is the primary objective of the School-College Orientation Program to prepare pupils for college. Other organizations assisted by us will help us obtain scholarships. It is recognized that the reputation for fine scholarship of Carnegie Tech will be of material assistance in gaining recognition and assistance from educational institutions.

Evaluation and research are being developed under the leadership of the Director of Research of the Board of Education,

Dr. James Becker. As yet, little is known as to why an intelligent pupil becomes an underachiever. Poverty with all its ramifications is suspected to be a major reason. But research is an essential phase in our attempt to conserve the intellectual resources of the young people of this city.

Therefore, Dr. Sidney P. Marland, Jr., Superintendent of Schools, with the support of Dr. John C. Warner, President of Carnegie Tech, and the three Deans who have given so much leadership and direction to the program--Dean Lawrence N. Canjar, Dean John R. Coleman, and Dean Erwin R. Steinberg--requests the continuation of the School-College Orientation Program in Pittsburgh which was financed originally by the Carnegie Corporation for forty pupils for a two-year period, and the expansion of it to include one hundred children yearly.

The Budget

The following is an annual budget for the School-College Orientation Program for one hundred high school students, one half of whom are juniors and one half seniors.