



If we are ready to take a look at our school situations with eyes wide open, we must certainly recognize the need for changes. The statistics that supports changes are overwhelming. Newspapers frequently present these depressing facts on a regular basis. One statistic tells us a lot, however. The progress an average school child makes in a year's time is .4 of a school year. That is, they gain less that a half year's progress in a school year. That means that the average high school graduate operates at about a 5.2 grade level and this figure doesn't include the 30% or more that drop out of school. Now that's pretty sad!

In addition, we are aware of the vandalism, crime, and financial challenges. School districts all over the country are going bankrupt. Many important programs are being eliminated.

One of the major handicaps that educators give as an excuse for not achieving what they want is the large class sizes. From their point of view their reasons may be valid. This doesn't need to be. I will show how the results in the PAL manual –four to ten times the current results in the schools – is possible in classrooms of any size. Let's concentrate on positive improvements rather than on the negatives.

A major portion of the ideas presented here are a result of the experiences of many experts, as well as my personal experiences – both mistakes and successes. In addition, I have reviewed hundreds of books and articles from expert psychologists, theologians, scientists, nutrition experts, financial experts, and educators. With this depth of expertise, I feel well-qualified to offer the enclosed ideas.

Professionals and Non-professionals

When I have had a staff working for me in teaching positions, I have often found the most effective persons to be non-credentialed. They hadn't been handicapped by previous methods they were raised with, and they were still more effective. Why? Because they were more in-tune with the students, rather than being controlled by lesson plans, requirements of an administrator, or fears resulting from failing to adhere to traditional teaching methods.

As far as I am concerned, teachers are directors of learning, not teachers except perhaps by example. Let's face it. Our school children are bored to death. As teachers, we often think we need to "tell it like it is" or to entertain when we aren't disciplining. We feel that in order to be successful we need to make the lectures interesting and contain information that everyone must know. First, we don't need to, and as far as I am concerned, shouldn't lecture to our students. Secondly, information that teachers are "blessed with" isn't for everyone. Students learn best what they are interested in, and they will best learn the material by experiencing, not by being told about it. Keep these concepts in mind.

A next extremely important concept to bear in mind is that we all learn at different rates of speed, Our attention spans vary, for example, from less than a minute to perhaps 15 productive minutes, no matter what age group we're speaking of — from a small child to an adult. A student brings into the classroom a wide range of past and present experiences which also affect his or her attention span. Emotional problems, lack of love, problems at home, a fight with a peer, fears, previous successes and failures — these all contribute to how we are at the moment. Past and present experiences have a definite affect on a student's attitudes, interests, and attention that will contribute to the learning situation. Each student also has his own maturity level, intelligence quotient, and environmental factors that need to be considered. As teachers

we need to work with these individual needs, not teach at the mass hoping everyone will be reached.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Seriously consider my first major change in the system. Reduce the percent of professionally trained teachers in our present system and increase teacher aides in the classroom. Oh, no, you may say, that would put a lot of teachers out of work! Hey! What are we after anyway, more teaching positions or better quality education? If we want young people better prepared for life, then we need to do what is best to achieve that end. Fewer "master teachers" and more aides will reduce costs, better train teachers (as I suggest later), and most important, better prepare our young people by giving them personal direction rather than a systemized program that has lacked the results we want and our children deserve.

A teacher or teacher's aide should be a resource person for the students, not a dictator or a "know it all". With proper guidelines, a student can learn on his own, not be having facts crammed down him. Learning becomes meaningful and is retained when we want to learn, not when someone else tells us what is right for us. Our 85% neurotic society is a result of being molded into what others think should be, rather than becoming who we really are. Our dropouts and society's rebels are a result of resentments and anger built up over the years by our parents and institutions that brain-washed or conditioned our thinking to conform to established patterns .

Basically, all that is needed is one master teacher to oversee the learning process for about every three classrooms. That teacher has the main responsibility for evaluating and personalizing the learning process for the 100 or so students in those classrooms. Each classroom can have two trained aides, who like the master teacher, acts as a resource person and a director of the learning. As you may readily see, an aide usually costs less than a credentialed teacher, and in this proper role as a director can perform the same functions for less money. A class of 30 students, for example, will, with the usual 10% being absent, provide a teacher-to-pupil ratio of close to 12 to 1. That's not bad. In fact, it's terrific because this new system operates even more efficiently than most classrooms. You will see why as we go on. Leaving out the details of organization and responsibility for now, can you see an application of what I have tried to present? Less costly instruction is available to more students by persons qualified to educate, and more personal help is available.

Why is the help more personal? Each child has his or her own schedule of learning activities based on their own abilities and levels. As a result, the student is not frustrated or bored because learning is adapted to his own needs. The learning process is also personalized to his rate of learning and there is allowance to let each child progress as much or as little as he desires and as fast as he wants. Does this approach encourage lazy learning? No. Certain minimum standards are expected of each child and are attained by each one.

THE P.E.P.

You may be aware that many schools formulate a plan for each educationally handicapped student. It is called an I.E.P. or Individual Education Plan. The concept is good except, in my opinion, it has been mostly administrative paper work rather than specific applications, in most cases, to the students. I have coined a similar instructional guide called P.E.P. or Personal Education Plan that we will now apply to each student. All students are involved with this plan. It isn't a formal list of objectives and procedures

prepared for administration. It's a practical, everyday — every hour — use of a plan personally geared to a child's abilities, levels and personality.

The preparation and use of the PEP is really "where it's at." Yes, the scheduling discipline, teaching techniques, and many other factors contribute to the successes. But the real success is the proper use of the PEP. In fact, after you hear or read of this introductory material I am presenting, and do nothing but use the principles of the PEP presented, you will be well on the way to more student progress. Personally, I would like to see less tax money wasted and more freedom offered to our children, but even if no one else looked into those areas and used the PEP as I suggest, my goals for better education would be well met.

Prior to new students starting school, the master teacher gives an informal evaluation that takes only a few minutes per student. This is not a formal achievement test which often doesn't reflect accurate results for various reasons. Basically, only three sets of skills are tested: reading, spelling, and math. A few informal questions to older students in language skills may help place them in that subject. Most always the spelling level is a little behind the reading level and the math is easy to evaluate. The math is just one page of problems — one problem representing each math skill taught at the various grade levels. The student is asked to complete as many as possible. Later, when he begins his day's work, the PEP instruction will briefly review the most difficult type of math function he is successful at and then build more difficult skills. Time isn't wasted (more boredom and problems) on all the review that isn't necessary.

The reading part of the informal placement test is reviewed in the early pages of this PAL manual. When are these evaluations made? Initially all students should be evaluated prior to starting school. If organized properly with an aide's help, 100 students could be evaluated in three days or less. Preferably, new students enrolling in the middle of a school year should be tested outside of class time. But, even if necessary because of the nature of the PEP, the master teacher can free himself for the needed few minutes and even start the student that same day in the PEP activities.

What are the PEP activities? These are the subjects a student is required to do in a day's schedule. In his folder is his own PEP that has listed the subjects and the amount of work he is to complete each day. Most all students would be required to have reading or its equivalent for students below 4th grade level, math, spelling, or language (depending again on the level), and rebound learning. Other subjects can be and are added at certain times for various reasons, but there are at least three major subjects listed. Depending on the ability and the needs of the student, a specific number of pages or accomplishment is expected each day. When these are completed the student has met his required amount, and then is free to continue into another day's assignments (working ahead) or work at any other constructive activity as long as no one else's studying rights are violated. Let me add at this point, that students using these methods have gained their two to five years in a year, by only attending three hours per day rather than the usual six or so.

A beauty of the PEP allows the student to do "what he wants, when he wants" as long as his PEP is completed. It doesn't matter what subject he chooses to work at first or what anyone else is doing. In fact, there isn't even an awareness of other students' levels, so there are no "put downs" for being a dummy and the like. Each day the student successfully accomplishes each activity and asks the aide or teacher to sign it off as completed on his PEP. This continually keeps the child in contact with his "directors" and vice versa. The aides and teacher are always aware of what the student is doing. A personal relationship is developed, something sorely lacking in our present systems. The student progresses at his own speed and changes into appropriate materials when he and the teacher see the need.

As you can see, the teacher seldom ever is needed to prepare "lessons" or lecture-type activities, and the typical "correcting of papers" is eliminated in the after-school hours, thus saving a lot of preparation time. All learning is accomplished on a personal level. The teacher's role is that of a facilitator. He or she provides the environment, material, and assistance when it is needed.

Can you begin to see the values of the PEP? Now let's extend the PEP potential a little. Recall the student is only doing three hours required work in a four to six hour day. So now he is free to do "what he pleases" within the teacher or school's offerings. The other activities can include art, crafts, industrial arts, home economics, horticulture, recreation and a host of other things. Now we are providing more practical activities not only to the student's liking but in more realistic preparation for life. Now the child can explore a wide range of interests and determine the direction he wants to go based on some practical experience. Actually, if implemented correctly, the student should be able to mix the so-called extra-curricular activities with his solid requirements. This begins to teach the student self-responsibility and self-direction. If a child doesn't complete the PEP for the day because of his poor judgment, the incomplete assignments are sent home as homework and if not completed on his own time, he will have "chosen" not to take part in "fringe benefits" till he gets caught up. This is really what life is about. If we wish to be successful, we can't afford to be procrastinators. If we want the "fringe benefits" of living, they result from our own efforts. Freedom is available but often needs to be attained by our own efforts.

REBOUND LEARNING

Rebound learning and many other benefits of rebound exercise is a must for every classroom. Actually one unit for every two classrooms is adequate. For those not familiar with them, they are sometimes called mini-trampolines. Usually they are a framed mat about 38 inches across that sits about eight inches off the floor. The person exercising on the units can jog, jump, dance, or any number of fun things. A unit will last many years and can be a big boon to progress for all its users, including the teachers.

They are definitely the most effective and efficient form of exercise there is. How is this possible when swimming, for example, is supposed to use all the muscles? The difference is that rebounding strengthens every cell in the body, not just the muscles. Basically, these units develop strength, coordination, stamina, can heal, and can achieve a host of other benefits, including being used as a learning tool. Many students and my own experience with re-bouncers verify this.

A student jogging or jumping while looking at a phonics chart and saying the sounds, for example, impresses on his brain cells that which he is experiencing. So, while he is getting valuable exercise, he can be learning some valuable sounds, word recognition, math facts or whatever. It's amazing how fast they are learned and how much they are enjoyed. I was able to advance a nine year old boy from kindergarten reading level to third grade reading skills in one year, as well as develop math levels to fourth grade. The re-bouncer was a key factor in his growth for this so-called retarded youngster.

Another great benefit from the units is their ability to give energy instead of take it away as in other forms of exercise. This makes for a nice break in the routine when an aide calls a student for his practicing. This is also a pleasant way for the student and the adult to be informal with each other, which in itself is worth the three to five minutes a day spent this way. These units are worth their weight in gold and should be seriously considered.

TEACHER TRAINING FOR AIDES

Our higher education institutions are not providing what they could for real teacher preparation. Any college-educated person can look back on those years and must readily admit that a large percent of the required courses weren't really necessary, or at least could have been condensed to present the main concepts in a much briefer and more meaningful way. I'm certain we could take any person wanting to be an effective teacher and prepare him or her in a year or less to do a better job than most teachers trained by our present system of education.

Here is a concept that the system could really benefit from, and for that matter, so will the trainees and the students. A big change in tradition would result, but the benefits would be better all around. Here it is: Cut staff back gradually with retiring teachers and train college students to become teachers by serving as aides while completing academic necessities.

School districts could even possibly charge a basic tuition fee for the training and come out ahead. And why not? Why couldn't an elementary school charge tuition like a state university? These eager trainees will be excited about helping in the classroom and will take an active interest in serving as an aide. What better training is there than actually doing the work? It's a good way for a trainee to decide if teaching is what he wants to do without putting in years of study and money only to later discover he would rather be doing something else. Also, their training is applicable to being a more effective parent.

Look at the school's benefits. No wages would need to be paid for aides. The training aides are there because they want to be, not just to earn some money from a job. Even more than two aides per classroom could be assigned if needed.

A trainee could serve as an aide for half a day, and utilize the rest of the day for academic studies. I feel certain that such training in 1 year could prepare the student better than most teachers got in four or more years of formal college preparation. With an established study outline for the trainee, the principal and/or the master teacher can direct the trainee's studies. Even if combined with paid aides, it could be beneficial in many ways.

A foreseeable problem with such a training program could come from the teacher training institutions. There could be a fear for lack of tuition-producing students. Again, so what? Are we interested in the almighty dollar or really considering the students, whether they be college age or younger? Few people like change, but perhaps we are overdue.

SCHEDULING YEAR ROUND

Major benefits can result by altering the typical school calendar and secondly, the scheduled school day. Recall that our goals are for the children in considering any changes.

Our typical nine month schooling is outdated. Our used-to-be need of letting students out for summer farm labor is almost nonexistent. Even if it was necessary, my proposal could still take them into consideration. It is a well-established fact that students regress in remembering facts after the three month vacation. As a result, for about the first month or so in the fall, teachers spend a lot of time re-teaching concepts of earlier years — a real waste of time in terms of progression that could be made.

Another problem resulting from the typical nine month school year is boredom. It's a real drag as spring comes around, resulting often in increased anathy and

tendency to behavior problems. During the final two months or so of vacation the same thing happens. Children often "can't find enough to do", so the resulting boredom often leads to delinquency. Parents about this time are really looking forward to school, too.

If all school districts changed their school calendar to a year-round schedule, there would be many advantages. Basically, this is a quarter system that nicely separates the year into definite grading periods with vacation periods between them. Studies and my experience using this calendar show many positive results. Boredom is almost non-existent. In fact, most of my students felt refreshed during their breaks and looked forward to returning.

There is no learning loss to speak of, hence the learning is continuous. Little or no time is needed for review, thus improving the student's attitude. Under the typical 9-3 scheduling when reviews are made, a good percent of the students feel "put down" because they have to go back to the "same ole stuff." The year-round use of curriculum is always on a progressive note, giving the students a feeling of progress.

The three or four-week vacations are much better for preventing boredom and its resulting problems. These "breathing periods" are just right for parents, and excellent as far as vacations are concerned. Now vacations are available not only during the summer but throughout the year. If we could all regularly break away from routine like this, our mental health and productivity would be much higher too.

These quarter breaks are also better for regular school maintenance, as well as giving teachers "a shot in the arm" after just completing a busy quarter. The boredom or "staleness" of the old schedule is now eliminated.

SUMMARY

I've given you a lot to consider. Some changes are major, some are not so drastic. However, I'm certain you can see the many advantages when the changes are made. Now, all we need is the courage and genuine concern for our children to make those changes. I have a favorite saying that you probably have heard: "If it is to be, it is up to me." This applies to all of us. I'm doing what I can. What are you going to do?

Whether you are a teacher, administrator, parent, or a concerned taxpayer, you can have an impact. Some of these suggestions don't require major changes. Talk to others about the possibilities. Express your opinions to the newspapers. Develop interest and action in your local PTA's. Write legislators. You are free to duplicate any of these materials you feel would be helpful.

I have used the above concepts with close to 24 students at one time, by myself, and with students ranging from 6 years through 17 years (many of whom were so-called problem students) in the same classroom. It can be done, and when it is done the results are well worth the efforts.

Further detailed organizational, procedural recommendations, forms and materials may be found in BETTER SCHOOLS - Part 2. This is designed for persons who presently operate schools and/or wish to convert present private or public schools to utilize the above principles.

BETTER SCHOOLS - PART 2

Up to this point you have considered changes in the schools as they were presented in Part I. That which is presented here is designed specifically for schools already in operation and wanting suggestions on how to adapt their facilities to the recommended objectives. Trying to present an organized approach to developing a program for an established school is difficult. As you can appreciate, there are so many varying factors from one school to another. Some may wish to take full advantage of savings and better schooling and are willing to make a complete changeover. Others will only want to adopt some of the changes for now, and consider full utilization at a later date. School size, facilities and personnel care are also key factors. My approach here to organizing will be a compromise, sensing a reluctance to make complete change which is typical with most of us, let alone an established system.

Because a change to the year-round schedule and a 4-hour day are major decisions for school boards, I'm going to assume that you aren't ready for that yet. Also, a complete changeover to train teachers in a "hands-on" training is probably out of reach for awhile because of the credentialing and schooling requirements at a state level. However, I'm not going to set these ideas aside, and I will present them later. If you are among those desiring to make a complete change in any of these areas, I believe you will see how that can be done as we move along through these materials.

So, at this point then, we are desiring a gradual change in program. Our primary goals as I see it are:

1. to reduce costs of salaries
2. improve instructional results
3. utilize rebound learning
4. train teachers and aides
5. implement the P.E.P. for personalization, and to
6. Organize the implementing of all the above.

The first thing that needs to be done is to convince and get the support of those with whom you will be working. Allow them to get an overall picture of the possibilities. A team of people working together with similar goals is necessary for best results. Obtain or make copies of Better Schools - Part I and distribute copies as needed. To begin with, I would personally approach key positioned persons such as board members and principals. Present the possibilities as offered and get their general support. They may go for the whole idea or just part of it. When you realize measurable success even with a part of the proposals, we will then be in a better position to further upgrade the programs by making additional changes.

Anyone with any common sense and vision can certainly see the value of the P.E.P. In fact, I see no reason why a teacher couldn't use the P.E.P. in their own classroom, with or without aides. Of course, more benefit will result if aides are available and a re-bouncer is used, but even without, the teacher will see less preparation time for lessons and marked improvements in student progress

The same teacher using the P.E.P. wouldn't have full use of extra-curricular activities but these could be even in the one classroom, opportunities to do fun and worthwhile activities which could include: free reading, quiet table games, science and nature projects, video viewing, helping other students, arts and crafts, working ahead, studying a different subject of personal interest, and building models. Students helping each other can be very valuable. This cross-age tutoring can be extended to other classrooms as well as students of their own class.

Once the administration approves a change to implement the program, all the teachers in the school should become aware of the possibilities. Present the Part I topic either individually for review or at a teacher's meeting, allowing discussion to follow. Still assuming at this point that the change is going to be gradual, perhaps other teachers may want to implement the P.E.P. Don't be offended if there aren't too many willing to change. Typically, teachers are "hung up" on their own pet approaches to teaching. Very few teachers react favorably to any change. At least others will be aware of the "pilot program" going into effect and will closely observe it in action. Good results will breed more support and desire to change.

Let's assume at this point next to the worse, that the teacher will still have a self-contained classroom of about 30 students and no aides. How awful! But it's still possible. Review all the materials from the PAL manual so that you know what is available and the direction in which you're headed. Contact the parents of each new child prior to starting the new school year by a letter that briefly states what you plan to do and the results you expect to get. Invite them to call the teacher (you) by phone and arrange a pre-testing time for their child. Perhaps you can arrange to use your classroom or some part of the school about a month before school starts. If not, invite them to your home. Because this is a new approach, I would allow at least 30 minutes per interview even though the actual pre-test may only take ten minutes per pupil. Most parents still want to ask questions and get a little acquainted. Keep the pre-test for your records.

Get a copy of the P.E.P. form and make about 50 copies, one for each student with extras for later. Develop a P.E.P. for each student. If possible, obtain a folder or binder for each student to later use and put the P.E.P. as the binder's first page. Gather all the materials you will need for the personalized studies and place them in your classroom.

Realize you are now personalizing your instruction and materials. Even if you are assigned to teach a middle grade, for example, you will have beginning readers as well as those at grade level or above.

You next need to match the P.E.P. of each child with the appropriate text or material item. Using the PAL system you have copies of word lists for phonics blanks, and spelling lists that can be duplicated as needed. Place them in each binder at the student's desk. When this is done you are ready for the students, as far as their assignments are concerned.

Familiarize yourself with the re-bouncer by studying the manual's chapter on Rebound Learning. If the school won't order a unit for your class, arrange to bring your own that you have purchased. (Keep in mind that all materials you are paying for that are necessary for your profession is tax deductible at income tax time.) Practice using the re-bouncer and saying the sounds as described in the PAL materials. You are then prepared to train your aides and/or students for its use. Be open to the idea that an advanced student in your class can do an excellent job assisting students on the re-bouncer, in case you don't have an aide or if you decide student help would be best. Testing to advance a pupil in rebound activities should be supervised by the aide or teacher.

If possible, spend a day with your aide(s) before class activity begins. A good day would be when your students are coming to you for the pre-test, especially if it is done in your classroom. As parents bring their child, the aide can give directions about the math portion of the test and have the student work at it while your may be testing an earlier-scheduled child in reading and taking a few minutes with the parent. This will cut down on your testing time. Most of the time, while the test is being taken, the aide can study the PAL materials.

Between appointments or when one may be missed, the teacher can spend some time reviewing what will be classroom procedures and the responsibilities involved for each of the aides.

As the teacher talks of responsibilities, it should be very clear that the aide will supervise rebound practices, sign off completed P.E.P. activities, administer spelling tests, give phonics lessons, and serve as a roving resource person. The teacher will oversee these activities. In addition, the main responsibilities are to determine readiness for student advancement and P.E.P. changes, checking homework slips and assigning new ones each day, and serving as a friendly resource person.

As pointed out in the guidelines, students are always being evaluated because of their frequent contacts with their director(s). Formal testing, except for an occasional end-of-book test, is seldom done. Grading, per se, is not based on test scores but rather on the overall progress a child makes relative to his levels and potentials. Failures are really non-existent. Emphasis is not on comparative performance to other students but more on one's own efforts. Another P.E.P. evaluation may be given just before a quarter ends to determine grade level progress. Otherwise, the teacher will be able to develop grades based on the student's P.E.P. and daily personal contacts. Copies of report cards should be kept for each student.

After you test a child at the end of the quarter, share the results with them. It is delightful to see their faces light up when you tell them they have advanced a year already when they have been in school for less than half a year, for example. This is a big boost to their ego and encourages even more enthusiasm. I have never experienced any student who didn't make better progress than in previous years. And the neat thing is that it really wasn't the teacher performing the miracle, but rather it's the result of applying more effective teaching principles with the student's God-given potential. It's exciting!

Another valuable selling tool for your program is the re-bouncer. Children from other classrooms will want to try it. Teachers and parents will bug you for information. Give them some literature and perhaps suggest where they can get one, as well as materials related to its use. Use it regularly yourself as directed, and I guarantee you will want to "tell the world about it". Become familiar with its many uses and values so it isn't passed off as a fun gimmick. Ask a child to demonstrate how it's used for learning and see some more positive results.

I mentioned a goal would be to reduce the cost of salaries. In the situation I have presented is a one-teacher, one-classroom situation, this probably isn't possible because we aren't reducing the staff any. However, a step toward showing the effectiveness of in-service aides is very possible. Show from your classroom how your aide with only minimal briefing, was able to professionally assist you. Invite the administrator to see the class in operation. You might also invite volunteer parents to assist in the program. Their getting involved and feeling the progress will be a big help in the selling of your new program. And in a very real sense it would be your program because you will have been the pilot program. Ideas aren't worth much until they are put into action.

The guidelines offered so far have been geared for a minimal effort to bring desired change into a school or system. I have presumed a situation where an interested taxpayer or caring teacher has wanted to get things started but as yet lacks backing for a total change. Hence, the approach has been designed towards one teacher acting as an initiator. Naturally, this could easily be more than one teacher and hopefully it would be. The approach would be the same—being started from a teacher level. In review, then, your steps for preparation have been:

1. Present the program to the administrators.
2. Share Better Schools, Part I with the staff.
3. Review all the topics and materials from the PAL Training Course.
4. Notify the parents of your students of plans and pre-test.
5. Pre-test all your students.
6. Become aware of all the texts and materials that are available.
7. Develop each student's P.E.P.. Put the needed materials in the student's desk.
8. Train your aides and practice using the rebounder and the sounds.
9. Utilize the program and P.E.P. in the classroom.
10. Evaluate each child during the last week before the end of the quarter and report results on report forms.
11. Share your success with staff and administrators.

Let's go a little further and assume that the entire school has the "go ahead" to implement the P.E.P. as described here and in the obtainable materials. More than likely, then, the principal has approval from either the school board or the district superintendent to begin this important change. What are his/her steps to get things going?

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal must first present the concept to his staff.

She/he would be better prepared by reviewing all the topics and materials available for his specific needs. That is, he needs to be well versed in the Training Course as well. He can copy what he wants from the loose-leaf pages in the manual. One copy of each is all that is really needed at this stage—which, by the way, is very cheap compared to having a consultant or specialist organize the program.

It is my hope that the materials are adequate in getting the program understood and started. There are probably areas that I have not foreseen or aren't sufficiently explained. I would greatly appreciate letters or e-mail suggesting additions or changes in the PAL presentation. It's quite easy to make needed adjustments and it will benefit many. In advance, thank you for your efforts and support.

In a quick rundown, here are some responsibilities that a principal would have if his staff is converting to using the P.E.P., with a slight reduction in teachers because of their retirement or transfer at the end of the previous school year.

1. Review "Better Schools, Part I and Part 2.
2. Get school board or district approval for program.
3. Survey the school's text supply and facilities; order needed materials.
4. Organize the staff for presentation of program.
5. Duplicate or purchase a set of "Better Schools" for each teacher; reproduce needed copies of forms as provided in the PAL course guidelines.
6. Arrange for needed teacher aides.

7. Schedule needed time for teacher's pre-tested students; send letters to parents.
8. Consider adopting a different report card to better fit the P.E.P.
9. Support teachers, educate public, and consider an effort to change scheduling and offer the teacher training program for the following' school year.

Now that you have reviewed all of the PAL materials relating to the P. E.P., the next major step is getting district support. Your approach to them will be based on several factors, the prime one being your relationship with them. If there is no personal relationship, then a more formal presentation needs to be developed.

On a personal basis, a one-to-one approach to the superintendent or each school board member would be best in order to answer their questions most easily. You will know whether it is better to informally describe the P.E.P. changes or to ask them to review the appropriate PAL materials. Again, depending on the size and formality of the district, you may or may not need a formal school board approval. Plan well ahead, preferably getting approval during the preceding spring or early summer.

Preparing and getting board approval during the spring before the new school year has a couple of advantages. One is that your staff and community is being prepared. Perhaps unwilling teachers may rather resign than make changes in their teaching approach. Hopefully these teachers will have had a chance to review the proposal first so they can justifiably choose not to participate. I can't imagine a caring teacher not wanting to improve the learning situation and make it easier for themselves at the same time, but some may choose to do so.

Your early approval advantage really is necessary to allow you time to budget and order needed materials so they are available by mid-summer and fall. If it is necessary to make a formal presentation to the board, consider putting together a packet of information and present them to each member prior to your presentation. The packet could include a cover letter that briefly describes the proposal and the expected results based on experience.

A copy of a sample P.E.P. and possibly other forms used may also be helpful. Stress the money-saving features, specifically how it relates to your school with expected resignations and less expensive aides to replace them. Your packet should estimate the anticipated savings in salaries and possibly in materials, if you were able to survey your stock and needs by that time.

Show how the aides will be trained and utilized. Show how adult-pupil contacts will be more frequent and how the program personalizes instruction. Briefly explain how the mini trampoline is used and some of its values.

If for some reason you don't get approval to hire teachers for every classroom, be ready with an alternative. You definitely want to use the P.E.P., no matter what. Don't make this proposal unless they deny using the aides as presented. Otherwise, those reluctant to change will have an easy way to back away from what you want to do. But if they insist on a full "professional" staff, show how you will utilize the one paid aide in each classroom. At the worst, if they don't allow any paid aides, show how you will attempt to get volunteer parents, and/or use advanced students to help out.

No matter how the P.E.P. proposal is presented, any administrative body should accept the P.E.P. on one of the above bases.

In order to really experience the monetary savings and more efficient teaching, you want to use one master teacher for every three classrooms with 2 aides per room. Success at this level will provide a solid foundation for the next steps of calendar changes and teacher training the following year. If you must maintain your present staff and can still start using the P.E.P., you have succeeded. Even though total success

won't be what it could be, you will set a very solid success base to propose further successes a year from this time.

One thing that may be helpful for the board presentation is to get teacher and/or parent support before appearing before the board. Approach people who you know are open-minded, who really care for student progress, and who may be influential in their support of the program. Educate them to the possibilities-by sharing the "Better Schools" topics and materials. Together, make plans for your proposals.

STAFF PRESENTATION

As principal, you should know your staff pretty well and can probably project what their acceptance will be with the P.E.P. implementation. If you think the acceptance will be favorable in the spring before its implementation, make the presentation then. You then may have their support for the school board appearance. If you think there may be dissent among the teachers over the proposal, then it may be best to present it in full to them after the board decision.

Perhaps the simplest way to introduce the total prospects, is to make copies of "Better Schools, Part I" and put them in the teachers' mail boxes along with a cover letter from you, the principal. Basically state that you have reviewed the PAL materials, see great potential, and will have a staff meeting on a particular date. At that time you will have other materials and a trampoline for them to familiarize themselves. They would enjoy your demonstrating how the rebounder could be used for learning.

During the presentation to the staff, indicate in no way that any of the staff will be laid off because of the new program. There is a good chance that by spring you will know who plans to leave and you could present your plans based on that information, although it is not necessary. The main emphasis at this meeting is to explain the mechanics of the P.E.P. and the role a teacher and aide would have in the classroom. Strongly emphasize the expected progress because of the personalization and the better chances that the teachers have to constantly know what the student is accomplishing. Show how less lesson planning is needed, and that the basic preparations are in providing materials, direction, and extracurricular activities for incentives and expanded education opportunities.

CLASSROOM AIDES

Although a teacher can get by without aides helping in the classroom, it should be obvious of their value, especially in making the P.E.P. more useful. Earlier, I suggested a couple of alternatives for help in a class where aides weren't budgeted. Basically, it involved volunteer parents and the use of students. If this situation does exist with your entire staff, a letter supporting a need to parents for volunteers would be very helpful. The letter would highly support the new approach, perhaps pointing out that an aide requires no expertise, and thanking them in advance for their support. A presentation at a PTA meeting could also be helpful. Perhaps a result would be that they will support the program to the community and school board.

If you are able to acquire an aide per teacher or the 6 aides per three classrooms under one master teacher, it is advisable to hold a meeting for them all under your direction. In addition to familiarizing them with school policies, you would introduce the P.E.P. concept and how it differs from traditional class routine. Show how important they are as directors to the children and their need to support the master teacher. List their probable functions as aides. It will be up to the master teacher to decide what the specific aide functions will be. Probably the responsibilities will be few at first until the

aide feels comfortable with class routine and basic functions. Allow the master teacher working with the aides to determine what will work best. Personalities and skills vary and should be used in the most effective manner.

More than likely there are no free classrooms to be used just for extracurricular activities, as there would probably be in a double session and when a possible cafeteria area would be available.

If there is an "unused" classroom, coordinate its supervision with the aides under a master teacher's direction. Students choosing to leave their regular class to use the activity area probably would need a pass to show their approval for the move. A rebound learning activity, by the way, can easily be done in the hallway to help minimize classroom noise. Charts posted on the hallway wall may encourage passers-by at other times to practice on their own. The rebounder can be easily moved from one area to another as needed.

Copies of the applicable materials should be made available to the aides for study. This study, coupled with oral instruction, will reinforce their knowledge and confidence.

REPORT CARDS

As educators, we are responsible to the students and parents to report student progress. There are many forms and ways to approach this matter of grading and reporting. You will notice that the PAL system minimizes student tests and places emphasis on skill mastery and progression. On occasion, the students may need an informal test from the teacher in passing from one reading activity to another. At the end of some worktexts there may be mastery tests to complete before moving out of a subject or level into another. Otherwise, evaluations for report cards are usually subjective except for the comparative math, spelling, and reading level tests at the end of a quarter.

Seriously evaluate whether your present report cards are appropriate to the P.E.P approach. Study the PAL form presented to see how it is adapted, and make attempts to discover how best to relay student progress to the parents. Using homework slips as recommended will keep constant communication going between teacher and parent. A report card is a good way to summarize results. Teachers should make copies of report cards for permanent records and coverage in case cards are misplaced.

SCHEDULING

Certainly there can be no doubt as to how the year-round calendar and four-hour day is better than traditional scheduling. Recall the main advantages listed in "Better Schools, Part I. One way to experience the four-hour day using P.E.P. guidelines as a pilot experience, is to use it during a summer session. If your school offered an academic and extracurricular setting during the summer using two 4-hour sessions, it would be seen how workable it is, assuming the P.E.P. is used. A summer program wouldn't want to be involved in a lunch program, anyway. So this would be a good chance to save that bother and expense. I believe you will also discover that the academic progress will show the progress of two or more months gain in a single month, the same as during a school year where the P.E.P. is used.

Setting the summer program aside now as a possible help, let's consider the 4-hour, two-session day. Hopefully your school district saw the savings and reduced pupil boredom as the idea was presented initially when the overview of the PAL proposals were presented. Whether they accepted the proposal then or are now ready to move

into it because of success seen in P.E.P. utilization, let's cover some things that need to be done.

If your school has had a hot lunch program in the past, the cooking staff should be notified in advance of its discontinuance. Perhaps they should have first choice at the paid teacher's aide positions, if they are available. Also, be aware that there is more storage space available in classrooms because the sack lunches will be discontinued. It is also possible that the need for providing hot lunches will be eliminated too.

As alluded to previously, rebound activity would be best if done in the hallway or some other area separated from the classroom. An aide from a 2-aide classroom could be responsible for calling students from her own class plus one 15-student classroom. When completed, an aide from the other larger class could do the same. It might also work well to have the rebound activity in a free classroom. When a student completes his practice, he or she would be sent back to send another student. If this procedure was followed, then the aide would be "permanently" in the open room(s) to supervise the other activities .

A major adjustment of a double session would be bussing students to and from school. I would seriously try to put the responsibility where it belongs—on the parents. I don't think all taxpayers should pay extra to bus students when, for the most part, it isn't necessary. Propose that all parents arrange their own transportation, and most can—if they want to. In rare cases where it is absolutely necessary to get help, ask that the needful family contact the school about a month before a quarter or school year begins. They, not the taxpayers, should pay for the bussing which would be a figure established by the school district.

To facilitate minimum use and expense of bussing, arrange those needing bussing to attend the afternoon session. This would allow plenty of time to pick up and drop off after 5 PM. Also, it would prevent families from needing to get up real early. For the few students needing to be bussed, less expensive vans could be much more practical.

In Part 1 of "Better Schools", I covered the main advantages of the year-round calendar. It should be no major problem to make the change when it is agreed upon. A major obstacle is getting school districts to coordinate their change-over so that transfer problems are minimized. There wouldn't be any real problem of different calendars if all schools were personalizing their instruction with the P.E.P. The students will be making such good progress that a few days of missed schooling won't really make any difference.

So then, no matter whether you are a teacher, tax-paying citizen, parent or an administrator, the important factor is getting the P.E.P. well on its way. As administrators begin seeing the changes with what they have started, then they will be more open to further changes to improve. We each need to do our best to improve what we can in our areas of responsibility first. Good progress will breed more of the same. Districts, even singly, can do a major good by legislating the year-round calendar which couple with other areas of progress to bring recognition and further change. Let your school board be aware of the many advantages of the year-round schedule, but don't pressure at the detriment of the P.E.P. or other areas of progress. The time will be right when their hearts and insight is right.

TEACHER TRAINING

I have previously expressed my opinion about the effectiveness of our present teacher-training system. The time and expense involved to become credentialed is not necessary. I would gladly match "worthiness to be a teacher" that is trained with PAL guidelines with most any "schooled" teacher. In one year, a person desiring to become

an effective teacher, and following what I have developed, can do as well as a 4 to 5 year credentialing program. Put these trainees in actual teaching conditions with outside time scheduled for other professional basics, and they will do an excellent job.

I'm sure you will see the financial advantage to using teacher trainees as aides. Since I would feel you might like to try such an idea, let me suggest a way to get started—after I offer some other thoughts.

At the risk of discouraging the idea of teacher training in elementary classrooms, I feel it only fair to point out something not at first apparent. Could you imagine at some point in time, how many teachers would be put in the job-hunting market because of the adoption of this program by most schools? What's going to happen to the market after a few years?

Again, at the risk of "stepping on someone's toes", this is what I would like to see. When a person applies to train as a teacher trainee, he or she will understand that they will be training for a master teacher position or to be a better qualified parent. A parent who is deemed "qualified to teach" would be able "to keep their youngster at home and teach them as they think best, meeting requirements for certain subjects. This would develop a much-needed relationship between the parent and child, as well as perhaps offer other possibilities. The parent, if desired, could develop a part-time business from their home to supplement the family income. Much more individual freedom and potentials are available in this kind of arrangement.

Would this eventually put the public schools out of business? No. Many parents couldn't and wouldn't want to teach their own children. Certainly the number of public school children would diminish, however. If we can get around the idea of education being a big business, we will be better off. Fewer students, less building programs, less money on materials and staff, will all reduce the money needed to educate our children. The result would be less tax dollars and effort spent on public education and better results with our children--and that's where it really counts, isn't it?

Now, let's get the program started. Advertise for persons who want teacher training experience and courses for a year. Let it be known that they will be certified upon adequate completion of requirements, but no jobs will be guaranteed. Tell the applicants that jobs may be available to teach, take on school district-sponsored recreation jobs, or they will be qualified to more effectively teach their own children. I recommend that they pay perhaps \$500 for the year's tuition—or whatever will cover the costs of books and learning materials. This will be a type of "good faith money" that isn't much, but pretty well commits them to the training.

Each student teacher will be assigned as an aide for one 4-hour session per school day. They will coordinate with the principal on the completion of other academic requirements. Throughout the year they will be asked to pass exams on those materials. May you visualize the end results of personalizing and improving our system of education. Feel free to write or e-mail me if I can be of further help or you have suggestions to share.