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Experiences met in establishing a school camping program in the city of Medford.

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SERVICE PAPER

EXPERIENCES MET IN ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL
CAMPING PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF MEDFORD

Submitted by

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First Reader: Dr. Arthur G. Miller, Associate Professor
of Education

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In looking for a Thesis problem, the main objective was to find one that could be put into actual use as a contribution to the curriculum of the Medford Public Schools. When the writer first heard of school camping, it immediately seemed a perfect solution, she having been connected with private camping for a number of years and having an immense interest in it. From a teacher's point of view, the possibilities of a camping program in the curriculum and the many needs it would satisfy, appealed greatly. It was then decided to see what could be done toward the end of establishing a school camping program in the City of Medford.

JUSTIFICATION OF PROBLEM

A school camping program meets many needs which cannot be met in the classroom. Learning by doing is educationally accepted as the best method. Unfortunately, in the classroom it is not always the only method employed. The main opportunity afforded by outdoor education is that of group living. This is its distinctive contribution. Not only do the children profit from this experience but also the teacher obviously reaps its benefits.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A workable program was devised which would fit the needs and situations existant in the public schools of Medford. This was setup, in the outline form which follows in General Procedures, to show the actual possibilities of initiating a program of this type in our school system.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The majority of literature in this field consists of descriptions of various school camping enterprises. The success and pupil - teacher benefits derived from all of these experiences is the best justification possible for those about to undertake the project of outdoor education.

¹
As Julian Smith has said:

"The concept that the camping environment should be an integral part of community school education is relatively new, but developments in the past few years already indicate its wide acceptance."

²
Donaldson describes in detail in eight chapters the many-sided educational advantages afforded by this type of program. Next he offers some principles of guidance and administration, and finally tells a case history of Camp Tyler in Texas.

¹
Smith, Julian W., "Planning for Community School Camping", Education, September, 1952.

²
Donaldson, George W., School Camping, Association Press, New York, 1952.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE (CONT)

Rabb and Schotts³ in an evaluation of their camping experience stated:

"The Children Themselves, in their follow-up reports on camp life, point out the many deep and lasting values of such an experience".

3

Rabb, George E., and Schotts, J. Kenneth, "A Close - Up of School Camping", The Journal of The American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, May, 1952

CHAPTER III

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Upon first becoming interested in school camping, an attempt was made to learn as many facts as possible. All the written material that could be located about this type of program was read. Conferences were held with Dr. Miller and Dr. Wylie of Boston University who advised the writer as to the necessary steps to be taken and who referred her to various personnel who had actually taken part in beginning programs in their respective cities. At this time, in addition, there were two conventions held in the vicinity of Boston which included as part of their panel discussions, the beginnings of such a program. One "School Camping in Newton" was held at Harvard University as a section of the state convention of Elementary Education; the other "Setting Up of a Camping Situation in Needham and Newton" was a part of the Eastern District Physical Education Convention held in Portland, Maine. Both of these gave much valuable information. The next step was to take the findings to the then Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Medford, Bertrand Hooper. A total of three meetings were held, at the last of which Mr. Hooper and the writer were joined by Miss Olive Carson, Supervisor of Elementary Education in the City of Medford. During these meetings, the justification of this type of program, just what it would entail, as to personnel, finances, location of

GENERAL PROCEDURES (cont)

camp site, subject matter and suggested grade levels on which to concentrate as a beginning, and the possibilities of such an addition to the school curriculum as far as practicability, advantages, and adjustment within the curriculum, were discussed. The meeting concluded with Mr. Hooper's consent to have an outline of the idea submitted to the School Committee for approval. The school year ended at this time so nothing more was done until after the summer vacation. Meanwhile Mr. Gordon B. Allan, Teacher, camp counselor, and member of the Medford School Committee had become interested in this field. He arranged with the Newton Public Schools for a showing, before the School Committee, Elementary School Principals, and 6th grade faculty members of the Medford Public Schools, of some of their colored slides taken during camping experiences. As a result of the favorable reaction of those present, a committee was formed, of which the writer was a member, of 4 school committee members and 4 teachers to further investigate the possibilities of such a program in Medford. As part of the investigation an actual camping experience being carried out by the Newton Public Schools at Sargent Camp in Peterboro, New Hampshire, was visited for two days. While this was a very valuable experience for the visitors, it was difficult in that the Newton trip had the advantage of a three year background. It was not possible, therefore, to see

GENERAL PROCEDURES (cont)

first-hand many of the problems of a beginning program. The benefits of such a program, however, were easily discernable and they were described in full in a verbal report to the Superintendent of Schools. The information was well received and was relayed to the Medford School Committee by him.

And so, as a result of these proceedings, a general acceptance of this comparatively new trend in education, has taken hold in the city of Medford.

In the following material it has been endeavored to show, in outline form, just how a school camping program could be put into operation in the Medford Public Schools. Needs have been listed underlying such a program and the procedures a classroom teacher could follow.

I. INTRODUCTION

The success of school camping the country over is, in itself, almost a justification of this type of education. The plan has mushroomed in schools throughout the country, is spreading rapidly, and is still growing. Briefly, the underlying thought of the program is that the school building is a center where pupils and teachers gather for purposeful exchange of information. Learning, however, is not limited to the school building. Teachers believe in real learning experience. Therefore, why try to bring the outdoors into a school building? Take the students out.

I. INTRODUCTION (cont)

It is sincerely believed by the writer that a school camping experience gives to the student not only a better understanding of his environment by gaining first hand information, but also, an opportunity to reap the benefits of a group living situation.

In preparing this material, a school camping experience of three days' duration was kept in mind.

It might also be well to point out that a desire to take part in this program must come from the teacher herself. The program is conducted on a strictly voluntary basis.

II. NEEDS

A. Personnel

1. Two classroom teachers

- a. To share teaching, planning of programs and schedules

2. Two student teachers

- a. To help with teaching, take care of bed-time discipline

(note:- It is suggested that each trip be taken by a combined group of two classes.)

3. Personnel provided by management of camp site

- a. Nurse
- b. Cook
- c. Camp director
- d. Two councilors

II. NEEDS (CONT)

4. Resource people

- a. State Forestry Department
- b. Audobon Society
- c. Science Museum
- d. School faculty
 - (1) Music department
 - (2) Science department
 - (3) Art department
 - (4) Any member who is a specialist in any phase of camping
- e. Community sources
 - (1) Fire department
 - (2) Girl and Boy Scout leaders

B. Transportation

1. Bus

- a. P.T.A.
- b. School Department

C. Cost

The cost for a school camping trip is approximately three dollars per pupil per day. This amount is earned by the students themselves, either by group or individual projects, a suggested list of which can be found in the next section.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Introduction of idea to class

1. Teacher starts unit at the beginning of the year. After work has begun, she implants the idea - what could be done in actual out-of-doors, not in classroom.

B. Enlisting of parent cooperation

1. Meeting of parents, teachers, principal (perhaps Superintendent, member of School Committee)

C. Fund-raising

1. Group projects (classes earn money as a group)
 - a. Food sale
 - b. Movies
 - c. Sale of clothing with school insignia
 - d. Talent show
 - e. Volleyball game
 - f. Christmas corsages, pomander balls, etc.
 - g. Junk drive
2. Individual projects (charts kept to record each pupil's progress)
 - a. Washing cars
 - b. Mowing lawns
 - c. Shoveling snow
 - d. Extra home chores
 - e. Baby sitting
 - f. Neighbor's errands

III. PROCEDURES (CONT)

D. Sample unit

The following suggested activity outline is one the teacher might choose to carry out in the classroom during the year to lead to culmination during the trip experience.

Weather and You

1. Objectives and Understandings

- A. To develop an appreciation for scientific methods of weather forecasting
- B. To gain familiarity with the instruments used in the weather bureau
- C. To develop skill in the organization and keeping of charts
- D. To understand how weather affects our lives
- E. To develop an appreciation of the importance of weather forecasting
- F. To understand the farmer's concern about weather
- G. To learn about the work of the Department of Agriculture as it relates to weather
- H. To promote an understanding of the importance of weather to aviation
- I. To help the children discover these scientific facts:
 1. The weather affects our lives
 2. Water may change its form

D. Sample Unit (cont)

3. Air is all around us

4. All living things need air

II. Outline for Study

A. How the weather affects our lives

1. Weather is an important factor in the growing of food

2. Weather determines the architecture of our buildings

3. Weather governs the type of clothing we wear

4. Many of our leisure-time activities depend upon the weather

B. What weather means

1. The air pressure

2. The temperature

3. The humidity

4. The amount of rain or snow

5. The amount of cloudiness

a. Study of clouds

6. The direction, and velocity, or strength, of the wind

C. Prediction of weather by class

1. Observe direction of the wind by the weather vane

2. Measuring the speed of the wind with an anemometer

D. Sample Unit (cont)

3. Measuring amount of rain or snow with a rain gauge
4. Getting accurate temperature by using maximum and minimum thermometers
5. Measuring air pressure with a barometer

D. Value of Weather Bureau

1. Keeping weather records
2. Making weather maps and forecasting the weather
3. Sending out warnings about storms, frosts, or floods
4. Making special forecasts in connection with forest fires
5. Making special forecasts for aviators and navigators
6. Publishing facts about new discoveries relating to weather
7. Testifying in court cases

E. Why the weather changes

1. The position of the sun affects the temperature of the earth
2. The temperature of the air affects the amount of moisture the air will hold
3. Different kinds of cloud formations are followed by different kinds of weather

D. Sample Unit (cont)

III. Activities

- A. Make a chart keeping daily record of observations and forecasts
- B. Make weather instruments
 - 1. Rain gauge
 - 2. Barometer
 - 3. Humidity indicator
- C. Collect newspaper and magazine articles pertaining to weather in any part of the world
- D. Class visit to weather bureau or airport to see weather instruments
- E. Do experiment to show how clouds are made
- F. Write to Weather Bureau for pictures, pamphlets, etc.
- G. Using cotton batten on sky-blue paper, make forms of different types of clouds
- H. Using thermometer and pan of water, determine freezing temperature, above freezing, below freezing

IV. Integration

- A. Reading - stories about trees, animals, flowers, birds, and how they are affected by weather
 - 1. Myths - weather superstitions
 - 2. Poetry - Fog, Carl Sandburg, etc.
 - 3. Newspapers for general weather conditions

D. Sample Unit (cont)

B. Language

1. Oral and written reports
2. Tell stories, select and learn poems
3. Write original stories and poems
4. Present play
5. Write business letters for information

C. Writing

1. In nature booklets
2. Descriptive sentences under pictures
3. Original stories and poems

D. Spelling

1. Keep word list
2. Learn word meanings
3. How to recognize, pronounce, use those words
in connection with weather

E. Music

1. Songs about weather in textbooks

F. Social Studies

1. How climate affects animal, bird, and
plant life
2. How environment affects us

G. Arithmetic

1. Making and interpreting graphs
2. Measuring time and distance

D. Sample Unit (cont)

3. Sending money orders
4. Reading and recording observations on instruments

V. Culmination

E. Final preparation

The final step in the pre-planning procedures is the setting up, by the teacher and students, of a time schedule to be followed during the camping period.

1. Rising time
2. Breakfast
3. Morning activities
4. Lunch
5. Afternoon activities
6. Dinner
7. Evening program
 - a. Recreation
 - b. Skits based on activities
 - c. Lecture by resource people
8. Bed-time

The time schedule should not be so filled that it is not elastic. Some suggested activities are:-

1. Keeping of daily weather chart
2. Raising of weather flag
3. Observing movement of trees

E. Final Preparation (cont)

4. Telling directions

a. Compass

b. Sun

c. Pacing

5. Cloud sketching

6. Observation of how weather of past months has affected water levels in pond, stream

7. Observation of ground conditions

8. Proving or disproving superstitions learned in classroom

a. Thickness of moss

b. Growth of moss on certain side of tree

9. Observations of shadows - time of day

10. Make sundial for time

Related Science

1. Observation of animals at this season

2. Plants at this season

3. Make terrariums to bring back to classrooms - moisture, heat, and growth

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

School camping is growing. The fact that it has mushroomed so rapidly all over the country makes it a widespread, but at the same time, a still new trend in education. It is exciting in that its newness prevents any binding traditions and, therefore, provides the best type of learning experience: that of the pupil and teacher together. The opportunities it affords, of learning by first-hand experience, and social, group, and democratic living cannot be bested by any traditional form of education.

In order to make this venture, a successful one, those in charge and, in any way connected with it, must believe in it. If the sincere belief that this is a worth while activity for the children is there, then the necessary leadership, resources, and facilities will follow.

This is indeed the type of wide awake, practical, and stimulating curriculum addition of which all America's educators may be proud.

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