1987

Proposal to establish a vocational high school for San Bernardino Unified School District

Thomas W. Kuhn

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project

Part of the Vocational Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/401

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
California State University
San Bernardino

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
FOR SAN BERNARDINO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Project Submitted to the Faculty
of the School of Education In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree of

Master of Arts
in
Education:
Vocational Education Option

By
Thomas W. Kuhn
San Bernardino, California
1987

Approved By:
(Advisor)
(Committee Member)
ABSTRACT OF PROPOSAL

A PROPOSAL TO THE SAN BERNARDINO CITY UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

for

Tom Kuhn

1987

Statement of the Problem

With the advent of "Excellence in Education," Vocational education has taken a back seat to the academic programs. The result has been a trimming of vocational programs. With the big push for college preparation, a large segment of the student population has been ignored. As a result, one-third of California high school students drop out before completion. An intensive effort must be mounted to bring these students back into the educational community, and to keep the potential dropouts in school.

Procedure

A search of the literature has shown that there is a dramatic increase, nationwide, in the number of academics required for graduation. This increase in graduation requirements has resulted in a lack of equity between vocational and general education. Many
educators are calling for putting vocational education on a equal par with general education—both are an integral part of a complete educational program. In the state of California, Superintendent Honig is calling on vocational education to help in reinforcing the basic academic core. The standards for excellence in vocational education must be improved to meet the new emphasis on the academics.

Results

This project deals with the justifications for a vocational high school. Various criteria for a vocational high school have been developed for a presentation to the San Bernardino School District. The focus of the criteria is a magnet school concept for potential dropouts, and an alternative method of learning for students not capable or desirous of a college education.

Conclusions

Vocational education programs have been on the decline as a result of the increased stress on academics. The dropout rate from the public high schools has reached alarming proportions. A vocational high school can be a magnet for keeping at-risk students in the educational process.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Objective. ....... 1
Context of the Problem. ........... 1
Problem Statement ............... 2
Purpose of the Project. .......... 3

DEFINITIONS .................. 4

ASSUMPTIONS .................. 4

DELIMITATIONS ............... 5

LIMITATIONS ............... 5

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT .. 5

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROJECT .. 7

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction. ................. 7
Graduation Requirements .. 8
Academic Credit for Vocational Classes. 9
Reinforcing the Academics .. 10
An Alternative Method of Learning 11
The Role of Vocational Education. 12

METHODOLOGY ................ 13

Part One: Justification ....... 13

Part Two: Criteria for a Vocational
High School ................ 14

THE PROPOSAL TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT .. 15

INTRODUCTION. ............... 16
Statement of the Problem

Statement of the Objective

The objective of this project has been to propose the establishment of a vocational high school to the San Bernardino City Unified School District.

Context of the Problem

With the advent of excellence in education, vocational education in many high schools has taken a back seat to college preparatory programs. Many local school boards have embraced the idea that quality education translates into college preparatory programs. As a direct result, the number of academic courses required by all students for graduation has been greatly increased. For the most part, vocational programs have been reduced because of this change. Many students no longer have the time to fit vocational classes into their schedules.

A large segment of the high school population is not suited for entry into college. As proposed by The National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education [NCSVE] (1984) in its report, The Unfinished Agenda, it is a fallacy to equate a quality education with college preparation. (p. 1) The majority of students who are prepared for college will probably find
themselves unsuited for an academic education. What makes this trend particularly disastrous is that students will likely find themselves without a saleable job skill when they drop out of college. To counter this narrow push to academics, the present trend in secondary education needs to be amended. It is important to society to provide the highest quality educational program for our college preparatory students. But it is equally important to provide a quality education for the student who is not college bound. This student needs a sound basic academic program in conjunction with a quality vocational program.

Problem Statement

The problem is that a very limited number of high school students in the San Bernardino City Unified School District actually attend a four-year college institution. The Secretary of Education reports that, nationally, only nineteen percent of all high school students will attend college (Calhoun and Finch, 1982). Yet, the local school board has instituted graduation requirements that are directly focused on preparing all students for entrance into four year institutions. The "Forgotten Majority" are those students who will not make it to a four year institution. Twenty eight percent of these
students will not even graduate from high school (NCSVE, 1984). Statistics provided by State Department of Education statistical data (CBEDS) for the San Bernardino School District show that over eleven percent of the student population at San Bernardino High School drop out each year. The public school system cannot afford to have this number of its students drop out. The public school system must provide a quality education for all the students in our high schools, not just the selected few destined for college.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to provide an alternative to the present offerings of vocational education programs. The primary emphasis of this project has been to propose the establishment of a vocational high school. This proposed vocational high school will provide an alternative for those students not capable or desirous of a college preparatory program. Various criteria have been prepared for consideration by the school district.

This project will be submitted to the San Bernardino City Unified School District for consideration in the hope that it will be instituted in the district.
Qualifying Statements

Definitions

Vocational Education: "Organized Educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree" (Calhoun, C. C. and Finch, A. V., 1982, p. 2).

Vocational High School: A public institution having vocational education as a major portion of its curriculum. It may or may not be situated with a college preparatory and/or ROP/C program.

College Preparatory Program: A program designed for the primary purpose of preparing students for entry into four year college institutions.

Assumptions

A basic assumption of this project has been that the school district is interested in providing a quality education for all of its students.

A second assumption is that the school district is willing to finance the initial increased cost of a vocational high school.
Delimitations

This project is a proposal for the benefit of the San Bernardino City Unified School District, and is not intended for application by any other agency.

Limitations

Limitations could be placed on the proposal developed in this project based on restrictions applied by the California State Educational Code, and by other federal, state, and local governmental agencies.

Significance of the Project

The proposal resulting from this project is potentially of great significance. The number of students not completing high school is alarming. Extrapolating the eleven percent yearly dropout rate cited in the problem statement section results in forty-four percent of all students entering San Bernardino High dropping out before graduation. It will take a major change in curriculum to draw these students back into the educational program, and to retain those students who are potential dropouts.

For many years a gap has existed between the general education program and the vocational program in our schools. This gap has become very pronounced
in the state of California. This discrepancy is most evident in the State Department of Education policies. Superintendent Honig, in a recent speech to vocational educators, stated that "An academic core is necessary for all of our students, including career-vocational preparation students" (Honig, 1986, p.1). The result of Superintendent Honig's reform has been an increase in the number of academics required for graduation. A de-emphasis on vocational education has followed in the wake of this increase. "Anxious educators and school board members have argued that the 'new direction' doesn't meet the needs of lower ability students" (Eisen, 1986, p. 8). Melvin Barlow believes that the "...principal step toward a solution rests with the educational institutions that should demonstrate concern for the future vocational competency as well as the general competency of their students" (Barlow, 1982, Bridging the Gap, p. 31).

Tempers can run very hot on whether the schools should be teaching the academics, or whether they should prepare students for a vocation. A third, calmer group, calls for the integration of the two. Prepare as many students for college as can handle it. Teach the basics to all students, regardless of career orientation. And, place all non-college bound students into a career-vocational program.
**Organization of the Project**

The education of today's children is too important to allow so many to dropout of high school. This paper has been an attempt to, at least partially, address this problem. It has been an attempt to create a school that motivates students to learning instead of forcing so many out—a school where every student graduates with a solid academic grounding, and a marketable entry level skill.

The project, itself, has two primary emphases. First is the presentation of a justification to the school district for a vocational high school. Second was the presentation of various criteria for a vocational high school, and how it can meet the present need of education.

The justification aspect primarily revolves around the summation of current trends discovered in the literature review. The criteria aspect deals with a design focusing on the retention of potential dropouts, and offers a viable alternative to the college preparatory and general education curricula.

**Literature Review**

**Introduction**

The push for reform in education has brought forth a torrential flood of information and opinions on what is going on and what the schools should be
doing. There is no doubt that the nation, and California in particular, has caught the fever of reform. There is a substantial amount of information available on the pros and cons of vocational education. There is enough information available to back up a positive or negative position on vocational education. This project addresses itself to the positive literature, and attempt to define the role of vocational education in California schools.

**Graduation Requirements**

One of the results of the reform movement has been a general increase in the graduation requirements for graduating seniors. Harry Silberman (1984), chairman of the National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education, states that the "new graduation requirements spring from the idea that basic academic courses are the best and most general form of vocational preparation in a changing society." (p. 27) This increase in academics reduces the number of electives a student may take during his school years. Included in these electives is vocational education. Silberman, and many others, believe that taking more academics is not necessarily better. Michael Dyrenfurth (1985), of the University of Missouri, has charted some of the current trends in graduation
requirements across the country. In the vast majority of states the number of prescribed courses for students is on the increase. In very few cases are there prescribed courses in vocational education. The general trend is to increase the number of academic courses for all students.

In the San Bernardino City Unified School District the number of required courses has increased dramatically. The school board has, in every case, met or gone beyond the requirements of the state department of education. The number of science semesters has gone from four semesters to six semesters in the past three years. The same pattern can be seen in other areas of the curriculum.

Academic Credit for Vocational Classes

The concept of offering academic credit toward graduation for certain vocational classes is not a new concept. For many years, a student could take an agriculture class and receive science credits. Certain drafting classes could be used to replace math classes. But, since the advent of increased stress on academics, many students no longer have the option to substitute vocational classes. As we increase the number of academics in the high schools we find that many students are unable to succeed in the strongly academic program. They become disenchanted and often
lose motivation. A vocational program may be the only way to keep them involved in the academic process. School districts are beginning to lose students at an alarming rate. So much so, that some states are becoming more flexible in allowing some substitutions for academics. Some states are also considering granting waivers for certain classes to vocational students (Dyrenfurth, 1985). The San Bernardino City Unified School District, at present, allows very few substitutions for academics. The only class that is presently being used for substitution is one year of agriculture for one year of elective science.

Reinforcing the Academics

According to California State Superintendent of Schools, "Career-vocational preparation is a powerful tool for teaching, reinforcing, and supporting the academic core, as well as providing the training necessary for employment" (Honig, 1986, p. 1). The state is pushing hard for standards of excellence in all educational areas—vocational education included. If equity is to be maintained we must improve the standards of our vocational programs. The Great Oaks Joint Vocational School District, in Ohio, has been a leader in promoting the academics in vocational programs. Their goal has been to produce completers that not only have entry level skills, but have an
underlying strength in math, science, communication, and organizational skills (Carr, 1984).

Many educators believe that to fully meet the needs of students there must be equity between vocational and academic programs. For vocational education to achieve and maintain this equity it must establish curricula that teach and reinforce the basics.

An Alternative Method of Learning

Vocational education can be an alternative for students who are not achieving in the academic program. "In vocational education, learning is promoted by the use of real objects and knowledge is made relevant to the real world" (Parks and Henderson, 1984, p.38). This is the primary reason many students gravitate to vocational education. Vocational education is more consistent with a student's cognitive learning ability. By applying what they learn, a student's abstract thinking ability is more easily facilitated. This is not just valid for students with lesser capabilities, but works well for most students. "Vocational programs teach abstractions by having students interact with the ideas in tangible, useful ways" (Pucel, 1985, p. 43). Curricula in the science areas have long demonstrated the concept of learning by doing. Science teachers
use hands-on experience in the lab as a method of reinforcement. Some classes do not lend themselves well to learning-by-doing, but many do. Vocational classes can be a viable alternative to the present stress on academic classes. Terrel Bell, former Secretary of Education, citing from "A Nation at Risk", stated that "...the variety of student aspirations, abilities, and preparation requires that appropriate content be available to satisfy diverse needs. Attention must be directed to both the nature of the content available and to the needs of particular learners..." (Bell, 1984, p.33).

The Role of Vocational Education

It would appear from the literature researched that few educators argue for the abolishment of vocational education. The primary disagreement comes from the relative importance of vocational education. Many argue that vocational education is of secondary importance to teaching the basics. Others argue that vocational education should be on an equal footing with general education. "Liberal education and vocational training should be conceived of neither as hostile rivals nor as as mutually exclusive enterprises but, on the contrary, as two essential and complementary aspects of the total preparation of the individual for his total life..." (Barlow, 1986,
"Vocational Education and General Education," p. 16). One thing is for certain. Education is losing a lot of students from the system. No one can doubt that California is developing quality programs for college bound students. But, in the process, the state is neglecting a large portion of the student population.

**Methodology**

As stated in the organization section, the project has been a proposal to the San Bernardino City Unified School District to establish a vocational high school. The proposal consists of two parts. Part one addresses the justification for the existence of the high school. Part two is the criteria to be considered for implementation.

**Part One: Justification**

Justification for the high school is based on several strategies. Foremost of these strategies is the statistics reporting the number of students dropping out of the educational system. Part two of the justification is the reporting of literature showing a correlation between the high drop out rate and the over-emphasis on academics. The third part of the justification is the reporting on the research on vocational magnet schools showing that an active, quality vocational program can be an incentive for
keeping potential dropouts in school, and an alternative to the general education program. The fourth part of the justification lists citations from research which show that vocational education can be used to reinforce the academics, and that academic credit can be offered for certain vocational courses. The fifth part of the justification is a rationale for developing more vocational programs in the district to improve the quality of instruction.

Part Two: Criteria for a Vocational High School

Part two of the proposal discusses the various criteria that should be integrated for a successful vocational high school. This includes entrance requirements, graduation requirements, the use of a tutorial class for student assistance, and competencies.

This part of the proposal addresses the various problems faced by a vocational high school and ways to overcome them. Chief among these is the concept of a two year school for juniors and seniors, a four year comprehensive high school with a magnet vocational program, articulation with the local community colleges, making the best use of business and community resources, academic credit for vocational classes, reinforcement of the basics by vocational classes, and making the best use of ROP programs.
A PROPOSAL TO THE SAN BERNARDINO CITY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Submitted
by
Tom Kuhn
1987
A PROPOSAL FOR A VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction

This proposal is for the establishment of a vocational high school in the San Bernardino City Unified School District. With the advent of the academic core, many, if not most, students are not receiving an equitable educational opportunity. The academic core does not allow for the differences in student motivation and student learning styles. The academic core is a contributing cause to the alarming dropout rate from the high schools. This paper is predicated on the idea that a vocational high school would better serve the educational needs of many of the district's students. A vocational high school could be a partial remediation for the high dropout rate.

This proposal is divided into two main sections. Section one will deal with the justification for a vocational high school. Section two will address various criteria that should be taken into consideration in the development of a vocational high school.
Part One: Justification For A Vocational High School

A Report on Dropout Statistics

There can be no doubt that this country faces an educational crisis with the dropout rate from the public high schools. Nationwide the dropout rate for high school students is at twenty-eight percent (National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education, 1984). In the state of California, the dropout is reported by The Sun newspaper (1987) to be at thirty-seven percent.

The community of San Bernardino does not fare as well as either the state or the nation. In the same news report, The Sun reports that the San Bernardino City Unified School District lost nearly seventeen percent of its high school students during the 1985-86 school year. The rate for freshman was alone over eleven percent. This is only for a one year period. If the freshman class were to lose eleven percent of its students each of the four years spent in high school, the dropout rate would approach forty-five percent.

These are alarming statistics that need immediate attention. A forty-four percent dropout rate cannot be tolerated. A conscientious effort must be made to reduce this figure. The present curricular offerings of the district are not sufficient to keep these
students in school. Curricula that will help keep students in the schools must be considered. The concept of the academic core is at the heart of the problem.

The Academic Core as a Negative Motivator

The over-emphasis on academics in a universal core curriculum can operate as a negative motivator. Many students are unable to achieve in such a curriculum. Students unable to achieve lose motivation and face an increased risk of dropping out of school.

By forcing students into the academic core, educators are creating an inequity. Not every student is receiving an equal opportunity for a quality education. In effect, the schools are creating an elitist group of the few college bound students, and neglecting the majority. The validity of the academic core proceeds on the assumption that students can be homogeneously grouped, and are capable of such a curriculum. This is simply not true. Education has lost the equity provided by a diversified educational system. Rupert Evans (1982) reports that neuropsychologists believe that less than a third of high school students are ready for the type of formal learning that makes up most of our secondary curriculum.

"Vocational education has been judged as less essential to the comprehensive high school curriculum
than the academic subjects—English, mathematics, science and social studies" (Copa, 1984, p. 31). This belief has become wide spread in our educational system. Vocational education has taken a back seat to the academics. One is led to believe "that basic academic courses are the best and most general form of vocational preparation in a changing society" (Silberman, 1984, p. 27). The academic core has been developed as the direct result of such thinking.

George Copa (1984), of the University of Minnesota, states that "We can expect even more separation of students within the required academic courses in the form of 'remedial' or 'functional' sections of these courses and the dropout rate may increase" (p. 30).

The National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education, in The Unfinished Agenda (1984), states that "secondary school students are a diverse group, varying in background, ability and aspirations. A wide variety of educational approaches are needed to accomodate those differences; no single prescription can be effective for everyone" (p. vii).

Richard Wiley (1986) is the Governor of South Carolina, and the chairman of the National Governors Association's Task Force on Readiness. He states that schools should develop "policies to help at-risk youth succeed in meeting the new educational
standards." He believes that the excellence movement, and the academic core in particular, has imposed a "forbidding barrier" to the student who enters school with lagging skills, or for the student who falls behind after entering school. Wiley has some very specific suggestions for high schools. He promotes the concept of alternative programs for dropouts and potential dropouts. It is important for the student to be able to select from a variety of environments to which he can make a commitment.

**Vocational Education as a Positive Motivator**

Not every student learns in the standard academic environment. Not every student wishes to be in the standard academic environment. There are alternative methods of learning other than the academic core curriculum.

One of the primary points of focus in education today is the need for students to develop critical thinking skills. It is questionable that the academic core is capable of teaching critical thinking skills. David Pucel (1985), a professor of vocational education at the University of Minnesota, believes there are alternatives to learning critical thinking other than the standard academic practices. He states "Not all students wish to go on to college, and not all students learn best through instructional methods based on
teaching abstractions" (p. 43). Pucel argues that the student learns best through instructional methods based on his developmental level. This opinion is corroborated by Martin Brooks (1984) who believes it is important "to assess the cognitive demands of curriculum and the cognitive abilities of students, and match the two" (p. 23).

Vocational education can be an alternative for students who are not learning in the standard academic program. "In vocational education, learning is promoted by the use of real objects and knowledge is made relevant to the real world" (Parks and Henderson, 1984, p. 38). The key to keeping a student in school is to grab that student's attention. The student who wants to be there, who sees a purpose for being there, will learn. And equally important, he will stay in school. Many students see a purpose to vocational education and will gravitate to those programs they are interested in.

William Stitt (1985), a Director of Vocational Education in the Vacaville Unified School District believes that many students have difficulty understanding a subject when it is presented from a purely an academic or hypothetical standpoint. The student may become confused and frustrated. This student comes under pressure to drop out of school to
find employment. Many do drop out of school only to find they have no marketable job skills. "Vocational classes help retain students by stimulating the interest of the student through a higher degree of involvement and physical activity..." (p. 26).

**Vocational Education and the Basics**

Back to the basics has become the warcry of the reform movement in education. An increased emphasis on academics has been deemed important for all students. This is most evidenced by the emphasis that has been placed on test scores. In most cases, vocational education has been precluded in this emphasis on basics.

Vocational education can be a valuable tool for teaching and reinforcing the basics. According to California State Superintendent of Schools, Bill Honig (1986), "Career-vocational preparation is a powerful tool for teaching, reinforcing, and supporting the academic core, as well as providing the training necessary for employment" (p. 1). While Superintendent Honig states that vocational education can be a valuable tool, he believes it has not yet developed to the point where it is doing so.

The Great Oaks Joint Vocational School District, in Ohio has been a leader in promoting the academics in vocational programs. As reported by Rupert Evans
(1982), one of the goals of the district has been to produce vocational program completers that not only have entry level skills, but have an underlying strength in math, science, communication, and organizational skills.

Vocational programs in Baltimore, Maryland (Clawson and Shealey, 1984), have made an effort to relate the academics to technology. Educators in vocational programs believe math and science are directly related to technology in a natural process. The planners involved in the programs decided that the related academic instruction would be better taught by vocational teachers for many students. They were able to show that vocational education and academics are not necessarily exclusive of each other.

Further indication that vocational education can teach the basics has been developed in Virginia. With the release of a Nation at Risk vocational educators predicted the submersion of vocational programs. The Virginia Board of Education was convinced as to the relation between teaching technology, and math and science. Curricula were developed that allowed math and science credit for selected vocational classes. The increased efforts in vocational education "has led to an appealing 'cafeteria' of new offerings, with a layout that makes the best of both worlds--general and
vocational education" (Brown, 1984, p. 36).

A cooperative effort between the academics and vocational education would seem to be a compromise that has some potential. Vocational educators have long taught the basics in their classrooms and shops. This ability to reinforce and teach the basic academics needs to be promoted and developed to its fullest potential.

A burden has fallen to vocational educators and administrators to prove that vocational education does teach the academics. The development of the Frameworks in Vocational Education, by educators in the State of California would seem to be a step in the right direction. These frameworks, point by point, and unit by unit, reference the academic competencies called for by the General Frameworks.

Part One Conclusion: The Case for Vocational Education

Vocational education programs were drastically cut back in the middle part of this decade. The push for excellence and the development of the academic core have raised the questions as to the worth of the Vocational education. Michael Dyrenfurth (1985), of the University of Missouri, has charted some of the current trends in graduation requirements across the country. In the vast majority of states the number of prescribed courses for students is on the increase. In
very few cases are there prescribed courses in vocational education. It is interesting to note that as the number of prescribed academic courses has increased so has the dropout rate.

These reductions in vocational programs cannot be allowed to continue. The process must be reversed with an expanded variety of programs and an increased number of classes. Vocational education is a valuable and viable alternative for those students not achieving in the current overly-emphasized academic curriculum. Vocational education can be used to teach the academics, critical thinking, and job skills. Most important, vocational education can be a magnet for keeping the at-risk student in the educational process. Many, if not most, high school students do not want, nor do they need, an over-emphasis on academics. Educators must develop vocational education to its fullest potential. Every student must be given an equal opportunity for a meaningful education. The elitist concept of the universal academic core must make way for a more realistic and meaningful curriculum.

The San Bernardino City Unified School District "has a rare opportunity to not only restore vocational education to good health, but to lead [education] in fulfilling the mission and raising the standards and
the status of this significant part of today's public school curriculum" (Eisen, 1986, p. 10).

Part Two: Criteria for a Vocational High School

Introduction

The time would seem to be appropriate for the development of a vocational high school in the district. The various criteria that should be looked at in this development will be considered in this section of the proposal. There will be two basic settings for the proposed vocational high school. The first design is for a separate two year vocational school for qualifying eleventh and twelfth graders. The second design is for a magnet program to be operated as part of a four year comprehensive high school. For all intents and purposes the two programs would be operated the same. The setting for the school would be the primary difference.

Mission Statement

This vocational high school will exist for the purpose of providing a sound academic program in conjunction with quality career-vocational preparation as an alternative to the standard academic program.
Focus

Vocational education can be an alternative method of learning for students unlikely to achieve in the standard academic program. Vocational education can be a motivating factor for students not wishing to be in the standard academic program. Vocational education can be used to teach and reinforce the basic competencies required by the California State Frameworks in Education.

The proposed vocational high school herein will focus on the at-risk student who is likely to drop out of the educational process. By providing an alternative method of learning, the at-risk student can be kept in school while receiving a sound academic grounding as well as career-vocational preparation.

The proposed vocational high school will take a multi-level approach, coordinated with the San Bernardino comprehensive high schools, the San Bernardino County Regional Occupation Program (ROP), the Community College District, and the business community.

Entrance Requirements

Commitment by the student is an integral part of any educational program. The student who is committed to what he is doing achieves. The student who cannot make a commitment does not achieve, and generally is
at-risk of dropping out. For any type of educational program to be effective and successful it must be applicable. For a limited number of students this may mean a curriculum that heads them toward college. For many others this may mean a vocational curriculum. In either case the student needs to find the curriculum applicable to his particular needs.

Student commitment is what will drive the proposed vocational high school. The proposed vocational high school should not be construed as a dumping ground for every student not wishing to take the academic core. Entrance to the school should be limited to students who have the desire to make a commitment to their future. To reinforce this commitment a student should be required to sign a behavioral contract as a condition of entrance. This contract will lay out exactly behavioral and academic rules that must be adhered to.

A second consideration for entrance to the school should be the successful completion of a limited academic core at the home high school. This academic core will be completed during the ninth and tenth grades. A listing of the classes that should be taken during the first two years can be found on the next page of this proposal.
**Ninth and Tenth Grade Academic Core**

**Ninth Grade**

- **English** .............. 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Mathematics** .......... 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Science** .............. 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Social Studies** ....... 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Physical Education** ..... 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Tutorial** .............. 2 Semesters....10 Units

Total Ninth Grade Units........60 Units

**Tenth Grade**

- **English** .............. 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Mathematics** .......... 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Science** .............. 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Social Studies** ....... 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Intro. Vocational Class** .. 2 Semesters....10 Units
- **Tutorial** .............. 2 Semesters....10 Units

Total Tenth Grade Units.....60 Units

Total Ninth and Tenth Grade Units.....120 Units
Graduation Requirements

Eleventh Grade

English......................2 Semesters....10 Units
Mathematics................2 Semesters....10 Units
Science....................2 Semesters....10 Units
Social Studies.............2 Semesters....10 Units
Vocational..................4 Semesters....20 Units

Total Eleventh Grade Units...........60 Units

Twelfth Grade

English......................2 Semesters...10 Units
Social Studies.............2 Semesters...10 Units
Career Development...........2 Semesters...10 Units
Vocational..................6 Semesters...30 Units

Total Twelfth Grade Units..........60 Units

Total Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Units..120 Units
The Tutorial

Superintendent of Schools Honig has placed great emphasis on competency based education. The General Frameworks in Education demonstrate this fact very well. The report card for schools is based on student performance on tests. If schools are to increase student test scores, more individualized attention is necessary.

If the student has made a commitment to a vocational program, the next step will be to reinforce the basics for that student. To that end the student should receive intense help during the ninth and tenth grades. This help can be in the form of a tutorial, or study hall, class.

The tutorial class can help students where they most need it. The student can be coached in his other classes, with specific attention being paid to any problem areas. If public education is serious about teaching the basics, the student must be given every assistance possible to attain those basics.

As well as reinforcing the basics, the tutorial class can be used to give the student an overview of his possible vocational choices. The student can develop a career plan that best meets his desires, needs, and abilities.
**Introductory Vocational Class**

During the tenth grade the prospective vocational student can take two semesters of a beginning vocational class. This class will allow the student to get his feet wet in his chosen area. The introductory vocational class will teach the basic skills necessary to move to the higher level, and more specific classes.

**Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Vocational Class**

In the eleventh and twelfth grade the vocational class takes the place of the tutorial class. The vocational class can be used to reinforce the academic classes. Again, if the student is having difficulty in any particular area, specific assistance can be given. Its primary purpose, though, will be to teach and reinforce skills necessary to finding and keeping a job.

The student will receive training on job search skills. Techniques for seeking out a job and attaining that job will be stressed. The student will learn how to create resumes, letters of application, and interviewing skills.

Reinforcement of the attitudes necessary to keeping a job and to how to get advancement will also be stressed. Attitudes that allow a student to survive in the workplace will be emphasized.
Academic Credit for Vocational Classes

Many Students are unable to achieve in the standard academic class. For many of these, a vocational class can be an alternative form of teaching the basics. Education is faced with the reality that many students are disenchanted with the educational system and drop out. The student who has dropped out is receiving very little in the way of the basics. It is more realistic to try and retain that at-risk student in school and to find an alternate method for teaching the basics.

Student motivation is a primary ingredient to learning. By developing curricula for vocational classes, a student can receive a sound grasp of the basics and a marketable skill at the same time. To this end, a student should be able to earn academic credit for selected vocational classes.

The State Department of Education is developing Frameworks for Vocational Education. These frameworks should be adopted for use by the district. Further, vocational classes within the district should be reshaped to meet these frameworks. Having rewritten the curricula for vocational classes, students should be allowed to receive academic credit for those classes that reference the Frameworks for Vocational Education, and the General Frameworks for Education.
Articulation with the Community Colleges

The question is being raised as to the appropriateness of teaching vocational education in the public high schools. Can the schools do an adequate job, and is there a job market for students completing high school vocational programs? The schools can do an adequate job of skills training, but the market is weak for students coming directly from high school.

Articulation with the community colleges would appear to be at least a partial solution to the problem. The concept of joining with the community colleges for the production of a superior product is often termed "two-plus-two".

In the two-plus-two program, the student receives his basic academic grounding in the ninth and tenth grades. During the eleventh and twelfth grades the student takes the beginning level vocational classes. Upon completion of the high school program, the student receives advanced placement into community college vocational programs.

By developing such a program, the best use is made of the comprehensive high school, the vocational programs, and the community college. The student leaves the community college with an associate degree or an advanced certificate. His chances in the job market are increased.
A Case for the Vocational High School

This proposal has been for a separate vocational high school. There are advantages to having the majority of vocational programs concentrated on a single campus. There are also some disadvantages.

By putting vocational programs onto one site a duplication of effort can be avoided. The cost of operating one larger program can be less than individual programs at the comprehensive high schools. Classes that in the past have been closed due to a lack of enrollment would have a wider base to draw from and thus be kept open. The disadvantage to having vocational programs at one site are primarily in the area of transportation and the cost of original development.

As an alternative to the separate vocational high school, smaller magnet vocational programs can be operated as part of the comprehensive high schools. Transfers between schools for students can be done on the same arrangement as the ROTC programs are currently being done.

Better use of facilities would be accomplished by putting the vocational programs onto one site. Shops would be used a larger part of the day, instead of sitting only partly used as they are now.

The district presently has a wide variety of
Regional Occupation Programs (ROP) being operated. In many cases only students attending the comprehensive high school where the ROP program is being operated have the opportunity to enroll. This is depriving many students of some excellent vocational training. As well as combing vocational facilities, it would be efficient to do the same with the ROP programs.

**Business Resources**

An important resource that is often ignored is the role of the business community in the operation of vocational programs. Business is beginning to realize they have a stake in what is taking place in the schools. For business will be the employers of the products we produce. More and more, business is willing to give financial support to various vocational programs.

One concept would be to offer business the use of the school facilities for the further training of their employees. In turn, the business would supply the technical personnel, and much of the modern technology needed for the programs. The school and the business would have joint use of the facilities, equipment, and the personnel.
Can San Bernardino Afford Not to Have a Vocational High School?

Can a vocational high school be a viable alternative learning mode for students unable to achieve in the standard academic environment? The research of literature would appear to indicate that it is indeed possible. With the dropout rate from public high schools at an alarming level, it should be obvious that present directions are inadequate. The needs of many, if not most, of our students are not being adequately met. New directions must be explored, if an equitable education is to be provided to all students.

Catterall and Stern (1986) report that "vocational classes and other alternatives are relevant mainly to students who are not college bound" (p. 81). Since research shows that only twenty per cent of all jobs for the remainder of this century are going to require a college degree, it would seem inappropriate to develop high school curricula that primarily address the college bound students. It is erroneous to assume that every student must be trained for this end. Curricula must be designed that cover the educational needs of all students.

Chicago seems to be one of the few cities to recognize that students have varying needs. Entering
BIBLIOGRAPHY


