

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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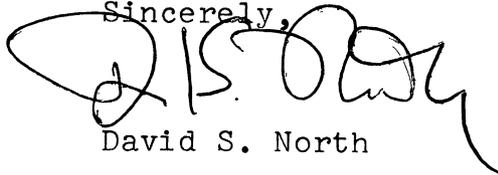
Dear Dr. Garcia:

We have enclosed four items which may be of interest:

1. An announcement of a Federally-financed program for education of the children of migrants. Most of the youngsters will be Mexican Americans.
2. An announcement of an HEW-financed program to assist in the education of Mexican American children.
3. A reprint of an article on the education of Spanish-speaking youngsters which appeared in American Education, an HEW publication.
4. A copy of Communities in Action, an OEO publication. If you would like to receive this regularly, just let us know.

We will continue to send you similar material.

Sincerely,



David S. North

Dr. Hector P. Garcia  
1315 Bright Avenue  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

Enclosures

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
Office of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202

New approaches for strengthening of elementary education will be developed this summer and during the following school year in 14 special institute programs for advanced study, the U.S. Office of Education said today.

The institutes, authorized by Title XI of the National Defense Education Act, also will develop models for teacher training activities scheduled to start this fall in "Follow-Through" projects for Head Start children.

According to Donald N. Bigelow, director of the Division of Educational Personnel Training, the institute programs will be conducted by 13 colleges and universities in 12 States for local and State leadership personnel in early childhood education.

The Bank Street College of Education in New York and the University of Oregon, at Eugene, will cooperate to develop a joint "Follow-Through" seminar--workshop for supervisory personnel from more than 30 school districts where pilot "Follow-Through" projects are expected to begin this fall. The short-term institute program will be presented twice, once in the East and once in the West.

Eight Colleges and universities in Texas will cooperate to develop a model for teaching Mexican-American children. Teachers from selected Texas public school systems will attend a summer institute, followed by inservice training during the school year in the use of Spanish and English in first grade teaching of children of Mexican ancestry. The institute is the first step toward the establishment of a number of demonstration centers featuring bilingual schooling.

Texas

St. Mary's University, San Antonio, in cooperation with the University of Texas, El Paso; Our Lady of the Lake College, Trinity University, Incarnate Word College, all of San Antonio; Texas A and I University, Kingsville; Pan American College, Edinburg; and Southwest Texas State College, San Marcos, with the support of the Southwest Regional Development Laboratory at Austin. Twenty-five first grade teachers from selected public school systems in areas of Texas with a heavy Mexican-American population will participate in a summer institute to be followed by a closely supervised program of in-service education. The purpose is to develop the capability of providing instruction in both Spanish and English for first grade children who speak only Spanish.

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USDL--8297

FOR RELEASE: Sunday Editions  
June 11, 1967

LABOR, HEW AND OEO COOPERATING TO AID MIGRANTS

A pilot project to help migrant and seasonal farm workers move out of the cycle of poverty into the mainstream of American society was announced jointly today by three Federal agencies.

The Migrant Compensatory Education Project -- now under way in Florida, Texas and California -- is designed to provide education for migrant children and to help support their families while they train in "homebase" States.

The \$2 million experimental program was announced jointly by Secretary of Labor, W. Willard Wirtz; Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, John W. Gardner; and Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, R. Sargent Shriver.

President Johnson, in his March 15 Message on Urban and Rural Poverty outlined the needs of migrant farm workers and called for special educational, health and social services to aid them.

"Migrant farm workers are among the forgotten Americans," the President said. "Their wages are low, their employment uncertain, and their housing and working conditions deplorable. Though their needs are great, they often find it impossible to obtain social services available to other poverty-stricken Americans."

The pilot project is designed to help solve some of these problems. It includes basic and remedial education, occupational training, vocational rehabilitation, health and food services and economic support to some 1,000 youngsters, aged 14 to 21, and their families.

The program is being funded and operated through State and local community action and educational agencies.

There are approximately 2.5 million members of migratory farm worker families who, because they follow the crops during the growing season, do not have the opportunities available to the average American citizen.

The three Federal agencies have allocated funds to support the experimental project through next fall. The project seeks to demonstrate how programs of State, local and Federal agencies can be coordinated better to serve the needs of the migrant family. Results will be analyzed and the findings used to form the basis of broader programs of a similar nature.

Under the program, the migrant family and the children will be offered an opportunity to learn other than agricultural vocational skills. It is hoped that the project will find ways to reduce the school dropout rate among migrant teenagers which is one of the highest in the Nation.

The children will be encouraged to complete primary and secondary education, including vocational training, and move on to college or more rewarding jobs.

The program is based on the recognition that increasing mechanization is lowering the need for migratory farm workers. Unless today's migrants are given the opportunity to acquire education and other skills, they may end up on tomorrow's welfare rolls.

Although the project is designed to educate and train children, their families are given support to free youngsters from the necessity of contributing to family income while they are in training. An important aim of the project is family rehabilitation through social services, adult education and skill training for parents.

Among Federal agencies and programs involved are: the Neighborhood Youth Corps of the Department of Labor; Manpower Development and Training Program of Labor and HEW; HEW's Welfare Administration and Office of Education, and community action programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Project programs are being conducted in Broward County, Florida; Webb and Star Counties, Texas, and Tulare County, California.

Local program sponsors are: Florida--The Economic Opportunity Coordinating Group of Broward County Inc. Texas--The Texas Education Agency for the Laredo Independent School District and the Rio Grande City Consolidated Independent School District. California--The Cutlerors Unified School District and the Woodlake Union High School District.

Numbers of youth expected to participate are: Texas -- 183 in Webb County, 150 in Star County. California -- 333. Florida -- 330.

The Labor Department will support the kinds of jobs sponsored by Neighborhood Youth Corps programs. The participants will work as teacher aides, laboratory assistants, recreation aides, clerks, receptionists, athletic aides, building trade aides and landscape and agricultural aides.

Labor has funded \$319,750 for Texas, \$342,540 for California and \$239,730 for Florida.

Under various programs, the U.S. Office of Education will support intensive remedial education, in-service training and workshops and a special program to assist migrants to enter college. The National Teacher Corps has committed some 20 teachers, including 16 interns and four master teachers. The Welfare Administration will support training of parents of enrollees for skilled jobs.

Health, Education and Welfare, through its Office of Education, is funding, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Teachers Corps, and the Higher Education Act, \$378,165 for Texas, \$100,000 for California and \$140,000 for Florida.

OEO will provide reading centers, tutoring, library and counseling services and adult basic and remedial education.

OEO is funding \$99,720 for Texas, \$75,000 for California and \$81,827 for Florida.

Additional funds and services will be provided by Federal, State and local agencies.

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(S67-3137)



## SE HABLA ESPANOL



By JOSEPH STOCKER

## Help for Spanish-speaking youngsters

There are more than one and one-half million children with Spanish surnames in the schools of five Southwestern States—Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Nearly all of them are Mexican-Americans. In scholastic attainment they lag far behind their Anglo-American schoolmates, and their dropout rate is high. The reason for their underachievement can be summed up in a single word: language.

Monroe Sweetland, Western States legislative consultant for the National Education Association (NEA), has described the school record of Mexican-American youngsters as "tragic." He said bluntly, "It constitutes the greatest single failure of our systems to provide equality of educational opportunity in this region."

The Mexican-American child comes out of a Spanish-speaking home into an English-speaking school, and from that point on it's a case of oil trying to mix with water. In many instances, says John M. Sharp, professor of modern languages at Texas Western College, El Paso, the child's parents speak little or no English, and his first significant contact with our language occurs when he begins school. "English is no less a foreign language to him than it would be to a child from Argentina or Colombia," says Dr. Sharp. "He suddenly finds himself not only with the pressing need to master what to him is an alien tongue, but also, at the same time, to make immediate use of it in order to function as a pupil."

In many States English is prescribed by law as the language of instruction. Schools even forbid Mexican-American students to speak Spanish except in Spanish classes, the obvious theory being that if they speak only English, they will learn English. Some schools have been known to administer corporal punishment to students for lapsing into Spanish. "If you want to be American," the young Latin is told over and over again, "speak American."

These speak-English-only laws are hard to enforce. "Obviously it is impossible to make a person speak a language," says James Burton, who teaches English and speech to Mexican-American stu-

dents at Jefferson High School in El Paso. "Any teacher in control of his classroom can prevent his students from speaking Spanish, but the result is likely to be a thundering silence. It is certainly no guarantee that fluent, idiomatic English will gush forth like the water from the biblical rock."

It's not only an alien language that the Mexican-American child encounters, it's an alien set of cultural standards as well. The tempo is faster than that to which he is accustomed. The school environment lacks what one Southwestern educator has described as "the plasticity and warmth of human relationship" so often found in the Mexican-American home, however humble. Customs are strange. "Take the matter of funerals," says Florence Reynolds, principal of Pueblo High School at Tucson, Ariz. "If a member of the family dies, the Mexican-American child is likely to stay out of school as much as a week. He does so at the insistence of his parents. But we say it's wrong to stay out of school a week for a funeral. So the school is putting itself above the parents, in effect, and the youngster is caught in a dichotomy of values."

Many a Mexican-American child, therefore, suffers not only educational but psychological damage. He is being told in every conceivable way that his language and his culture are no good. He must inevitably begin to suspect that he is no good either. If he is no good, how can he succeed? And if he cannot succeed, why try? "These children," summed up a California school administrator, "are conditioned to failure in the early years of their schooling, and each passing year only serves to reinforce their feelings of failure and frustration. Is it any wonder that as soon as they are 16 or can pass for 16, they begin dropping out of school?"

Schools have tried one remedial measure or another, with no great success. Perhaps the most widely used approach has been to group all Spanish-speaking beginners in a special prefirst-grade class to teach them English, after which they are "promoted" to the first grade. But this means that little

Juanito must go through his entire school career a year behind his age group, which simply confirms his feelings of inferiority.

Lately, however, a new concept has emerged that seems to hold out real hope and might even bring a dramatic breakthrough in the education of Mexican-Americans. It's the concept of bilingualism: using Spanish as a vehicle to education for the Spanish-speaking child, with English being taught as a second language.

The idea is only now catching on. In a school system here, another there, teachers and administrators have become aware that bilingualism may hold a key to the future for hundreds of thousands of Mexican-American children.

It's a spontaneous movement, with no central direction or coordination. Different schools go about it in different ways, but the results in almost all instances have been encouraging. At Laredo, Tex., in the United Consolidated Independent School District, a suburban district encompassing 2,440 square miles, bilingualism has been put to work in the primary grades. The student body is a mix of Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans, and instruction is carried on in both English and Spanish. The district tried

it the other way, forbidding the Mexican-American children to speak Spanish, educating them solely in English. The result was frustration and failure and a heavy proportion of Mexican-American dropouts.

Then a concerned school board appointed a superintendent, Harold C. Brantley, who believed in bilingualism and wanted to build a program along such lines. In September 1964, the district launched what it called "an experimental biliteracy program"—bilingualism for both Mexican-American and Anglo-American children. It began in the first grade and was extended to the second grade in the fall of 1965. Last fall it moved to the third grade, and eventually it is to extend through all the grades, including high school.

At Tucson's Pueblo High School, Mexican-American students are offered courses in Spanish custom-tailored for them. The school had discovered that many Mexican-Americans are actually "bilingual illiterates," that is, they speak, read, and write both languages poorly. Their Spanish is often a hybrid catch-as-catch-can mixture of Spanish and English. Yet when some of these Mexican-American students enrolled in

conventional Spanish courses they were bored to tears. One Latin miss said candidly to her teacher, "I came here to learn good Spanish but you haven't taught me very much." "I don't wonder they were bored," says Principal Florence Reynolds. "Imagine—teaching a Spanish-speaking youngster to say, 'Buenos días.'"

In 1959 Pueblo High offered an experimental course in Spanish for the Spanish-speaking. It was such a success that the students petitioned the faculty to provide a second year. At the end of the second year they again asked for more. Today the school conducts 14 such classes, nearly all taught by native speakers, several of whom were born in Mexico. Along with language skill, the curriculum emphasizes the cultural heritage of Spain and Mexico to help the student gain a sense of identity and pride. Attesting to the success of the program is the fact that, although English-speaking students are in the majority at Pueblo High, more Spanish-speaking than English-speaking students are enrolled in Spanish courses. Two of the program's alumni, their interest whetted by the courses, chose careers in education, got their degrees, and are now back at Pueblo High as Spanish teachers.

*For this Spanish-speaking child a popular magazine has bridged the difficult gap between her native tongue and a new language.*



Some months ago the program also caught the attention of the NEA. Its staff members, impressed by what they saw at Pueblo High, heard also of similar programs springing up in other Southwestern communities. Bilingualism, they sensed, held a significant answer to the problem of educating Mexican-Americans. So the NEA set up a project, the NEA-Tucson Survey on the Teaching of Spanish to the Spanish-Speaking, to survey the five Southwestern States. Its purpose was to search out some of the more promising approaches to bilingualism, and to persuade more schools to try them now that financing was available under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Seven Tucson educators, all involved in one way or another with the education of Mexican-Americans, comprised the NEA's survey team. Chairman was Maria Urquides, dean of girls at Pueblo High and herself a Mexican-American.

Members of the team visited 37 schools in 21 cities. Their report, titled "The Invisible Minority . . . Pero No Vencibles" ("But Invincible"), firmly concludes that bilingualism "can be a tool—indeed the most important tool—with which to educate and motivate the Mexican-American child."

Chairman Urquides, a vigorous, exuberant, outspoken woman, intensely proud of her "Mexican-ness," insisted at the outset that the survey wasn't to be just another study of the Mexican-American education problem. "The heck with a study!" she snorted when an NEA staffer first broached the idea. "We've been studied so much we're sick of it. Let's do something about it—something to strengthen the youngster's concept of being a Mexican-American, to make him proud of being a Mexican-American. The schools are doing so much now to destroy it!"

And so the NEA report doesn't just assemble recent research on the subject, as do so many similar reports. It describes in detail a number of the most promising programs in bilingualism that the survey team observed in its travels through the five States. Then

*Continued on page 24*



it says to other schools with sizable Mexican-American enrollments and high Mexican-American dropout rates: Go thou and do likewise. A number of schools are doing just that.

There is evidence that the best bilingual teachers are those who speak Spanish natively. And this, by the nature of things, means mostly Mexican-Americans. For the teacher of Spanish to the Spanish-speaking is usually much more than just a teacher: he is a counselor, a parent-substitute, an understanding friend, even, sometimes, a father confessor.

Maria L. Vega performs just such a multiple role at Phoenix Union High School, which has a 50 percent Mexican-American enrollment. Born in Mexico, speaking labored English even yet, Mrs. Vega started the Spanish-speaking program at Phoenix Union in 1960. There was one class that year. Last year there were 14.

"They come to us with every problem they have," she says. "Once a boy came to me. 'Mrs. Vega,' he said, 'I stole a car. Here are the keys.' I helped him, and he got another chance, and this past year he graduated. A girl comes to me and says, 'Mrs. Vega, I'm going to have a baby. What shall I do?' I say, 'Do your parents know?' And she says, 'No.' And I say, 'Let's tell them.'"

"Our classes deal with human relations, with the problems of our community—drinking, TB, juvenile delinquency. School is so important to them. For a majority of them there is no other place—their homes are so small. They have no place to study.

"I teach them more than Spanish. I teach them Spanish history, geography, literature. If they know their great heritage, they can be proud. And they can be

something, instead of just on welfare. They can be better American citizens."

What Maria Vega and all the rest are doing is what Daniel Schreiber, former director of the NEA's Project Dropout, must have had in mind when, at a Mexican-American seminar held in Phoenix in 1963, he talked of the need of young people to "achieve confident self-identity." "The youngster," he said, "whose school experience begins and ends in failure—and those of minority children too often do—having discovered that he is good at nothing, stands a strong chance of becoming good for nothing. And far too many young lives, with all the potentials and real talents and capabilities they embody, are being wasted and crushed. The challenge is to redeem them through inventiveness and energy and dedication."

Now, four years after Schreiber spoke these words, there is much activity to report. New and imaginative programs are springing up in many communities. More and more, there is the "general feeling of great urgency—of urgency for positive action," that Regina Goff, OE's Assistant Commissioner

of Programs for the Disadvantaged called for at a conference last August on Federal educational programs affecting Mexican-Americans.

Action takes many forms, often innovative. Pueblo, Colo., schools and other community agencies are working on a bicultural program of art, music, literature, history, and language with financial help from title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In Alpine, Tex., where more than 60 percent of the children speak Spanish, schools are using two-way radios for guidance and counseling, and experimenting with leased wire and voice-writers for language teaching. El Paso is beginning the first phase of its model center for teaching English and Spanish and is also planning a general culture center.

In such ways, through bilingualism, it begins to appear that the process of redemption is under way for at least one group—the "invisible minority" of the American Southwest. ■

*A former newspaperman and full-time writer, Mr. Stocker is now director of publications and public relations for the Arizona Education Association.*