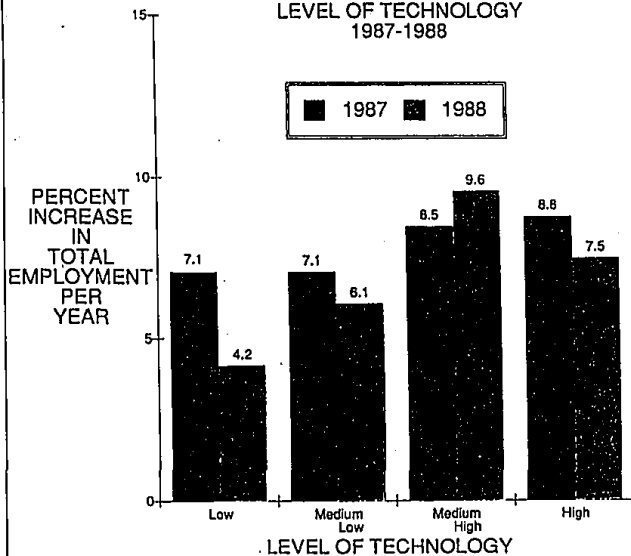


OAKLAND COUNTY EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK BY LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY 1987-1988



The big growth in jobs will occur in medium and high technology, according to this chart. It was prepared by University of Michigan economists and presented to the Oakland County economic outlook luncheon last week. To educators, it says technical skills are more necessary than ever.

Replace 'general' track Educator says it neglects majority

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Dale Parnell is prodding Oakland County educators to pay attention to "the neglected majority."

"They're the high school students in the so-called 'general curriculum,' neither college prep nor vocational. They suffer from an 'unfocused' program, drop out at alarming rates and aren't prepared for jobs."

"We have to get high school and college faculty talking to each other," said Parnell. He advocates replacing the "general" curriculum with a more substantial, more structured "2-plus-2" program — grades 11-14 in high school and community college.

Its graduates would be prepared for the technical jobs of the 1990s: laser, automotive, diesel, aircraft, medical technology. With their learning skills, they would be prepared to learn new jobs.

PARNELL IS president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) in Washington, D.C. He was an electrician before he became a high school teacher, principal, school superintendent, Oregon state superintendent, college professor and president of three community colleges.

Parnell was in Pontiac last week to address a collection of high school educators, Oakland Intermediate School District officials and Oakland



Dale Parnell
cross those lines

Community College leaders.

He has no quarrel with the bachelor of arts degree from a four-year college — "it has served America well." But only 25 percent of future jobs will require it, he said.

His concern: "the group of students between the 25- and 75-year lines of the academic stadium." His book calls them "The Neglected Majority."

That neglected group is growing. In 1969, only 12 percent of American students were in the general track. By 1981, some 43 percent were in general, which Parnell brands "the academic and vocational desert of American education."

A SKILL-ORIENTED vocational curriculum isn't the answer, Parnell said, because it doesn't train one for "life-long learning" in a changing market.

"They need a quality education. They need a better education. But they do not necessarily need more British literature. They need more literature," he said.

In place of the theoretical physics that college-bound students take in 12th grade, Parnell would substitute applied physics. Math, science, communications skills — all would be taught in an applied setting.

The chief hurdle is that high schools are in charge of grades 11-12 and community colleges of grades 13-14.

"There is very little discussion of continuity in learning. We're a cottage industry. We don't communicate across jurisdictional lines," Parnell said.

That communicating must be done by educators. "Continuity in the curriculum is an educator's job. We can't pawn it off on the home. It's our problem, not a societal problem."

Oakland starts preparing for '2-plus-2' schools

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Counselors, teachers and administrators already are at work on transitional programs between high schools and Oakland Community College.

The goal: a "2-plus-2" program for grades 11-14 to train the adaptable workers of the high technology era (see story above).

"We have had discussions on how to make the transition from area vocational high schools and the community college," said Dr. William Keane, superintendent of the Oakland Intermediate School District. The intermediate school oversees four such vocational schools.

"The next level is community college courses in the area vocational schools," Keane said.



R. Stephen Nicholson
sell the 15-year-old

terms: "Middle- and upper-class students who want to be doctors or lawyers start to act like them in high school. They take the appropriate math or science courses. They build their high school courses around entrance into that professional group."

"This (2-plus-2) is an extension of that. What to do if you want to be a diesel mechanic. Now it's more difficult for students to get that information... The pathway is vague, at least to a 15-year-old."

NEITHER BIG dollars nor vast new construction will be necessary, they agreed.

"The people are in place to do this now," said Nicholson. "It doesn't take a lot of new classes. The changes are of technology and focus."

"The focus is on what the student needs, not on how to fill up high schools and colleges."

If schools fail to prepare "the neglected majority," Nicholson said, the result will be increasing dropout rates and a cadre of adults unable to support families above the poverty level.

"I'm excited," said Keane. "I wish I were 40 again," said Nicholson. "God, I wish I were 40 again!"

HOW CAN 2-plus-2 be implemented when the system is split between a countywide community college and dozens of individual K-12 school districts?

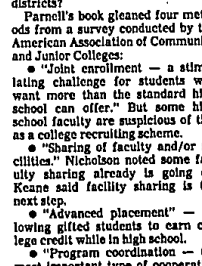
Parnell's book gleaned four methods from a survey conducted by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges:

• "Joint enrollment — a stimulating challenge for students who want more than the standard high school can offer." But some high school faculty are suspicious of this as a college recruiting scheme.

• "Sharing of faculty and/or facilities." Nicholson noted some faculty sharing already is going on. Keane said facility sharing is the next step.

• "Advanced placement" — allowing gifted students to earn college credit while in high school.

• "Program coordination — the most important type of cooperation — but also the most difficult to sustain."



William Keane
multiyear effort

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Step close with someone
thing long with
beads, sequins and
lace. Slim lace dress
with side taffeta bow

by Zum Zum, \$132.

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