

More variety needed for better education

This series has explored ways in which schools can become more effective in providing an education for our children. The ideas presented can be implemented without state or federal legislation, nor do they need a massive infusion of new money from the taxpayers.

- Children are not homogenous, varying in emotional make up, aptitudes, intelligence and family background. We need a variety of schools with different concepts of education to properly serve them.

- Transportation is the key to providing diversity in schools. There are ways to structure school bus operation in our school districts, either jointly or separately, to accomplish this end. What's more, such a system can save scarce fuel and reduce costs.

- Schools in the traditional, progressive and open categories should be provided, not by edict of the board of education, but by encouraging educators in autonomous individual schools to design a program which will attract parents and students.

- Teachers should have the freedom to choose schools similar to that choice given parents and students, permitting them to teach in a school having an educational philosophy compatible with their own.



By
BOB LYTLE

...sophy compatible with their own.

- Neighborhood schools should be one of the options, eliminating the need for school boards to divide the community by unilaterally choosing schools to be closed because of delinquent enrollment. In effect, schools will close themselves when they fail to attract sufficient patronage.

- Year-round schools can be one of the options. They have the advantages of improved learning retention; students like the schedule; they permit parents to have a free lifestyle with a choice of vacation periods and, last but not least, can cost less. Air-conditioned facilities are available to start a pilot program now.

- Competition can have an invigorating effect on schools by improving the quality of education; encouraging the development of new, more effective learning methods and the involvement of teachers in spirited team work.

- Test results permitting parents to judge the efficiency of their youngster's individual, class and school achievement should be made public, despite the objections of educators. We parents are capable of understanding test results and making allowances for other factors not expressed by tests.

- Changes are needed in high schools to make students want to attend. Programs can be presented, such as increased career education, work study programs, a version of the year round schools and possibilities for early graduation.

By opening all the area high schools to all students, choices can be multiplied. Programs similar to Bloomfield Hills' "Challenge" should be expanded to encourage students having difficulty relating to schools.

Schools in our area have a fine group of administrators and teachers. We must understand, however, that the idea of parents' freedom to choose and educators' freedom to propose would be an awesome change in their way of life. With homogenous schools, change takes place only after near unanimity has been achieved.

WITH LIBERTY SCHOOLS, change will be continuing in response to needs of parents and young people spanked by the offerings of forward thinking and competitive educators.

Put yourself in the position of a principal who for years has run his school with every lookstep dictated by higher authority. With little experience in the exercise of his independent judgment, he would suddenly be forced to do things on his own. A lonely prospect, this future shock.

Remember, too, that we parents have in the past criticized superintendents and administrators if one school had a different program than ours, because we thought we were being discriminated against. Now we want them to do that very thing! Have compassion for them because, like other public officials, they have learned that there is safety in "not going anywhere alone."

ents, asked the board for permission to run a year-round school (or other innovation)? He would have to withstand considerable pressure from his peers but he may be able

to keep his school from being closed.

I AM CONFIDENT that there are principals with the necessary fortitude. They need only your

encouragement.

In conclusion, should you agree with the ideas expressed in this series, the way to get them implemented is for you and your neigh-

bors to make your feelings known to school board members. Doing this once is not enough. Do it again and again.

I hope that I have made a contri-

bution to better schools by doing this series. Thank you for listening.

Note: The views expressed are those of columnist Bob Lytle.

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