

TWENTIETH ANNUAL CONVENTION  
of the  
Department of  
Secondary-School Principals  
of the  
NATIONAL  
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The twentieth annual meeting of the Department of Secondary-School Principals met in St. Louis on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, February 24, 25, and 26, 1936.

THE FIRST GENERAL SESSION

The first session of the twentieth annual meeting of the Department of Secondary-School Principals was called to order by President Harrison C. Lyseth, Supervisor of Secondary Education of Maine, and President of the Department of Secondary-School Principals at 2:10 P. M. in Assembly Hall No. 3, of the Municipal Auditorium, St. Louis, Missouri. After a few announcements the President introduced Herbert P. Stellwagen, Principal of Soldan High School, St. Louis, Missouri, the chairman of local arrangements for this Department, who gave a short address of welcome.

President Lyseth then introduced George E. Carrothers, who in the absence of Mr. C. O. Davis, read the paper entitled *High Lights in the Department's History*.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE DEPARTMENT'S HISTORY

By CALVIN O. DAVIS  
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Associations or societies for the promotion of public education in America are nearly as old as our Federal Union. The earliest ones were not, however, professional organizations. Perhaps the earliest of all these associations was the *Pennsylv-*

*vania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools*, founded in 1817. Fifteen years later, in 1832, the *Western Literary Institute and College of Professional Teachers* came into existence at Cincinnati. This was the first society of importance to include teachers as well as political and social leaders in its membership. With this organization the real beginnings of a class and craft consciousness among educators may perhaps be said to have begun in America. Still, another thirteen years had to pass before the first state teachers' association, as such, came into existence (in Rhode Island in 1845) and another twelve years before a national organization of teachers was effected. For the National Education Association really dates from 1857, although the official action which created it as a result of a merger of several independent educational societies did not take place until 1870.

During all this time and down to 1916, America's high-school principals had no organization of their own. Instead they cast their lot and their influence with other departments of the National Education Association; in particular they were generally found flocking with the superintendents.

Then under the leadership of a group of Illinois principals, the new organization was promulgated. This was in 1916—at the time of the mid-winter gathering in Detroit. Among the sponsoring stalwarts were C. P. Briggs, L. W. Smith, K. D. Waldo, W. L. Goble, H. V. Church, H. E. Brown, Jesse B. Davis, Milo H. Stuart, W. D. Lewis, Thomas H. Briggs, C. H. Johnston, and C. H. Judd.

The purposes of the Association, as reported by its temporary secretary, were to be (quoting) "To develop and further a feeling of class consciousness among high-school principals; to develop a professional spirit on their part; to study curriculum problems of administration; and to be looking forward to certain standards and tests of efficiency for high-school subjects as a basis for survey work."

In April, 1916, seventy-eight principals representing seven states in the middle west met in Chicago and effected a permanent organization, under the name, National Association of Secondary-School Principals. For its officers it chose Principal B. F. Brown of the Lake View High School, Chicago, president; Principal M. R. McDaniel of the Oak Park High

School, Oak Park, Illinois, vice-president; and Superintendent F. M. Hammitt of Mason City, Iowa, secretary-treasurer.

In 1927, the new organization was duly admitted as a department of the National Education Association, under the name it bears to-day.

It started its career aggressively and has continued to adhere to the principle of energetic effort ever since. Many of its original ideals have been realized in whole or in part.

In order that we may appreciate just how far secondary education has advanced in thought and practice in the last twenty years may I quote from Mr. Brown's presidential address delivered in 1917. Recall that this was given at the time of the first annual meeting of the new association in Kansas City, Missouri—just when its objectives were being formulated and its purposes were being declared. Said Mr. Brown, "No longer should men and women interested in the administration of secondary schools be content to accept ideas and direction from those who are not in a position to understand their needs, or from those who are actuated by ulterior motives.

"The old theory of education, in which the pupil has been judged by his ability to remember, is bound to be displaced by the demand that our schools shall be so organized that there shall be a development of power, that we shall turn out a product with the ability to think and the power to do the job the world has for it to do in a creditable manner. The former idea was imposed from above and is still holding on like grim death, but the signs of the times show that its days are numbered. Relief must come largely through the efforts of secondary-school men, and this new spirit of union and coöperation will furnish the moral backbone to enable us to make the public high school conform more nearly to the needs of one hundred per cent of our pupils than to five or ten per cent of them."

Mr. Brown then pointed out the need for experimentation and listed specifically eight subjects which he felt should be dealt with at once. These eight, as stated by him, are as follows:

a. "To devise a satisfactory method of bringing subject matter in history into the realm of the pupil's experience so that it may become real, and may not be a matter of memory.

b. "To devise a type of examination that will show development of power in the subject during the course.

c. "To work out a system of credits that will be fair both to the pupil who does excellent work and to the pupil who does only fair work.

d. "To work out also a system of credits that will discourage seniors and juniors from electing studies of the first and second year in order more easily to obtain the necessary credits for graduation.

e. "To discuss the changing conceptions of schooling and education with reference to the demands for the development of the power to meet the problems of life successfully.

f. "To emphasize the social side of high-school life and give it a proper place in the school program.

g. "To find best ways of presenting instruction concerning the advantages and disadvantages of various vocations.

h. "To find an answer to the question of credit for work done independent of public school supervision."

During the next few years each of the problems suggested by Mr. Brown was attacked vigorously by the Association and gratifying improvements in school procedures have been noted in respect to them. In particular has this organization sought to put into effect Mr. Brown's recommendation concerning educational experimentation. Everywhere within the circle of its influence, undertakings that seek to discover new ways and means of school organization and administration are being carried forward by its members. Research is the slogan of the times.

In this first presidential address Mr. Brown also took occasion to contrast what he regarded as the status of the high-school principal at the time with the status he would merit and attain as a result of the newly formed organization. Said he, "Our place in the educational world will be greatly improved by organization, because of the simple fact that we shall from now on act intelligently and unitedly. We shall no longer be the tail of the dog, to be wagged at the pleasure of influences that have dominated our secondary schools. . . . Instead of having it handed down to us where to get off, we shall now be in a position of at least discussing the advisability of getting

off. . . . From now on we shall take our place among the organizations that are dictating the educational policy of our schools to-day."

How true Mr. Brown's prophecy was respecting the prestige and power of this organization can be judged by each for himself. Certainly no one who is at all conversant with its work would call it a weak and puny Department. Leadership in matters pertaining to secondary education most assuredly has been the Department's watchword.

At the close of the meeting in 1917 new officers were chosen for the succeeding year. These were as follows:

President, Jesse B. Davis, Principal of the Central High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan;

Vice-President: V. K. Froula, Principal of the Lincoln High School, Seattle, Washington;

Secretary-Treasurer: H. V. Church, Principal of the J. Sterling Morton High School, Cicero, Illinois.

During the first nine years of the Department's history it proceeded much after the fashion of other educational societies of the period. That is, its members met in annual convention, listened to a program of set addresses, exchanged greetings and notes with fellow principals, and went home. Some time later in the season, the annual *Yearbook* made its appearance and probably some few individuals perused its pages.

But in 1926, new policies were introduced. In place of a *Yearbook* a series of bimonthly *Bulletins* were issued. The *Yearbooks* had contained little more than the papers read before the convention, together with certain business items. The *Bulletins*, on the other hand, have dealt with a great variety of topics in addition to these matters, including: abstracts of books and magazines, reports of educational committees of one kind and another, lists of unpublished master's theses in the field of secondary education, scientific studies of many sorts, and discussions of many problems pertinent to the administration of the secondary schools. The nine *Yearbooks* published between 1917 and 1926 contained a total of 1218 pages of printed matter; the forty-nine *Bulletins* published since that date have contained a total of 5471 pages of printed matter.

The Department, through its Secretary-Treasurer, also handles a number of matters of especial concern to the principal as an individual and as a manager of his school. Among these services are the furnishing of (1) Uniform certificates of recommendation to colleges; (2) Standard High-School Personnel Record Blanks; (3) Group Life Insurance; (4) Automobile, Fire, Accident, Sickness and other forms of insurance; (5) Directory of Members; (6) Membership cards, seals, emblems, certificates, plaques, and official stationery both for the National Honor Society and the National Junior Honor Society.

Besides being responsible for the various activities mentioned above, the Department has been conspicuously influential in educational undertakings outside the circle of its own organization. It has done this to some extent as a unit but more especially as unofficially represented by its individual members. For example, the committee which prepared the booklet *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* was composed in considerable part of persons also attached to this organization. The National Committee on Research in Secondary Education is a child of this Association; the Department of High-School Inspectors and Supervisors also stemmed from this group. As for the Secondary Commissions of the great regional standardizing agencies—the North Central Association, the Southern Association, and the others—much of the leadership found therein is furnished by men and women who are likewise connected with the Department of Secondary-School Principles. And of the two great national committees which to-day are busily at work endeavoring to effect what may prove to be almost revolutionary changes in secondary-school organization and procedures—the Committee on Orientation of Secondary Education, seeking to develop a philosophy of education upon which all schoolmen can unite, and the Committee for Coöperative Study of Secondary-School Standards and Accrediting Procedures, trying to fashion principles for judging the work of schools in truly valid ways—of these two great Committees all members, I think, are, at the same time, of this organization. And finally, through the force of the Department's numerous sets of official resolutions and recommendations, sweeping reforms in education other than strictly secondary, have been instituted or fostered. Surely the story

of the organization's coöperative adventures has been interesting and noble.

In the Department's annual meetings held since 1917 the topics discussed have been both numerous and varied. Merely for the sake of curiosity I checked through the titles of the addresses and papers delivered before the conventions held during the past nineteen years. These total 760. A few topics, of course, have been discussed frequently; others only occasionally. Those recurring most often, with the number of times each has been considered, are as follows: The curriculum, 33 times; guidance, 18; articulation, or the relation of the high school to other divisions of the system, 16; student activities and social life, 16; finance, 13; supervision, 13; the junior high school, 13; administration, 10; philosophy of education, 9; problems relating to teachers, 8; methods, 8; deans of girls, 8; marks or records, 7; international relationships, 7; the small high school, 7; and from one to six discussions each on athletics, dramatics, class size, scholarship, character education, homogeneous grouping, measurements, study habits, libraries, school reorganization, cardinal principles, and others dealing particularly with specialized subject-matter fields.

In 1917 the roster of the organization listed 245 members; to-day it contains the names of more than 5000 individuals.

If, therefore, the old adage still holds true that "Ye shall know them by their fruits" the organization that was started in 1916 may truly be said to be a fortunate and successful one.

In the absence of Mr. McDaniel, Mr. Church read his paper entitled *The National Honor Society an Essential*.

## THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY AN ESSENTIAL

M. R. McDANIEL,

Superintendent, Oak Park and River Forest Township High  
School, Oak Park, Illinois, and President  
of the National Honor Society

The word *essential* is a strong word, but from the first organization of the National Honor Society I have been a firm and enthusiastic believer in its value. After thirteen