

## Foreword

AMERICAN PARTICIPATION in a war of global dimensions has done much more than to make world geography a matter of vital concern to the average citizen. It has stimulated Americans to a reappraisal of their heritage. We have asked ourselves what are those characteristics which set the United States apart and distinguish its traditions, its purposes, and its form of government from those of other nations. In particular, the war has served to focus attention on the American form of democracy and the conditions essential to its preservation.

Many citizens, in the past, have taken democracy for granted. If they have thought about the matter at all, it has been to identify democracy with the traditional rights and freedoms they have enjoyed as citizens of the United States. Too frequently they have failed to consider responsibilities which must accompany those rights and freedoms if democracy is to survive.

The war has jolted us out of any complacency toward such a situation. Particularly to school people it has brought home a sense of their opportunity and obligation in helping young people "learn the ways of democracy." We know that reading about democracy is not enough, that the sharing of responsibility, which is democracy at its best, is a thing which pupils must *live*.

For teachers and school administrators seriously concerned with this challenge, this publication has a vital contribution to make. The Student Council has long been recognized as an effective means of teaching students civic responsibility through practice. Most high schools have some form of Student Council. However, Councils vary widely in pattern of organization, in activities carried on, and in the extent to which real responsibilities have been delegated to students. The current *Bulletin* brings together reports of practice from Student Councils in all parts of the country as revealed in a careful survey, and presents constructive suggestions for Council organization and functioning. This authoritative study should prove an invaluable source of suggestion and assistance to school administrators and teachers seriously concerned with capitalizing the values inherent in the Student Council.

The *Bulletin*, entitled *The Student Council Handbook*, (No. 89) published by the Association in March, 1940, proved so popular that the supply has been exhausted. The present *Bulletin*, while it includes some of the material which appeared in the earlier study, is almost entirely new material brought about by a study of reports and Constitutions of more than one hundred secondary schools of the nation. The Committee on Student Activities anticipates for this new publication a career of usefulness comparable to that of its predecessor.

The war has served to stimulate concern for democratic values and procedures. Those values and procedures are tested as much in peace as in war.

The problems we face in the postwar era are likely to tax to the utmost the devotion, the co-operation, and the sense of responsibility of every citizen. The role of the public school in relation to the achievement of these ends is a central and expanding one. Among its most effective agencies of functional civic education is an active, socially responsible Student Council.

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## Acknowledgment

THE MANY REQUESTS from schools, principals, sponsors, and student officers of school organizations for the *Student-Council Handbook*, issued by the National Association of Secondary-School Principals in March, 1940, and now out of print, would seem to be ample justification for a re-issue of that popular issue of *The Bulletin*. Schools are "learning the ways of democracy" and are continually seeking ways by and through which they can democratize themselves in a practical and effective manner. There are almost unlimited ways and situations in any secondary-school whereby and wherein truly democratic and realistic citizenship-training opportunities exist or are visibly inherent for all students. To meet these apparent needs and demands by secondary schools, the National Association of Secondary-School Principals was willingly impelled to prepare and publish another handbook on the Student Council, *The Student Council in the Secondary School*.

It was the aim and purpose to preserve the most useful material on the management of student organizations obtained from several studies made for the National Association of Secondary-School Principals in 1939 by Jacobson and Brogue and published in March, 1940. Three hundred and sixty-one schools, of all sizes and types, co-operated in supplying this helpful material on Student Councils at that time.

Many of the summaries and conclusions on practices of Student Councils are included in this publication. In addition, one hundred and sixty-five schools have graciously supplied the National Association of Secondary-School Principals with all kinds of material on Student Councils during the busy closing months of the school year, 1943 - 1944. These current reports have made descriptions of new practices and trends possible; also a comparison of trends