



**Together
We Educate**

**Joan Braunagel McShane
Ambassador for Education
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Iowa Department of Education
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TURN AT THE CASEY STORE AFTER YOU PASS THE AMOCO STATION

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery everyday. Never lose a holy curiosity." Albert Einstein

Dr. Einstein would be pleased to know that I, this year's Ambassador for Education, always was curious. And as I traveled from the Mississippi River to the Missouri River and from the Missouri border to Minnesota's edge, I was in awe not only of the mysteries he suggests, but also of life in Iowa. Most particularly, I am humbled by the warmth, the love, the goodness, the kindness of this great state's people. Beautiful, bountiful Iowa is blessed with people who love their children, love their land, love their state and their country, AND love each other. I saw example after example of this. Everyday, every single day most Iowans live their lives fulfilling John Kennedy's favorite words, "For those to whom much is given, much is required." These people of the Heartland never waver from their responsibilities, particularly those involving the education of Iowa's children.

I would like to begin this report by discussing a meeting I attended in the fall. In November, Secretary of Education Riley, at the request of President Clinton, called all of the Teachers of the Year from the 50 states to Washington, D.C. for a conference, "Goals 2000 Teacher Forum." Each of us was asked to bring a partner - a person from our state but from a district different from ours in location and from a different teaching level and discipline from ours. Daniel Benitz the Vocational-Technology teacher from Jefferson Scranton High School was my partner. We spent two days learning about "Goals 2000" and being encouraged to return to our states to assist others in needed changes in education.

I came from this conference with several thoughts. I was concerned then, and I continue to be concerned about these new policies and how they will affect children in Iowa. We were told in November, and I don't believe the

emphasis has appreciatively changed, that the major thrust for educational assistance from the present national administration is for "the most needy." Iowa is not considered a "most needy" state. Will we be allotted our fair share of financial assistance?

In conversations at this conference with Department of Education personnel, I insisted in Iowa we do have many at-risk children, and some of these children have benefited from their participation in such programs as Chapter I. Iowa needs to have this kind of funding continue. Iowa objects to a formula that would reduce, rather than increase, Iowa's financial assistance. (At the time I am writing this, I do not believe that the ESEA reauthorization of H.R. 6, H.R. 3139, S. 1513 has been acted upon. These will have great impact on funding.) In addition, I have concerns about the future Eisenhower funding and several provisions of "Goals 2000." Hopefully, our senators and representatives will keep the needs of the children in Iowa uppermost in their minds as final negotiations occur.

AN EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE

"Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them and try to follow where they lead." Louisa May Alcott

One evening, at this November conference, I was sitting at a table with the Teachers of the Year from several other states. One of them asked me, "Joan, what is it that Iowa does to have such good schools and provide the excellent education it does? Iowa students always score first or second in the country on standardized tests, and when Iowa kids come to our state, they have skills and knowledge beyond what our students have at the same grade level."

I answered, "First of all, Iowans have been working at education for over 100 years. Our governor enjoys boasting that Iowa first had public land set aside for schools in 1830. Second, Iowans set a high priority for education. They believe nothing is more important than good education for their children and, in many instances, they sacrifice willingly to realize that goal. Third,

Iowans strive to involve everyone in the education of their children. Many towns have booster clubs as well as PTAs. Business/community partnerships are not new to Iowa. Fourth, Iowa has extraordinarily well educated and trained, dedicated, professionals. Very few educators look on their vocation as an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. occupation in Iowa. These people are constantly working to improve the instruction and learning that takes place in Iowa's classrooms. For the most part, they are involved in activities in the community as well as the school. They are assisted by area education agencies staffed by knowledgeable individuals representing many fields of expertise. The Iowa Department of Education is not a department handing out mandates but rather one that assists the school districts of Iowa in the implementation of the necessary regulations and the improvement of education. The Department is part of the team that makes the educational system work. Iowa has a State Board of Education whose members represent the diversity of the Iowa population, both in geography and occupation. This Board's quest is for the best possible education for *all* of Iowa's youth. Iowa's state legislature is made up of representatives from urban, suburban, and rural areas. These people might not always agree on matters of finance and regulations, but they do agree that the highest priority for this state is its youth and their education. It is all of these components together (Together We Educate) that produce Iowa's excellent educational system. To paraphrase a popular bit of slang, "We really do get it!" and I add, "We really do it well!"

NO LIMITATIONS

My answer to that teacher's question is what I would like to discuss with you in this report .

"Aerodynamically the bumblebee shouldn't be able to fly, but the bumblebee doesn't know it so it goes on flying anyway." Mary Kay Ash

This is the philosophy that has allowed the people of Iowa to form and maintain exemplary school districts. While our friends on the coasts or in population dense areas, try to convince the nation they are the sophisticates

of the country, we here in Iowa exemplify what is true sophistication. In our public schools, in addition to reading, writing, science, social studies, and mathematics, Iowa students also excel in the fine arts. I did not visit one school - elementary or secondary - that did not have a music program. Every middle level school and high school had band, orchestra, and chorus. I saw extraordinary art work everywhere, kindergarten through community colleges.

Iowa's scientific and agricultural education ranks highest in the nation/world because of the study that begins in Iowa's public schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade. Iowa can look with pride at the numbers of astronauts, doctors, dentists, veterinarians, teachers, researchers, writers, painters, sculptors, politicians, engineers, etc., who have been graduated from Iowa schools.

We are leaders in many facets of education and provide working models both nationally and internationally. At the present time, the fiber optic network (Iowa Communications Network) has the entire country buzzing. At the National Science Teachers Association Convention in Anaheim, California, in March, I was asked again and again about the fiber optic network. A Floridian commented, "I don't envy your climate, but I am very envious of your educational successes and initiatives." Iowa always seems to be on the cutting edge of educational programs, in the arts, sciences, humanities, and technology. We give new meaning to the words, "Think globally, but act locally!" So it is that this midwestern state proud of its past and confident in its future never has followed, but has and continues to lead the nation in education. Like the bee, we put no limits on our abilities.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

"Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." John Wooden

Iowans believe that they must provide quality education for all children. I saw evidence of this everywhere I went. I could not possibly mention every

speech, every visit, every conference or meeting attended, every reaction, but I do want to share with you some of my memories.

I was educated in a large/medium school district, and most of my teaching career has been in similar sized districts; therefore, I was extremely interested and gave most of my time in the small to medium sized districts of Iowa (many of these districts are seldom visited). I was particularly interested in the districts in which all levels were on a single campus. In these single campus facilities, I saw evidence of a kind of camaraderie we only dream about in the large districts. I saw elementary staffs working with senior high staffs, middle level staffs working with both - all levels working together. I saw high school students mentoring middle level and elementary level students in the classroom, in the lunchroom, and on buses. I saw the "real world" with special education students in these schools integrated into all activities. I saw Iowa's education at its best. Someone asked me, "What is too small in district size?" My answer was, "I do not know what is too small, but I do know what is too large."

I saw extraordinary physical accommodations for learning. John Glenn Elementary School in Donahue has a media-computer-instructional area that provides for the needs of the students and at the same time accommodates an efficient use of space that results in an area that is a hub for working and learning. The principal delights in telling that the teachers designed this area. The high school building in Eagle Grove should be a national model for keeping the integrity of an older building and adapting it to the needs of the 21st century.

I was continuously amazed at the new construction or remodeling that is occurring in many districts in Iowa. I saw again and again communities responding to the need for new or improved physical facilities to accommodate the changing delivery systems. DeWitt Central Middle School is such an example. Their Central Middle School boasts a technology room designed especially for technology instruction for middle level school students. This facility should be featured in a magazine for school planning and construction with the article title, "Facilities for Now and Into the 21st Century."

In general, the maintenance of most buildings I visited was very good. I could not begin to mention the innumerable times superintendents or principals told me that their custodian(s) worked extra time not only to maintain the building, but also to help with special projects for the children. The upkeep of the building and helping the children are other examples of the care and dedication of ALL in Iowa for the children. Again an example of "Together We Educate."

Many districts are facing the closing of schools - never a pleasant task. Two districts I visited that I thought were handling the closing with optimistic realism were the Clark District with the closing of Weldon School and Mt. Pleasant with the closing of Pleasant Lawn. As I visited with the staffs of these two buildings, I found them accepting of the change and giving it their professional and personal support. This kind of staff attitude certainly helps alleviate community concerns.

I was always impressed by the administrators of districts and buildings I visited. I would compare them to parents who are proud of their offspring. A few sample comments from building administrators are: "My teachers are so dedicated." "You'll see great things in the classrooms as you visit." "These teachers love the kids." "I couldn't ask for more professional or dedicated people." "You'll see no finer educators anywhere."

And from the teachers concerning their building administrators, I remember hearing: "He's turned this place around." "He doesn't ask us to do anything he wouldn't do." "He makes me want to work harder." "She understands, and she makes it happen." "I worry about her, because she works so hard and cares so much about the staff and the kids." The picture of Iowa's excellence in education is beginning to emerge. Caring and respected professionals are found everywhere in the schools of Iowa.

Good education is alive and well in Iowa because most districts have been able to marry what has been successful and is successful to the needs of the students in Iowa's classrooms now and in the future. The profile of the Iowa student is changing. In eight years, single parent families have increased 55 percent, teenage mothers have increased 53 percent, and children in poverty

in Iowa have increased 85 percent in the last six years. Whether a district is urban, rural, or suburban, the students' backgrounds and experiences are far different from even ten years ago. Most districts are meeting the challenges brought by these changes; others perhaps need some leadership to meet these challenges.

Mason City is a district whose staff and students seem to be on track and traveling high speed into the 21st century. Their tech-prep program is praised throughout the state, and I was especially impressed with the extent of their collaborative work with North Iowa Area Community College. What a plus for the students in this district! Mason City's involvement with the national Scope, Sequence, and Coordination Project directed in Iowa by Dr. Robert Yager, University of Iowa, and funded by the National Science Foundation shows their interest in both change and research in science.

As I look at my travel diary, I think I had a "love affair" with southwest Iowa. (Since a recent novel is set near Winterset, I hasten to add my "love affair" was not the kind described in the novel, but one of good feeling about the people and the area.) For example, I was in Creston on January 17-18, 1994, the coldest days of our extremely cold winter. I had parked my car overnight at the side of Berning's Motor Inn Coffee Shop. As I prepared to go out the door on that bitter cold, windy morning, a waitress encouragingly said, "I know your car will start. I just know it. And remember, you must let it run for at least ten minutes. I heard that on television last night. Don't cheat or get impatient. You come back in here and wait." My car did start, and I stepped back into the restaurant to wait the ten minutes. The waitress appeared with a cup of steaming coffee for me, and as I waited, she refilled my cup. When I left, I thanked her, and she handed me a sack with a cinnamon roll, a pat on the back, and the words, "Please be careful. Call if you need help!" I was warmed by more than the coffee!

As I pulled onto the highway out of Creston, I thought of the many outstanding educators with whom I had visited and who were so proud of their students and their classrooms. I remembered their warm reception of my words the previous day. I thought of the superintendent who knew his district so well and knew what his teachers and administrators were doing,

and he was pleased to tell about them. Despite the weather conditions, it was a great visit.

Mt. Ayr School District, the "Technology Capital of Iowa," continues to provide technological equipment and use that I did not see duplicated anywhere - only dreamed about. The technology component in this district is outstanding with computers, networking, fiber optic use, writing laboratories, and agricultural and drafting technology etc., second to none. In the artistic spectrum, I saw a mural being painted by the students on the wall of the elementary building's stage that could best be described in elementary students' language, "Awesome!" A visiting artist from the Iowa Arts Council was there assisting the children. The staff of the Mt. Ayr District is warm and friendly, proud of their accomplishments, their students, their administration, and their community for its support! I felt the superintendent was very much like the leader of the band of people in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. He is a leader who knows where, and who, and why he is leading.

Geographically far from Mt. Ayr is Dubuque, but dedication to good education is not geographically isolated in Iowa. At Dubuque's John F. Kennedy Elementary School not only did I see good education taking place, but also I visited with a staff who truly felt collaborative decision making was present and working in their building. Many boast of collaborative decision making being present, when, in reality, it is not. John F. Kennedy has a successful working model. The staff even provided a home-cooked luncheon for the Ambassador for Education. I appreciated the thoughtful touch.

Also, in Dubuque I visited the outstanding automotive technology program at Hempstead High School. The young people who participate in this program are fortunate, indeed. An automotive engine repair team from the Hempstead program repeatedly places first in state competition and recently placed third in national competition. After talking with the instructor, I believe I discovered the key to their success - high expectations combined with exemplary teaching skills equal superior student learning and performance. Cheers!

I saw innovative programs not far from home. Hoover School in Davenport boasts in 1993-94 the only year round calendar in the state. As I talked with teachers there and observed their classrooms, I knew I was among "true believers" in what they were doing. The state at-risk grant has provided opportunities for the school and the neighborhood that never would have occurred without this financial help. If there is data needed for commitment of staff and neighborhood together making a difference, it is here.

Garfield School in Davenport is on the radio every day and listened to regularly by students, parents, friends, and neighbors. As I traveled throughout the state, I often was interviewed by local radio stations - even a call in show, but never were the questions so in-depth or probing as those I received from the student radio show host at Garfield. This station is the product of staff, students, and most importantly a school business partner. (Who just happens to be a former student of mine from many years ago.)

Working with business partners to provide outstanding education is apparent in Eagle Grove. In fact, Eagle Grove seems to have everybody involved in the schools. As I spoke at an evening PTA meeting, and then, the following day visited schools and talked with a town banker, I knew this system could be a model for involvement of everyone in education. They exemplified exactly what I envision when I talk about "Together We Educate." The superintendent and his pride in his district and his talent in recruiting all to work cheerfully and diligently for the education of the students in Eagle Grove seemed to be the nucleus for this successful school district that continues to meet the changing needs of its students. I also saw integration of special education students with positive results and to show the seriousness of their commitment to this, this summer an elevator will be installed in the high school. Eagle Grove is an example of Booker T. Washington's words, "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way." Visit Eagle Grove!

On the far western side of Iowa, I also saw good education taking place. Rock Valley is a small district who is efficiently using its resources and reaching out into the community for input. I learned about committees that included business and community people, professional educators, and students. Too

often I heard about and saw committees meeting and the group about whom everything revolved was not represented - the students. Rock Valley involves their students! Rock Valley is on the move with technology innovations and beginning work on a 21st century curriculum.

I shall not soon forget the view of the shiny silver dome on the courthouse in Bedford one early spring morning. I had to drive downtown before going to the school to see the entire building after viewing the shiny dome for several miles. What an interesting structure! I found the staff at Bedford to be as bright at our early morning meeting as their courthouse dome. (Remember the warmth, I mentioned. It was certainly here.) This staff has veteran teachers and beginning teachers working side by side and learning from each other.

Would you like to go to Puerto Rico? If so, join the Pen Pals Club of the sixth grade social studies class at Bedford. They were soon to leave for that beautiful island to visit their pen pals; alternate years, the Puerto Rican children come to Bedford. What a wonderful method to learn other cultures, another language, and make friends! The students earn their own money with sales of various kinds and other fund raising activities. I offered to chaperon!

I did not visit any strange lands with strange sounding names, but I did attend many, many, many staff development activities and gave many speeches around this state. I often shared similar ideas, but I tried to prepare especially for each speech I made; therefore, I have an entire file drawer of speeches. I gave keynote addresses for the Mobile In-Service Training Lab (MISTL), PTA meeting talks and honor assembly awards, "words of wisdom" to professional organizations, luncheon speeches, teacher award ceremonies addresses, talks to future teachers and retired teachers, faculty meeting mini-speeches, thoughts and concerns to superintendent and principal gatherings, and a few times, I sat down and chatted with boys and girls, young men and women.

One of the sterling highlights of the year that I recall with great pleasure was a teacher coming to me after a staff development meeting where I spoke,

hugging me, and saying, "This is the first time I have ever come from one of these kinds of meetings and felt happy. I usually feel so down. Thank you. Thank you. I am going to try something new I have always wanted to do with my students. Please come back sometime."

Obviously, I was touched by her comments about my talk, but I was most pleased that she felt confident enough to try that "something new she had always wanted to do" with her students!

As Vladimir Smirnoff would say, "What A Year!" It was in one way a very sad year for me. I lost my mother on September 22, 1993. She had mentioned many times during the summer that she was looking forward to hearing about my "adventures" traveling about the state. I missed sharing with her, but I can only hope she knew where I was and what I was doing and what I was saying. And most of all, that she was pleased.

The driving was a lesson in bravery for me. I taught for many years at Jefferson School in Davenport so that I could walk and not have to drive to school. Then I become Ambassador for Education and had to drive everywhere in all kinds of weather during one of Iowa's all time worst winters. Probably the night I shall never forget was sitting on the side of the bed in the Heartland Inn in Mt. Pleasant looking out the window into the blowing snow and watching the semi-trucks jack-knifing off Highway 218. School was canceled the next day, and I drove home. It took me five hours to drive what normally is one and one-half or two hours. Despite all the weather, I had to cancel only three engagements. Two I made up later, but after two attempts, Dike officials and I gave up. I am hoping to just drop by Dike in early June.

A FEW CONCERNS

"If everyone is thinking alike then somebody isn't thinking." General George Patton

I shared just a few of my positive reactions with you, and believe me, there are many more. However, this report would not be complete without my sharing some concerns with you. Most of my concerns are not unique to Iowa, but rather exist throughout the country, but since we are leaders in education, we have the responsibility to work harder to solve faster!

Assessment continues to be a concern both in Iowa and throughout the country. Outcome based education, performance based, paper and pencil tests, standardized tests, portfolios are kinds of assessments being discussed and used in Iowa. Predominately, however, the standardized paper and pencil test remains the most used assessment instrument. I did find many districts confused as to what to use and why. I believe each district carefully needs to look at what each individual community expects from assessment; however, I believe it is the professional educators who must acquaint the citizens with the kinds of and purposes of the various kinds of assessment that are available and could be used.

Reading Jamie Vollmer's report, I learned from his data that Iowan's wanted their children to be able to: first, use and understand computers; second, solve problems; third, work with others; fourth, listen carefully and speak well; fifth, think independently; sixth, be lifetime learners; seventh, manage finances; and eighth, set and attain goals. Could these skills be measured on pencil and paper standardized tests?

His data also documented that Iowans want their children to know: first, reading; second, writing; third, mathematics; fourth, history; fifth, science; sixth, geography; and seventh, music and the arts. Apparently, in gathering his data, he distinguished between "doing" and "knowing." Can we separate them? Should we separate them? It would appear that is part of the struggle and the dilemma of assessment. What are our expectations and then how do we assess them?

In the same arena is the "Goals 2000" voluntary national standards for students, teachers, districts, states. In addition, each subject matter discipline is spending millions of dollars writing individual subject matter standards. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is already revising their

recently written and published standards. Many Iowa districts seem to need guidance to sort this "standards' blitz" to be able to know how it will or should affect each district and what will be expected of them. I was asked again and again about the "state's" response to the push for national standards, both in "Goals 2000" and in the particular subject matter disciplines. There is concern.

My personal view of all these standards is that I am aware of the need by many for them to exist; however, to me, a standard seems to set a limit. In education, I like to believe there are no limits to what is possible for our students to learn.

Does Iowa have a plan for education now and into the 21st century? Yes, we do. The soon to be released document, "Education Is Iowa's Future: The State Plan for Educational Excellence in the 21st Century" gives us a structure from which to work and goals to achieve. All components and expectations are addressed. We are on target!

Another concern of mine is the absence of tech-prep training/education in many districts. We know that in ten years 80 percent of the available jobs will be those of some kind of technologist. Are we addressing this need everywhere in Iowa? As mentioned, I have seen outstanding examples of tech-prep, but there are many districts where there is no program or only the old "shop" program. I am aware that this need is being addressed through the state department. Good! Help and improvement must be on the way!

I heard the following several times, the most recent after a speech I gave at Buena Vista College. "If Iowans really believe that they need to prepare their students to compete not only in their home area, but in this state, in this nation, and in the world, where are they going to have experiences working with people of various cultures and ethnic backgrounds?" When the students from Buena Vista asked me that question, I answered, "Yes, Iowa students need this experience, but it must happen naturally. People must be encouraged to move into communities, etc." I felt this was a very weak answer from me, but I knew no other. Students in the urban areas, of course, do have experiences with people of color and various cultures, but in many,

many of Iowa's communities, there are no people of color. I find the fact that students and teachers are concerned about this to be the first step toward a plan. What can we do?

As I visited districts, I saw great diversity in the accommodations for special education students. I would divide my observations into three categories. First, in some districts students are still isolated (regardless of their special education classification). They have separate rooms, sometimes with door signs indicating the kind of room - MD or LD, receive little integration, and seem to be known and tagged (at least verbally) as "special education." The second kind of structure was one that saw a special room with students integrated into several classrooms without support and returning to their special education classroom for the remainder of the time. Again, they were clearly labeled and known. The third structure was one of integration into classrooms, often times with students and teacher going together. These students seemed an integral part of the classes, accepted as members of the class.

There are no easy answers either for the special education child or for the school. But in a society where we value the contribution of everyone, where if the rights, needs, and privileges of any one person are reduced, all of us are diminished, how can we not prepare our students to live and work and understand each and everyone who inhabits this planet?

Another particular anxiety of mine involves the elementary and middle school more than the high school curriculum. In our zeal for integration of disciplines in the curriculum, in many instances, a kind of "mush" has emerged. Too often the integrity of the disciplines has been lost for the sake of integration. I have attended several meetings of a national group, Consortium for Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning (CITL), whose participants are the executive directors or assistant executive directors of the national organizations for the teaching of English, reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and communication and one or two teachers from each organization. When these people met to discuss the integration of subjects in the elementary curriculum, what was unanimously agreed was that the

integrity of each discipline must be kept and that not all disciplines can be integrated for all topics.

As an example of my concern, I visited an elementary classroom whose teacher proudly told me she was teaching a science thematic, integrated unit on animals. I saw social studies, language arts, and art, but I saw no science. I think as integration continues everyone will "get better at it," but I feel a watchful eye should be kept focused to see that the integrity of each discipline is maintained and that what is "science" or what is "mathematics" does not become blurred and mushy.

Curriculum, delivery systems, standards, integration of disciplines, inclusion of special children, budgets, which taxes and how much, class size, time management, and safety in the schools are concerns of everyone interested in the education of Iowa's children. I am firmly convinced that we provide the best education for all students where there is a strong commitment and involvement in the schools by parents and people in the community. (By involvement, I do not necessarily mean, "physical presence," for parents can be involved in assisting with homework, encouraging and fostering a love for learning, but not be able to be physically present in the school. As a working mother myself, I always felt I was involved, but not always present in the building itself. But involvement, in one or another, by all of these groups must be present for the best education possible to succeed.)

How can parents, professional educators, business and labor leaders, citizens provide the education Iowa's children need today and in the future? What must we do? What must we change? What are the barriers to change? Or better stated might be what can make change happen? (Success is made up of can's. Failure is made up of can't's!)

MY IDEA FOR MAKING CHANGE WORK

*"After the verb 'to love', 'to help' is the most beautiful verb in the world,"
Bertha von Suttner*

As I traveled this state, I listened intently to teachers and administrators, and I consistently heard the same themes. Time is a universal problem to educators, not only time with the children in the classroom, but also time for preparation and most recently time demanded of teachers away from classroom responsibilities. If teachers are going to be involved in site-based management and collaborative decision making, they must be given the time and training to participate successfully.

Most of all, I found teachers to be frustrated with the need and demand for change. When there is commitment for change, guidance and leadership is then needed for change to occur. In January, 1992, the National Science Teachers Association sponsored a national conference in Washington, D.C., "A Strategy for Change in Elementary Science Education." This meeting brought together decision makers, administrators, teachers, school board members, and community people from 40 school districts throughout this country. As these people talked with each other, the consensus was that the one common thread that had to be present if meaningful change were to occur was the belief in the need for change and then for leadership for change at every level.

Another common component for change is the belief that change can occur. Teachers believe this when success is shown to them. Sorry, but faith alone does not inspire most classroom teachers to change delivery systems, curriculum, classroom control techniques, goals, or proposed outcomes.

Teachers are weary of the "late start" or "early out" or "day before school begins" or "day after school ends" method of staff development. Teachers are weary of being "told" about new techniques, new materials, different kinds of assessments to meet the needs of their students. Inservice (staff development) is usually done with the "vessel technique." An "expert" usually blows in, blows off, and blows out. The teachers sit and listen or watch a video or hear a testimonial to a "never fail" new technique. Sometimes a teacher will use what he/she has heard, but can this kind of staff development ever really be effective? Every teacher knows this approach/technique does not work for students to learn so why do administrators believe it works well with teachers?

For effective change to occur in the classrooms in Iowa, I believe the first step is for each district to assess where they are, where they want to be, and how they are going to make the journey to their desired destination (achieve their goals). This should be accomplished with participation from the entire community - teachers, administrators, parents, community members, business and labor representatives, and students. I have seen districts where there is no need for drastic curriculum change; I have seen other districts where curriculum has not changed for 20 years. But do the teachers and administrators and parents and students in the latter district realize they need a curriculum change? If not, how can this first step be accomplished? How can a specific need for change be identified? Then after the need is recognized, where do they begin their change process? After it is begun, how will it continue? This is probably the most crucial step in the entire process. How often does change get started, and then bogs down or slips quietly into obscurity? Where is the focus? Is there a model? How does it happen?

Various AEAs have started Model Classroom programs. To me this is a positive first step. But may I suggest other actions as well? Think of the success of the Peace Corps. What made it so successful? The people involved and those people evaluating this national program write that its success is due to the close and continuous involvement of the Peace Corps volunteers with the people whom they are helping. The words here are "close" and "continuous."

I propose a "Mentor Corps." This could be a group of teachers, perhaps from each AEA, to work in that AEA. (Iowa is a very large state, with very different needs and expected outcomes. I observed what works in Dubuque does not necessarily work well in Rock Valley and vice versa.) This group of teachers would be available to work in the classrooms with teachers. The members of the corps, teachers who had special expertise, would be "doing" the particular kind of change that had been decided was needed in that district. The corps members would move from room to room, school to school, and then to other districts if the same kind of change were needed there. Classroom teachers could observe and then be part of the demonstrated change. This "change" could not occur "all at once," but over years with new

members of the corps selected as expertise was needed for a different kind of identified change.

I heard again and again from teachers that they would like to have time to observe their colleagues teach. This would allow them not only to observe teaching, but also observe exactly how a master teacher would handle the very same situation the classroom teacher has every day. Many times secondary teachers shared with me their reluctance to use cooperative learning groups because they just didn't think cooperative learning groups would work in high school. When I asked, did you ever see cooperative learning groups being used in a high school classroom? The answer was "No." When elementary teachers tell me, "I can't team teach. It's too noisy. Nobody works." And then I ask, "Have you ever seen team teaching in a classroom setting similar to yours?" The answer is, of course, "No." However, one teacher did tell me she had seen team teaching on a video. Better than nothing, but not instructive enough for her to feel comfortable to try it herself.

How would these teachers for the "Mentor Corps" be paid, for they would need to be released from their own classrooms? Could districts pool funds? Could business contribute? I confess I don't have all the logistics for this, but I do have the idea.

The "Mentor Corps" need not be restricted to teachers. I discovered just how lonely administrative jobs can be. Could there not be a similar corps for administrators?

The Iowa Communications Network and the Star Schools program might also be a viable part of the "Mentor Corps" plan or perhaps, as the fiber optic network and/or the Star Schools expand to assist districts and teachers with change, there would not be the great need for a program like the "Mentor Corps."

I cannot emphasize too strongly the need at this time for some kind of practical "show me" when districts want to change - be it delivery, curriculum, techniques, use of materials, restructuring, etc. The "Mentor

Corps" acts only as point for dialogue. I hope I have not been guilty of Harry Truman's words, "If you can't convince them, confuse them." I offer this, because I always am irritated when I hear criticism, but no suggestions for a "better way."

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

*"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."
Franklin Roosevelt*

As you have read, I have had many, many positive professional and personal experiences this year. "Ambassador for Education for Iowa" is a title I carried with pride and always tried to be the best representative possible.

We, the state of Iowa and I, had several perks. We made the New York Times! February 12, 1994's issue included an article written by me in the "Class Acts" section found on the Opinion Page. The "Class Acts" was a special section to highlight classroom activities of four Teachers of the Year. The Iowa classroom experience was the lead article! Since its publication, I have received many letters and telephone calls discussing and applauding what is happening in Iowa schools.

Another perk is that the United States Department of Education, after the Goals 2000 Conference, keeps me informed of legislation and activities of interest to teachers. I share this information with teachers as I travel to districts and schools.

I placed the money from business and industry that was given to me when I was chosen Teacher of the Year into a trust fund administered by the Davenport Schools Foundation. For the next five years, a student of color who is planning to enter the teaching profession will be awarded a \$1,000.00 scholarship for books and supplies. A committee composed of educators, parents, and community leaders makes the annual selection. This year I had the pleasure of presenting the "Ambassador for Education Scholarship" at the Davenport Central High School Awards Program to Cathy More who plans to

attend the University of Northern Iowa and become a science teacher. As it happens, quite coincidentally, Cathy was a former student of mine. I cannot express in words my feelings when I put the envelope containing the check in her hand, but they were those of gratitude, pride, and serenity that the torch of education will continue to be passed.....

Ted Stilwill, Susan Miller, and Jody Crane were my mentors, my confessors, my advisers, and my friends. I shall miss them. A question never went unanswered; a request never ignored by the dedicated people in the Iowa Department of Education. I thank each and every one.

I am very grateful to my family - my husband Ivan who kept the household together when I was gone, to my daughter Rosemary whose encouragement never wavers, and to my bulldog "Danny" who always welcomed me home regardless of the hour.

Even as I write this, I am preparing to continue this "ambassador business." I have commitments until the end of June. I have enjoyed the opportunity of visiting schools, giving speeches, assisting with staff development, having time to read and research (I was so grateful for this!), sitting on committees and assisting in curriculum writing and/or selecting, and once in a while teaching. It has been wonderful, but I do look forward to returning to the classroom. First, last, and always, I am a teacher. If we could provide for every child in Iowa the same kind of education as described in The Education of Henry Adams, we would realize our greatest quest. I want to be part of the group on that journey.

In closing, I want to share one last experience with you. As I was walking, down the hall in the elementary school in Janesville, a little girl (I later learned she was in second grade) stopped me and asked, "Whose mother are you?" I replied, "Well, I'm Rosemary's mother, but she is an adult and doesn't go to school anymore." "Oh," she said, "I thought I knew everybody's mother, and I don't know you." (I was flattered that she thought I was an elementary school child's mother!) I told her who I was and that I was visiting her school to see all the good things that the boys and girls were doing. "Great," she exclaimed, grabbed my hand, and pulled me toward her

classroom. "I want you to see my math paper from this morning and all of our room and our teacher." I went willingly. She beamed the entire time, and I saw all that she described.

In contrast, when three years ago I was visiting an elementary school in Birmingham, England, a nine-year-old student asked, "You're from the government, aren't you? You're an inspector!" I assured him I was not from the government and certainly not an inspector. We met again as I toured the building, and the same conversation took place. Even after finding a map and pointing out the United States to him, I could not convince him I was not an inspector and from the government. He was obviously suspicious and fearful.

What a difference in the attitudes of these two children. That bright, happy, warm, loving, little girl did not "just happen." Caring parents, exemplary educators, and a community of people who have provided a safe, wholesome environment for her allowed her to grow into this delightful child. "Together" we do it in Iowa. "Together We Educate," and we do it very well.

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