# Department of Superintendence

# FIFTH YEARBOOK

## THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

PUBLISHED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENCE
OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES
1201 Sixteenth Street Northwest, Washington, D. C.
FEBRUARY, 1927

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# THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENCE

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## FOREWORD

FOUR YEARS ago the Department of Superintendence issued its first curriculum yearbook. Since that time, each succeeding yearbook has dealt with those problems of the curriculum which seemed of greatest importance to members of the Department; and in the solution of which the Department was particularly fitted to make a large contribution.

The 1924 Yearbook, *The Elementary School Curriculum,* through its statement of general educational aims and objectives, its survey of current curriculum practice, and its proposed effort in curriculum revision in a local community, laid the basis for local programs of professional study relating to the curriculum.

The 1925 Yearbook, *Research in Constructing the Elementary School Curriculum,* prepared through the cooperation of seventy-five curriculum specialists, brought together in one volume digests of 150 scientific or semi-scientific studies in eleven of the subject fields of the elementary school curriculum; and in addition included a briefer summary of over 500 reading investigations.

The 1926 Yearbook, *The Nation at Work on the Public School Curriculum,* pictured some of the forward-looking work being done in the field of curriculum building. It presented case-studies of curriculum revision programs in typical cities. It stated fundamental principles; included reports of eleven national subject committees; and contained summaries of investigations in various elementary school subjects not reported in the *Third Yearbook.* The 1926 Yearbook was a product of the Cooperative Plan of Curriculum Revision proposed at the Cincinnati meeting of the Department of Superintendence in February, 1925. This Plan is intended to bring together such school systems, colleges, and universities as are actively interested in curriculum revision. The chief objective of the Cooperative Plan is to stimulate and encourage local interest and endeavor. It also offers opportunity to pool the best thinking of many school systems.

The 1927 Yearbook, *The Junior High School Curriculum,* is also a product of the Cooperative Plan of Curriculum Revision. During 1926-1927 three hundred school systems, interested in junior high school curriculum revision, and twelve national subject committees have worked under the Commission on the Curriculum. The Department of Superintendence and the Research Division of the National Education Association have acted as a clearing-house.

Parts I and II of this Yearbook were prepared by the Research Division; Part III, by the twelve national junior high school committees. In preparing a curriculum yearbook on the junior high school it was necessary tentatively to define that particular unit and state its functions, and to do the same for the elementary school and the senior high school. These definitions have been made with full realization that some may not agree with them. The hope is that out of the discussion that they provoke there will come clearer thinking as to the articulation of the units of the American school system, which will be the subject of the 1929 Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence.

Since James M. Glass in his study of *Curriculum Practices in the Junior High School and Grades* 5 *and* 6, published by the University of Chicago Press, has so recently set forth in detail the program of studies in fourteen representative cities, showing core curricula, elective courses, and time allotments, discussion of these topics is omitted in this volume.

Certain topics, such as the relation of the junior high school to college entrance requirements, the source, training, and salaries of junior high school teachers, and junior high school costs have been included because they are vitally related to the successful administration of the curriculum.

One hundred nineteen research studies—some scientific, others semi-scientific—are reviewed in this Yearbook. In addition, the junior high school committees, composed largely of school superintendents, have selected materials rich in suggestions and information from the wealth of curriculum content being developed in many local school systems.

The junior high school is a new educational unit. It would be unfortunate if it were "swamped out" through compromises with conventional procedures. In the preparation of this Yearbook the Commission has stood squarely for a forward-looking experimental conception of the junior high school curriculum, which, as one writer has said, "should be so selected, organized and operated as to break down the line between curricular and extra-curricular activities, by introducing the extra-curricular spirit into the curricular subject-matter." While Chapters IX-XVIII are organized on the subject basis, the reader should not infer that this organization is indicative of a belief that curriculum content should be organized in "water-tight" compartments. In the preparation of a yearbook which enlisted nation-wide cooperation, division of work was necessary.

The committee reports were prepared under the limitation of time and the pressure of work to which all school executives are subject. In many cases it was impossible for committees to hold even one meeting. Those who did meet, did so on their own time and at their own expense since funds were not available for traveling expenses. Nevertheless, the best thought of hundreds of teachers, principals, supervisors, and superintendents has been contributed directly or indirectly to the various chapters of this Yearbook, since the members of the various committees, through correspondence, pooled the ideas developed in each of their local school systems.

The following statement was made relative to the 1926 Yearbook. It also applies to the 1927 Yearbook:

> This volume does not prevent a national course of study. Instead it brings together some of the best of the practical material which is evolving from the Cooperative Plan. It is the accepted policy of the Commission on the Curriculum that none of its work should be presented with finality.
>
> The issuance of final statements is undesirable from two points of view:
>
> 1. Educational research is too young to allow final words at this time to be issued on any subject.
> 2. The public school curriculum will continue to change as long as civilization advances.

The 1927 Yearbook suggests problems for further research and experimentation. It makes available for local course of study committees suggestive material for curriculum construction which can be adapted and utilized in local programs by communities of varying size.

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# PART I

## THE PLACE OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN THE AMERICAN PROGRAM OF EDUCATION

# CHAPTER I

## THE AMERICAN PROGRAM OF EDUCATION

*WHAT ARE America's educational ideals?* Education for life and service in a democracy cannot rest upon capricious or indefinite theories. It must have for its basis a sound and reliable philosophy. Fortunately, the founders of the republic planned a nation in accordance with definite purposes, to achieve which they framed the Constitution. Officially they promulgated these six purposes in the preamble: (1) a more perfect union, (2) justice, (3) domestic tranquillity, (4) the common defense, (5) general welfare, and (6) preservation of the blessings of liberty. They held the conviction that these should be secured by education. Since that time the states have provided for schools at public expense, taxing all for the general welfare. In tax-supported schools these American ideals are paramount. Upon their realization depends the perpetuity of our government which is composed of citizens. The progress of the republic is conditioned by the development of its citizenry. To keep the citizenry at a rising level, schools have been established at public expense. The Continental Congress before the Constitution was adopted concretely evidenced its faith in the purposes which were later stated in the Preamble of the Constitution, when it resolved in the Ordinance of 1787 that: "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." Daniel Webster, in an address at Plymouth on December 22, 1820, clearly pointed out that public education has a claim on every dollar of private wealth. He said:

> New England early adopted, and has constantly maintained the principle, that it is the undoubted right and the bounden duty of government to provide for the instruction of all youth. That which is elsewhere left to chance or to charity, we secure by law. For the purpose of public instruction, we hold every man subject to taxation in proportion to his property, and we look not to the question, whether he himself have, or have not, children to be benefited by the education for which he pays.

*Why public schools?*—The legal sanction for appropriating public funds for schools is prescribed in the forty-eight state constitutions. The following illustrations are typical:

> All children within this province of the age of twelve years shall be taught some useful trade or skill, to the end that none may be idle, but the poor may work to live, and the rich if they become poor may not want.—*William Penn in his Frame of Government,* 1682.
>
> The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public schools, wherein all the children of this Commonwealth above the age of six years may be educated, and shall appropriate at least one million dollars each year for that purpose.—*Constitution of Pennsylvania,* 1789, *Article X, Section 1.*

The General Assembly shall provide a thorough and efficient system of free schools whereby all children of this state may receive a good common school education.—*Constitution of the State of Illinois,* 1870, *Article VIII, Section 1.*

Schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The general assembly at its first session under this constitution shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of public schools, wherein the tuition shall be free of charge to all the children of the state.—*North Carolina Constitution,* 1868, *Article IX, Sections 1 and 2.*

When the colony of Georgia overthrew the control of England in 1776 and became an independent state, a convention of delegates meeting in Savannah drew up a constitution. One of the most striking provisions of the constitution was the direction given to the legislature to establish free schools in each county to be supported at the general expense of the state.—Gorden G. Singleton, *State Responsibility for the Support of Education in Georgia,* page 1.

The state shall ever maintain a general, suitable and efficient system of free schools, whereby all persons in the state between the ages of six and twenty-one years may receive gratuitous instruction.—*Section 7484, Digest of Laws Relating to Free Schools in the State of Arkansas,* p. 5.

The general assembly shall provide a thorough and efficient system of free schools whereby all children of this state may receive a good common school education.—*Article VIII, Section 1, Constitution of the State of Illinois.*

It shall be the duty of the general assembly to provide by law for a general and uniform system of common schools, wherein tuition shall be without charge and equally open to all.—*Article VIII, page 27, Laws of Indiana Relating to the Public School System, Indianapolis,* 1923.

The General Assembly shall establish throughout the state a thorough and efficient system of free public schools.—*Article VIII, Section 1, Maryland Public School Laws,* 1922.

The legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public schools for the instruction of all the children in this state between the ages of five and eighteen years.—*Extracts from State Constitution, Section VII, New Jersey School Laws,* 1921, p. 6.

It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders.—*Article IX, Section 1, Code of Public Instruction, State of Washington,* 1923, p. 23.

*The American school offers a complete education.* Many of our states have recognized that money invested in high schools and colleges, as well as that invested in elementary schools, brings big returns. They have provided a free educational program extending from the kindergarten through the university, which is divided into these four important units: (1) Elementary, (2) Junior high school, (3) Senior high school, and (4) Collegiate.

The following statements briefly define and set forth the objectives of the first three of these four units in our American program of education, and the relation of one to the other. Many will disagree with the statements. They are tentatively presented as a working basis for a more detailed discussion of the curriculum of one particular unit of our public school system, namely, the junior high school. There is need for this tentative working basis since the forty-eight state constitutions originally provided only legal sanction for appropriating public funds for schools but did not map out a program of educational units for each state. Since

education must be conceived as a process of growth, it is unfortunate that these units have grown up in many instances with too little thought of interrelationships and specific functions. In fact, what constitutes a junior high school in one school system is quite different from that in an adjoining school system. Hence the need for working definitions.

Only brief statements are presented here, since the Department of Superintendence has at work a Commission on the Articulation of the Units of the American School System which will present its report in the 1929 Yearbook.

*The elementary school—what it is and seeks to accomplish*—The elementary school comprises the kindergarten and grades one to six; the kindergarten being recognized as the introductory section of the elementary unit. There is also a growing tendency to make provision for children of preschool or nursery age.

This large elementary unit is often broken up into smaller units. To illustrate, the phrase "Kindergarten-Primary Unit" has been used in some teacher-training institutions and in some school systems to designate the period of school life from four or five to eight or nine years. In the few institutions in which the nursery school has begun to function, the unit is referred to as the Nursery-Kindergarten-Primary Unit. The period is in some places designated as that of Early Elementary Education.

The following statements as to the functions of the various sections of the elementary unit are tentative. They represent in a general way what appears to be the consensus of opinion of writers in the field.

The nursery school is usually looked upon as an extension of home life, where progress is shown in healthy growth of body, increase of physical control and power of sustained attention, development of social relationships, multiplying interests, and creative activity.

The kindergarten is a continuation of the work begun in the home and the nursery school and seeks further:

1. To train the child more readily to adapt himself to his environment.
2. To teach the child to realize that the privileges and rights he formerly had as an individual cease to be his alone, when he becomes a member of a group.
3. To teach the child to associate with those outside his family group.
4. To develop the power of self-control.

In discussing the functions of the kindergarten Herbert S. Weet, superintendent of schools of Rochester,[1] writes:

> For the large numbers of children who come from the homes of the foreign born, the kindergarten gives that elementary control of the English language which is so essential to the work of the primary grades. Through its games, nursery rhymes, simple stories, and the like, it gives to all a background of experience which lays the foundation for the more formal work of reading and numbers which follow later. Its activities in sense training and health studies make it serve as a clearing-house for the early detection and correction of those limitations which often have so pronounced a bearing upon the later school life of the child.

[1] *The Cost of Public School Education*, Board of Education, Rochester, New York, 1923. p. 9.

The elementary school is the great integrating force in the American program of education. It gives children the groundwork on which their subsequent education is based. Except in those schools which have departmental work, promotions depend upon the average in all subjects.

Briggs,[1] in discussing the purposes of the elementary school, writes:

In such an organization of education as exists, or as will exist, in the United States, the most important purposes of the elementary school are conceived to be: first, to furnish the common training necessary for all children "regardless of sex, social status, or future vocation"; and, second, by means of this common training, to integrate the future citizens of our democracy.

The former of these two purposes, though seldom explicitly stated, is increasingly influencing the program of elementary schools. Permitting variation in accord with local conditions or with mental endowment of individual children, it demands the searching out and inclusion in the unified courses of study of those facts, skills, and attitudes that are and will continue to be needed by each and every individual in a community. . . . In consequence we have during the past generation seen the exclusion from elementary courses of many details of arithmetic, grammar, history, and geography that are, or may be, of value only to those pupils who continue their education beyond the point to which all are expected to progress. Similarly we have seen the inclusion of new elements and even of new subjects that are believed to be essential to adequate living by each participant in our social, industrial, and political life.

The second of the major purposes of the elementary school, to integrate the future citizens of a democracy, has been from time to time presented by educational theorists; but until the discussions of national aspirations subsequent to and during the World War it has never received from course-makers the serious consideration that it deserves. Additional emphasis has been given to this function of the common school by the conflicts apparently growing at present between different social and economic classes, each having inadequate understanding sympathetically to comprehend the position and the contention of the others. It is argued that only if there exists a large body of common facts, resulting in common ideals and prejudices, may a democracy continue to be successful.

According to Superintendent Weet,[2] the four-fold purposes of the elementary school may be stated as follows,

To advance the child in his ability:

1. To read, write, and speak correctly the English language, and to know and use intelligently the elementary processes of arithmetic. By common consent these are the fundamentals without which neither the knowledge nor the training essential to the fullest enjoyment of life, to economic independence, and to satisfactory citizenship, can be secured.

2. To know and to observe the laws of physical health and well-being, and to appreciate the meaning of life and nature.

3. To know and to appreciate the geography and the history of his own community, state, and nation, and to some extent of the world at large; to sense his share in the social, civic, and industrial order of such a democracy as ours, and to meet to the full the obligations which such knowledge and appreciation should engender, to the end that justice, sympathy, and loyalty may characterize his personal and community life.

4. To share intelligently and appreciatively in the fine and the useful arts through the pursuit of music, drawing, and literature; of manual training and

[1] Briggs, Thomas H. *The Junior High School.* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920, pp. 20-22.

[2] *The Public School Program.* Reprints of a Series of Articles Describing the Program of Instruction Pursued in the Public Schools of Rochester, New York. Published in 1926 in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.* Democrat and Chronicle Reprints: No. 3, p. 1.

the household arts as they are related to the three great universal needs of food, clothing, and shelter.

In the effort to attain these objectives it is important that beginning with the nursery-kindergarten-primary unit, the subject-matter and activities of the curriculum be selected and organized with the idea of providing a *continuous* and *progressive* series of experiences adapted at every step to the maturity of the children and to their capacity to assimilate and react to them in highly profitable ways.

*The junior high school defined*—The junior high school is an expression of a changing conception of education. A new type of school has appeared with a new attitude and atmosphere for early adolescent education.

Less than two decades ago certain educators became convinced that the 8-4 form of organization was not as effective as it should be; and a few pioneer schools began experimenting with a new school unit which brought under one roof children of the early adolescent age and offered differentiated courses of study. This movement was welcomed so generally by the Department of Superintendence that it passed the following resolution at its Cincinnati meeting in February, 1914:

> We note with approval the increasing tendency to establish, beginning with the 7th grade, differentiated courses of study, more effectively preparing the child for his probable future activities. We believe that as a result of these modifications a more satisfactory type of instruction will be developed and that a genuine economy of time will result.

William L. Ettinger[1] summarized the chief criticisms directed against the traditional plan of school organization as follows:

1. The older 8-4 plan in relation to secondary and college education made the period of formal education entirely too long to meet present social conditions.
2. The seventh and eighth year grades, as ordinarily organized, were merely an intensified repetition of the work of the preceding years, rather than an appeal to new interests and more mature powers.
3. The work of the upper grades did not articulate with the work of the first year of the senior high school.
4. Pupils were taught and handled *en masse*.
5. The traditional activities and studies of the old type school did not recognize the budding and diversified interests of early adolescence, and as a result, the discipline, the mode of instruction, and even the theory of class administration failed to meet the mental, emotional, and vocational demands of the adolescent.

Since 1914 the junior high school movement has spread rapidly so that today there are approximately 879 so-called junior high schools in the United States. See Table 4 on pages 28-29 and the map on page 30.

Definitions of a junior high school represent a variety of viewpoints, some being in terms of grade-organization, as for instance seven-eight-nine; others being in terms of reorganized subject-matter; others in terms of provisions for different individual and social needs of pupils. A review

[1] Address delivered before the New York City Associate Superintendents, District Superintendents, Principals of Junior High Schools, and Principals of Senior High Schools, October 10, 1923

of current literature shows that the junior high school as an educational institution comprises many different educational policies and a variety of grade combinations.

The following represents a composite statement. It is set up as a preliminary definition of what the term "junior high school" signifies.

The junior high school is that portion of the public school system above the sixth elementary grade, including usually the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, and admitting and making provision for all pupils who are in any respect so mature that they can profit more from the junior high school environment than they would from continuing in the elementary school. It is essentially an exploratory, try-out, and information school. It is neither a sub-secondary school nor a vocational or trade school. The junior high school is distinguished by these characteristics:

1. A separate building in which to house the seventh, eighth and ninth grades, or at least two of these grades.[1]
2. A separate staff of teachers.
3. The recognition of individual differences in capacities, tastes, and purposes in the organization and conduct of class work.
4. A program of studies differing from the course of study to be found in the like numbered grades of the traditional school in America.
5. A partial or complete departmental organization of subject-matter and teaching.
6. The organization of a limited number of curricula, each containing groups of constant and variable courses.
7. A definite and effective plan of pupil guidance.
8. Certain elective studies to be chosen by pupils under guidance.
9. Promotion by subject.
10. Organization and administration of student activities in accordance with the needs and interests of adolescent pupils.

*The special functions of the junior high school*—If the junior high school is worthy of being maintained as a separate unit in the American public school program, distinct from the elementary and the senior high schools, it must have distinct purposes and definite functions, difficult of realization in the plan of eight elementary and four high school years.

What are the purposes of the junior high school? What is it supposed to do that is different from the work accomplished by the elementary school or the senior high school? To answer these questions a canvass was made for statements, printed since 1920, which set forth the "objectives," "aims," "purposes," "advantages," "values," and "arguments for" the junior high school. These were in most instances readily interpreted in terms of "special functions." Statements relative to the special functions of the junior high school by twenty college men and fifty-nine public school administrators, superintendents of schools, supervisors, and junior high school principals were compiled from a wide variety of sources, such as, textbooks, courses of study, superintendents' annual reports, magazine articles, and bulletins. In some instances the writers' statements as to

[1] It should be noted also that many school administrators recommend the six-year junior-senior high school organization for the smaller school systems.

the functions of the junior high school were much longer than others. In every instance, in the final compilation, the most complete statement available from each writer was used. These statements include, in most cases, only the special or major functions of the junior high school—the functions that are peculiar to the junior high school as opposed to the elementary school or the senior high school. This probably accounts for the fact that so few mentioned as a function of the junior high school the continuation of common education or regular scholastic or academic training.

The following statements are illustrative:

*William McAndrew, Superintendent of Schools, Chicago, Illinois.*

The seventh and eighth grades of a traditional system are too thin in content. To make those grades richer in content costs more for equipment, library, apparatus, etc., than is justifiable in so many elementary schools as the ordinary community has. There are enough common characteristics of children ordinarily in seventh, eighth, and ninth years to warrant grouping them in one organization. The individual differences of abilities in children of these grades warrants grouping them in accordance with their abilities; but unless you have these children in larger numbers than is the case in separate elementary schools your segregated groups would be too small to warrant your providing separate teachers to the different groups. But the proper aims for the entire public school service, namely, a supply of citizens disposed to better the civic, social, political life of the community, is essentially the function of the junior high school, as of all schools. Its exercises and methods differ from other parts of the public school system chiefly as affected by the ages of its pupils and the equipment of its buildings. It looks to different futures for different children, testing their aptitudes and advising them as to various kinds of service, industrial, professional, etc.—*Statement made at meeting of the Commission on the Curriculum, September* 24, 1926.

*Charles H. Judd, Director, School of Education, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.*

The junior high school presupposes the completion of an elementary course in which the fundamental subjects have been sufficiently mastered so that they are freely usable by the pupils. During the elementary period these courses are taken in uniform fashion by all the members of all the grades, with due regard to their individual differences.

In the beginning of the junior high school we ought to look for the type of personal and social independence that grows out of the elementary program.

The junior high school is the beginning of a new type of education in which more individual responsibility will be assumed by the pupils. This means that a certain amount of repair work or completion work will be necessary. It is frequently true that the fundamentals have not been sufficiently mastered so that they can be used with entire freedom. There ought to be some recognition of that fact and provision made for finishing the work that has not been completed in the elementary school.

Beyond this point there seems to be a new horizon. We would do well to think of the future. I hope the day will come when the fundamental core of the junior high school will be the social studies. We are faced with the problem of collecting a type of material which has not been present in our school curriculum up to this time—material which shows how man lives in his world and how the world is organized. This seems to indicate that the building of the junior high

school curriculum is not a problem of thrashing over familiar material, but putting into shape a large body of new material.

There are some junior high school pupils who know that they are going into the professions. Hence at this juncture there must be some differentiation. The only group that would begin to specialize in the junior high school would be the professional group, in that they would begin those subjects that are necessary for matriculation in the professional school. The pupils who are planning to go into business and industry would not begin those forms of individual skill, but would get the general intellectual background of industry rather than the actual skills. The junior high school is not a vocational school.

In the junior high school, the laboratory-library method of procedure should be emphasized. The methods ought to be those that assume individual responsibility on the part of the pupil.—*Statement made at meeting of the Commission on the Curriculum, September* 24, 1926.

*M. C. Lefler, Superintendent of Schools, Lincoln, Nebraska.*

The junior high school is the outgrowth of attempts to organize a unit of the school which is specially adapted to the needs of adolescent pupils.

By gathering together all 7th, 8th, and 9th grade pupils within a radius of 20 blocks, it is possible to organize a school which has many advantages for pupils of this age over the small 7th and 8th grade "departmental" units of the elementary school as formerly organized. Among these advantages are:

1. The junior school gives better opportunity to adjust the work and classification to varied degrees and types of ability.
2. It makes it possible to offer work needed by pupils with specialized types of ability.
3. It gives a better opportunity to guide and develop the social instincts.
4. It makes it possible in greater degree to explore pupils' interests, aptitudes, and abilities, and in the light of the knowledge gained to give wiser educational guidance.

Where the junior high school offers a somewhat larger variety of courses than the departmental grades of the elementary school, it is not so much in the variety of courses as in the adaptation of the required work to varying needs, the wise guidance of pupils in their choice of electives and the fostering of wholesome and character building extra-classroom activities that the junior high is making its contributions.—*Report No.* 4 *of the Superintendent of Schools, Lincoln, Nebraska,* April, 1925, p. 7.

*W. J. Cooper, Superintendent of Schools, San Diego, California.*

A junior high school will minister to normal pupils of all sorts from the onset of pubescence until they have been adjusted to work in a higher school or are ready to leave school for wage-earning. It will help each pupil discover his own capacities, limitations, interests, and aptitudes. It will provide adequate guidance, develop proper study habits, and offer preliminary training for all who are capable of entering higher schools and financially able to go on. It will retain to the compulsory school attendance age those who must soon enter wage-earning groups, provide exploratory courses to discover their aptitudes and interests and train them, so far as possible, to be most productive in the economic life of the community. It will provide rather elementary work in English for recent immigrants, and review courses for such students as need more work in fundamental tool subjects. It will provide a curriculum of studies and activities designed (a) to develop in each pupil a high sense of values that he may work out for himself, "a philosophy of life;" (b) to train each pupil in proper care of his personal health and an insistence upon high standards of public sanitation; (c) to make