

Kingston Township School Board Is Only One In Area That Has Asked For An Evaluation

School Board's Attempt To Improve Standards Started With 1944 Survey

No. 2 in a series of articles on schools

Kingston Township Schools, including both Elementary Schools, the Junior High and the Senior High School, are fully recognized, fully accredited, standard schools, operating under the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, under the guidance of the Office of County Superintendent of Schools for Luzerne County, and managed and directed by a duly elected Board of School Directors whose specific duties, responsibilities and powers are fully set forth in the School Code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Because of the great amount of misinformation which has appeared in one of the Wilkes-Barre newspapers in recent months regarding the status of Kingston Township schools the Post feels called upon to give the facts regarding the status of Kingston Township schools and to give a comprehensive report on the progress that has been made in improving these schools. This information should be of value and interest to students, and to parents, who are interested in their education welfare. It should also be of considerable interest to the other taxpayers of the Township, who pay about one-half of the total cost of operating and maintaining these schools. The other half of the money necessary to pay the cost comes from State Appropriations, which are based on teachers' salaries and operation cost of transportation for those students who travel by school busses.

Comparison of schools, one with another, is a difficult task; they may vary in size, type, wealth

available for operating them, and objectives. In a community that is primarily industrial, or agricultural the emphasis might be placed on Vocational Education, while another community might feel that preparation for college is of primary importance.

The Board of Education has consistently tried to bring to Kingston Township the type of schools and the quality of schools that its members feel are desired by the community, and in an honest effort to accomplish this have had these schools evaluated by Educational leaders from outside the district.

In 1944 the Board of Education employed three outstanding educators from the University of Pennsylvania to make a survey of the two grade schools and the high school, and to report on the standing of Kingston Township schools, when compared with AVERAGE schools throughout the country. The report of this survey, a copy of which is available in the office of the high school, showed that Kingston Township schools, at that time were considerably below the average school. This was true of both the Elementary and the High School. The report of the survey included many criticisms and numerous recommendations, which, if carried through, would enable these schools to compare favorably with average schools of the country. This report was carried in the Dallas Post.

In 1948, four years after this initial survey, the Board of Education authorized membership in the Middle States Association of Sec-

ondary Schools and Colleges, and requested an Evaluation to be made of the High School by a committee from that Association. This committee, comprising nine educators representing the numerous phases of High School education, from Accredited Schools of the Middle States Association, visited Kingston Township and spent three days in an intensive survey to determine the status of the high school when compared with other accredited schools of the association.

Relatively few schools in Pennsylvania are members of the Middle States Association. Kingston Township school is the only high school in the Back Mountain Area to hold such a membership. Such membership does not imply any particular outstanding quality, but it does indicate that those responsible for the management and direction of the school are interested in having comparisons on a high standard, and are striving to bring about the improvements necessary to have these schools fully accredited by this organization, which is recognized as representing THE BEST in Secondary and College Education.

There are only SEVEN high schools in all of Luzerne County that have met the high standards of the Middle States Association and are accredited by that Association. These schools are: the three Wilkes-Barre Schools, G.A.R., Meyers, and Coughlin; Forty-Fort High School; Kingston Borough High School; Hazleton City High School, and Newport Township High School.

The Evaluating Report of the Committee which made the Survey of Kingston Township High School in February, 1948, for the Middle States Association contains many criticisms, numerous recommendations for improvement, and a set of comprehensive Charts which show at a glance the Status of the school when compared with other schools of the country, and when compared with Accredited Schools of the Association. This complete report is available to any student of Kingston Township High School, any interested parent or taxpayer of the Township, in the High School Office.

The following tabulation, compiled from information on the Chart showing the Summary of Evaluative Criteria in this Report indicates Kingston Township's standing in various areas compared with Accredited Schools of the Association. This chart shows where they are above the average of accredited schools—in staff, plant and instruction. It also shows that they are considerably below the accredited schools in six important areas of educational effort—curriculum, pupil activities, library, guidance, outcomes and administration.

Table Based On Chart Summary of Evaluative Criteria—Kingston Township High School

Subject	Accredited School (*)	KTHS (*)
Curriculum	52	35
Pupil Activities	52	16
Library	52	22
Guidance	52	18
Instruction	53	63
Outcomes	52	39
Staff	52	56
Plant	52	59
Administration	52	36

(*) Numerical scale based on "Thermometers" ranging from Zero to 100 per cent.

Obviously, to obtain the Accredited rating from the Middle States Association it will be necessary for the school to make considerable progress in improving its status in the six areas in which the above tabulation shows it is below the standing of the Accredited Schools of the Association. The recommendations of the Evaluating Committee have been, and are being, given serious consideration; many of them have already been complied with, much progress has been made toward achieving the score the school board is aiming at, but considerable progress needs to be made in areas which are beyond the scope of School Directors duties, responsibilities or powers.

Some of the improvements which have been made in an effort to improve the school and to bring it into line with the high standards of the Middle States Association are quite obvious and apparent, even to a casual visitor to the school. Many of them may not be quite so obvious, but they are just as real.

A few of the more recent improvements are listed here to show how the School Board has been complying with some of these recommendations:

A SCHOOL CAFETERIA was recommended by this Committee; while the idea of a cafeteria was not new to this Board, an all-out effort was made this past year, and a modern, well equipped school cafeteria, designed to serve at minimum cost, is now in operation. While the cafeteria construction and equipment cost several thousand dollars, student lunches are costing less than one-half of their actual cost because of participation in the Federal School lunch program, through which are received large quantities of surplus food-stuffs, in addition to a direct subsidy on each pupil's lunch served.

The Committee criticized the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, as it was conducted in 1948; this has been remedied by employing a fully certified and highly competent Physical Education Instructor and through the purchase of much needed gymnasium and physical education equipment, including a Vaulting Horse, Parallel Bars, Gym Mats, and thousands of dollars worth of Athletic Equipment. The Board has been looking for a woman Physical Education Instructor to conduct the girls' classes, and will employ one as soon as possible.

THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT has been greatly improved in its new location in the building, and through the purchase of several pieces of new equipment. Ad-

ditional pieces of modern office equipment will be purchased as the need for it arises and the funds to pay for it are available.

THE HOME ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT has been completely modernized, with new Napanea kitchen cupboards, sinks and counters; modern electric kitchen ranges have been installed on the school purchase plan through which the newest models of these will replace the older models each year, so that girls taking Home Economics will be thoroughly familiar with the latest and best in kitchen equipment throughout their course in this Department. The Home Economics Instructor is fully qualified in her work, and is considered to be one of the best in this area.

A NEW MUSIC ROOM, including storage space for all of the band instruments, was provided in the building; new band uniforms were purchased to supplement older uniforms; new instruments were purchased, and every opportunity for music instruction is now available in the school, under the direction of a fully certified and highly competent Music Director.

THE LIBRARY came in for considerable criticism from the Committee; to correct this the Board employed Miss Morris throughout the summer months to carry out a program of correcting some of the faults in the Library. Miss Morris was then given Sabbatical Leave to enable her to attend Syracuse University to complete her Certification as a Librarian. She will return this fall fully prepared to complete the necessary alterations in the Library. Much of the criticism regarding the Library, however, falls on the students and their lack of use of the library, and on the teachers for their failure to require its use in the preparation of students' studies.

THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS SHOP is now one of the best equipped, and most modern shops of its type in this Back Mountain area. It is not a Vocational School Shop in any sense of the word, but it is a well rounded Industrial Arts Shop, with good equipment, and with a highly competent properly certified instructor.

OTHER ITEMS The district was commended on the outside appearance of the High School Building, its location and ample grounds. The Board was severely criticized for the dark, dingy, appearance of the interior of classrooms and corridors. To correct this condition the Board of School Directors started an intensive program of interior decoration this past summer in which many of the rooms in the building were painted. In this program all of the rooms in the two grade schools have been completely redecorated. In this program it is expected that all of the rooms in the High School Building, and all of the corridors will be completely redecorated during the next few years.

Much new instructional material has been purchased for classroom and laboratory use; new text-books by the best authors are purchased by the school board, and every effort is being made to improve the standards of education in the high school. Every other recommendation made by the Evaluating Committee has been, and is being, given the serious consideration of the School Board. These Recommendations will be adopted and carried out as rapidly as it is physically and financially possible to comply with them.

It is the single minded purpose of the School Board to make Kingston Township Schools the best in this area; to eventually have them take their rightful place in the ranks of those few schools that are now Accredited by the Middle States Association, and to so equip them that every educational requirement can be fully met with-

in the limits of a good Secondary School operating under the Laws and Regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

All of these Recommendations have been followed out, improvements made, cafeteria equipped, shop improved, painting done, etc., during a time of exceptionally high costs for labor, material and equipment, involving thousands of dollars in cost, without the School Board adding one mill to the burden of the home owner and taxpayer. Tax millage on property in Kingston Township has been for years, and still is 35 mills. This rate has not been increased despite the terrific increase in cost of every item that goes into the operation and maintenance of a school.

Much that goes into an Evaluation Report of a school depends on the students, teachers, principals, parents and community. The report given here is based primarily on what the School Board has done, and is doing, to improve the schools. What are YOU doing to help?

The Post will publish your contribution—asking only that you state facts, not opinions, and that your letter is on the same high plane as the two previous articles which have appeared here on Kingston Township School.—Editor

Edward L. Reese Funeral Today

Edward L. Reese, 77, father of Mrs. Sheldon T. Evans, of Shavertown, and a brother of Mrs. Mary Jane Simons, also of Shavertown, died suddenly Tuesday morning at his home 126 Storm Hill, Wilkes-Barre following a heart attack.

Funeral services will be conducted this afternoon from the late home with Rev. E. M. Greenfield of Abbott Memorial Church officiating.

Mr. Reese was a life member of Abbott Church and was a life-long resident of the Storm Hill section. Two years ago he retired after 68 years' service with Hudson Coal Company at Pine Ridge Colliery where he started as a slate picker at the age of seven.

Had he lived until May 20, he and his wife, the former Lena Ahouse of Nanticoke, would have observed their 54th wedding anniversary. Surviving in addition to his wife are these children: William, Clemens, Elmer, Mrs. Fred Lancaster and Mrs. Edith Hunt of Wilkes-Barre; John, Plymouth; Mrs. Frank Evans, Frackville; Mrs. Sheldon T. Evans, Shavertown.

United Sportsmen Meet At Herman Kern's Inn

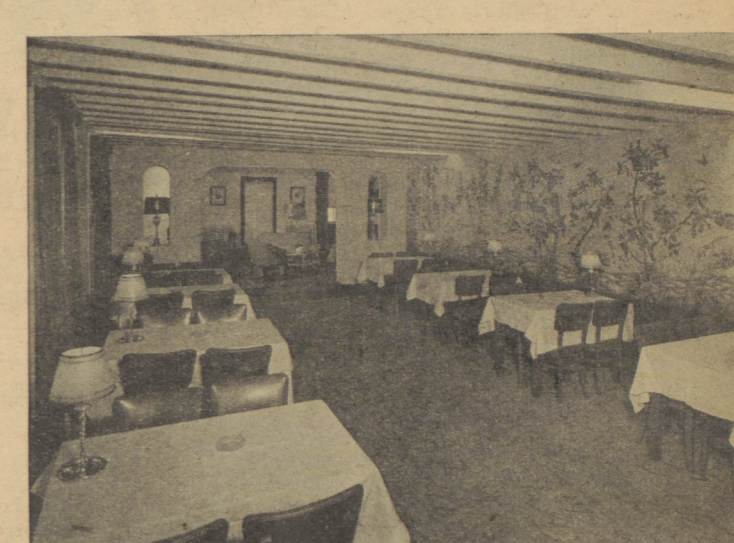
About sixty members of the Harveys Lake United Sportsmen Association met at their home, Veterans Memorial Drive, Tuesday evening, February 8 at 8:30 p.m. Important business will be taken up and veterans will be asked to sign up for the Red Cross Blood Bank. Refreshments will be served.

Plans were made to chance off two fly rods. Announcement was made of a fox hunt to be held at Alberts Corners in February.

Veterans To Meet

Kingston Township Veterans Association will meet at their home, Veterans Memorial Drive, Tuesday evening, February 8 at 8:30 p.m. Important business will be taken up and veterans will be asked to sign up for the Red Cross Blood Bank. Refreshments will be served.

Any one unable to call at the veteran's home for blood cards, should contact George Turn and they will be delivered.



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