

- 1. Does the local community have a responsibility to require the school system to develop each child's potential?

Yes.

- 2. If so, how?

The community must be well-informed and exercise their vote. It must know the needs and goals of the school district both educationally and financially. It must support these goals. There needs to be a massive information program, which might be done through parents, group organizations such as block clubs, and individual efforts.

- 3. Would a Junior College benefit the Decatur community?

Yes.

- 4. If so, in what ways?

Provides college education, technical education for those unable or unwilling to leave the community.
 State universities are restricting enrollment of freshman and sophomore students.
 Since Decatur school district property tax is paying to reimburse other districts for Decatur students, it would be well to spend that tax money locally.
 Making available education needed for employment or for upgrading employment.
 Keeping these trained people in the community.
 Provides training in areas specifically needed by this community.
 Full and part-time education in day and night school.
 Provides counseling and guidance.

The League will work with the committee of Citizens Supporting Maconland Junior College to disseminate information on the need for and benefits from a local junior college.

Send concise summary of report on Jr Coll support to members before vote on Jr Coll ref.

Also concise report about schools - ?

League Backs Junior College

By Mary Ann O'Connell

Members of the Decatur League of Women Voters decided today to support the establishment of a junior college in Decatur.

Putting their decision into action, league members will work with the committee of Citizens Supporting Maconland Junior College and will disseminate information on the need for and benefits from a local junior college.

The consensus decision to support the establishment of a junior college was made following a report on junior colleges made by the league's education committee.

That report and one on educational opportunities offered students attending Decatur's public schools were given at a league meeting today.

Those reports will be repeated at a 7:30 p.m. meeting Wednesday in the home of Mrs. Russell Oplinger of 152 Cobb Ave.

Benefits that the league's education committee see coming from a local junior college include:

—Providing post high school educational opportunity to persons unable to afford private colleges or commuting to another junior college

—Making technical, semi-technical and general education available to those needing it for employment or for upgrading employment

—Stopping the drain of persons who stay in other communities where they receive their technical training.

The league report said that last year Decatur paid \$174,000 in tax costs to other junior college districts where 319 Decatur students attend junior college.

League members decided to work with the Citizens Supporting Maconland Junior College, which is campaigning for an affirmative vote on a

referendum to establish a junior college here.

The second portion of the league's meeting today concerned educational opportunities for children in Decatur schools, especially in relation to preventing school dropouts.

Mrs. Robert Ohlsen of 111 Westdale Ave., education committee chairman, said that the committee's report was a spin-off from its work last spring in comparing the Decatur school district with others in the state.

At that time the committee found that Decatur in 1968 had a 21.6 per cent dropout rate of students from its schools.

"We've found that the needs of the dropout can not easily be separated from the needs of all students," Mrs. Ohlsen said.

While the league's report focused on the causes and ramifications of the dropout student, it also took into account the quality of education for all children. One of its conclusions was that the local community has a responsibility to require the school system to develop each child's potential.

That league members said could be done by having a well informed electorate.

League members said that there needs to be a massive community information program to make people aware of the problems and their part in the solutions.

Two Charged In Stabbing

Two Decatur youths have been charged with attempted murder and aggravated battery in the stabbing Sunday night of a former Decatur man in his Champaign apartment.

They are Richard A. Stone, 20, of 1212 N. Edward St., and John Eddie Williams, 17, of 2854 N. Fairview Ave.

JUNIOR COLLEGE

Discussion points:

Could public schools use counseling services? If found it is needed, Jr. Coll. could set up program.

There is no definite time set for the state to require membership in a Jr. Coll. area.

If we join another Jr. Coll. area, there would be no limit on taxes paid to that area.

Consensus Questions:

1. Would a Junior College benefit the Decatur Community?

Yes. with no objectors

2. If so, in what ways?

1. Dropouts realizing need of education could return and continue education if qualified.
2. Provides college education for those wanting to go, who can't afford to live away from home, or whose parents find it necessary for them to be at home.
3. Higher education could help prepare people find gainful employment, therefore reducing the relief roles.
4. The state pays 75% of the building costs of a Junior College. The public schools must pay their complete cost.
5. Saves the cost of educating our students in other Jr. Coll. areas, as this cost must be born by the local school district.

Making available tech. ed, especially in areas needed by community

LOCAL SCHOOLS

Discussion points:

Where schools have special programs to hold student interest, dropout rate declines.
Independent Study at Leveview are only for interested or top students. Most are not potential dropouts.
Many college bound students may be motivated by Vocational Training adding to the percentage of Voc. Ed. students furthering their education.
Physically and Mentally Handicapped students are educated very well. The problem comes in finding a job after their education and training.

Consensus Questions:

1. Does the local community have a responsibility to require the school system to develop each child's potential?

Yes. with no objectors.

2. If so, How?

1. The community must be well-informed about school problems. *in order to vote well,*
2. We must know the needs of the schools and students both educationally and financially.
3. Parents can help by donating their time and talent to help out the schools.
4. Group organizations such as Block Clubs can be beneficial in informing of and solving school problems by open discussion.
5. Information can be spread on individual basis such as neighbor to neighbor, etc.

Support district goals.

LOCAL SCHOOLS CONSENSUS

League's national program for Human Resources calls for equality of opportunity in education. One intent includes the idea that the schools develop an environment in which each young person can acquire the knowledge and skills with which to develop his individual potential. Besides the integration aspect, our concern must be the quality of the program offered in every school to every child.

The Illinois League position on schools states that basic changes should be made in structure and financing of schools. Included is the belief that special considerations are needed to solve special problems, such as inner-city schools and large numbers of disadvantaged children.

Do Decatur schools meet this goal of educational opportunity for all? Or are there too many undereducated? The holding power of a school system is one measure of its success. That is, what is its drop-out rate, or percent of students quitting before high school graduation?

This rate can be computed by taking the number of students entering ninth grade (100%) who leave with no record of transfer, as compared to the number in the group at the end of the twelfth grade. Decatur's drop-out rate is now 21%. In 1962 it was 21%. Comparing Decatur with the national rate is difficult because of the lack of similar figures, but comparing the number of high school graduates nationally with the total population aged seventeen gives a rate of 23% leaving school.

The school committee presentation November 10 and 11 will focus on the causes and ramifications of drop-outs, as well as possible solutions to the problem. But keep in mind that the larger concern is with quality education for all children; how well they are being equipped for life. Are they being educated to be able to make their own intelligent choices, and to handle change as it occurs?

Please prepare for the presentation and discussion questions by doing background reading. Resource material includes national and state League position on schools, the Illinois League publication "The Schools"; National League's School Desegregation, North and South; Decatur League fact sheets School Integration, 1969; Comparison Study of Several Illinois School Districts, 1969-70, and Effects of Elementary redistricting Plans, 1970.

Also to be presented is a short study on the Junior College issue. Junior Colleges are commuter colleges. They are to provide technical and vocational courses leading directly to employment as well as the first two years of higher education leading to a bachelor's degree. Junior Colleges are also directed to "develop and experiment with programs designed to aid the under-educated student of post high school age." Many promoters feel it is the best way to provide higher education for the most students at the least expense to student and taxpayers.

Discussion questions:

1. Does the local community have a responsibility to require the school system to develop each child's potential?
2. If so, how?
3. Would a Junior College benefit the Decatur community?
4. If so, in what ways?

Need alternatives

Spec Ed Cur as Ex.

*Public - must be well-informed electorate
know needs, goals of district, backed & financial
communicate in spirit of mutual respect
& good faith*

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League positions re: school integration

National program 1968-1970---under Human Resources---"Work will continue in areas covered by the League's 1966 position, e.g., for school integration, compensatory education....." --see National Voter, May-June '68

Decatur League local statement--see Decatur Voter, Dec. 1967

Quotes ~~assess~~ statement to Decatur Board of Education voted at Nov. LWV Board meeting--

"The League of Women Voters of Decatur supports the Board of Educations' commitment to the philosophy of racial and socio-economic integration of the public schools. All Leagues of the United States have been actively concerned with equality of opportunity for education.

We applaud the Board of Education's action in this direction and look forward to the implementation of a plan for integration of the Decatur School District."

See April, 1968 Illinois Voter for Chicago League testimony on school busing.

See Jan-Feb 1967 Illinois Voter re: Evanston League action in school integration

Statement of Human Resources position as announced and revised by the National Board, Jan. 10, 1969

Members of the LWV of US believe the federal government shares with other levels of government responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons in the US. Employment opportunities in modern, technological societies are closely related to education; therefore, the League supports federal programs to increase the education and training of disadvantaged people. The League also supports federal efforts to prevent and/or remove discrimination in education and employment and housing and to help communities bring about racial integration of their school systems.

Local consensus 1970

Emphasis on local community responsibility to require the school system to develop each chil's potential.