

Byron J. McMahon

Minutes
STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
April 22, 1954

A regular meeting of the State Advisory Committee on Agricultural Education in California was held April 22, 1954, in Conference Room 400 of the State Education Building, 721 Capitol Avenue, Sacramento.

Committee members present were:

Robert Couchman, San Jose
George Ende, Lodi
A. J. Thille, Santa Paula
Waldo Weeth, Coalinga
Eugene Boone, Modesto

Those absent were:

Carl Avrit, Chico
Joe Russ, Ferndale
Harvey McDougal, Collinsville
Keith Mets, Holtville

Other present were Byron J. McMahon, Chief, Bureau of Agricultural Education; E. W. Everett, Assistant State Supervisor; George P. Couper, Special Supervisor; Howard F. Chappell, Regional Supervisor; J. Everett Walker, Regional Supervisor. Mr. McMahon introduced Mr. Eugene Boone as the new member of the Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of E. J. Peters.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Weeth at 9:30 A.M. The Minutes of the meeting of October 21, 1953, were read and approved.

Mr. McMahon informed the Committee that the one-year terms of Messrs. Weeth, Couchman, and McDougal, had now expired and stated he was requesting that all three accept reappointment. Mr. Thille then took the chair, a motion being made by Mr. Ende, seconded by Mr. Boone, that the Committee endorse the reappointment of the three men for a three-year term. The motion was duly passed.

Mr. McMahon then discussed the decision of the Committee at a previous meeting that formation of local advisory committees to departments of vocational agriculture in high schools would serve a worthwhile purpose. He said no pro-

motional effort had been made to bring about the appointment of these committees, but said a number were now in the process of formation.

Mr. Everett stated that both Mr. McMahon and the regional supervisors had sent out letters to each of the 225 administrators operating vocational agriculture departments in the State, and that reports had been received on the active advisory committees now functioning, as well as those being formed. He said 34 such committees are now active, and 27 are in the process of formation. He added that no objection to such committees had been encountered and that 61 schools are now considering setting up such committees.

Mr. Walker said that more progress had been made toward forming advisory committees than is realized and that he considered it preferable to move slowly and more soundly. He expected six advisory committees to be formed in his region next fall. He mentioned that at some schools, whose Boards are made up predominantly of farmers, administrators feel that advisory committees are not needed.

Mr. Chappell said his experience was similar to that of Mr. Walker, that while progress was not rapid, it was "all right". He said he now had appointments to discuss formation of advisory committees with the administrators and agriculture teachers of six high schools in his region.

Mr. Thille remarked about the popularity of vocational agriculture among students and pointed to the need for good student counseling so that some students intending to go on to college do not find, in their senior year, they have failed to meet college entrance requirements.

Mr. Everett reported that S. S. Sutherland, Teacher Trainer at the University of California, Davis, is preparing a pamphlet for high school administrators and counselors suggesting to them that students intending to take vocational agriculture be advised that they can arrange their courses of study so as to complete college entrance requirements and take vocational agriculture at the same time.

Mr. Boone said he had discussed this problem with Farm Bureau groups and that at least one family prominent in agriculture in the Modesto district was opposed to their youngest son taking vocational agriculture because of the difficulties encountered by an older son in preparing for college entrance. He described the counseling done by the Modesto High School among eighth grade boys of the elementary schools tributary to it. He spoke of the organization of the advisory committee to the Modesto Junior College, of which he is a member, and said he thought it would render important community service.

Mr. Weeth commented upon the experience of high school students going on to college, saying he had heard that students coming from smaller high schools tend "to get lost" in the larger colleges. He suggested that some data be gathered on the experience of vo-ag students going on to college. He mentioned, also, that of the students in the College of Agriculture at Davis, 54 per cent have had no farm background.

Mr. Couper said he felt the trend toward enrollment in vocational agriculture by urban students was significant. He added that only about 10 per cent of those taking vocational agriculture continue on in college. He felt that the fact that schooling in vocational agriculture is terminal for such a large proportion of students must be kept in mind, but that it should not prevent those students taking vocational agriculture and intending to go on to college from taking care of college entrance requirements.

The Committee then resumed its discussion of the evaluation of local Agricultural Departments, carried on at the October 21 meeting. After brief introductory remarks by Mr. McMahon, Mr. Everett presented for Committee consideration a proposed "quick method" of evaluation. He said that whereas the goal is to make an objective evaluation, such a method unavoidably becomes subjective. He thought that all phases of a program could not be measured objectively. He

presented and discussed the form used in the reimbursement procedure, the second proposed form presented at the Lodi meeting and considered to be too complicated, and a third form that had been prepared for the Committee's consideration.

A general discussion of the proposed evaluation form then ensued. Mr. Weeth thought there should be a provision by which the agriculture teacher would, himself, evaluate his program. Mr. Walker felt there should be some measure or indication of the suitability of the individual agriculture instructor to a community.

Messrs. Everett, Chappell, and Walker discussed the results of evaluating the agriculture departments of 21 high schools selected as representative. Some modifications of the various bases of rating were discussed and a question was raised as to whether adult or young farmer programs should be included in such a rating procedure.

It was then moved by Mr. Couchman, seconded by Mr. Thille, and passed that the Committee recommend to the Bureau of Agricultural Education that the proposed Vo-Ag Department Rating form be used on a trial basis and that the results of such a trial be reported to the Advisory Committee for further consideration.

Mr. Walker requested guidance from the Committee on a follow-up of Vo-Ag graduates.

Each Committee member then presented a brief discussion on aspects of agriculture he felt warranted consideration in connection with the general program in vocational agricultural education in his special field. Mr. Couchman felt that some means should be found to awaken greater interest among Vo-Ag students in horticultural projects. Mr. Boone discussed the increasing importance of mechanical skills in farming and was of the opinion that mechanical training is understressed.

Mr. Emde, taking note of Mr. Couper's earlier remark about the large percentage of Vo-Ag graduates terminating their schooling, thought that students should be encouraged to take greater interest in participating in community activities. Mr. Thille discussed the possibility of increasing student interest in horticultural projects through nursery and plant breeding projects. Mr. Emde then described the set-up at Lodi High School for training in horticulture. Mr. Weeth discussed the importance of training in the elements of farm management and good business principles. He presented each Committee member with a list of his "Ten Commandments of Business Ethics" by which he has guided his business activities for 30 years.

Mr. McMahon then presented for the Committee's consideration the matter of reimbursing schools having departments of vocational agriculture under the Smith-Hughes and George-Barden appropriations. Passage of Proposition No. 2, with increase in A.D.A. reimbursement to schools, has raised the question as to whether another basis should be sought for distributing the George-Barden funds to schools, he said, explaining that no increase in these funds is anticipated. Originally, he explained, the purpose of these funds was to encourage schools to establish departments of vocational agriculture, but that as other costs have risen, the amounts available for reimbursement from these funds have become less significant.

Mr. Everett then outlined in detail the present reimbursement procedure under which some \$265,000 is allocated to 225 high schools. The basis is the payment of \$900 for the first teaching unit, \$600 for the second full-time teaching unit, and \$300 for the third full-time teaching unit. If funds are available, \$200 additional has been paid if the school's program is considered of exceptional quality.

To provide a more justifiable basis of compensation, Mr. Everett explained that it has been proposed that it be as follows:

1. For summer service, 12/10 of regular salary	\$ 800
2. To compensate partly for travel	500
3. To compensate partly for smaller teacher load	1200
	<u>\$ 2500</u>

On this basis, he explained, federal funds would not be adequate to reimburse all schools. He felt that this would provide a more logical justification for use of these funds, even though it would be necessary to prorate them.

Mr. McMahon said that Congress has been studying all federal aid programs and there has been considerable sentiment for elimination of them. He said that should this occur, consideration should be given to the possibility of seeking increased state aid or use of county service funds for encouraging vocational training.

Mr. Boone then moved, Mr. Thille seconding, that the Bureau submit the proposed new schedule for reimbursement at the next meeting of administrators for their reaction and that this be reported back to the Committee. The motion was duly passed.

Mr. Emde moved, Mr. Thille seconding the motion, and the Committee approving, that the next meeting be held in San Jose on October 22. Mr. Everett suggested that special consideration be given to training in agricultural mechanics.

The annual election of Committee officers was then called for. On motion of Mr. Thille, seconded by Mr. Emde, and vote of the Committee, the incumbent officers were retained in office, namely,

Mr. Weeth, Chairman
Mr. McDougal, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Couchman, Secretary.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

(signed) Robert Couchman

Robert Couchman
Secretary