

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SUMMER SCHOOLS  
A CASE FOR  
THE VOLUNTARY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

AN ABSTRACT OF  
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Voluntary public elementary summer schools are being established in communities throughout the United States. This thesis traces the historical growth and development of the public elementary summer school movement from its start in 1866 to the present. In particular, it is concerned with the voluntary attendance aspect of these schools.

Evidence was sought which would point to a recent increased interest in elementary summer schooling. Further, it was thought that this study might uncover an identifiable submovement of voluntary enrichment programs. Through this study it was felt that the causal factors of this movement would become apparent.

A library study was undertaken in order to find the answers to the questions posed. The few scattered references were located which offer data on summer programs prior to World War II. Since then, the great majority of references are in periodicals. As these were lacking in breadth and scope, all fifty State Departments of Education were contacted for recent statistical information. Thirty one states responded with a plethora of data covering all aspects of summer schooling. This material is on file at the Danbury State College Library, Danbury, Connecticut.

This thesis has established several conclusions. An

increase of the incidence of public elementary summer schools was definitely in evidence in the United States. The overwhelming majority of these programs are being populated on a voluntary basis. Programs of the enrichment variety are most popular. These include social and recreational as well as academic and creative enrichment programs. Remedial classes are now a small part of the whole summer program. Significant impetus for the continued propagation of elementary summer schools is coming from federal government programs. Voluntary summer schools are an acceptable and desirable alternative to the all year school.

There is every indication that voluntary enrichment elementary summer schools are being established as an educational pattern and will continue to grow in use and usefulness.