

BY THE BOOTSTRAPS

How North Carolina Pioneers In Education

(The National Observer)
Winston-Salem, N. C.

North Carolina ranks 48th of the 50 states in the percentage of adults who are high school graduates. It ranks fifth from the bottom in the percentage of men rejected by the Armed Forces for illiteracy. And it ranks about 40th in governmental support for education.

At this moment North Carolina is engaged in a program to upgrade its education. It makes it perhaps the most exciting state educationally in the nation. What North Carolina is doing could lead the way for other states with similar resources but less initiative.

Georgia has copied, for detail, one of the first and most promising North Carolina innovations — the summer school for gifted and talented youngsters. Two weeks ago an Oregon schoolman visited Governor Sanford's School, then in a room on the old-brick, colonial-style of Salem College here. Representatives from New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maryland have come to observe, and representatives from other states arrive daily.

Other Projects
The Governor's School, in its second year and thriving on only part of the North Carolina story. Consider these projects.

North Carolina School for the Gifted, a residential high school college, which will give students a standard academic curriculum, but will concentrate on training them for professional careers in music, dance, and drama.

North Carolina Advanced School, which will offer months of special training in the eighth graders of above-average ability but below-average income.

Learning Institute of North Carolina (LINC), the operating body (or "link") that study all the experimental pilot projects, and convert them to broad use in the state. These are only samples. Every one is unique—never, as far as anyone here knows, tried anywhere else on a state level.

It does not mean, however, that North Carolina is staking progress on the experiment in the four years of Governor Sanford's administration.

support of public education has nearly doubled, up to \$300,000,000 a year, and the state has climbed from 46th to 42nd in spending per pupil.

New Colleges
The 1961 State Legislature boosted spending for schools by 20 per cent (not counting the normal increase required for more pupils), and the 1963 session tacked on another 10 per cent increase. The last session also approved the governor's program for three new four-year colleges and a system of community junior colleges dotting the state.

In his 1960 campaign, Governor Sanford blamed inadequate education for the fact that North Carolina's economic growth was only half that of its neighbors. He promised not only better schools but a dose of new taxes to pay for them—and he delivered. Toughest to swallow was a 3 per cent sales tax on food; the governor called it "the school tax" and his opponents labeled it "the food tax." There was opposition to passage, but there is no talk of repeal.

Governor Sanford, the main-spring of the educational works, recalls no dramatic vision that propelled him on an educational crusade. "Too many people were leaving the state, too many people were unemployed, too many did not have good jobs," he says. "I believed that better education was the way to change that."

The projects that have begun under his aegis cannot be measured in a year or two. But the governor thinks his accent on education is already paying off. "While education gets most of the publicity," he says, "this state is undergoing the greatest industrial development in its history. What we are doing in education is a big reason."

'Chicken Feed'
One of the most noteworthy things about North Carolina's program is that the most of its pioneering ideas is, relatively speaking, chicken feed. The Governor's School, for example, will operate for three years on little more than \$500,000. Those aren't tax dollars. The Carnegie Corporation contributed \$225,000, and businessmen and foundations in the host city of Winston-Salem matched that.

Governor Sanford and his associates have taken advantage of the abundance of foundation money available for projects that are new, different, and prom-

ising. Their most expensive new effort is the North Carolina Fund, which has the broad aim of combating poverty in the state. The five-year costs was set at \$10,000,000.

The Ford Foundation contributed \$7,000,000 and other private sources will produce most of the rest.

The North Carolina Fund has already begun a \$2,000,000 "Three Rs Project" designed to improve the reading, writing, and arithmetic performance of first, second, and third graders all over the state. A half-dozen other projects are in the planning stage to be undertaken in co-operation with the cities or counties involved.

To evaluate the Three R's Project will be one of the tasks of LINC, which was founded last February and operates from the mansion house of an old dairy farm near Durham. Its funds are both public and private, and its board of directors includes the presidents of Duke University and the University of North Carolina, representatives of the state's public schools and colleges, and the governor.

\$27,000 SALARY
LINCS limitless goals and limitless area of operations enticed Harold Howe II, superintendent of schools in the New York City suburb of Scarsdale, to become its director. Mr. Howe's salary, significantly, is \$27,000, identical to that of the president of the University of North Carolina.

LINC's first major effort, the Advancement School, is to get under way this fall in a converted hospital building in Winston-Salem. Plans call for 350 eighth-graders to be drawn from all over the state for each three-month session, or 1,400 each year.

To make sure the children don't feel lost for three months away from home, they will come in groups of seven from a school. At the same time one teacher from their school will accompany each group; thus 200 teachers every year will study new ways to increase the learning potential of their students.

Fifteen "master teachers" from all over the country are being recruited for the Advancement School faculty. Their salaries will range from \$8,000 to \$11,000, but Ralph McCallister, who is in charge of the school's development, says, "The people we talk to are usually so excited about our plans that money is no object." One teacher has agreed to come from California and another from Michigan.

How Select?
Perhaps the most difficult of the many awesome problems involved in creating such a school is that of selection. How do you decide who is average or above average in potential but below average in achievement? ("Below average" is defined here as being one to three years behind.) Should there be geographic quotas for various parts of the state? How do you avoid labeling these youngsters as examples of failure?

The process of selection will be much simpler, on the other hand, at the North Carolina School for the Arts, scheduled to open in Winston-Salem in September 1965. These students will be chosen on the basis of their skill in instrumental music, singing, dancing, or drama, and their desire for a career in one of these areas.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the scope of North Carolina's education pioneering than its arts school. It will be the closest thing the United States has ever seen to the famed conservatory schools of Europe. The only thing even comparable is New York City's High School of Performing Arts, which is a high school only, and open only to that city's residents.

North Carolina's school will be a high school accredited to give standard diplomas and a college accredited to give bachelor's degrees. It will even accept and educate grade school-age youngsters should they show professional promise that young.

All Candidates to Be Considered
The school will be regional, even national. Probably half the students will come from within

the state, and most of the others from the South, but candidates from any state will be considered.

Vittorio Giannini, the composer, is leaving the faculty of New York's Juilliard School of Music to become director. "It is something I have dreamed of for years," says Mr. Giannini. "I hope some day every state may have such a school."

Mr. Giannini will soon start building a faculty from among professional performers — opera singers, concert soloists, symphony musicians, Broadway actors. Their schedules will be arranged so that they can continue to perform just as teachers do at Juilliard or the dramatic academies in New York.

"I will tell these teachers," says Mr. Giannini, "that when they see a youngster of promise anywhere in the country, and see that he is not getting the proper training, they should take him by the neck and drag him back here."

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