

Words of Caution

By Jose F. Cortes

“EVERY secondary school,” according to Department Order No. 1, s. 1957, The Revised Philippine Educational Program, “should provide an effective guidance program to help the students in their studies and in the choice of their future careers and vocations.” In view of the mandatory nature of this provision of the Order, it would be well for school administrators to consider and avoid some such pitfalls as the following in the establishment or maintenance of guidance services in their high schools:

a. Some administrators believe that they should first employ a highly trained guidance counselor or one major in guidance before taking steps to organize guidance services in the school. This idea is a fallacy which many school officials desiring to start guidance programs have not realized early enough. It is, of course, an advantage to have a full-time, trained counselor when establishing or administering the guidance program, but the employment of one is not a prerequisite to the effective starting of the services. The Bayambang High School and many others have successfully organized their guidance programs notwithstanding their inability to employ full-time and well-trained counselors at the start.

b. In their desire to establish guidance services right away, some school administrators have started the program prematurely and hastily. The premature start has proved to be another mistake of such administrators. There have been no planning, no cooperative thinking and effort, no in-service education for the teaching staff, or no preparation on the part of the school officials as well as teachers concerned. The goals, activities, and major techniques of guidance and the respective roles of the different members of the teaching staff in the guidance program are not known or are not functionally understood.

c. The idea that a guidance program that has been successful in one high school in the Philippines or in another country can be copied *in toto* by another high school is held by a number of school officials. It does not occur to them in their desire to launch the project that local conditions, resources, personnel, and students need to be considered. Modifications and adjustments generally have to be made to meet the needs and conditions of the students, teachers, and community concerned.

d. Some school officials hold the idea that if they would launch any guidance program at all it would

be one which would be elaborate, well equipped, and well staffed right at the start. Nothing short of the best would be acceptable to them even at the outset. They would first have at least one specially trained guidance counselor or one major in guidance as well as an unusually high item for the counselor; an elaborately equipped clinic or interview room; adequate provisions for standard psychological testing, personality inventory and remedial devices; and other requisites of the modern guidance clinic. Because of this mistaken notion, many schools have not been able to start their program. It is, of course, good for the administrator to work for what is reasonably satisfactory in the way of providing needed facilities and personnel and for further improvement from time to time, but he should not give up in despair and manifest lack of resourcefulness when the best could not at first be made available.

e. In choosing the guidance counselor for among the members of the faculty, some principals have preferred those who are among the oldest in the teaching service, those who are most respected and feared by students, and/or those who receive the highest salaries, regardless of their personal qualities, attitudes, emotional maturity, and characteristics. The main functions of the counselor differ greatly from those of the former dean of boys or dean of girls, who essentially was a disciplinarian and attendance officer. While the counselor should have had wide and varied experiences and whenever possible some specialized training in guidance, she should not be so old and so feared that students, particularly the maladjusted or those with serious problems, would not voluntarily go to her, not confide their problems or personal difficulties to her, and not expect sympathy and democratic treatment from her.

f. There is also the belief in some quarters that the guidance movement is another educational fad that would fade away in time. Hence, some school administrators have failed up to now to appreciate the goals, objectives, and principles of the movement and have remained indifferent to the expected effects of the services on the personality, security, and future of our young people. The guidance program is an integral phase of the total educational program, and the goals of the former are the same as those of the latter. The future of the guidance movement appears to be secure and assured.