

Functions and Finances

The function of a dynamic Parent-Teacher organization is to provide concerted action for the welfare of children and youth in home, school, and community. The National Congress of Mothers was founded with this purpose in mind in 1897. States soon became organized along national lines, each making its own constitution and by-laws to conform with those of the National Congress. Iowa was the third state to organize.

The next step was to set up district organizations to include areas corresponding with those of the Iowa State Teachers Association — seven districts of varying numbers of counties — these being known as the Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, Southwest, North Central, Central, and South Central districts. Some areas were more populous than others, and in the districts with many counties contact was difficult. There was great inequality in the distribution of state monies on a county *pro rata* basis, and county representation itself varied in a distressing manner. But as these problems developed, they resolved themselves into a reorganization program. In 1944 Iowa was reorganized into nine districts each containing eleven counties.

The State Congress is the governing body, and its work, procedure, and policy, adopted from the national program, are administered by its Board of Managers. This body consists of the elected state officers, the district presidents, elected by local unit representatives to the district meetings, and the committee chairmen. According to a recent revision of the by-laws, committee chairmen are nominated by an elected nominating committee and are then elected by a special electing group which meets following the state convention in the year a president is elected. The committee chairmen then take office with the president and serve throughout the three-year term.

From 1900, the year of state organization for Iowa, until 1943, the presidents might serve unlimited terms, but action was taken in 1943 to provide for only one term of three years for state and district officers. Elections were staggered so that some occurred in each of the three years, thus providing for experienced leadership at all times. With this change came a "three-year plan" for state meetings; the formal convention type of meeting comes in the year the president is elected. The first state meeting in the president's term of office is a short-course type of meeting held on the campus of Iowa State College at Ames. The second year a parent education meeting is held at the State University of Iowa in Iowa City. In the third year, the formal meeting, mentioned above,

may be held at any place in the state willing to entertain the convention and having facilities for 600 or more delegates.

The state organization breaks down into nine districts with their corresponding officers and committee chairmen, and, consequently, with their own spring and fall meetings. Districts are made up of councils and local units within their confines. Districts do not interfere with either the councils or local units, but act as channels for the dissemination of the state plans. Councils serve a similar function, with their local unit membership.

A council is set up to strengthen the work of the local units and may be formed when there are three or more such functioning units in a locale, either rural or urban. At present, the Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers has ten county councils and forty-two city councils.

To organize and aid the local units is of the first importance to the State Congress, and to provide for such expansion a Field Service Fund is budgeted each year from the state portion of the national Founders Day monies contributed by local unit members and friends. Founders Day is given special recognition each year in appreciation of services rendered and with a thought for the challenge to members.

The name of Mary Grinnell (Mrs. David O.) Mears occupies a place of high honor in connection with national Founders Day. The daughter

of J. B. Grinnell of Grinnell, Mrs. Mears attended the First National Congress of Mothers in 1897 and served as vice-president of this organization from 1905 to 1924. The idea of Founders Day on February 17, commemorating the life and services of Mrs. Birney and Mrs. Hearst, was the special contribution of Mrs. Mears to the National Congress in 1910. In 1947 the National Golden Jubilee ceremonies honoring the founders were held at the Alice Birney Memorial at Marietta, Georgia.

The Iowa Congress has outlets through the press and through monthly radio programs for the promotion of its projects, some of which are: Summer Round-Up of Children, Youth Forums, Scholarships, Study Groups for Parent Education, Hot School Lunch program, Safety Projects for School and Home (including Driver Education courses), Recreation in school and community, and the use of films, in many areas, with special emphasis on International Relations and Home and Family Life.

The publication program is extensive, a bibliography by Mrs. B. C. Hopkins reveals. The official publications are *Iowa Parent-Teacher* and *A History of the Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers*.

The legislative program of the Iowa Congress is in line with that of the Iowa State Education Association, with such National Congress adaptation as may be applicable in Iowa, yet all being

shaped up by the various divisions of the state congress — extension, public welfare, education, home service, health, and publicity. The division of organizations, as its name indicates, sets the pattern for state, district, council, and local units. Thus does the Parent-Teacher Association function in behalf of the objects stated:

To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

To raise the standards of home life.

To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

To develop, between educators and the general public, such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.



The Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers is financed from three main sources of revenue: (1) dues; (2) Founders Day gifts; (3) the sale of life memberships and distinguished service scrolls.

The principal source is derived from annual membership dues which are all-inclusive for local, state, and national organizations and payable by the members in each association in which membership is held. Membership dues include three portions: a national portion, as provided in the na-

tional by-laws (five cents); a state portion, as provided in the state by-laws (twenty cents); and a local portion, as provided in local by-laws. The allocation of these monies is made through an annual budget plan prepared by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Board of Managers.

The second source of revenue, the Founders Day Fund, is acquired through free will contributions from the 678 local associations in the state. This is a national plan, introduced in 1910 by Mrs. David O. Mears of Grinnell, Iowa, and adopted in commemoration of the founding of the Parent-Teacher Movement in 1897, and the fund is used for an extension program. In 1950 Iowa's gifts were \$2,027.80, one half of which amount was sent to the national office for its extension program. Iowa's half was placed in a cumulative fund to be used for adding a field worker to the staff.

The Student Loan Fund, the third source of revenue, is being established in Iowa this year, through the sale of life memberships (\$25 each), Distinguished Service Member Scrolls (\$5, \$10, or \$15), and "In Memoriam" cards (any amount). Any of the foregoing may be purchased by units desiring to honor present workers or to commemorate the deceased. Individuals may purchase them for themselves or for friends. Loans are currently being made to teacher-training students in Iowa.

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