

School Plant Facilities Change With New Teaching Techniques

Features

Sports

MEDFORD TRIBUNE

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As the educational programs offered in school districts change, so do the facilities in which they are housed.

Changes made in school plant facilities are made to provide the student with a more desirable background in which to develop his interest in study.

Many new innovations in buildings and classroom facilities were reviewed by educators from this area on trips east late last year and to the San Francisco area earlier this year.

The tour of buildings and observation of educational programs in eastern and mid-western schools was part of an in-service observation plan in connection with the Ford Foundation financed Oregon Program for Improving Education, a program in which Medford school district is cooperating with Southern Oregon college and the state department of education. The trips were financed from non-tax monies through the Oregon Program.

Plant Facilities Observed

Plant facilities observed, and studied, ranged from a completely new design at McPherson, Kans., to renovated rooms expanded to provide lecture areas.

Educators toured all types of buildings - from the campus style school with departments housed in separate buildings connected by covered hallways or walks, to the large high school in multi-story buildings.

In most cases, plant facilities were altered to fit the development of new teaching techniques; in other cases, where new buildings were necessary anyway, the plant was designed specifically for new teaching techniques such as team teaching, cooperative teaching, large and small group instruction, and increased utilization of the library as the center of academic development.

Perhaps the most unusual of the schools visited was McPherson, Kans., where educators toured a building of hexagonal and circular design. The hexagonal area is for academic classes, and included a central library and visual aids centers. The circular building, connected with the hexagonal cluster by an activities center and kitchen facilities, houses the gymnasium and industrial arts area, which is located around the edge of the gym.

Rooms of Conventional Design

Educators found, however, that specifically designed, unusually shaped buildings are not necessary for classes in which new teaching techniques are used. Most of the classrooms were of conventional design - that is, square or rectangular.

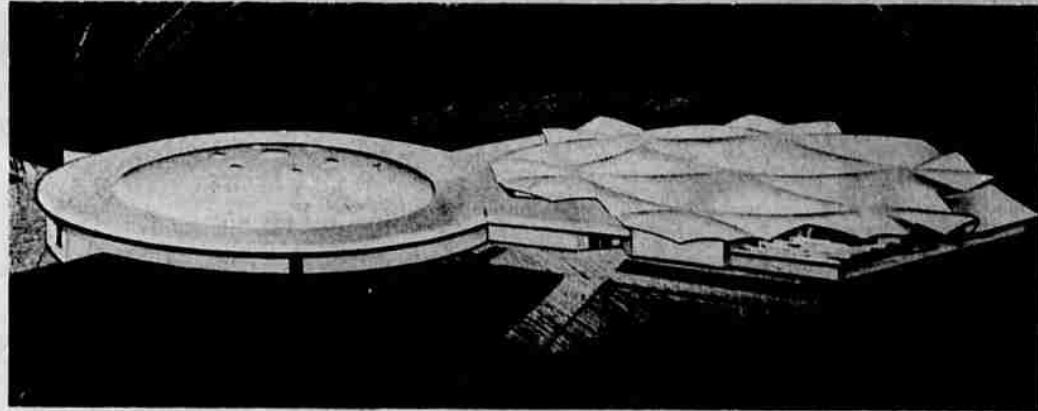
Educators also observed other building aspects, keeping in mind any designs which could be incorporated in new buildings in this area to help meet the need in providing a better education for a greater number of children.

One of the big differences was in the size of classrooms. Instead of being virtually all one size, three different sizes were predominate - the large, small theater type room; the conventional size for 30 to 35 students; and the small, seminar type room.

Many of the plants toured had converted conventional classrooms, either by removing a permanent wall (in many cases replacing it with a moveable wall), or by adding a partition to make two small rooms from one large one, which was done in many cases by a moveable wall.

Used With Considerable Success

Moveable walls, in fact, are used with considerable success in many of the schools visited where flexibility in class schedules required that large and small groups be converted to one or the other in a short time. In some



The McPherson, Kans., high school, which was under construction late last year when area educators toured the building, is perhaps the most unusual design observed during an in-service visitation under the Oregon Program

for Improving Education. The hexagonal area at the right is for academic classes, and the circular area at left houses the industrial arts area and gymnasium.

cases, cafeterias and gymnasiums were divided with moveable walls to make use of space.

Lecture areas varied from one seating about 300 students to rooms capable of seating 80 to 90 students. Lecture classes also were held in many auditoriums.

Some centers had an elevated lecturer's stand, complete with audio-visual material and equipment, while others had tiered rows of seats for students with the lecturer on the floor in front of an overhead projector screen.

In one lecture center complex, which included the lecture room and seminar-type discussion rooms, the floors were carpeted. Officials at the school said the carpet was inexpensive, and reduced greatly the amount of noise in the classroom. Seventy or so students, they pointed out, make a considerable amount of noise just moving about. Maintenance costs also were reduced, since the carpet needed only vacuuming and not expensive cleaning and re-waxing every other year or so.

Provide Defused Light

The windows in this lecture center contained light-colored draperies, providing a quiet, defused light out of an otherwise glaring window expanse.

The lecture room was quite pleasant. Under such conditions, school officials believe, the student can do better work, getting more from the lecture than in other less desirable large rooms.

Other classrooms were large enough to house upward to 70 students, but had moveable walls to make two classrooms. Some classrooms were what are considered standard size, that is, in the 30 to 35 student capacity class.

Small seminar classrooms in which a group of 10 to 15 students discuss material presented during lecture periods were included in most schools in which team or cooperative teaching was observed. Usually the students sat around a large table, and the instructor acted only as a moderator for the discussion.

Other Building Features

Among some of the other building features observed were the use of tile in hallways; the use of outside hallways, principally among the California schools (this type of construction is used on new buildings in the Medford district); and student locker areas removed from the main travelled hallways.

Tile was used along hallways in many schools. Officials at the schools noted that although the initial cost may be somewhat more than walls plastered and painted, the long-range maintenance costs are reduced.

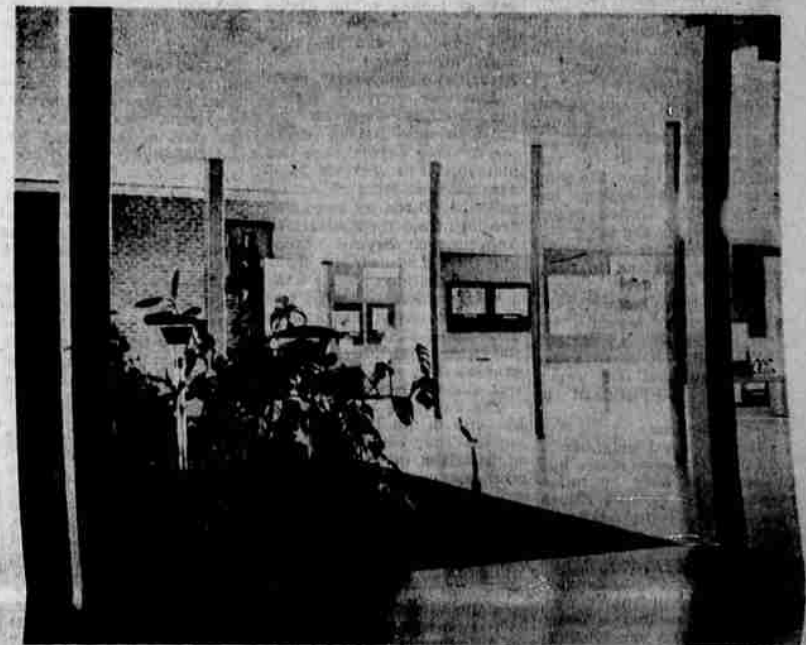
Student locker areas away from the main used hallways keep noise to a minimum, especially if the school has an eight or more period day when some students arrive and leave earlier than others. This proved to be a desirable feature in many secondary schools, and was accomplished with little, if any, additional cost.

Class Preparation Areas

Educators also observed class preparation areas for teachers, and teacher lounges which provided an area away from the student occupied areas. Student centers in one school provided a place for student activities, as well as relaxing, for students who met certain requirements.

Many of the school plants observed, whether new or renovated, were designed to be pleasant and attractive; to let the student feel at ease so he would be more receptive to a studying atmosphere.

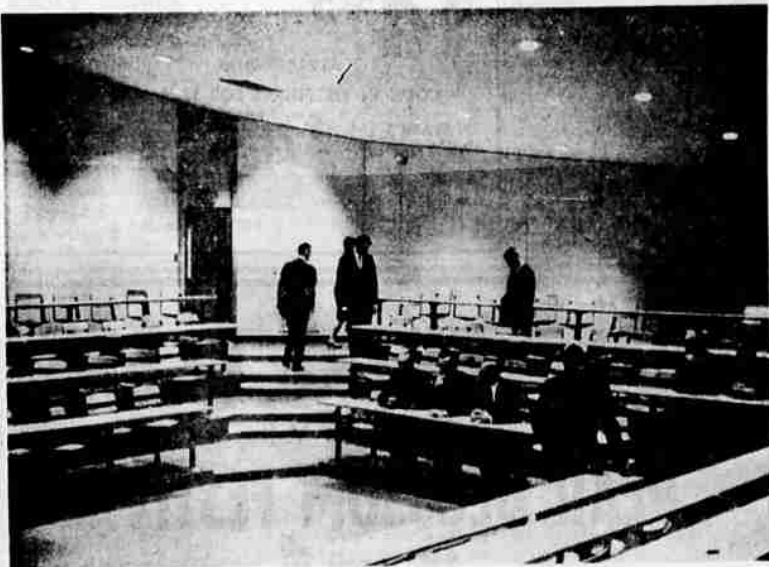
Plant facility changes, combined with changes in teaching methods, are designed to provide the opportunities for a better education of young people today and tomorrow.



The lobby of the Brien McMahon High school in Norwalk, Conn., serves as a display area for work done by students in the art department. Such displays, school officials have noted, tend to encourage students to do more and better work.



This picture shows the interior of the library at Newton South High school in Newton, Mass. Opposite the library in the same circular building are lecture rooms and regular size classrooms, which can be moved in the future to expand library facilities.



Educators from southern Oregon are looking over the large group instruction room at Estabrook Elementary school in Lexington, Mass. The room was designed specifically for large groups of students, and has worked effectively, school officials in Lexington said.



This scene shows students at Wayland, Mass., High school changing classes. Wayland was a campus type high school with departments housed in separate buildings. The field house, a popular structure where winters are more severe than in this area, is the dome shaped structure at the right.



The library is more and more becoming an important part of any high school, and in many cases is now in a central location. This is the library building at the Newton High school in Newton, Mass. Surrounding the library are other buildings housing various departments. Pictures were taken by James L. Payne, Salem, architect, who accompanied educators on the trip.