

The Open School Door

A Series of Articles on Clinton County
Schools and Their Problems

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Should all my children plan to attend college?

We hear so often that without a college education a child's future is impaired in some way. This is an important subject for all parents that are interested in their children's future to consider carefully.

It is true that for any person to be eligible for any of the professions and certain skilled areas he or she would have a college education.

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MANY educators feel that the idea that almost every student should automatically attend college because it is the accepted thing to do is not clear reasoning and certainly is a very misleading concept.

There certainly wouldn't be much use in IQ or aptitude tests, much less any sort of a guidance program, if it is assumed that everyone will attend college and become an educator, doctor, or perhaps a lawyer.

The very basic idea of most public school guidance programs is that every child is different and that they should be encouraged according to their abilities and interests to reach their greatest potential.

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EVERY principal and guidance person fully realizes that there is no one right answer to every one's future. All we can do in education is to use whatever tools we have at hand to suggest the best possible direction for each person to follow.

It is true that we have much past evidence and studies to base our suggestions upon, but each person is different and has a right to be different, therefore educators only make

suggestions. This discussion brings us back to the first question which was referring to the idea that perhaps almost every child should attend college.

Certainly if we believe that people are different and have a right to be, we couldn't as educators, direct everyone to college. College does a certain job for those who have certain abilities and desires. This may lead us to guess that some who are attending college should not and also that many others should attend that do not.

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WHAT IS the solution to this great problem? Perhaps there isn't any final clear-cut answer. However, one method to help lessen the burden of worry and guesswork is to have some careful thinking and planning on the part of all involved. What this means is for the parent, school and certainly the child to think, study and plan together on the vital future of the youth.

This planning may or may not include college. On the other hand, if the potential of the student indicates that college is advisable, some very careful planning, which includes saving of money by perhaps both the parents and the child, should be started in the younger years of the student.

What is done today during the younger years of a person's life so vitally effects his later years that in this age of specialization no parent, school or citizen can afford to neglect the future role of younger citizens in our great democracy.