

**Southwestern In Focus**  
**EDUCATOR SEEKS TO IMPORT EX-**  
**CITEMENT OF LEARNING**

By Julie Elkins  
EPT Sundial 5/8/66

Education has far outgrown the days when all that was necessary, according to Socrates, was a student, a teacher and a log to sit on.

Managing the log has become big business. Preparing any child for the responsibilities he must meet as a citizen in today's world requires attention to his individual needs intellectually, socially and spiritually, as well as his future needs—economically—and politically.

“The most exciting thing about education today are the changes, changes happening in every area,” according to Hibbard Polk, assistant superintendent of instruction of El Paso Public Schools.

Education has been an exciting experience for Polk since before his high mark as valedictorian at his 1934 graduating class at Abilene High School. And he has spent the years, more than 30 of them, on a path designed to give the excitement of learning to other students.

“Everything we do is for the children, for their benefit,” Polk stressed, “Even teachers’ salary raises are designed to provide better education for the child—after all, that’s the only reason why we’re here.”

**TALKS OF CHANGE**

A calm, confident man with a friendly openness, that immediately bridges the gap from “the other side of the desk” and dispels the austere image of a school administrator, Polk readily speaks about the sweeping changes heralded in education—many of

which are being implemented now in the El Paso system.

“Our newest program is occupational training for seventh, eighth and ninth graders. We give them something to study which they enjoy, do well, and which gives them a skill in the future,” he commented. “And, of course, there was Operation Head Start last summer one of the finest programs we’ve ever had.



**HIBBARD POLK**

“Society has changed and education changes with it,” he went on enthusiastically, “and with the funds now being made available through the federal government, we can now reach many children who were formerly educationally deprived.”

Polk values contact with the children he is responsible for and makes as many personal visits throughout the schools as possible.

Asked if he missed the experience of actual teaching, he replied immediately, "Yes I do. But here in the planning end of things, I know that the programs we put into effect are helping the children eventually. Administration is rewarding in this sense."

The road Polk has followed to his goal has been a direct one. Only two interruptions occurred. The first happened in 1938 just after he had received a degree in speech and drama from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene and arrived in El Paso eager to begin his teaching career.

"Young man, said the personnel officer to me," he reminisced, "go out and get yourself a year or experience somewhere else, and then come back to us!" Having already moved to El Paso, I couldn't very well change again, so I worked a year out here, and then went to the little town of Roscoe Tex., for my year of 'experience'."

Returning to El Paso in 1940 he became a speech teacher a Bowie High School. Then World War II made its interruption and Polk served as a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Army in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater seeing action on Iwo Jima. He was discharged in 1946 and returned to Bowie as teacher and counselor.

For the next eight year Polk served as principal consecutively for Franklin, Lamar Hillside and Bonham Schools. Slated for the principal's office of newly-constructed Burges High School in 1955 a reorganization at Education Center landed him in an office there as personnel director.

He has since served as director of secondary education and was named assistant superintendent for El Paso Independent School District last March.

## **PARTICIPATES**

Throughout the years, Polk has managed to include many activities in his already crowded schedule. He received a master's degree in administration from Texas Western College in 1951, and did further graduate work at the University of Southern California.

But, most important, he met and married the El Paso girl who was to be responsible for an award he received from Sertoma Club in 1960: Father of the Year.

With direct simplicity, he says "When a person becomes a parent, the really worthwhile things come through your children. He and his wife, Sue, have two sons, Barnard, 17, president of Austin High School's Student Council, and Jack, 14, a freshman at Austin.

Latest in a lengthy list of honors awarded Polk for his years of service to the Sun City came last week when he was named new president of the El Paso Council of Churches. He is chairman of the board of First Christian Church. Typically modest, he regards this not as an honor, but as an "opportunity for service with people of all denominations.

There is no doubt that Polk lives up to the high standard he expresses: "Influence can he exerted anywhere when the example to follow is there."

\* \* \*

## Southwestern In Focus

# Educator Seeks To Import Excitement Of Learning

By JULIE ELKINS

Education has far outgrown the days when all that was necessary, according to Socrates, was a student, a teacher and a log to sit on.

Managing the log has become big business. Preparing any child for the responsibilities he must meet as a citizen in today's world requires attention to his individual needs intellectually, socially and spiritually, as well as his future needs—economically—and politically.

"The most exciting thing about education today are the changes, changes happening in every area," according to Hibbard Polk, assistant superintendent of instruction of El Paso Public Schools.

Education has been an exciting experience for Polk since before his high mark as valedictorian of his 1934 graduating class at Abilene High School. And he has spent the years, more than 30 of them, on a path designed to give the excitement of learning to other students.

"Everything we do is for the children, for their benefit," Polk stressed. "Even teachers' salary raises are designed to provide better education for the child—after all, that's the only reason why we're here."

### TALKS OF CHANGE

A calm, confident man with a friendly openness that immediately bridges the gap from "the other side of the desk" and dispels the austere image of a school administrator, Polk

readily speaks about the sweeping changes heralded in education—many of which are being implemented now in the El Paso system.

"Our newest program is occupational training for seventh, eighth and ninth graders. We give them something to study which they enjoy, do well, and which gives them a skill in the future," he commented. "And, of course, there was Operation Head Start last summer, one of the finest programs we've ever had."

"Society has changed and education changes with it," he went on enthusiastically, "and with the funds now being made available through the federal government, we can now reach many children who were formerly educationally deprived."

Polk values contacts with the children he is responsible for, and makes as many personal visits throughout the schools as possible. Asked if he missed the experience of actual teaching, he replied immediately, "Yes I do. But here in the planning end of things, I know that the programs we put into effect are helping the children eventually. Administration is rewarding in this sense."

The road Polk has followed to his goal has been a direct one. Only two interruptions occurred.

The first happened in 1938 just after he had received a degree in speech and drama from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene and arrived in El Paso eager to begin his teaching career.

"Young man, said the personnel officer to me," he reminisced, "go out and get yourself a year of experience somewhere else, and then come back to us!" Having already moved to El Paso, I couldn't very well



HIBBARD POLK

change again, so I worked a year out here, and then went to the little town of Roscoe, Tex., for my year of 'experience'."

Returning to El Paso in 1940 he became a speech teacher at Bowie High School. Then World War II made its interruption and Polk served as a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Army in the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre, seeing action on Iwo Jima. He was discharged in 1946 and returned to Bowie as teacher and counselor.

For the next eight years Polk served as principal consecutively for Franklin, Lamar, Hillside and Bonham Schools. Slated for the principal's office of newly-constructed Burgess High School in 1955 a reorganization at Education Center landed him in an office there as personnel director.

He has since served as director of secondary education and was named assistant superintendent for El Paso Independent School District last March.

### PARTICIPATES

Throughout the years, Polk has managed to include many activities in his already-crowded schedule. He received a master's degree in administration from Texas Western College in 1951, and did further graduate work at the University of Southern California.

But, most important, he met and married the El Paso girl who was to be responsible for an award he received from Sertoma Club in 1960: Father of the Year.

With direct simplicity, he says "When a person becomes a parent, the really worth-

while things come through your children. I and his wife, Sue, have two sons, Bernard, 17, president of Austin High School Student Council, and Jack, 14, a freshman at Austin.

Latest in a lengthy list of honors awarded Polk for his years of service to the Sun City came last week when he was named new president of the El Paso Council of Churches. He is chairman of the board of First Christian Church. Typically modest, he regards this, not as an honor, but as a "opportunity for service with people of all denominations."

There is no doubt that Polk lives up to the high standard he expresses: "Influence can be exerted anywhere when the example to follow is here."