

SOUND PREPARATION ACCENTED

And there is no excuse in Allentown for any student to graduate without sound preparation either for college or for a job which will use the skills he has learned.

The comprehensive high school provides communities across the United States with a way to rise to challenge of giving a relevant education to the neglected 7 out of every 10 students.

The area vocational school is another workable scheme. The J. M. Wright Technical School, set in a public park in Stamford, Conn., also has a long history of successful vocational and technical education.

Wright Tech (as it is called by the students) started out in 1921 as a vocational school without high-school, diploma-granting status. Since 1945, it has been graduating skilled workers as well as some college bound. Wright Tech is one of 14 area vocational-technical schools in Connecticut. Vocational educators acknowledge that this Southern New England state is doing one of the best jobs in the nation offering schooling for skills to a significant number of its school children.

Wright Tech takes boys and girls in the 10th grade on recommendation of their previous school and the results of aptitude tests. John Kerpchar, Wright director, says that the school will not take just any boy or girl. Instead, he maintains, he wants only those with the aptitude, interest, stamina, patience, and self-discipline to handle both a high-school academic program and a full shop program.

YEARBOOK WINS AND WINS

Mr. Kerpchar runs a highly disciplined school. Dress and grooming codes are strictly maintained. The building is spotless, the pupils polite, and the student body displays considerable sense of pride. This one vocational-technical school offers a full program of physical education with varsity sports teams, gives dances, schedules a colorful graduation ceremony each June, sponsors a yearly trip to Washington for the seniors, and manages to squeeze in a very active club program.

The Wright yearbook repeatedly wins awards for both style and content.

As in many of the better technical schools in the United States, the curriculum is written to order by the faculty.

All the shops do production work. Students spend one full week in a shop and one full week in related classroom instruction. A few girls are studying to be nursery-school attendants. They not only work at nearby nursery schools but take care of the small children brought by mothers who come to the school beauty shop as customers.

Girls studying practical nursing spend eight months in a hospital learning on the job. Girls in the beauty-culture program must put in 2,000 hours working on "live" customers. The dental assistants work closely with area dentists not only at the school but in on-the-job training in their offices. Boys and girls in the food-preparation class not only serve lunch each day to a portion of the faculty and staff but do some catering for call-in customers.

The tool-and-die students in the machine shop made an instrument for the Stamford Museum telescope and were, the day I visited, forming rods to be used in the reconstruction of an old mill.

A former student in electronics did a senior project which hooked the school's clock system into the Bureau of Standards in Washington. Another boy worked out a complete weather-prediction system in one electronic unit.

The magazine rack in the library gives a clear profile of Wright Tech and how it is meeting the needs of the students. A few of the titles are Popular Science, Motor, Scientific American, Time, Life, Sports Illustrated, Better Homes, House and Garden, Harper's, Atlas, Popular Electronics, United States News and World Report, National Geographic, Saturday Review, Parents, McCalls, and Vogue.

Miss PARSONS. Two years ago I traveled around for a series of articles for the Monitor entitled, "What's Right in American Schools," looking for the strengths.

I asked the educators what they thought their soft spots were, and in city after city it was vocational education. So I made a little mental