

**MORAL VALUES IN
SECONDARY EDUCATION:
A BULLETIN, 1917, NO. 51**

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Moral Values in Secondary Education: A bulletin, 1917, No. 51 by Henry Neumann

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HENRY NEUMANN

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SECONDARY EDUCATION:
A BULLETIN, 1917, NO. 51**

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

BULLETIN, 1917, No. 51

MORAL VALUES
IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

A REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE REORGANIZATION OF SECOND-
ARY EDUCATION, APPOINTED BY THE
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Prepared by

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ETHICAL CULTURE SCHOOL, NEW YORK CITY



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PREFACE.

At a meeting of the Reviewing Committee of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education held in Chicago in November, 1915, Dr. Henry Neumann, a member of the committee and a teacher in the Ethical Culture School, New York City, was requested to prepare a statement on Moral Values in Secondary Education. The statement prepared by Dr. Neumann was discussed at the meeting of the committee the following July. After revision it was submitted to all the members of the committee and has been approved by them. This approval does not commit every member individually to every statement and every implied educational doctrine, but does mean essential agreement as a committee with the general recommendations.

The purpose of this bulletin is to stimulate the thought of teachers in discovering their innumerable opportunities for quickening the conscience and clarifying the moral vision of their pupils. The attention of teachers is here directed also to the other reports of the commission, in which are elaborated many of the ideas presented in this report. No series of reports, however, could compass the rich opportunities of the secondary school for developing the ethical life of young people.

CLARENCE D. KINGSLEY,
Chairman of the Commission.

THE REVIEWING COMMITTEE.

(The Reviewing Committee consists of 28 members, of whom 10 are chairmen of committees and 10 are members at large.)

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Alexander Inglis, Assistant Professor of Education, in charge of Secondary Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

Henry Neumann, Ethical Culture School, New York City.

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Vocational Guidance—Frank M. Leavitt, Associate Superintendent of Schools, Pittsburgh, Pa.

¹ Deceased Sept. 4, 1917.

MORAL VALUES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION.

I SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE MORAL AIMS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION.

To consider moral values in education is to fix attention upon what should be the paramount aim. A schooling that imparts knowledge or develops skill or cultivates tastes or intellectual aptitudes, fails of its supreme object if it leaves its beneficiaries no better morally. In all their relationships present and future, that is, as schoolmates, as friends, as members of a family, as workers in their special vocations, as Americans, as world citizens, the greatest need of our boys and girls is character, the habitual disposition to choose those modes of behavior that most do honor to human dignity. Not simply to learn to tell the truth or to respect property rights, but to realize in ever more vital ways that the worth of life consists in the endeavor to live out in every sphere of conduct the noblest of which one is capable—this it is which gives education its highest meaning.¹

Stated in terms of national service, the aim of the secondary school should be to equip our pupils as fully as possible with the habits, insights, and ideals that will enable them to make America more true to its best traditions and its best hopes. To strengthen what is most admirable in the American character and to add to it should be the goal toward which all the activities are pointed. Hence the best contribution that any school can offer is to enrich the understanding of what is required for right living together in a democracy, to encourage every disposition toward worthy initiative and cooperation, and to provide all opportunity for the practice through which these habits and attitudes are most surely ingrained. By a fortunate circumstance, leading features in our national life, such as our ideals of liberty and equality, and such traits as a distinct strain of chivalry, link themselves naturally with tendencies especially active in young people during their years in the secondary

¹ Moral behavior, as here understood, is that which calls out in all concerned, in the agent himself as well as in the recipient and in all who are in any way involved, the best of which each is uniquely capable. Friendship, for example, is morally valuable to the extent that each of the friends stimulates the distinctive excellence of the other and thereby of himself; and since each can be his best only as he acts out his various relationships aright, in the home, the vocation, etc., where the same rule of reciprocal stimulation applies, it follows that the influence of friend upon friend thus reaches out into increasingly broader circles. For this conception and far much else here included the writer is indebted to Prof. Felix Adler.