

School Won't Woo 'Gifted' Only

By PETE MANN
Herald Education Writer

FT. LAUDERDALE — The average student at Nova High School probably will be just that — average.

For this prototype "school of the future" will be no intellectual ivory tower for the gifted. It will attempt to provide the best education possible for any student within the range of his abilities.

When it opens in the fall of 1963, it will have an enrollment of about 1,400, according to Arthur B. Wolfe, educational director of the South Florida Education Center, of which Nova is a part.

Those 1,400 will be "volunteers" from all parts of Broward County. They will not have to meet any entrance requirements or display any special abilities.

The idea is that all students, whatever their IQs, will be successful if they are taught in the proper atmosphere by teachers who are

* * *

A bold new concept in education will begin to take shape on an abandoned airstrip in Broward County this fall when construction starts on Nova High School, the first step in a sprawling grade-less complex that will encompass teaching from kindergarten through college graduate work. This is the last in a series of articles explaining the program.

* * *

Each term his program will include — as dessert — one elective.

There will be no "vocational" curriculum, as such. Wolfe objects to the phrase, in fact.

"Industry and business don't want us to train people for certain jobs," he says. "They say, 'We will do the training for the specific task, and we can do that better than anyone else.'"

"What they want us to give our students is broad, basic knowledge and theory. That will prepare them for specific training later."

For that reason, all industrial arts courses at Nova will be elective. They will be taught with a definite accent on theory, not practice.

Also among elective classes will be commercial art, fine art, medical chemistry and other courses designed to lay foundations for particular occupations.

* * *

THE SCHOOL DAY will be 30 minutes longer than standard, and all the added time will be spent in classes.

Besides that, there will be an "optional" sixth period, during which band and choral programs, club activities and golf, tennis, swimming and driver education classes will be scheduled.

If the load sounds heavy and the day sounds long, these are the points to remember:

EACH student will set his own pace. There will be no regular "June promotion." When a study unit is completed, the student will move on to a more advanced one.

CREDIT towards graduation will be given for every study unit completed. There will be no flat failures. If a student's work is below what

would normally be called "passing," he still will get numerical credit for what he has accomplished.

UNDER the trimester system, the gifted child might complete the six-year school in less than the 18 terms, the average student in exactly 18, the slow student in more. There will be no fixed limit to the number of trimesters leading to a diploma.

It is conceivable, Wolfe says, that in the complex of schools, ranging from kindergarten through graduate school, a student could be taking junior college math and high school English simultaneously.

Other fascinating features at Nova:

CLASS periods will range up to two hours in length, giving students the opportunity to hear a lecture, discuss it in smaller groups, and then do practical work or research individually — all while the subject matter is fresh in their minds.

TEACHING will rely heavily on the "team" technique, with one teacher lecturing many students, and several teachers handling discussion groups and guiding independent study.

TEACHERS will have clerical assistance and all the latest automated equipment

— from teaching machines to tape recorders, from language laboratories to closed circuit television — so their talents will be better utilized.

FLEXIBLE physical plants will have "convertible" classrooms and lecture halls, made larger or smaller as desired by means of folding walls and portable partitions.

RESOURCE centers in each academic building will replace the traditional central library. Thus, tapes, films, books, periodicals and other reference materials relating to a particular subject will be easily accessible to students and teachers in the area where that subject is studied and taught.

NICETIES — such as a cafeteria, a spectator-seating gym, an auditorium and school buses — will be eliminated so "those dollars" can be spent for better equipment and a study-inducing atmosphere.

BUILDINGS will be air-conditioned, carpeted and silent — with all possible noise-reducing devices — and will have few outside windows, but many glass partitions to give an impression of airy spaciousness.

When Nova is complete, its capacity will be 2,100. Wolfe says.

"As soon as it's filled, I guess we'll peel off and build a junior high. But they'll both be part of the same complex, very closely tied-in. Just an open courtyard is all that will separate the two..."

But in the beginning, only seventh through 10th graders will be accepted at Nova. The 11th and 12th levels will be added one at a time over the next two years.

That's because, Wolfe says, the planners want their first graduates to have attended Nova for three years. It will make evaluation of their experience more meaningful.

Whether Nova succeeds or not — and Wolfe is certain of its soundness — it is the most exciting effort yet at updating secondary education.

It might well be the key to improved mass public education, a key which must be found, educators say, if the United States is to keep pace with the rampant technological advances of the space age.



Arthur Wolfe
... 'volunteers' sought

free of clerical burdens and aided by the latest equipment.

A county-wide survey will be conducted next fall to determine how many students want to attend Nova. If there are many more applicants than spaces, the county probably will be zoned to assure equitable attendance rates throughout the county.

* * *

EVERY STUDENT who goes to Nova will feed on a basic academic menu consisting of required courses in English, a foreign language, mathematics, science, social science and physical education.

Dr. Williams Gets Jr. College Post

Dr. Kenneth R. Williams, president of Dade County Junior College, has been named to the commission on administration of the American Association of Junior Colleges.

His appointment was announced by Edmund J. Gleazer Jr., executive director of AAJC. The commission will evaluate junior college administrative practices and recommend improvements.