



CHARTING COLLEGE COURSES—Both teacher and student from Torrance are ready for the opening of school Monday at El Camino College. Here Pat Sharer, 1230 Cota Ave., goes over her class schedule with instructor Donald Hein, 17109 Patronella. Miss Sharer was just appointed secretary to the Student Council at El Camino. Hein teaches math and is a counselor.

### Magazines Spotlight Waleria School

The "Little Red Schoolhouse" program at Waleria Elementary School, Torrance, drew the national spotlight again this week, as it was cited in the September issue of Redbook Magazine and in the Sept. 14 issue of Time Magazine.

The Waleria program, recently featured on NBC-TV, was cited in Time's feature article on education and in a Redbook article, "What's Really Happening in Our Schools," by Robert Ben-diner. Redbook calls it the "most significant trial" of classroom grouping in the U.S. Time also cites the local program as forward-looking.

The Redbook article says: "Each primary class in the Waleria School there contains 11

first graders, 11 second graders, and 11 third graders; each intermediate class combines fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. After three years, tests showed that the Waleria pupils have a healthier attitude toward their work and toward each other, and rate better academically than children in a single system."

Widely publicized since it began in 1955, the "Little Red Schoolhouse" has spread to other schools in Torrance and to a number of other districts throughout the country.

#### Variations Stressed

"The 'Little Red Schoolhouse' only emphasizes something that we have known all along—that every classroom everywhere is really a multigrade classroom," Assistant Superintendent Albert Posner said. "Just as children vary in size, shape, and rate of growth, they vary in mental abilities."

"We know that in the average first grade classroom, we have children whose mental level is that of a pre-schooler and we have other children who do better than many second graders. By the time these children get to be 13 years old or eighth graders, their abilities differ even more. Some are fourth graders in ability, while others would do better than most high school graduates. A birth date does not tell a child's capabilities."

A variation of the "Red Schoolhouse" is used in "combination classes in many Torrance schools. Children from two different grade levels may be placed in the same classroom under the same teacher.

#### Combination Classes

Combination classes are set up when schools have an odd number of children in two different grade levels. Torrance elementary classes have about 34 students each.

Assignment problems arise when, for instance, 50 seventh graders and 50 eighth graders are enrolled in a school, because they represent 1½ classes of each grade. Rather than hire four teachers (at a cost of about \$20,000) for these 100 students, Torrance hires three (at a cost of about \$15,000), combining 17 eighth graders in one classroom. Students are picked purely at random.

"Tests repeatedly show that combining two classes is educationally sound," Posner noted. "This is common practice in many districts. A multigrade approach to teaching helps to conserve and stretch tax dollars. This is not the only way to meet a child's educational needs, but is certainly one good way."



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