

## Schools Plan Bilingual Program

Anderson, Janet

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# Schools Plan Bilingual Program

By JANET ANDERSON

Hundreds of Spanish-speaking children will learn to read and write in Spanish this fall as part of Hartford's first public school bilingual education program.

About 700 children are included in the over-all bilingual program. All of them will be taught academic subjects in their native language while learning English as a second language. Most, but not all, of the children will have regular classes in Spanish reading and writing.

Still in the planning stages is a program to include classes in Puerto Rican History and culture.

Under the new program, which may be the largest of its kind in New England, at least some of the city's nearly 5,000 Spanish-speaking school children will become literate in their own language, and make progress in math, science and other subjects while they are learning English.

In the past, most of the children made little or no progress in any academic subjects until they mastered English. And there are many children who can speak both languages but are unable to read or write in either of them.

### 20 Per Cent Spanish Speaking

Nearly 20 per cent of all Hartford school students are native Spanish-speaking. The school board estimates that about 1,000

children arrive from Puerto Rico a year. (Although enrollment figures are increasing, they do not register 1,000 new Spanish pupils per year because many of the students already here drop out, move or return to Puerto Rico).

The new bilingual education program is the first through ninth grades at seven different schools. This year's program will be expanded, and will some day "hopefully" include all the city's Spanish school children, according to Mrs. Lois B. Maglietto, supervisor of the English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual programs of the Hartford Board of Education.

An advisory board of Puerto Rican citizens from four model neighborhoods, two at-large delegates, and two teachers help plan all the city's bilingual programs. The Model Cities Agency gave \$73,000 for a curriculum development and teacher training programs. The school board pays the salaries of Spanish-speaking, bilingual and English as a Second Language teachers, with some federal aid. The state also provides some teachers for the bilingual program.

### Work on New Program

Mrs. Maglietto is presently trying to work out a program with the University of Hartford and the University of Puerto Rico so Puerto Rican seniors can come to Hartford during their final year and student

teach in city schools. "Then we hope to nab them permanently," she added.

A workshop to prepare bilingual teachers, paraprofessionals and parents for this year's program will be held Aug. 16 to 27 at the new Jones School on Blue Hills Avenue.

Many of the materials for the new program were ordered from Puerto Rico. And more Spanish and bilingual materials are being published in the United States, said Mrs. Maglietto, who has learned to read and write Spanish.

She said this year's program is not yet fully developed, and hopes the Model Cities agency will refund the curriculum development group which is composed of six teachers, four of whom are Spanish-speaking. There is still a need for at least one more teacher, she said, because the board tries to hire Puerto Rican teachers rather than just Spanish-speaking.

In addition to expanding the regular bilingual program, Mrs. Maglietto hopes to have total bilingual schools or sub-schools where English children learn Spanish as a second language. Then all the children could speak two languages. The Everywhere School in South Arsenal neighborhood is the only school presently attempting this kind of program, and both parents and children have been receptive to it, according to one

teacher.

Various other programs are under consideration for Hartford's schools but next year the bilingual program will be in action at the Everywhere School, Barnard Brown, South Arsenal, Clark Street, Kinsella, Hartford Public High School and the Quirk Middle School. (The Quirk program will be at Barnard Brown until the new school opens in February).

Most of the programs will be in combination classes with students from two grades in each class and a team of teachers rotating to the classes.

A teacher team can include two Spanish-speaking teachers for academic subjects and Spanish language arts, a bilingual teacher for subjects like math, and an English as a second language teacher.

The bilingual program will give the Spanish-speaking students who stay in Hartford a chance to learn academic subjects, and speak, read and write in two languages. For the students who return to Puerto Rico, the program offers them a better chance to get a job back home because they will be literate in their own language and possibly in English as well, according to Mrs. Maglietto.

She thinks the program needs expansion, and perhaps new dimensions. "It is not perfect," she says "But at least it is a start."