Regional Computer Center Aids Students, Teachers

By CHRISTINE LINDLOF
Advisory Committee with Washington Approval
CROWLEY — A regional data center, headed by the Acadia Parish School Board, is being started here to aid students of Southern Louisiana by providing valuable information for counseling and by creating teachers from record keeping and allowing them to spend more time with students.

In addition to Acadia, the proposed center is set up to serve the parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, Vermillion, and West Feliciana.

The regional center is a joint effort on the part of educators on the local level to collect, process, and return pupil data and other school information in such a way to assure reliable, efficient service.

High Speed Automation

Data is processed by means of efficient, high-speed automation in sharp contrast to the slow, tedious manual methods traditionally used by teachers, counselors, administrators and clerks.

Dr. John Bertrand, superintendent of schools, explained originally the data processing center was set up on a $60,000 Title III grant for Acadia only; however, when the three-year grant expired in March, 1971, it was decided that such an operation costing approximately $200,000 a year would not be too expensive for one parish to operate.

Bertrand said the parish, along with other Louisiana parishes, was awarded a special one-year extension of Title III funds. The funds, he said, were awarded by the State Advisory Committee with Washington approval.

Bertrand also said the computer center check a print out as it rolls out of the computer. The computer center is set up to service a proposed 13-parish area.

GOING OVER SCHEDULING — Larry Sonnier of Crowley, (left) programmer at the center, goes over a scheduling problem with Stanley Bray, manager of the Regional Computer Center. Under one-year special grant, the center is offering its services free on a trial basis to area parish school boards. (Advertiser Staff Photo)

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Stanley Bray, manager of the center.

Free Teachers

Bray said some of the benefits of the system are an attendance system which keeps student attendance records for freeing teachers from record keeping duties and allowing them to spend more time with students.

In addition, the system which cost $1 million, will not report on state exams but will analyze parishes, and identify problem areas, including a cumulative profile of each student from the ninth to the 12th grade.

"With this system, we are able to spot a potential failure and work with those students," Bray said. Educational director at the center is James Gardner.

Bray pointed out the system is a cooperative and each parish determines how a certain operation will take place. Although processing is done at the center, all materials remain the property of each individual school board.

He said in the fall, an advisory committee will be set up with members from each of the participating parishes to run the system.

"However, we are not talking here of something that can be measured in dollars and cents," says Bray. "This is a system which is helping to bring education.