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MINUTES OF SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Airlie House
Arlie, Virginia

January 21-23, 1972

Dr. Alvin D. Loving, Sr., President, Presiding

Friday, January 21, 1972

Dr. Loving opened the meeting by recommending that although the planned purpose of this special Council meeting had been to plan program activities, attention be given first to the financial status report of the Association, prepared by Dr. Atkins. This report, which is attached, portrayed a sudden emergency as to finances. In introducing the report, President Loving suggested that the following should be considered: Is it an immediate, short-term financial crisis or is it a long-range one? Does it represent principally a drop in membership renewal? Is it regional? Is it important to have some kind of in-depth study which would involve state units? Or is this ASCD problem simply part of the whole economic picture for the nation? Thus, there will be policy questions: Do we hold the line, or do we cut back? Can we come up with a program that will bring money in? Was terminating the CCC's a good decision or a bad one? Do people know about ASCD? Do they know of our services - or curriculum? Is it possible to design a regional program to make money and at the same time get new members - to design a program for "profit"? In the past ASCD has been an Association of "service." What kinds of programs can we develop and sell? Should we look at the kinds of programs that have already been sold, and then plan strategies for profit? Dr. Loving stated that the Executive Council has a commitment to do something about the current financial situation, and asked Dr. Atkins to present the financial picture of ASCD as of the end of December 1971.

Dr. Atkins explained in detail the financial statement which consisted of the following tables: Operating Fund Balances, Budget Summary, A Projection of Income 1971-72, and the Budget Statement. (Attached as part of these minutes). He said he was alarmed when he looked at the January report in relation to experiences over previous years. Traditionally, as the registrations for the Annual Conference flow in and money comes in for the exhibits, ASCD has a cash surplus in the first quarter. But this is not the case this year. We face the prospect of immediate and sizable deficits. Everyone - not just the staff - should make stringent efforts to come up with some kind of immediate help so that ASCD can get through the year.

Dr. Loving pointed out that other organizations have trusts, grants, capital funds, and tangible items which can be mortgaged, but ASCD has no such assets. In the past, ASCD has been existing in terms of the Annual Conference and its
publications, along with membership fees, but this has not provided enough financial stability to keep the organization on an even keel when the going gets rough.

Dr. Davis suggested that ASCD will need to systematically reduce what it spends just as many groups around the country do who are faced with a similar situation. It was also pointed out by Dr. Greene that ASCD can no longer depend upon the NEA to carry temporary deficits during lean times. Dr. Atkins stated the Association does not know from the NEA Accounting Division how far ASCD is in arrears until 15 days after the close of the month, and that there appears to be no shift in this policy.

The question was raised as to whether an inventory was kept of ASCD publications. Dr. Leeper said there was such an inventory, but that it has never been systematically evaluated as an asset. It has been viewed, rather, as a source of income. The three major sources of revenue for the Association are membership fees, publication sales, and funds arising out of the national conference. In the past, ASCD has looked to publications sales and the Annual Conference to make up any deficits in "regular" income from the members.

Dr. Atkins asked for authority to stringently cut the present budget. He stated the Association could not continue with its present mode of operation, that it would have to try to obtain more income, and that more people than those on the Washington staff would be needed to work on the dilemma. He said that the full extent of the crisis had not become apparent until January 1972, when the reports through December 1971 revealed a 22 per cent drop in membership, which was a staggering and unexpected drop. Taken together with rising costs and a steady decline in publications sales, it precipitated an actual cash deficit.

It was suggested that the Council take a creative look at the overall position of the Association and begin thinking of immediate steps for the next three or four months; but also that simultaneously it think of the long-range view in terms of program, membership, and publication sales. Dr. Norris suggested looking to the human resources in ASCD for ways to make money, and contacting the various states for a commitment in terms of the total budget of ASCD.

Dr. Atkins pointed out that immediate budget cuts could be made on items over which he has direct control; for example:

- from estimated cost of publication handling, which is based upon number of publications sold each year

- from promotion budget by curtailing future expenditures

- by cancelling the Unit Presidents' Leadership Conference in May

- by terminating all working groups as quickly as possible
Dr. Davis suggested the possibility of personnel cuts. Dr. Atkins pointed out that a considerable sum of money is already being saved by not filling two current vacancies on the staff. He said that further reductions may have to be made, as necessary, but pointed out the need for a large staff just before the national conference and advocated the postponement of personnel cuts until after that time.

The President suggested packaging publications and selling out groups of items, some of which have not been moving very well, as in a "fire sale." It was also suggested that perhaps a mail house could handle this operation. Dr. Wilhelms suggested tacking on to the "fire sale" idea an offer to comprehensive members that when they join ASCD they could pick from a selected list any four previously issued ASCD publications...patterned after the "book clubs." Dr. Leeper pointed out that the biggest asset is inventory - the cost of storing is carried principally by our printers. He pointed out that the staff is now performing many of the duties that the NEA handled in the past in connection with publications sales and that, therefore, the workload of the staff had increased.

It was also suggested that issuing fewer pamphlets during the rest of this year would save funds. (The dollar saving could not be estimated at this time). To achieve greater sales, it was suggested that we issue pamphlets geared to new topics such as might be based on the Continuous Education Conference in Chicago and the Elementary Education Conference in Dallas, or pamphlets on the "Career School of the Future," "Educating the Children of the Poor," and "Children's Impact Upon the World."

Subcommittee Formation

It was suggested by the President that the Council members break into small groups for the purpose of coming up with proposals to meet the immediate "survival" needs of ASCD. Discussion by the Council indicated the following areas for further consideration:

Publications

- Book sale
- Book gifts for comprehensive members (a la book club offer)
- Less expensive publications
- Paperback yearbooks
- 2 to 4 page leaflet sent to membership when there are no publications coming out
- Short publications aimed at "hot issues" such as the alternative school
- Reissue articles that are especially popular with persons outside the membership
- Produce classroom materials.
In connection with the 2-4 page leaflet to be sent to the membership, Mrs. Fields suggested giving wider distribution to our basic ideas that are already in the yearbooks and publications rather than covering new things; for example, re-emphasize the ideas that are present in this year's yearbook. Dr. Greene further suggested publications geared to particular groups of people like superintendents, foundation people, anthropologists, etc.

**Membership**

- Include with the mailing of the conference program an application to be passed along to a friend as an invitation to attend the Annual Conference

- Personal contact with friends at home

- Reach demonstration teachers through key state people

- Reach state unit members who are not national members

- Assign someone from the Executive Council to "beat the bushes" for national membership and to work with the Washington staff in this area

- Produce an attractive one-page leaflet for the state units, stressing the advantages of ASCD membership. Include a covering letter requesting duplication and distribution by the state unit

- Specifically tailor a letter for "drop-outs"

- Obtain lists of "special interest" groups who do not have any professional tie with ASCD (e.g., federal programs like Head Start)

- Personalized membership brochure with special, personal appeal to various groups

**Annual Conference**

- Beef-up attendance at the Annual Conference (over 3,500 registrations, the number needed to cover the cost of the conference)

- Redesign the Annual Conference so that it is less elaborate in terms of money, but still do not remove the creativity

- Issue a one-page letter to educators in the Philadelphia area publicizing the conference - hi-lighting program activities - with a reminder that this would be a good way to use up in-service or institute time.

A possible way to raise money immediately, as suggested by Dr. Norris, would be to tactfully contact the many people in ASCD and request they each try to obtain "x number" new members. ASCD members might also be asked to place purchase orders for yearbooks - another source of revenue.
The need to focus every energy between now and March on the Annual Conference was stressed by the members.

The Executive Secretary was asked to give his opinion as to why the Association was in its present financial position. Dr. Atkins stated that the financial picture was a result of a combination of many factors which the staff and Executive Council were aware of in a general way, but the intensity of which was not foreseen. For instance, program development has definitely fallen off; as the declining national economy has dried up certain resources and revenue.

It was indicated that ASCD may not have a program that is appealing to the whole membership. Three other areas of major concern are the unloading of inventory, attendance at the Annual Conference, and the need to develop a statement of what ASCD is doing in order to publicize the Association. This statement should be prepared and circulated before March in order to convince people why they should join ASCD and why they should attend the Annual Conference.

It was agreed that the financial picture of the Association should be kept as quiet as possible until the total situation could be assessed. Dr. Loving wondered if there was any reason to believe that the membership projection and participation could be inaccurate, but it was pointed out by the Executive Secretary that during the last two years the projected figures have been accurate.

At the suggestion that we reconsider our future in the Reston plans, the President expressed his feeling that removing the Reston property would diminish our stability for the future.

It was suggested that perhaps a subcommittee should be appointed to review the inventory list and decide which publications are salable, particularly to certain interest groups; then packets could be made up consisting of two or three current publications coupled with two or three "off the shelf" items and then pushed to the right people.

The Senior Associate suggested the idea of developing a special sales campaign pitched toward collegiate people who use ASCD publications as textbooks. Dr. Leeper reported that such a campaign was going on at the moment in connection with, "Curricular Concerns in a Revolutionary Era."

After considerable discussion, Dr. Loving suggested that working task forces be formed as follows:

- **Annual Conference** - Dr. Greene, Dr. Ebersole, Mrs. Link, and Mrs. Arlington
- **Membership** - Dr. Davis, Mrs. Unruh, and Dr. Wilhelms
- **Inventory** - Dr. Loving, Mrs. Fields, and Dr. Leeper
- **Grants** - Dr. Norris, Dr. Ponder, Mr. Dobson, and Mr. Stodghill