



Graphic Studios, Courtesy Oak Park (Ill.) Schools

Who Is a Supervisor?

"I am," says the superintendent, the teacher, the department head, the consultant—and they prove it. When supervision becomes cooperative and creative it involves many people and is bigger than any one title with a fence around it. Who is a supervisor? Everyone who is helping teachers do a better and more satisfying job.

¶ *A superintendent as supervisor*

FROM A SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTEBOOK

VIRGIL M. ROGERS

REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE of the school system most superintendents are to some extent concerned with the problems of supervision. There are some administrators in large and small school systems who look upon their jobs as being exclusively administrative, assuming that the supervising principals and special supervisors will look after the work of routine supervision of all teaching. Fortunately, however, a good many administrators

recognize the essential inter-relationship between creative supervision and the whole field of educational administration.

Some administrators find their greatest satisfaction in the supervisory and counseling function. Some have discovered this after years of trying to be effective as administrators without participating extensively in supervision. These enthusiastic converts remind one of the convention of Presbyterian ministers who,

after long discussion, passed a resolution abolishing the doctrine of predestination. When the motion was finally adopted, an elderly theologian arose and presented a second motion to the effect that the body go on record making the new rule "retro-active."

Here are a few random pages from the superintendent's notebook describing his supervisory activities. Only items which seem to be significant are included.

Wed. The teachers' advisory council convened in the faculty library. As an ex officio member, the superintendent presented a point of view on the topic of intercultural and race relations as they seemed to relate to education. Conferred with the librarian on plans for supplementing the professional library with current volumes in the field of intercultural relations, and requested the preparation of a bibliography on the subject for distribution. Planned for a display of selected books to be placed in the foyer of the administration building for teacher use.

A conference was held with all new teachers for purposes of orientation to supplement the principals' conferences and to interpret school bulletins and policies.

Thurs. Met with Village-Wide Student Council today and discussed problems in the area of what is good citizenship for students in our schools; conferred with Educational Advisory Council, composed

of representatives of the parent groups and teacher groups in the community. Detailed suggestions for the establishment of a postwar planning commission grew out of the conference.

Fri. Conferred with the president of the Teachers' Association on plans for faculty discussion groups; considered ways and means of implementing decisions of the council on the study of race relations; accepted the responsibility for finding speakers to appear before faculty groups; conferred with the director of recreation and physical education about plans for a survey of playgrounds; met with a committee representing all departments to discuss playground problems as we recognized them; met with a committee of parents, at their request, relative to the work in one department of the school program which resulted in clearing up certain misunderstandings.

Mon. Today conferences were held with a faculty committee and a representative group from the Mothers' Council to plan a program of interpreting to parents our work in pupil-evaluation through testing; conferred with the curriculum coordinator on matters relating to the development of suitable instructional guide sheets for promoting effective teaching in the field of world cooperation and race relations; met with lay-teacher committee to discuss plans for suitable observance of "V-E" or "X" Day when it comes.

Tues. At request of a parent group, conferred with them on the advisability of permitting sixth-grade children to join a proposed social dancing class sponsored by a women's civic group in the community; arranged for a conference between the Mothers' Committee on social dancing and representatives of the department of physi-

A day's work for Virgil M. Rogers, superintendent of schools in River Forest, Ill., includes many activities which, strictly speaking, would be tagged "supervisory" rather than "administrative." But good administrators, believes Mr. Rogers, "recognize the essential inter-relationship between creative supervision and the whole field of educational administration." On these pages, the author presents in diary form a sampling of supervisory jobs that fall in his line of duty as a superintendent.

cal education; went over prospective school building sites with the director of the department of physical education and recreation to consider the adequacy of the sites for playground and athletic facilities.

Wed. Met with committee representing junior and senior kindergarten department and the superintendent of buildings and grounds relative to postwar planning for expansion of the facilities of this department; conferred with a principal on the work of Teacher "A," made suggestions for helping the teacher overcome difficulties she is having in trying to allow controlled freedom without the attendant disturbances which are preventing the development of good work habits; visited classes in primary rooms and saw inspiring work in several spots; got a good laugh when one first-grade teacher, who was building up experience background by making jam with her group asked what "scorch" meant and got the reply, "I think it is what mommy and daddy have when company comes."

Conferred with teacher who wants a leave of absence for graduate study, majoring in education of exceptional children with hearing and speech handicaps; interviewed prospective teachers for our system. It's so refreshing to find the combination of ability, training, initiative, health, imagination, and enthusiasm in an applicant as was true today.

Thurs. Discussed with the principals at the monthly conference a number of items touching on supervision, including testing, frequency of parent interviews, use of cumulative personal files in parent conferences, stimulation of school library usage, teacher cooperation with librarian, methods in music teaching and cooperation with custodians in leaving classroom floors free of trash.

Met with two teachers who are discouraged over the indifference of certain co-workers; the problem confronting them was how to reach a key person so that she would stop "dragging her feet," as one teacher described it, and participate more wholeheartedly in the total effort to improve the quality of teaching by more pupil participation and group planning. An important aspect of supervision seems to be to give encouragement and support to those who have discovered effective methods of creative teaching, but are frustrated when they come in contact with teachers who have grown cynical from years of routinized classroom teaching.

Conferred with Village fire department representative on plans for suitable educational activities to be participated in by the department working in each school during Fire Prevention Week. After considerable discussion it was agreed that it would not be practical or safe to promote a formal poster contest with rides on the fire engine for the winners. Decided to meet again to consider other proposals.

Fri. In visiting schools today came upon a group working on a unit on Chinese culture, which resulted in the superintendent learning much that he had not known about China; conferred with principal about personality conflicts between two staff members; after agreeing upon an approach to the problem, one is reminded of what Mortimer Snerd said when Charlie McCarthy asked him why he was so contrary, "I guess I am a psycho-neurotic with an inferiority complex." Addressed the faculty meeting on the implications of world revolution for education.

Obviously, supervision is a more subtle thing than routine classroom visiting, note-taking, criticizing, and applying formal evaluative criteria to modern teaching.

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