

meeting, the professional organization, and the parent-teacher group. The children must become aware of the contribution their activities are making toward the realization of the goals.

For educational administration there must be a continuous evaluation of policies and practices to determine their effectiveness in realizing the purpose for which they were established.

Put It into Practice

Unless educational administration recognizes and uses the classroom

teacher as a cooperator in controlling and directing educational development, children and adults will not realize their optimum development. Actual experience in cooperative educational administration on the part of the teacher is necessary if democratic functioning is to replace the competitive, authoritarian activity still found in so many classrooms. Children under authoritarian control do not manage their own affairs; and the schools do not fulfill their purpose of promoting efficient social interaction.

Administrative Leadership in the High School

HAROLD ALBERTY

In his analysis of needs in program planning in our American high schools, Harold Alberty, professor of education at Ohio State University, Columbus, points to the curriculum lag in secondary education. He goes on to point out specific responsibilities of the high school administrator in providing for a curriculum that will keep pace with the needs and changes of the society in which it lives.

IT IS RECOGNIZED generally that the secondary school is one of our society's principal agencies for bringing about the progressive reconstruction and refinement of democratic living. It is expected, therefore, that it will keep pace with the profound changes in American life by organizing its curriculum in terms of the basic and persistent needs, problems, and interests of young people to the end that they understand and participate actively in the continuous reinterpretation of

the values and practices of our culture and find a satisfying place in it.

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM LAGS

A casual examination of the program indicates that the curriculum is sadly inadequate to meet the demands of the present day. Many subjects can only be defended in terms of outworn values. Critical problems that beset youth are almost completely ignored in favor of the dreary covering of ground in the textbook. And all this in spite of the

fact that during the past decade many studies in the fields of psychology, the curriculum, teaching procedures, and evaluation have pointed the way to significant improvement in the program of secondary education.

Piecemeal Curriculum Reorganization

It has long been the practice of curriculum makers to attack the problem of reorganization in piecemeal fashion. A new need arises. It is met by a new course and a new textbook. Because the curriculum is already overcrowded it is usually made an elective so as not to interfere with the vested interests. This tinkering with the curriculum only adds to the hopeless patchwork of offerings which characterize the program of secondary education.

At the moment, a national commission is proposing the addition of a number of new courses to meet the needs of students who normally drop out of school early. In itself this is all to the good, but unless such additions are organically related to the total program they will perpetuate the already sharp dualism between the "cultural" and the "practical." Clearly, if we are to move ahead, such superficial practice must give way to a drastic re-examination of the whole curriculum structure. A few schools are leading the way, but in general secondary schools appear to be apathetic in the face of the persistent demands for reform.

The Administrator Finds Excuses

All too frequently the blame may be placed squarely on the shoulders of the administrator. He fails to create the environment essential to progressive

improvement and to provide the necessary leadership. He is preoccupied with problems of budget, public support, attendance, "discipline," and the maintenance of the physical plant and equipment. He fails to deal with the vital problems of curriculum reorganization.

Frequently his training has not equipped him for his leadership role. As a consequence he feels insecure in dealing with problems that involve working intimately with his staff. The *excuse* given is lack of time—and often this is the case. But more often the *reason* is a feeling of inadequacy or insecurity in dealing with the curriculum problem. So the administrator covers up his insecurity by spending time on problems which give the most satisfaction.

True, he can point with some justification to his poorly paid teaching staff, his conservative public, and the shortcomings of teacher-education institutions in preparing teachers sensitive to the need for reform. But basically the reason lies deeper, and in his more reflective moments he realizes it.

The Problem Is the Administrator's

Clearly, the responsibility for fundamental curriculum reorganization lies with the administrator. Without his support and leadership, teachers can do little.

True, the individual teacher can improve his own teaching. He can make significant changes within the traditional framework. But unless the school attacks the problem, such individual efforts are likely to bog down.

A look at any far-reaching program of curriculum reorganization reveals an administrator who gives it support and

leadership. And such leadership will be discovered to be democratic rather than authoritarian. Curriculum changes brought about by administrative fiat are likely to be temporary and ineffective, for the teachers who are expected to carry the changes into action have had no part in them and, as a consequence, feel no responsibility for their success.

WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

Most administrators claim that they operate democratically. Even when they utilize the most arbitrary procedures, they often insist that such procedures are necessary to the smooth running of the school and that in the long run the ends justify the means. Since there is great confusion as to the meaning of democratic leadership, it might be well to state some of its important qualities.

The democratic leader respects the personalities of the people with whom he works. This means that he assumes that his teachers have the intelligence to participate effectively in curriculum making, and that he works with his staff in such a way as to elicit the distinctive contributions of all.

The democratic leader is skilled in the techniques of group planning and action. As a member of the group having responsibility to the public for the total school program, he tries to sensitize the group to problems, proposes fruitful hypotheses for their solution, and helps to marshal pertinent data. But he does not insist upon a particular solution. His role is to stimulate action, to keep the program moving, to provide the setting for effective work, but not to dictate or coerce. He has faith in group planning and decisions arrived at through full and free discussion.

It follows from the above generalizations, that *the democratic leader accepts decisions of the group and carries such decisions into effect.* The real test of the administrator's sincerity and faith in the democratic process is found in his willingness to accept decisions that run counter to his own convictions and carry them into effect. Unless he is willing to do this, teachers are not likely to take seriously his announced belief in democratic action. A good deal of the lethargy on the part of teachers to participate in curriculum reorganization is due to skepticism as to whether they will have a genuine part in the final decisions.

GUIDES FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

Obviously no cut and dried program of curriculum reorganization can be formulated out of relationship to a specific situation. The teaching staff and the administrator will plan the program cooperatively in terms of principles and procedures which they set up. However, it is possible to present some leads which have been found helpful in various situations.

Identifying Problems

Generally speaking, thinking starts with a problem. Curriculum reorganization is no exception. The group must feel the need for change.

Since the administrator, by virtue of his position, sees the school in terms of its over-all operation and in its relationship to other institutions and agencies, he is in a very favorable position to initiate a study of the problems which are particularly pertinent. He may, therefore, propose a plan for defining and studying them. One plan which

has proved effective is to organize the staff into groups for the purpose of identifying the major problems.

The first type of organization which suggests itself is to form committees in the various departments or areas of the curriculum, (e.g.) science, social studies, English, guidance. The result of such an organization is usually the defining of problems in terms of special areas, rather than the school as a whole.

Another organization, which has been found to be desirable, is one in which cross-section groups made up of representatives of all of the departments or areas is formed. (And by all means representatives of the elementary school should be included.) This type of organization stimulates the interchange of ideas—and incidentally provides an opportunity for the staff to become acquainted. Ultimately the problems identified by these groups may be pooled by a central committee and submitted to the faculty as a whole.

Clarifying the Philosophy

When faculty agreement upon the problems submitted has been secured, the next logical step is to set up a plan for solving them. Faculty discussion is bound to reveal different points of view and basic philosophies held by various members of the teaching staff. The administrator should assume responsibility for helping the staff to clarify its beliefs.

Before the faculty can proceed intelligently upon a program for solving the problems, it is necessary to secure common agreement upon basic philosophy. The staff will need to become acquainted with the conflicting philosophies that are being advocated by edu-

cational leaders and come to a decision as to what beliefs are actually held and what kinds of programs they imply.

This calls for a careful study and discussion of the literature. Obviously the administrator will provide the necessary leadership. At first the level of agreement may be low, but it provides a starting point for further clarification and ultimately leads to a higher level of common agreement.

Planning the Attack

The detailed plan for attacking the problems which have been identified will, of course, take its character from the problems themselves; but the administrator has the task of leading the staff in formulating these plans. They may take the form of a community study, of an analysis of the basic needs and problems of students, of an evaluation of existing practices in the program of tests and measurements, of a study of the programs of the leading schools in the country. The determining factor in settling on any particular plan must be a staff decision as to the most effective way of gathering the data necessary for intelligent action.

Utilizing Personnel

The administrator also has the responsibility for seeing to it that all resources in personnel are utilized. A mistake sometimes made is to select only a few key teachers to carry on an experimental program, without involving other staff members or, as is too often the case, without the knowledge or approval of the staff as a whole. For example, a few likeminded teachers are selected by the administrator to start a core curriculum. The staff is merely

"told" about the new venture. The success of the venture seems to threaten the security of the subject-matter departments. The result is criticism—or even sabotage.

If the plan had been formulated, discussed, and adopted by the staff as a whole, all members would have felt a responsibility for its success. Such a plan would involve utilizing the subject matter teachers and special supervisors for the purpose of helping to plan resource units and possibly to teach the more specialized phases of the core. It would also utilize the research facilities of the school for the purpose of continuous evaluation of the project. At various stages, students and parents would also be involved.

Securing Good Public Relations

The responsibility for leading the public relations program also falls upon the shoulders of the administrator. Many curriculum reorganization programs fail because the public does not understand what the school is trying to do. What is advocated is not a "selling" program but rather a program of active participation on the part of the community. The level of participation will, of course, vary with the problems which are being studied, and will have to be determined by the administrator and his staff, for, in a final

analysis, curriculum reorganization is a professional job.

Providing Physical Facilities

The administrator will need to assume major responsibility for providing physical facilities. These include releasing teachers for full or part-time work on the curriculum; providing stenographic service; securing adequate rooms, equipment, and supplies; providing adequate library resources; and the like. This will inevitably involve a substantial budget. Without adequate financing, curriculum reorganization is next to impossible.

Carrying the Program into Action

Finally, the administrator must lead in carrying the new program into action. During the experimental period he must guard against unfair criticism and evaluation. This stage is crucial. If teachers discover that the administration is not behind them in giving the new program a fair chance to succeed, it is unlikely that they shall again be willing to give time and energy to serious study of the school's problems.

In a final word, the administrator is the key to successful cooperative curriculum reorganization. Without his sympathetic and intelligent leadership, the school is likely to continue perpetuating the status quo.



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