

Administration and Instruction as Inseparables

If instructional practices are to be materially improved, the organizational implications of any area of change must be carefully considered. Many widely advocated school practices are not in actual operation today because the administrative aspects have not been adequately provided for. Administrators, sincerely desirous of putting modern school programs into effect, must assume their share of responsibility by giving leadership which makes desirable instructional changes possible. The administrative problems associated with the year-round school program, the curriculum program in the high school, the surveying of teacher opinion, the wise use of consultant service, and the freeing of teachers for service in curriculum development programs are problems dealt with by the authors of the following articles.

Time for Teachers to Study Their Problems

Alice Pittman

In March, 1947, at its annual meeting in Chicago, ASCD went on record favoring the statement that "time for teacher planning should be included in the school day." More than a resolution is necessary, however, if such a desirable practice is to be put into effect. Alice Pittman, elementary supervisor, Springfield, Missouri, tells how administrative adjustments in one system provided time for in-service activity and program planning during the regular school day.

EXCELLENT PROGRAMS of in-service teacher education may be unproductive unless administration is realistic about the time teachers have to participate in the programs. Because releasing teachers during the school day obviously involves difficulties, there may be value in reports of experiences

telling of ways which have been devised for making teacher time available for educational planning.

A Staff of Regular Substitutes Serves

Springfield, Missouri has one hundred and eighty elementary teachers distributed in twenty-one schools of

varying sizes. A staff of seven teachers of substitute status is permanently employed and used to release teachers.

Several years of experimentation have resulted in an organized plan for distribution of time. A substitute is made available for each teacher two quarter days per month. In addition, substitutes are assigned to buildings on a regular schedule, the amount of time depending on the size of the building. Principals distribute this additional time among teachers according to the needs of the school's program at any given time. Thus flexibility is combined with regularity in the time available for teacher use.

This is the over-all picture. To it should be added some details of operation which have been found crucial in the effectiveness of the plan.

Personnel Use Is Planned

It seems better in our system to have three or four substitutes in a building at a given time than to have one more frequently. A principal who knows that on given half days six or eight teachers will regularly be available for conferences or other activities, can arrange other duties so as to keep this time free for participating with teachers. Likewise there is economy of time for other consultants who may be involved in the school's program. So the schedule of released time encourages planned use of the time as an integral part of a school improvement program.

Having three or four teachers free at the same time makes cooperative planning possible. Schools concerned about democratic living for children come eventually to attach importance to group thinking by teachers. One reason

is that group thinking is found to be a fundamental resource for solving problems. Another is that teachers universally need experiences to develop for themselves techniques of cooperative planning which they are attempting to teach children. An arrangement by which three or four teachers and a principal can work together consecutively seems ideal for getting group planning and action on many of the problems involved in improving a school program.

Flexibility Permits Adjustment

While it has seemed important to have substitute time assigned to schools and teachers on a regular schedule, there are occasions on which interruption of the schedule makes it possible to carry on special in-service activities. The whole school system can sometimes profit by sending a few teachers to an important educational meeting. Visiting consultants are available to work intensively for two or three days with the faculty of a single school or with selected teachers from several schools. Certain teachers need to be released at times for the many committees through which teachers participate actively in administration, a point of emphasis in our system. For purposes such as these, there is general agreement that the regular schedule for assignment of substitutes will be interrupted. This makes it possible to incorporate into the in-service program activities which would otherwise be impossible.

Secretarial Service Helps

One thing we have learned is that the plan does not operate automatically. There are more details than are appar-

ent which can cause loss of time and frustration for all concerned. After considerable experimentation, the numerous details of operation have been made a responsibility of one of the secretaries in the central office. For example, it has been found necessary in our system to provide transportation during the noon hour for substitutes who must change schools, and the schedule of transportation is an item requiring attention daily. When interruption of the schedule seems advisable, considerable planning is involved in making temporary arrangements. Details such as these require that the daily operation of the plan be in the hands of someone who has insight into the purposes to be served and sufficient skill in personal relationships to encourage a spirit of give and take.

Cost Must Be Admitted

There are factors on the debit side in our plan for releasing teacher time. One is, of course, cost. The salaries of seven substitute teachers, plus a portion of the salary of a secretary, plus transportation costs give the sum which, in our system, must be weighed against value received. Even when teachers of substitute status are used, with qualifications and salaries not equal to those of regular teachers, and when every precaution is taken to eliminate waste in the use of time, the total cost of the plan is considerable. Whether or not it is justified must be determined in the light of what it adds to the in-service program. It is pertinent to consider, however, how much a school system may otherwise waste in a school improvement program which adds up to

little improvement because teachers do not have time to share in it.

Children's Needs Are Considered

A factor which should be carefully considered is the loss, if any, to pupils during the time they are working with substitute teachers. One arrangement for minimizing loss is the assigning of the same substitute to a given class as regularly as possible when the teacher is away. Selection by teachers of activities in the school day which can be most readily handled by a substitute has proved helpful. It has been a matter of policy to consider the amount of time a teacher has been away from her group in deciding what in-service activities she should undertake. Teachers frequently express opinions as to whether or not they can profitably be away from their classes at a given time.

Planning can greatly minimize loss due to absence of a teacher from her class. If we assume it cannot be completely eliminated, we must decide whether an occasional situation in which a class may have less efficient teaching than the regular teacher could provide is off-set by the gains from continuous educational planning by a faculty.

Lay Support Is Necessary

There is a public relations factor of which schools may well be aware. "Substitute teacher" has an undesirable connotation for many parents. Possibly a better title could be used. Too often laymen do not understand the values in a comprehensive and continuous school improvement program. Therefore, the releasing of teachers through the use of

substitutes may require interpretation to the public.

We're Convinced It Works

After an experience of several years, the values we are getting from increased participation of teachers seems amply to justify the plan in spite of problems involved. There is need for

experimentation with various means for giving teachers the needed time for educational planning. Springfield's experience with the use of substitutes has been promising. The problem of releasing teacher time is doubtless not insurmountable if administration comes to recognize the importance of adequate provision for it.

Taking Curriculum Soundings

LESLIE W. JOHNSON

Administrators are more frequently making use of the opinion poll for giving an accurate picture of educational needs. How one school system used this method as an actual means for curriculum improvement is described by Leslie W. Johnson, director of curriculum in the Superior, Wisconsin public schools.

A GOOD PLANK in any educational platform is a statement of sharing in policymaking by all participants affected by the policies. It has become such an important principle in the recent philosophy of administration that various means are used to put the principle into practice. However, the mechanics of organization often prevent wide-spread use of the practice—it is difficult to get groups together; there isn't enough time for meetings.

Values must be weighed in making arrangements for group planning. Specially constructed techniques and devices need to be considered to gain means by which staff members may participate. In curriculum planning, the curriculum coordinator needs to "keep

his ear to the ground" in order to be effective in guiding phases of curriculum development.

THE CASE FOR FREQUENCY

Surveys of teacher opinion have often provided the springboard for an attack on real and current problems. In 1945, for example, the Curriculum Guiding Committee of the Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program launched a questionnaire entitled, *Inquiry on Curriculum Problems*. The volume of material (twelve essay-type questions) on a state-wide survey made the problem of tabulation difficult. Nevertheless, the questions raised were extremely useful for self-analysis and discussion in local communities. They

Copyright © 1948 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.