

# Your Role in Creative Administration

If school administrators are to focus successfully their attention and efforts on joint administrative action by all individuals involved in the school program, there must be an understanding of the peculiar responsibility of each person. Superintendents and children, teachers and parents, supervisors and boards of education, principals and curriculum directors—all have a part to play. A number of the articles which follow focus on these individual and group responsibilities, with guides for more effective and cooperative effort.

## *Supervision as It Functions in the Instructional Program: A Discussion*

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In response to a request from EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, a group of teachers in the Denver public schools discussed the function of educational leadership in schools dedicated to cooperative planning of the curriculum by pupils, parents, teachers, and administrators. Among the issues with which such schools are concerned are: the role of the supervisor as a service person; the function of the principal as an instructional leader; the function of the classroom teacher as a consultant; the importance of cooperative participation in developing the instructional program; the need for freedom for experimentation in curriculum building; and the role of the central supervisory organization. Those participating were Maurice R. Ahrens, director of the Department of Instruction, Mildred L. Biddick, principal of Fairview and Garfield Elementary Schools, Prudence Bostwick, supervisor in the Department of Instruction, Veronica E. Casey, coordinator, Smiley Junior High School, and Robert G. McComas, a classroom teacher at East High School. After the discussion by the group had begun, the tape recorder was turned on just as Veronica Casey spoke:

*Casey:* Are you saying that if someone in a supervisory capacity would sit down with the teacher and help her plan an experience and go in to see the group in action, the teacher would then be ready to take criticism or praise and go forward from that point? I feel that such help would do her a great deal of good because through it she has had the benefit of expert advice.

*Ahrens:* I'm wondering now. You're stressing here the observation idea which I think is one of the minor aspects of providing instructional leadership. It seems to me a principal has to provide an opportunity for teachers to sit down together and plan. There's where in-service training and the growth of teachers take place. If he provides that opportunity with leadership which he

has delegated to his faculty, there is a much better chance for improving instruction in the classroom than if the principal goes through the process of visiting a class, observing, taking notes, and discussing his observation with the teacher.

*Biddick:* I asked a group of my teachers this afternoon what they thought were the responsibilities of a principal. They said the first thing a principal has to do in a building is to set the tone as to whether there will be a cooperative approach in which all teachers participate or a competitive, individualistic approach in which the principal compares one teacher with another. If the principal tends to want all teachers to follow an individual plan, then you won't get teachers working cooperatively and you won't build a group spirit.

*Casey:* I agree heartily with you that the major function of the principal in his building is to free the time and provide situations so teachers may plan together. But what about the teacher who is often neglected? She has spent hours of planning and does what she thinks is a pretty good job, but she would like someone from the central supervisory staff to come in and indicate some of the good things she is doing and give her a pat on the back and some security to go forward. And that isn't done often enough. We assume that when teachers are doing a good job they should be satisfied—but they want help from someone at the top.

*Abrens:* Let's not forget the fact that the teacher can serve as a consultant to other teachers. They're not so far removed from persons who are sup-

posed to be experts, the principals and the supervisors; and they have many competencies and many techniques and procedures which they can share in a group situation.

*Biddick:* If we are honest, we know that the teacher is much more expert in many areas in the classroom than the principal or anyone who comes in from the outside.

*Abrens:* Especially when you recognize and believe that the curriculum is built in the classroom through the teacher working with her pupils. This, of course, means that responsibility for developing the program of instruction falls upon the teacher and a group of children; therefore, it seems to me that any kind of service that we provide must be directly related to the job the teacher is doing in the classroom.

*Biddick:* That's right. But the principal has the responsibility to set up a situation in a building where teachers can share with one another in planning and in helping one another, not because they are asked to, but because they have a stake in the program that is being carried on there.

*Abrens:* It seems to me that every school has a definite responsibility in developing an instructional program that meets the needs of its pupils and of the community in which the school is located. If that is true, the principal must assume the responsibility for instructional leadership on that basis.

*Bostwick:* Shouldn't it be his responsibility to bring to his teachers the kind of help they need? That is, teachers will know some of the resources; but it's the business of the principal to see that they receive every bit of help that is available to them from the central

office and from the community. He needs to know more than anyone else about resources.

*Biddick:* Isn't it the responsibility of the principal or anyone else concerned with the development of a program to engineer for teachers the kinds of experiences out of which a better building program will emerge?

*Casey:* Is that the reason, then, that he delegates responsibility for audio-visual aids, evaluation, occupational adjustment, and other services; so that all of these rich services can be brought within the building and made available to teachers?

*Biddick:* Yes, because it doesn't matter from what angle you attack this business of education. If you're working on the audio-visual aids program for a school, you have to wrestle with the philosophy of what you are trying to do and what the needs of a particular group of youngsters are. You have to re-examine constantly what your philosophy is, what your objectives are, and what are the means at hand. You must constantly ask: did the film or record do what you wanted it to do, or didn't it? Such a process provides teacher growth and a more realistic program in the school.

*Abrens:* We've talked so far about providing for small group planning. It's quite possible to plan in these small groups and lose sight of the total program in the building.

It seems to me that the principal as instructional leader must set up an organization which gives an opportunity for planning on a total school basis. My feeling is that if the faculty is small, such planning can take place in the faculty as a whole. If the faculty is

too large, the principal should set up some kind of organization which is representative of the faculty. In this group, specific planning can take place and reports can be made back to the faculty. Such a steering group, in co-operation with the total faculty, senses the needs of teachers and develops the program on the basis of the whole school, rather than on the basis of individual units.

*Bostwick:* Would you go so far as to say that this is the policymaking body of the school?

*Abrens:* Yes, that would be one function.

*McComas:* In the school in which I teach, there is a large faculty—over ninety teachers. The main planning group is a curriculum council composed of teachers from the various school departments and others selected by the faculty. In order to facilitate specific planning, the curriculum council has selected a steering committee. Both of these groups meet regularly.

This makes it possible to cut across departmental lines and give consideration to problems that affect the total school program. There is a give and take between these groups and the faculty. Problems may originate in the faculty or in either the council or the steering committee. The steering committee makes recommendations to the council, and the council makes recommendations to the faculty. The faculty as a whole makes the final decisions.

*Biddick:* A steering committee should help plan the particular approach to the problems and the attack upon them which seems to be the most promising for helping to facilitate group planning with the total faculty. Isn't that

# The PROGRAM of INSTRUCTION DEVELOPS AND FUNCTIONS IN

## Local SCHOOL UNITS



FACULTY PLANS

FACULTIES of each administrative unit set up a program of instruction that is best fitted to meet the needs, interests, and concerns of children in their respective schools.

TEACHER-TEACHER PLANNING groups study special phases of the program; call upon those services available.

TEACHER-PUPIL PLANNING is used in developing learning experiences in the classroom.



FACULTY CALLS IN SERVICES

### The Building Committee of Instruction or Faculty Acting as a Committee-of-the-Whole



TEACHER AND PUPILS PLAN TOGETHER

SUBMITS problems to citywide committees.  
CONSIDERS problems presented from citywide committees.

SERVES as a planning committee for the development of the building program.



FACULTY REFERS PROBLEMS

## THE PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION IS COORDINATED AT EACH LEVEL BY

### Elementary School Committee on Instruction

40 principals  
40 teachers (selected from each unit)  
Supervisors and Directors  
Elementary School  
Committee of Sixteen  
12 teachers, 4 principals, selected at random by the Committee on Instruction

### Junior High School Committee on Instruction

All principals ..... 11  
Coordinators ..... 11  
Teachers Elected ..... 11  
Supervisors and Directors

### Senior High School Committee on Instruction

All Principals ..... 6  
Coordinators ..... 12  
Teachers elected ..... 6  
Supervisors and Directors

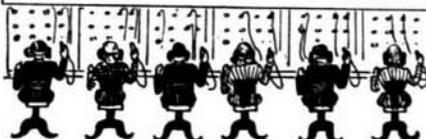
MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES of all-city committees are: TO COORDINATE program of instruction at each level; TO DETERMINE policies and principles on which program is based; TO GIVE ASSISTANCE in the improvement of instruction as requested at each level.

## The PROGRAM of INSTRUCTION is Coordinated on a City-Wide Basis by

### AN EXECUTIVE BOARD

Chairmen of 3 committees of instruction, 1 supervisor, director of department of instruction, the superintendent, and 2 assistant superintendents (ex officio)

2 elementary principals	1 junior high coordinator	1 junior high teacher
1 junior high principal	1 senior high coordinator	1 senior high teacher
1 senior high principal		4 elementary teachers



it? Isn't that what a steering committee is supposed to do?

*McComas:* That's right. For instance, in my school the problem of study halls came up, with special concern for the attitudes of both teachers and pupils in a study hall. We started working on the problem in the steering committee, to which it was referred by the teachers' interest committee and the student council. The steering committee took the problem to the curriculum council and asked that a study be made of the value of study halls. Students, parents, and teachers were involved in the evaluation and recommended policies to the faculty for their decision.

*Casey:* But I think another step is sometimes needed. In our school there is a building committee on instruction similar to your curriculum council. When the committee has a problem similar to problems in other schools, it presents this problem to the central committee on instruction so that teachers from all schools may participate in the solution. For instance, the need for redefining and implementing the scope and sequence of the junior high school program was proposed in the central committee, and a subcommittee was appointed to carry on this work.

*McComas:* That is certainly consulting with teachers. When you have all faculties involved, you really are making the democratic process work.

*Abrens:* A minute ago someone mentioned that one of the responsibilities of the principal was that of making available services from the central supervisory staff. It seems to me that there's something very important here. School systems have made every effort to provide competent consultant service to

the schools. My feeling is that if the principal doesn't utilize that service, he is shirking his responsibility as an instructional leader. He ought to be on the alert, not only in using the supervisory or consultant staff that is provided centrally, but in utilizing any other resources of the community that will help in the building of an adequate instructional program.

*Casey:* But that's too big a job for principals of large schools. That's why I believe it's important that they have assistants. No one person can be aware of all the advantages in the community that can be used in the instructional program. If teachers are made familiar with the central services through an orientation program early in the fall or at the time of their induction, then they themselves become agents for bringing services to the school.

*Biddick:* In many cases there will have to be either individuals or committees which will serve as spurs and reminders to the principal to get these services that are needed because it's difficult for any one person to see all of the needs.

*Bostwick:* That seems to me why it is important to have individuals who are responsible for finding needs. I wonder if our own central committees on instruction aren't good agencies for just such services. There we have the coordinators in the buildings, the principals, and teacher representatives, all of whom can indicate needs in their particular buildings. Other people may have similar needs and, in that way, there comes to be a sharing, not only of common needs, but also sharing of ways in which those needs can be met. It seems to me that a central

staff has responsibilities for helping people who are working as faculties to know the needs they have in common with others and to share in the solution of the needs of the system as a whole.

*Biddick:* There's another thing that someone coming from the central office can do in a building and that is to challenge the thinking of the people in that building so that they see more in the problems they were looking at than they did before.

*Ahrens:* It seems to me that one of the greatest things that principals can do is to help teachers identify problems they are facing in their daily work, and then help them set up some ways they can solve those problems. After all, the principal shouldn't solve them himself.

*Biddick:* Oh, no. But he must make it possible for those problems to be solved. Whatever resources it is necessary to tap to help teachers solve those problems should be tapped.

*Bostwick:* Many times he'd better just let these committees go ahead and solve them.

*McComas:* And see that when the committee makes the report and says, now here is the work and here are the things that we have done, that those ideas are carried out and not just filed away.

*Bostwick:* That's right. Really in this concept of democratic sharing and cooperation the administrator does have a tremendous responsibility in carrying out the decisions that are made. That doesn't mean that he cannot be a criticizing member of the group; but it does mean that he cannot cut off the thinking that has been done by a group

of people who have been given a responsibility.

*Casey:* You're right. The biggest morale builder in a faculty that I know is the condition that is created when the principal frees the whole situation; when teachers begin to think and act in the knowledge that the principal will make an honest effort to carry out their decisions.

*Ahrens:* You've mentioned this word *free*. We ought to recognize the fact that nothing is going to happen to any extent unless the teacher has freedom for experimentation in the classroom. In other words, there's another responsibility of the principal in his role as an instructional leader. While he must give the teacher a sense of freedom, at the same time he must also provide the assistance that's necessary to make that experimentation as successful as it can possibly be.

*Bostwick:* Yes, and as significant as possible for the youngsters who are having the experience so that a teacher doesn't go off merely doing just anything that comes into his mind.

It seems to me, too, that there has to be a concern by the central administration to have understanding and respect for the kind of thing that is going on in the school. We were talking about the fact that there had to be freedom for teachers to experiment in curriculum. That means that the old concept of curriculum that is planned centrally by a small committee of teachers doesn't really have validity. When the need exists for curriculum materials that are wanted in all schools, as many teachers as possible should participate in the development of those materials. All teachers concerned should have an opportu-

nity to criticize and make suggestions for their improvement.

*Abrens:* Although we have said that the school ought to have a considerable amount of autonomy in the development of an instructional program, I have a firm belief that there must be a central coordinating agency that deals with problems that are city-wide in nature, that all schools experience. If we have every school solving problems that are common to every other school, we're going to have a lot of duplication and wasted energy. There must be some coordination of the instructional program, and I think a well-conceived and well-organized central organization can serve a very important purpose in the improvement of instruction in a school system.

*McComas:* I think the central organization can provide still another service—that of letting teachers know what is going on in other schools. All teachers are interested in getting good ideas from other teachers and in sharing their own.

*Abrens:* It is my belief that a central organization for the coordination of instruction, or the improvement of instruction, must have a staff that can provide service to teachers. There must also be an organization, representative of the schools, in which city-wide problems of all the schools can be identified. It should be an organization so planned that solution of problems can be carried on in cooperation with the teachers in the schools.

*Casey:* An example of that was the occasion when teachers wanted to identify the units desirable for general education classes. Each school submitted units. You remember the list went back and forth between the schools and the

committee on instruction until finally we arrived at those which gave direction to all the junior high schools.

*Abrens:* You see, if we have a large number of individual schools, each working on its own with no coordination whatsoever, we have no common point of view, no common philosophy, and a duplication of effort. Many other problems arise. If we perfect an organization whereby we have this democratic give and take and through which we achieve participation and cooperative effort, many of these problems can be solved for the benefit of teachers who are working in the classroom.

*Biddick:* Isn't it true that every individual in every group has to wrestle with some of the specific factors in the situation, personally and individually; and having done that and arrived at an understanding of philosophy and basic principles, he then is able to go much more rapidly and accept other solutions that have been worked out by other groups with a similar process, without having to labor through each one of those cycles. That's just what your central committee can do—share the work done in various buildings.

*Abrens:* That's right.

*Bostwick:* And the central committee on instruction can also find common needs which can then be worked out by committees of the committee on instruction with representation from many different schools. Then you get that wonderful thing, the sharing of ideas, which is the way ideas are fertilized and through which they develop to the point where they become much richer than if they were simply held within building areas.

*Abrens:* Here is a good example of a

common problem. In a system where many of the schools are working toward the idea of life experience curriculum, faculties soon get to the place where they recognize the need for discovering the needs, concerns, and interests of the pupils. Such discovering can be done by faculties in individual schools. But you get a much better picture of what the needs, interests, and concerns of pupils are if you have all the schools, all the faculties, participating.

*Biddick:* And having participated and explored the needs in a particular area, those teachers are able to use the studies made by other groups in other areas because they have the feel for the process that's involved.

*Casey:* Our study reported in *Health Interests of Children* is a good example.

*Abrens:* Yes. That study had greater validity because it represented a large number of schools.

*Biddick:* I think the building of the elementary school report card, which

resulted from experimentation in a large number of schools, was another example.

*Abrens:* It seems to me that we are saying that supervision and service are synonymous and that individual schools must have considerable autonomy in developing a program based on the needs of children and the community. We certainly believe that the principal must assume the responsibility for instructional leadership in the development of the program, and that the curriculum should be developed through the cooperative participation of all teachers. Above all things, supervision should permit and encourage freedom for experimentation.

Coordination of instruction should be carried on through a central organization which represents all teachers adequately and provides full opportunity for them to participate in policy-making and in developing specific plans for the improvement of instruction.

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