

# An Emerging Program of Supervision

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This is the story of one way in which an emerging program of supervision is growing up, state-wide. It is West Virginia's story of recruitment of county supervisors from the ranks of good classroom teachers and principals; of the amazing way in which, through their in-service experiences together, local needs are made the basis of state planning; and of progress in the development of a program for pre-service training of supervisors. Maud J. Broyles is assistant state supervisor of elementary schools in the State Department of Education, Charleston.

AMONG THOSE PROBLEMS which supervisors in West Virginia are thinking through together and with widening groups are the many phases in the development of continuous progress through the twelve-year program of public education—evaluation of teaching and learning situations; an adjusted reading program; the development of child study groups; pupil progress; problems in art, nutrition, and social living; meeting the need for trained supervisors. . . .

In order to see the picture of supervision as it is developing in West Virginia we need to look briefly at the present pattern of supervisory activity—the two state-wide workshops yearly, the area meetings, varied local activities, and the inter-relationship of all these in identifying and solving problems. We need, also, to look at the over-all pattern in which supervision functions under the county unit.

## Time for Growth

The story begins one day in March, 1933, when West Virginia abolished the offices of every city, town, and rural-

district board of education in the state. Independent school districts, small and large, were suddenly wiped out; the county became the administrative and supervisory unit.

The fifty-five units thus established vary widely in financial ability, population, topography, occupation, and the percent of rural schools. The smallest has about fifty teachers, the largest over 1,600. Counties, and areas within counties, have special problems as well as recurring needs. Yet for every county the county unit law set a common concern: *For all children an equal chance for education* so far as can be provided by state equalization funds.

Growth in supervision came slowly. For perhaps ten years the major emphasis went to administrative problems. By 1945 a study showed that twenty-nine assistant superintendents gave full time to elementary school supervision and a growing number of counties employed helping teachers, especially in music and art. In the same year the State Department set as a goal at least one full-time elementary supervisor in each county. That goal has been realized.

With no pre-service training program to provide candidates, superintendents chose supervisors from the ranks of good teachers and principals. Because of the need thus created for in-service training, the State Department cooperated with counties—at first largely through bulletins and meetings. Out of an occasional regional meeting there grew a continuing organization. Progress was being made, but not swiftly enough.

### **Workshops Build Unity**

Then in June, 1946, five colleges offering teacher training joined with the State Department of Education in sponsoring on the campus of Marshall College a state-wide workshop in instructional supervision. Resource people from other states, from colleges and universities, from the U. S. Office of Education, and from the National Education Association were on hand to help us. A month later the State Department sponsored a "School in Supervision" planned with special consideration for new personnel.

These two meetings seemed to pull together forces that had been building up since the county unit was adopted. From them came the recommendation for the semi-annual workshops at Jackson's Mill. Since the first one, held in January, 1947, these workshops have called into action ever-increasing representation in planning, participation, and local follow-up.

To understand the togetherness which has grown up from these meetings, one needs to know Jackson's Mill—a state recreation center with permanent cottages, large and small; assembly halls; the great Mount Vernon dining room;

and quiet acres of landscaped lawn. This setting is ideal both for scheduled meetings and for those informal discussions which build friendship and common understanding.

The 1947 summer workshop was scheduled to follow the county superintendents' conference. Many superintendents remained. In this meeting the group as a whole got a clearer vision of the child in a twelve-year curriculum adjusted to his needs.

At the third Jackson's Mill workshop the West Virginia Association of School Supervisors was formed, an association much like ASCD in that it cuts across groups, "any person working in or vitally concerned with the improvement of the public school" being eligible for membership.

From the national and state Associations as well as from the local, those who have planned the Jackson's Mill meetings have drawn inspiration. State colleges and consultants from out of state have contributed richly to the program. At present these workshops are a strong force in the development of better supervision in West Virginia.

Between state-wide workshops there are meetings in the six supervisory areas as well as within smaller groups. The State Department, upon invitation, works closely in these programs. Although areas grew up independently and their programs vary widely, many of them will be helped this winter by suggestions of a committee of their presidents in regard to local use of the state-wide workshop reports; number of regional meetings; inviting representative principals, teachers, and lay people to meetings; long-term planning; immediate goals; and evaluation.

### The Beginnings of a Plan for Preparation

In response to the recommendation of the Marshall workshop, a committee of college, State Department, and county personnel met during the July, 1947, workshop to recommend "a pattern of college training and field service leading to a supervisors' certificate."

The struggle of this committee is a story of seeking and developing a trend of state-wide thinking. Due to the shifting committee membership, for awhile it appeared that the function of each meeting was to reject the progress report of the previous meeting and start anew; although close examination of these reports reveal a growing agreement.

In July of 1948, however, both the Superintendents' and the Supervisors' Association adopted the committee report which is expected, within the year, to form the basis of a program of supervisory training. It states that:

- Any plan of training for supervisors should be consistent with the concept of a twelve-year curriculum. It should prepare the supervisor to understand and work effectively in both the elementary and secondary schools, although the major emphasis of training may be directed toward some specific area of service.
- The graduate program of education must necessarily permit a range of choice in experiences consistent with the trainees' varying backgrounds of education and experience.
- Field experiences are an essential part of the training program and the committee recommends that a minimum of twelve hours of graduate credit be given for the satisfactory completion of guided

field experience which would cover not less than a two-year period. The field experience should be an integral part of the county supervisory program and should include experiences in both the elementary and secondary schools.

- The persons beginning supervisory training should have a bachelor's degree with three to five years of successful teaching experience.
- A program of graduate training approved for a supervisor should, without loss of credit, lead to a master's degree and a supervisor's certificate.

An advisory committee at work on a program of experiences for the education of supervisors will report to the Association in February.

### Today—and Tomorrow

Just past—in October—came the second school planned especially for new personnel. Members of the executive committee of the state supervisory association helped with the plans and the "teaching."

In the areas and within counties and sections of counties groups are working on specifics in the implementation of a twelve-year program, with adjustment in reading receiving special emphasis. In the plans completed in November for the February workshop, evaluation of progress and further study in reading, evaluation of child growth, and the development of child study groups are major topics. Local need and cooperative endeavor have shaped the beginnings of the development of supervision as a resource service in West Virginia. These same forces must point the way toward further change and growth.



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