

understanding and in working toward a solution of the problem. Likewise, it should assist members of the group in getting more depth in their study of the problem.

The principal particularly has a role in assisting teachers as they attempt to carry out a plan of action. He should work side by side with a teacher or group of teachers as necessary and also provide opportunities to talk over plans, problems and progress. He especially needs to give encouragement, to

show appreciation of effort and to recognize accomplishment. Frequently he may need to take the initiative in arranging for teachers to share ideas and help each other as they encounter difficulty or achieve success. Thus, he serves as a coordinator of their efforts.

Cooperative faculty attack on common problems plays a fundamental role in growth of teachers and curriculum improvement. How to speed this process at the local school level is an urgent educational problem.

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PRINCIPALSHIP PREPARATION at the Crossroads

What is the principal's job? What personal qualities and preparation will help him carry his responsibilities? Through in-service education and college programs, today's principal should be getting far greater professional assistance than he actually is receiving.

WHAT IS done, or left undone, during the next five years will cast the mold for elementary education and for the general organization for school administration and supervision for the next generation. In the United States there are somewhat more than 21,000 public school workers who hold the title of elementary school principal. In 1948, 26 percent of these principals were 50 years old or older. As these persons reach retirement new principals will be recruited to take their places. No doubt 5,000 new elementary schools will be built during the 1950's.

This means that between 1950 and 1960 or 1965 about 10,000 new elementary school principals will enter the school administration field. What these people bring with them to their new jobs, and what they can become after their initial appointment, will determine, in large measure, the direction that elementary education will take during the coming generation. A plan for immediate action can be envisioned from the facts at hand.

Leadership Is Expected

The trend of educational thought for

more than two decades has stressed the professional leadership role of the elementary school principal. The details of such leadership have been described in so many places that another rehearsal is not needed here.¹ Paramount among the many leadership roles is expertness in supervision of instruction, in in-service education of teachers, and in school-community relations. If principals are to function as the theory indicates, they must have the types of competencies which the job requires; and the school system must provide an organizational framework which will encourage and permit principals to function as they are expected to function. As yet our house is not in order. The time has come for us to make our theory a reality or change the whole concept about the principal's role. Let us face frankly the segments of the house that need to be put in order so that the expected leadership may become a reality.

Provisions for Administering the School Are Inadequate

Most elementary school buildings were designed without careful thought given to the spaces and the personnel required for effective administration. Office layouts are designed in terms of

¹ *The Elementary School Principalship—Today and Tomorrow*. Twenty-seventh Yearbook. Department of Elementary School Principals, NEA. Washington: the Department, 1948. *The National Elementary Principal*. "The Principal and School Community Relations" (Vol. 32, Dec. 1952), "The Emerging Role of the Principal" (Vol. 32, Oct. 1952), and "The Principal's Role in Instructional Supervision" (Vol. 32, Feb. 1953). Henry J. Otto, *Elementary School Organization and Administration*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Third Edition, 1954, Chap. 16. Harold G. Shane and Wilbur A. Yauch, *Creative School Administration*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1954, Chap. 17.

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left-over areas and aesthetic arrangement instead of according to the functions which the office should render and the staff required to render these functions. Physical provisions for effective communication are overlooked; conference and workrooms seldom have a definite relation to the way in which the school and the staff are going to operate and the facilities needed for such procedures. A 1947 study included 1,823 schools, 1,410 with supervising principals and 413 with teaching principals. Thirty-five percent of all schools with supervising principals were without secretarial help and 82 percent of schools with teaching principals had no secretarial help. Until we take the clerical load off the principal's back we cannot expect many other things from him.

Recruitment Procedures and Local Appointment Standards Are Still Low

Most large city school systems have an orderly plan for the recruitment and selection of prospective principals, but such is not the case in the great majority of school systems in this country. The majority of superintendents depend primarily upon "the old eagle eye" to discover those members of the local staff who might make good principals. Frequently the assignments go to promising young men who have been successful high school teachers or to coaches who have no training or experience in elementary education. Obviously local standards for appointment are low or non-existent or persons with-

out professional qualifications could not be appointed. The net result is (a) that leadership posts in elementary education are filled with persons unqualified for the expected leadership even though they may be fine persons in other respects; (b) teachers who have administrative promise are not encouraged (if not actually discouraged) from qualifying themselves for elementary school principalships; and (c) there never does develop, except in large cities, a reservoir of qualified people from which selections can be made.

Lame-Duck State Certification Programs Still Prevail

By 1948 at least half of the states required elementary school principals to hold a clearly defined special certificate in addition to a typical classroom teacher's certificate.² In seven other states an elementary school principal's certificate was issued by the state department of education even though its possession was not mandatory as a prerequisite for appointment. On the surface this looks like impressive progress, and it is when compared with 25 years ago, but it still leaves almost half of the states without certification standards or requirements for this position. The picture becomes still dimmer as one examines the details of the certificate requirements in the states which do have a special certificate. Whenever teaching experience in the elementary school, extensive preparation in elementary education, and a good background are minimized or overlooked, the special certificates look pretty thin.

²The details of these requirements, by states, are shown in *The Elementary-School Principalship—Today and Tomorrow*, op. cit. p. 301-310.

In most cases we are still trying to squeeze preparation for the expected leadership role into a 30-hour master's degree program. Most certificate plans still do not give the beginning principal a provisional certificate, followed by a professional certificate after a few years' experience and further professional preparation.

Principal's In-Service Education Is Relatively Untouched

In school systems which have well-ordered in-service education programs, principals engage generously in the in-service activities planned for teachers. This is good, because it offers principals leadership roles in teacher education and strengthens their own knowledge about curriculum, method and other problems at the same time. Such professional growth opportunities, however, are now available to only a small fraction of all the principals in the United States. State, regional and national meetings are being attended by an increasing number of principals, but such opportunities are still meager for principals in smaller cities and rural areas.

In only a very few places has any effort been made to develop in-service programs specifically designed for principals. Basically we do not know whether in-service programs specifically designed for principals are a good thing, what should go into them, when and how they should take place, or how in-system activities can or should be coordinated with college campus activities. As yet, we do not know how college staff members may be best used during the school year or during the summer. In a very real sense the whole

question of principals' in-service education is unexplored.

Who Knows What the Colleges Should Do?

The colleges are caught in the middle of all the problems previously identified in this article. The colleges concur in the expected leadership roles of principals, but where does the college begin, and in what direction does it move, when local provisions for administering elementary schools are inadequate, when systematic recruitment procedures are conspicuous by their absence, when local appointment standards are low, when state certification programs are weak, and when so little is known about the best pre-appointment or in-service education of principals? It is easy to point an accusing finger at the colleges, but colleges cannot operate in a vacuum. Few colleges can afford to employ staff and to offer courses unless there is enough clientele to justify the cost. No college can structure a pre-service or in-service program without considerable attention to certificate and appointment requirements.

Colleges also have the problem of finding enough properly qualified persons to staff college programs. In many cases the college president feels that his institution should offer the complete variety of courses requested by any of the students. Invariably the result is a scattered array of poorly staffed courses with small enrollments. Students need to realize that every institution cannot offer everything, and that it is better to have different institutions specialize in providing top-quality programs in different fields. The principle

of institutional differentiation has been accepted in such fields as law, pharmacy, medicine, dentistry and engineering, but in education we still expect each institution to offer courses leading to all the areas of specialization. Principals preparation will remain at its present mediocre level until institutional differentiation in this area is accepted and made a reality.

Everyone knows that degrees alone are not an adequate index of the professional preparation of principals. College degrees are merely one criterion of the expected competence of individuals. A degree with a major in Latin or mathematics or political science may represent excellent general education but such a degree gives one little preparation for the elementary principalship unless it is supplemented with the necessary study and experience in areas which comprise the unique demands placed upon principals. The "leadership that is expected" cannot come from persons who have not engaged in a vigorous preparation program. Colleges, too, should realize this fact and equip themselves to provide special programs uniquely designed to enable prospective principals to acquire the wide array of competencies demanded of them on the job. It is doubtful whether anything less than a two-year graduate program will do more than scratch the surface.

To envision a rigorous preparation program is only the first step. There remain many questions to which we now do not have good answers. Here are some of those questions: What amount and what portions of the pre-appointment preparation can be done best on the college campus and what

portions should be conducted as "experience based" in the school system in which the candidate is a teacher? Will all the campus aspects of the program have to be taken during summer sessions? What portions of the program are most effective if included as post-appointment in-service education? Is the internship a feasible experience for all candidates? What is the place of supervised on-the-job experience? What are the best activities for continuing in-service education after the official professional certificate requirements have been met? How can the colleges finance and staff their part in such a diversified enterprise?

Plan of Action

It is easy to ask questions; solutions come the hard way. Perhaps over-briefly this article has highlighted at least some elements of the predicament which confronts us. Principalship preparation is at the crossroads. Where do we start and which way do we turn? No doubt the choices will vary by states, but here are a few proposals for action:

1. The state associations of elementary school principals should take the initiative in getting the ball rolling. The profession itself should have enough pride in its own significance to come forth with action proposals that will break the present bottleneck. If principals themselves do not do it,

others will; and the results may not be the best.

2. Action plans should be developed and executed through the cooperation of the principals association, the superintendents association, the state department of education, the colleges, school board associations and other groups.

3. In most cases an action plan will include (a) a clear delineation of the preparation and certification standards sought, (b) an educational program aimed at members of the cooperating groups so that all may be clearly informed about the objectives, and (c) exploratory action plans undertaken by cooperating colleges and school systems. Too frequently in the past innovations have been initiated by the college alone; the results of such solo enterprises have usually been discouraging.

4. Action plans should secure the genuine participation and ultimate commitment by the colleges to pool their resources in whatever ways are feasible within each state to secure institutional differentiation and institutional cooperation as a way of guaranteeing top-flight preparation programs, which will produce "the leadership that is expected" of both elementary and secondary school principals. The next generation of children has the right to expect at least that much from us who guide the destinies of today's schools.

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