

# PROFESSIONALIZATION OF SUPERVISORS AND CURRICULUM WORKERS

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AS never before, American education is "alive" with excitement, enthusiasm and hope. Permeating the entire spectrum of societal affairs is the recognition and support of education as the generative power for human progress. More specifically, the professional family itself is experiencing something of a renaissance as to its own worth as a critical force in social preservation and advancement.

Included in this professional renaissance is an increasing sensitivity to educators' responsibility to improve the quality and quantity of the services rendered its larger society. The National Education Association's Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards has made substantial contributions which have resulted in many states' increasing the standards of qualification of teachers. The American Association of School Administrators for more than fifteen years has actively sought to raise the quality of preparatory programs for those who become its members. This organization has been extremely successful in regard to the preparation and certification of school superintendents. Similarly the Department of Elementary School Principals has for ten years expended its energies at an increasing rate to raise the competence of elementary school principals. While not quite so actively, the National Association of Secondary-School Principals has also been seeking to extend the professionalization of its members.

In 1959, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, by a resolution adopted at its national meeting, created a Commission on the Preparation of Instructional Leaders. Early in its deliberations, the Commission outlined a research and writing program from which emerged a recognition that preparation of instructional leaders could not be treated intelligently in isolation from a number of factors, all of which were integral parts of a larger and more complex problem—namely, professionalization.

In response to the query of ASCD's responsibility in the movement of super-

visors and curriculum workers toward self-discipline and professional maturity, one of the Commission's working papers stated:

By its very nature, ASCD exists for the purpose of assisting in the continued development of instructional leaders. Such leaders are considered to be any persons who are interested and involved in the improvement of instructional programs. Membership in the Association is open to all such persons. However, among the professional educators who are members, only supervisors and curriculum workers have no other organization through which they can work or speak as a national group on such matters as professional maturity and self-discipline.

Other professional organizations and lay groups look to ASCD as an organization for leadership in the areas of supervision and curriculum development. They listen with respect when ASCD speaks for its members. Therefore to offer supervisors and curriculum workers an opportunity to develop plans for their own self-discipline and professional maturation and to allow them to speak out through the Association seems to be not only an important function for ASCD, but, more significantly, a primary responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

### **A Significant Step**

Upon the recommendation of this Commission, the Executive Committee of ASCD committed itself in 1961 to cooperating with the American Association of School Administrators, the Department of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary-School Principals in establishing a Joint Committee on the Professionalization of Administrators and Supervisors. While this Joint Committee has not yet been overly productive, its creation was and is a major step forward in inter-organizational cooperation in an area of primary significance to each.

In 1963, a second significant step was taken by ASCD's Executive Committee. Upon the recommendation of its Commission, the Executive Committee designated the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education as the agency for accrediting preparing institutions. Subsequently a budgetary allotment was made for NCATE to develop standards for use in its accrediting procedures.

Similarly, in 1963, the Commission's final report recommended that the Executive Committee appoint a Standing Committee on Professionalization of Supervisors and Curriculum Workers. Subsequently this Committee has extended the original work of the former Commission.

The Committee's first year was spent in gathering information about the professional status of supervisors and curriculum workers. Surprisingly such data proved almost nonexistent at the national level. Consequently, literary sources were searched, assistance was sought from NEA's Research Division, from State Departments of Education and from Presidents of State ASCD units. From these sources the earlier Commission's manuscripts were updated in each of the following areas: (a) Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors and Curriculum Workers, (b) Recruitment and Selection, (c) Preparatory Programs and (d) Certification.

It was soon apparent that while working papers were important, no significant

<sup>1</sup> Mimeographed Working Paper of the ASCD Commission on the Preparation of Instructional Leaders. 1960.

progress could be made at the national level in absence of comparable action within each state. Consequently State Unit Presidents were encouraged to create State Committees on Professionalization of Supervisors and Curriculum Workers. Each state unit was invited to send such committee co-chairmen (a field person and a college person) to one of six regional meetings sponsored by the National Committee. Approximately 70 percent of the states responded, and representative groups in five regional meetings discussed the Committee's working papers, to check normative data collected by the Committee and to plan together on ways of working together during 1965-66.

From these regional meetings over 15 state units have specific operations under way to determine the current status of supervisors and curriculum workers, and from such studies to project action programs to advance the quality and status of such persons.

The Committee's experiences with the state units indicate a widespread and deep-seated interest in the problem of improving the quality of services rendered and the professional status enjoyed by supervisors and curriculum workers. Consequently, this year's work will include: (a) a continuation of the regional meetings, (b) the preparation of a bulletin which will include the working papers and a suggested survey guide for state use, (c) an increased involvement with the Joint Committee (ASCD, AASA, DESP and NASSP), (d) a closer working relationship with NCATE to develop standards for accrediting preparatory programs and (e) the publication of a series of articles, of which this is the first, on issues faced by the Committee.

This brief introductory article will be followed by others which deal in order with the following descriptive working titles: How One Profession Did It; What the Literature Says About Supervisors' Roles; Supervisors' and Curriculum Workers' Preparatory Programs; Recruitment and Selection of Potential Members; Certification Practices; How One State Does It; and Where From Here?

In retrospect, this initial article has sought to confirm the position that the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development does provide a framework within which its supervisors and curriculum workers, as members, can exert concerted effort at the national level. Second, it is hoped that this article has communicated a renewed faith that responsible action of mature people can result in productive effort to produce improved services for the youth we serve and that only as these services are improved can supervisors and curriculum workers move toward a higher level of professional maturity.

Finally, it is hoped that each reader leaves the article with many questions. How can one such organization contribute to such a professional group? How does a group move toward professional maturity? What controls can be exercised? What problems should be anticipated? What lessons can we draw from other professions? The next article in this series will attempt to draw comparisons between the route followed by the medical profession and those routes open to supervisors and curriculum workers. This article, too, will raise questions which deserve consideration.

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