

● From the Executive Secretary

LEADERSHIP IS MORE THAN ABSORBING TURBULENCE

COMMUNICATION about the urgencies and the possibilities of education for these times has far outstripped our achievements or our commitments. Just as advertising changes our perspective regarding the good life, our standard of living, and our expectations in general, so reports on pilot studies and lighthouse schools both stimulate and frustrate us regarding the difference between what actually *is* some place and what *should* be in our own school situation. Other frustrations, for example, arise through: the pressures from usually costly experiments to implement the findings generally but without funds to do so; the social directive to produce quality and equality, but with local option to negate the process; the mass produced directive to install technology in educational packages, but without funds for backup systems, personnel, or in-service education. Thus in our roles as leaders and supervisors, we have a situation producing turbulence with little relief.

Because of the explosion of means and the consequent expectations, the sense of guilt on the part of the educator as to what he is doing and what he should do has increased. Manifestations are evident in the educator-politician activities, in the increasing militancy of teachers as they insist upon becoming full-fledged and recognized participants in the policies and processes of education, and in the widespread dissemination of research clues as though these were viable teaching and learning realities.

Chief Agent of Change

So the rising tide of expectations and the revolutions of our time are threatening to engulf the school as the chief agent of change. For the school stands at the crossroads of cultural and social conflict, and as a fundamental agency of society which must not only modify itself, but must develop strong ripple effects that will sweep away or reshape years of improper growth and vestiges of inadequacy in our national life.

These expectations give rise to fundamental changes as computerized instruc-

tion and dial-retrieval methods substantially modify the role of the teacher; as changed concepts emerge regarding the ways the enterprise of schooling and learning shall be managed by the entry of industry into educational packaging and decision making; and, because of the increasingly popular concept of education for the state and not for individual growth and development, to name a few. When these concerns are encapsulated within curriculum decisions, a conflict arises as each educational leader attempts to decide which of the new ideas to modify for his own use, which is compatible with the established objectives and practices of the system, and which to implement within known budgetary and staff limitations.

Real concern is in order:

- If we know that real needs are evident but we are not taking aggressive and known steps to alleviate them
- If leadership potential exists, but we do not press for the funds or the organizational arrangements required to use this potential
- If our plans for helping people change do not include their perceptions, their needs, their ego structures and involvement
- If we satisfy ourselves and our critics by establishing pilot sections only of researched and necessary improvements, thus excluding most pupils and teachers from the improved program
- If we permit evaluation practices that consider pupils as tallies within a normal curve rather than as individual and worthy learners
- If we continue the fiction that curriculum improvement means a handful of teachers reworking the old guides each summer, or buying new books or equipment, but not focusing upon the methods, the environment, or the quality of learning that is supposed to follow.
- If decision making and supervisory practices are not made more collegial and responsive
- If we insist on pupil evaluation, teacher evaluation but have no plan for the appraisal of leadership or supervisory practices
- If we recognize the above items as just the beginning of a list that could be made, but contend that it is someone else's responsibility to modify the practices.

—LESLEE J. BISHOP, *Executive Secretary, ASCD.*



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