

The supervisor can make his most effective contributions to the personnel activity in the areas of orientation, in-service education, morale, and personal adjustment and motivation

The Supervisor's Role in Personnel Administration

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PUBLIC school supervision generally is viewed as a staff function. The role of the public school supervisor has been defined in various ways. During the 1920s his role was much like that of the supervisor in industry. He was viewed as an autocratic superior who was charged with seeing that teachers would "stay in line." Concepts of the role of the educational supervisor have changed over the years as new educational practices have been introduced into the schools.

Perhaps the basic factor that has affected the emerging role of the public school supervisor has been the rising level of professional preparation of teachers. Today, the supervisor is viewed as being a friend, a co-worker, a consultant and advisor to teachers. He works with teachers as a team member in providing the best possible program of education for boys and girls.

If the educational program is the focal point of school personnel administration, the superintendent of schools must assume definite responsibility for supplying a certain degree of leadership himself as well as making staff provi-

sions in terms of supplementary leadership for more penetrative development in this particular area.¹ This specialized leadership may be provided through certain administrative and supervisory personnel attached to the staff of the superintendent of schools.

Although the personnel activity may be the major responsibility of the director of personnel, the supervisor and other school employees have important roles to play in this area of school administration. The supervisor is in a key position to make valuable contributions in enhancing the success of personnel administration for the following reasons:

1. He is a professionally trained employee of the local school board.
2. He is a professional charged with developing promising professional relationships with the teachers with whom he works.
3. He is in a position to influence directly the self-confidence, morale, and effectiveness of teachers.
4. In the modern sense, his role is seen

¹James A. Van Zwoll. *School Personnel Administration*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964. Chapter I.

as that of being a consultant, a helper, a friend and mutual confidant of the teacher.

5. He is in the position of contributing to the objective that all school employees have the competencies needed for their respective jobs.

6. His work involves providing instructional leadership to enhance quality education in the school system.

The supervisor appears to be in a position to contribute to many of the functions of school personnel administration.

Emerging Role of the Supervisor

Personnel administration is a relatively new development in the field of school administration. As school districts become larger and more complex, this phase of school administration becomes more important and more specialized. In recent years personnel administration, which was once the exclusive job of the superintendent of schools, has become a partnership arrangement. The assistance of supervisors, principals, committees of teachers, and others is needed to cope with the personnel activity in the modern school complex.

The literature pertaining directly to the role of the supervisor in personnel administration is extremely limited. Apparently, few studies have been completed pertaining to the supervisor's role in this area. It seems evident, from a review of recent literature pertaining to the role of the supervisor in the modern school organization, that many opportunities exist for the supervisor to make worthwhile contributions to the personnel administration field. It appears that many of the functions of personnel administration may be more

appropriately carried out with the supervisor as a cooperating team member. The very nature of supervision in the modern school system lends itself to the support of personnel administration in the following areas:

1. *Orientation.* Beginning teachers and those new to the school system may find their adaptation and adjustment to the new situation eased as a result of the work of the supervisor. Many preliminary and pre-session orientation programs are inadequate at best. Thus personnel administration, and the school system in general, have an obligation to conduct a continuing program of orientation as the school year proceeds. The supervisor is called upon to play a major role in this continuing program.

Among the activities that may be included in such a program, to which the supervisor can make excellent contributions, are the following:

1. Arranging for new teachers to observe demonstrations and teaching by experienced teachers.
2. Organizing workshops for beginning teachers and for new teachers that will provide for professional growth and the exchange of ideas.
3. Tours of the school system and the school community to enable new teachers to learn more about the community, its school system, its goals, customs, and assets.
4. Arranging social events to provide opportunities for new teachers to get acquainted with colleagues, and to provide for an element of recreation. This is also helpful in gaining the good will and cooperation of the new employees.
5. Helping new teachers to become familiar with the job, and with its problems.

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Much of the supervisory program is concerned with continuing orientation activities for both new and experienced personnel.²

As a specialist in human relations, the supervisor can smooth the path of human interaction, ease communication, evoke personal devotion, and allay anxiety on the part of new teachers.³ Thus, valuable contributions are made in enhancing the job performance of new employees, and in improving instruction. The supervisor is a logical supplementary agent in exercising leadership in the development of a stimulating atmosphere free from tension for the new employee.⁴ This is an important contribution that relates to several of the principles of personnel administration.

2. *In-service education.* Within the school system all supervision of personnel has the function of providing in-service education that relates to the objective of promoting and maintaining competency.⁵ This is a basic objective of school personnel administration. In teaching, it is imperative that the teacher keep up with the changes in his teaching field. Regardless of how competent beginning teachers may be, the leadership of the school system has a responsibility to provide opportunities for these teachers to continue their professional growth. This is an objec-

tive of an efficiently operating school system. According to Lucio and McNeil,⁶ the supervisor is generally responsible for six kinds of duties with reference to in-service education:

1. He plans with individuals and groups to develop policies and programs in various academic fields.

2. He makes decisions, coordinates the work of others, and gives directions.

3. Through conferences and consultations, he seeks to improve the quality of instruction.

4. He participates directly in the formulation of objectives, selection of school experiences, preparation of teaching guides, and in the selection of instructional aids.

5. He gives and arranges for classroom demonstrations of teaching methods, use of aids, and other direct help to classroom teachers.

6. Through systematic surveys, experiments, and studies, he explores current conditions and recommends changes in practice.

3. *Morale.* The most important single factor in getting the best that a school employee has to offer is how he feels about his job, his associates on the job, and the school system in which he is employed.⁷ This is one of the principles of personnel administration that relates to morale. Actually all personnel in the school system play roles in facilitating this process. Morale cannot be created or guaranteed, but the climate which favors its development can be created. Greer⁸ states that one of the important elements in supervision is the development of a stimulating atmosphere free from tension. Therefore, the supervisor

² Van Zwoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-49 and 239.

³ William H. Lucio and John D. McNeil. *Supervision: A Synthesis of Thought and Action.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962.

⁴ Edith S. Greer. "Human Relations in Supervision." *Education* 82: 203-206; December 1961.

⁵ Van Zwoll, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁶ Lucio and McNeil, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁷ Van Zwoll, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁸ Greer, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

occupies a strategic position, as the friend and confidant of, as well as consultant to the teacher, in helping to create a climate conducive to development of good morale.

From a personnel administration point of view, it appears that the development and maintenance of morale might be looked upon as developing and maintaining organizational health.⁹ In reality this means taking action to improve school employee-job relationships. The supervisor can make excellent use of his relationships with teachers in bringing to the attention of the personnel division those problems, issues, grievances, and injustices that need to be corrected to improve the working situation.

4. *Motivation and personal adjustment.* Implicit in the concept of personal adjustment is the fact that the satisfaction of individual needs is a continuous process. Supervision contributes materially to the total administrative effort to satisfy both organization expectations and the physical and psychological needs of personnel. The supervisor can contribute to the achievement of these ends by:¹⁰

1. Providing assistance to members of the school organization in solving problems with which they are constantly confronted.

2. Helping the organization to decide whether the individual is capable of fulfilling role expectations.

3. Helping the organization to clarify the position requirements and the qualifications necessary for successful performance.

4. Assisting in the selection process.

* William B. Casterter. *Administering the School Personnel Program*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962. p. 80.

¹⁰ Casterter, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.


5. Motivating members of the organization to accept responsibility for self-development and creativity.

6. Dealing with personnel maladjustment, which is expressed in such forms as aggression or regression; thus minimizing the tension and strain within the school system.

7. Motivating the teacher to establish appropriate working relationships with his colleagues, and to enhance his personal and professional development.

8. Recommending changes in work assignments, dealing with unsatisfactory superior-subordinate relationships, and providing assistance to potential retirants.

In summary, personnel administration must increasingly deal with the complexities of human nature and its implications for organizational behavior. The supervisor has an important role to play in assisting the personnel division in coordinating the multiplicity of activities involved in its broad field of operation. The major concerns of the personnel division are also areas of interest to the supervisor. Supervision shares with personnel administration the basic objectives of doing whatever is necessary to make sure that all who work within the school system have the competencies, the will, and the working conditions for providing the best program.

It appears that the supervisor can make his most effective contributions to the personnel activity in the areas of orientation, in-service education, morale, and personal adjustment and motivation. Contrary to the views held by some authorities in the field of personnel administration, supervision is a dynamic, growing process that is occupying an increasingly important role in public education. 

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