

Negotiations: Inevitable Consequence of Bureaucracy?

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PERHAPS no current movement in education poses more questions about the organization and structure of educational administration and the role of the administrator than does the emergence of professional negotiations. By the same token, probably no other movement in education has offered as much potential for establishing a new role for the teacher in policy formulation in public schools. Professional negotiations and their accompanying ramifications have moved to the forefront of public attention. The movement has all the ingredients for controversy, emotionalism, and front page space; it is also critically important to the future of education and to the teaching profession.

The authors believe that the emergence of some form of negotiating machinery between the power structure representative of teacher interest and the power structure representative of management interest was inevitable, primarily because of two sets of factors. These two factors are: (a) changes in teachers and their behavior, and (b) the nature of the organizational structure of public education.

A "New Breed"

Many of today's teachers are pictured as a "new breed," having been produced out of the larger context of man's continuing desire to improve himself and from the observation that objectives often can be achieved more readily through aggressive behavior. Increased mobility of the American people has resulted in an increased number of "cosmopolitan" teachers as compared to "locals." Teachers are now better prepared than ever before; more of them are working in big school systems brought about by school consolidation and urbanization. Also, teachers more and more are aware of society's increased expectation of public education and

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the unprecedented demand for excellence. NEA President Elizabeth Koontz is probably correct when she says that today's teacher is

... sufficiently frustrated and actively dedicated enough to do something about the many problems that stand in the way of successful efforts, be they problems of working conditions, staff relationships, or welfare of teachers.¹

The authors, as school administrators and professors of school administration, agree that the new breed of teacher is on the scene, but we are inclined to believe that many of our schools and institutions are headed by a "not so new" breed of school administrator. Despite statements to the contrary, many administrators do not really view the teacher as being at the apex of the profession. The so-called advantages administrators enjoy over teachers are not as basic to the problem as is the fact that only administrators have legitimate authority to make decisions. This factor, in all likelihood, is the major reason that teachers in approximately 1,500 school systems in the United States have considered it necessary to develop formal procedures for negotiations in order to have a voice in the development of educational policies.

We believe that this situation developed, not so much because administrators want it this way, but because administrative behavior in educational organizations is primarily a function of the nature of the organizational structure within which it takes place. More specifically, the organizational structure of education is basically bureaucratic and has not provided a formal and legitimized basis for teacher participation in the development of educational policy.

The Bureaucratic Model

Close observers such as Abbott,² Miles,³ and Moeller⁴ have concluded that there is a close and positive correlation between the ideal bureaucratic model proposed by Weber and the structure of educational organizations. But the point is that there is a legal basis for authority in educational organizations which has constitutional and statutory foundations and is vested in boards of education and superintendents of education. There is, also, an ordered system, actually a mandated one, of subordination and superordination which is achieved through administrative offices. Administrators have the necessary authority to make and implement the decisions required to achieve the goals for which the organization is responsible. There is not, however, a formal, legitimized structure through which teachers can make policy decisions and be held responsible for those decisions.

The literature is rather complete with various suggestions regarding

¹ Elizabeth Koontz. "Why Teachers Are Militant." Paper read at seminar on "Who Controls American Education?" Joint Committee of National Education Association and Magazine Publishers Association, New York, New York, December 7, 1967.

² Max G. Abbott and John T. Lovell, editors. *Change Perspectives in Educational Administration*. Auburn, Alabama: Auburn University, 1965.

³ Matthew B. Miles. "Education and Innovation: The Organization as Context." In: *Change Perspectives in Educational Administration*. Max G. Abbott and John T. Lovell, editors. Auburn, Alabama: Auburn University, 1965.

⁴ Gerald H. Moeller. "The Relationship Between Bureaucracy in School Organizations and Teachers' Sense of Power." Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation. St. Louis, Missouri: Graduate Institute of Education, Washington University, 1967.

new and desirable administrative practices which have been advanced in light of the fact that professional negotiations are here, that teachers are more militant, and that their expectations are different from those of a decade ago. There is every reason to believe that this trend will continue, at least in the foreseeable future. We believe that it is regrettable that the negotiating machinery has been based on the industrial model, although this was clearly predictable inasmuch as the educational organization itself has been modeled along the industrial line.

We are concerned, also, about the dichotomy that is developing between teachers and administrators and believe that, although this is an inevitable consequence of negotiations between two competing power structures, it need not continue. Accordingly, we believe that a formal structure is needed which will provide for legitimized teacher participation in policy development. This, it seems to us, is the basic question and one to which we now give attention.

A New Model Is Needed

What kind of structure will alleviate the problems outlined here and provide for the legitimized involvement of the teacher in the achievement of organizational goals? Clearly no model has been offered, but the beginning of one may be on the scene. The literature contains some theoretical formulations which might be helpful as concerned educators move toward the establishment of a structure. For example, the principles offered by Saunders, Phillips, and Johnson, who summarized much research on educational leadership and developed a set of guides for effective leadership, might serve as an adequate base upon which some new conceptualization of structure might be developed.⁵ A major tenet of these principles is that the nature of leadership behavior in any organization is at least partly dependent upon the organization's functions and should operate within a structure which releases and invokes the leadership capability of the total group.

Miles talks about a similar proposition when he proposes an alternative model for educational organizations in which he formulates the idea of "organizational health." He develops a definition of a "healthy" organization and also defines a set of interpersonal process norms which support the idea of organizational health. He goes on to identify these norms as openness, trust, inquiry, collaboration, consensus, and individuality and shows that they are interdependent with role specifications and performance.⁶

Argyris, who also recognizes the need for a new organizational model, hypothesizes that formal and informal dimensions of organizational activities may be studied and understood by using a model that incorporates such properties as the following:

1. The organization is a pattern of parts.
2. The parts maintain the whole through their interrelatedness.
3. The parts change their interrelationships to cope with, and adapt to, new stimuli threatening the organization.

⁵ Robert L. Saunders, Ray Phillips, and Harold Johnson. *Theory of Educational Leadership*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1966.

⁶ Matthew B. Miles, *op. cit.*

4. The whole is able to control the environment up to the point that is necessary for maintenance of itself.⁷

From this rationale Argyris develops a tentative model for understanding the organizational mix, including in the model such dimensions as awareness, control, internal influence, problem solving, external influence, time perspective, and organizational objectives. He makes no claim that a complete theory has been developed, saying instead that, although one is needed, no such formulation is now available.⁸

Other examples of promising formulations could be mentioned, but the above summaries substantiate the point that a beginning is visible and that there is a reason for optimism.

In summary, the emergence of professional negotiations is a part of a much larger movement. Teachers also yearn for a better lot in life and a major part of their yearning deals with their professional careers. The increased success by groups employing aggressive behavior has been apparent to teachers, who have adopted this pattern of operation on pragmatic grounds.

It is our contention that the education profession should initiate action immediately to change the legal structure within which schools now operate so as to permit the legitimized involvement of teachers. It is possible, it seems to us, that objectives being sought through structured, industrial-type negotiations may be achieved through a different model of educational administration which would generate greater efficiency in goal attainment, better policies, higher levels of teacher satisfaction, and less confrontation, unrest, and militancy. □

⁷ Chris Argyris. "Organizational Leadership." *Leadership and Interpersonal Behavior*. Luigi Petrullo and Bernard M. Bass, editors. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967. p. 341.

⁸ *Ibid.*

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