

# The Principal Must Be Replaced\*

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IT IS widely recognized that rapid changes are occurring in American society. Many of these changes have important implications for education and are reflected in current educational innovations. These innovations, according to Sand, can be classified as practices designed to better utilize human talent, practices designed to better utilize time, and practices designed to better utilize technology.<sup>1</sup> There are three particular areas in which changes are most evident. These are in organizational patterns, in roles of teachers and other personnel, and in curricular content.

## Areas of Change

A variety of proposals have been developed and put into practice in an effort to provide an educational program geared to needs of individual learners and to use talents of teachers. These include the non-graded approach found more commonly at the lower elementary school level, though in some systems encompassing all elementary levels and, in a few, elementary and secondary; the middle school geared to the pre-adolescent learner; and the individualized approach attempting to allow each learner

<sup>1</sup> Ole Sand. "Basis for Decisions." In: *Role of Supervisor and Curriculum Director in a Climate of Change*. 1965 Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1965. pp. 45-46.

to move at his own rate and to a great degree in his own areas of interest.

The model of the classroom teacher as a person who stands before a group of learners dispensing knowledge is rapidly fading. Today classroom teachers make decisions on a level formerly reserved for administrative personnel. Frazier describes three models of the teacher which are emerging. These are the teacher as a specialist, as an executive, and as a professional in decision making.

As a specialist, the teacher serves as a member of a teaching team, as a resource aid to other staff members, and as a regular teacher. The teacher as an executive manages resources, serves as a team leader in cooperative teaching ventures, and coordinates teaching aides or auxiliaries. As a professional, the teacher is involved in decision making about what is taught and how. This includes curriculum planning, innovation development, and experimentation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Frazier. "The New Elementary School Teacher." *The New Elementary School*. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1967. pp. 96-112.

\* Based on an idea developed by Jack Davidson, Superintendent, Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Francis Trusty, College of Education, University of Tennessee; Robert DeLozier, Greenville, Tennessee, and the author.

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Expansion of knowledge is occurring at an unbelievable rate and has created pressure for education to reexamine the content of the schools. All content fields are undergoing scrutiny and major revisions have already been made in mathematics, science, English, and social studies.

## Continuing Education

These changes create a variety of problems for teachers and for the professionals who work with teachers at the school system level. These major problems are: (a) how to help teachers develop skills and attitudes necessary for carrying out their emerging roles; (b) how to assist teachers in keeping pace with developments in content and in organizational innovations; and (c) how to help teachers in providing more effective learning situations for students.

Teachers have not found that continuing in-service education programs are geared to help them make continuous and substantial progress in learning new content, new roles, and new skills and the application of these learnings to their tasks as teachers. Several ways have been used at the university level for improving teacher effectiveness, such as Saturday classes, evening classes, summer programs, institutes, and conferences. None of these seems to have resulted in much change in participants. Several reasons are given for this lack of change but these stand out:

1. There is a lack of relevance between what is studied and what teachers need in their own situations.

2. Teachers do not believe they have adequate support from their administration and colleagues to institute change.

As Haubrich says, ". . . changes which can be recorded when the individual is out of his own organizational situation . . . do not have any long-term impact when the individual returns to the organizational setting. Change off the job has far less force than changes which occur *in situ*."<sup>3</sup>

Continuing education programs at local

<sup>3</sup> Vernon Haubrich. "The Rhetoric and Reality of Educational Change." Mimeographed. Undated. p. 8.

school levels, according to Alice Miel,<sup>4</sup> apparently are not fully meeting the needs of teachers. The one factor which stands out is that there is little coordination between subject specialists, education specialists, and school personnel in planning or conducting a continuing education program. All too frequently these programs resemble college classes with a professor lecturing to teachers, the only difference being that he comes to them instead of their coming to the university campus.

A factor which limits the effectiveness of classroom teachers in developing good learning situations for children or young people is the role expectation of the building principal. As pointed out in the 1960 ASCD Yearbook, *Leadership for Improving Instruction*, the principal's primary role is that of providing instructional leadership, after which come his responsibilities for building management and public relations.<sup>5</sup> Stated more bluntly, the principal bears the responsibility for either assisting or permitting educational change. His support and expectations have more influence on whether a teacher changes than do colleagues or students.

Recognizing his responsibility for providing instructional leadership, the principal also must accept responsibility for staff and student personnel administration, administration of the school plant facilities, public relations, and school organization which involves scheduling, transportation, and cafeteria management. It is in these latter areas that the principal can find clearer courses of action to take and the results of action. In addition, in many instances, his preparation has dealt more with these managerial tasks than with providing leadership in instruction and curriculum development.

An examination of requirements for principals as described in university catalogs shows that programs in general include

<sup>4</sup> Alice Miel. "New Patterns of In-Service Education of Elementary Teachers." *The New Elementary School*. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> "Educational Leaders in Action." In: *Leadership for Improving Instruction*. 1960 Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1960. pp. 110 ff.

courses such as introduction to administration, school law, school plant, the principalship, finance, supervision, personnel problems plus some required study in a cognate area such as sociology, and some electives which can be but are not required to be in learning, human development, curriculum, or social foundations. As can be seen, the stress is on administrative procedures and technical knowledge. As expected, the principal operates within the framework he knows best.

## New Positions Needed

This is borne out when activities of principals are evaluated. Principals in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools were asked to keep a log of activities for ten days. Administrative and managerial activities such as supervision of bus transportation, rest rooms, and school plant; public relations; and similar duties far outnumbered supervision of or working with teachers in terms of improving the instructional program, teacher effectiveness, or learning situations for students.

Many superintendents and principals have recognized this problem and various attempts have been made to alter the situation. Vice-principals have been added, but too frequently their preparation has been similar to that of the principal—that of administering rather than helping teachers be more effective. In addition, when a vice-principal is appointed, one more rung is added to the administrative hierarchy and according to Griffith, the more hierarchial the structure, the less the possibility of change.<sup>6</sup>

To alleviate this problem, it is proposed that two new positions be established, replacing the principal. These positions are a Coordinator of Learning and a Coordinator of Administrative Services.

## Coordinator of Learning

The position of Coordinator of Learning has two important facets. One, the Coordinator is freed from managerial tasks, thus

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by Vernon Haubrich, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

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enabling him to devote his energies and expertise to the task of improving the teaching-learning process. As this is a different role from that commonly associated with the principalship, the title of principal is replaced.

Two, the role and function of the Coordinator of Learning are closely related to those of teachers. This means a teacher can move into this position without having to enter a new preparatory program such as is required currently when a teacher prepares to be a principal. For the most part, programs for principals have little direct relation to classroom teaching-learning application. This new position, then, opens a new avenue for professional progression for career teachers who wish to remain identified with the instructional program but who have ability and interest in providing constructive leadership.

The work of the Coordinator of Learning is augmented through direct communication with the team leaders, who represent teams of teachers planning and organizing the activities of groups of students. The team is



reports to the system-wide person in charge of business operations for the school system. Examples of functions and responsibilities are shown in Figure 1.

The Coordinator of Learning will provide leadership for instructional improvement and be the final arbiter in the event a dispute arises concerning an instructional and a managerial matter. Since each person, however, has specific functions and each is responsible to a different head, coordination and cooperation between the two are essential.

## Results

Teachers can look forward to a more stimulating atmosphere in which they not only can talk about but can have immediate assistance in developing innovative programs. No longer will they have to wait for a curriculum specialist to come from the central office; one is at hand to provide assistance and guidance. Now they have a person in a leadership role at the building level whose primary responsibility is for and, more important, whose interest is in program development.

Teachers now can expect that all re-

sources will be coordinated and available for the central purpose—that of providing a stimulating learning environment for children. This can be accomplished through the division of responsibilities so that each Coordinator can devote his energies and expertise to that which he knows best.

The position, Coordinator of Learning, opens an avenue for career development for both men and women which does not require extensive retraining. The position, Coordinator of Administrative Services, opens a new avenue for persons with a background in business administration and management. Needed also would be a broad knowledge of the function of schools in addition to specific knowledge of school law and finance as these pertain to the responsibilities of the Coordinator of Administrative Services.

The complexity of providing instructional leadership and carrying out the varied aspects of school management is such that no one individual can be expected to do everything in an adequate manner. It will avail little to develop innovative practices in curriculum unless similar advances are made in the instructional and managerial leadership areas. □

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