

limited time frame. The survey information has also become an integral part of the teacher evaluation/observation process in terms of providing guidelines for improving time on task.

• The school board, administration, and others placed considerable weight on the results as they dealt with the increasingly important annual question, "What should be cut from the budget?"

Although results of the goals survey can be used for several purposes, it seems clear that the primary employment of the data is likely to be for decision making regarding the relative importance of curricular and co-curricular offerings when contemplating elimination or reduction of programs

due to budget cuts. Schools have been expected to provide instruction on almost every conceivable topic, and services to counteract almost every "ill" or need of society. The results of a comprehensive goals survey should uncover valuable information for deciding what is to be cut or retained. It should be recognized that a goals survey is not an "end-all" that can stand by itself; rather, it is a tool that can augment professional judgment, past practice, and many other considerations that enter into budget decisions. In its absence, program importance and the allocation of dollars may be determined by the lobbying strength of special interest groups and the seemingly important ingredient called "tradition." ■

began a 22-day strike that further crippled the district's image. (In fairness to the employee unions, they had predicted before the levy that it would not generate enough money to settle contracts.)

The task at hand was clearly one of "cutback" management. Cutback management in our situation required a two-pronged approach and had to be aimed at reestablishing public confidence sufficiently to pass a major permanent levy within the next 25-month period. The first approach would be to engage our entire community, all stakeholders that use or support the public schools, in defining our most important educational goals and priorities. The second approach would be to design and implement a human resource management strategy to assist us in selecting which personnel to let go and what programs to curtail or terminate.

To accomplish our first approach, and to support decisions made in the second, we decided to conduct a survey of our staff, clients, and supporters. We were familiar with Brickell's goals survey efforts and decided to engage his services along with those of several other evaluators.

The instrument collected responses from a wide variety of stakeholders in the educational process in Toledo; namely, parents, nonparents, teachers, administrators, and students. A scientific sampling plan was used to allow for district-level analysis and for individual school-level analysis in relation to districtwide results.

The use of the results was a major consideration. We created a rather involved process to ensure that the results were shared and discussed in the media and with parent and citizen groups at the school level. To get the process started, meetings were held with all principals and central office personnel to share with them:

- Systemwide survey results
- Systemwide student achievement test results
- Demographic information by district and by school
- Processes by which the school building and central office personnel could analyze the data to establish building-by-building priorities in keeping with public expectations.

A set of districtwide priority goals was drafted in consideration of the



Getting Out From Under the Gun

DON STEELE

On July 1, 1978, I assumed the very important responsibility for serving the citizens of Toledo, Ohio, as their superintendent of schools. I took this position knowing that citizen confidence in the Toledo Public Schools was at its lowest ebb. Public attitudes toward the schools were perhaps best described in a statement by Gene Maeroff (1978), national education correspondent for *The New York Times*:

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Toledo's 54,000 school children have been facing the same plight as Mother Hubbard's dog, and the taxpayers and community nabobs have denied them even table scraps. Finally, last November 8, after the penniless school system had to suspend classes for seven days, 56% of Toledo's voters approved a 6.1 mill (emergency) operating tax increase. But the school officials maintain that the increase is far short of what is needed and that the school system, which has had to shut down for periods during each of the last two years to avoid bankruptcy, will face the same money shortages in a year or two.

Following the emergency levy passage referred to above, the teaching and nonteaching employee unions

information and presented to the board of education, who approved the goals. Districtwide priorities served as a basis for organizing and assigning work at the system and building levels.

Through the implementation of the districtwide goals, an evaluation process for cabinet level administration was developed. The first step of this process called for the assignment of each board goal to the appropriate division head. Division leaders then developed product expectations along with corresponding actions for each goal. Cabinet members met with the superintendent and refined product goals and activities. These refined product goals were then linked to each division head's performance evaluation. Cabinet members worked with their subordinates in developing performance evaluation criteria for them consistent with the goals for the division. By closely linking district goals with the administrative evaluation system, the board of education and the superintendent could monitor the district's progress in achieving results as measured by original purpose. It also ensured that the entire administrative team would be working toward ends deemed most important in a coordinated effort. With the close of the 1979-80 school year all administrative personnel had been formally evaluated, using this goal-oriented approach.

Procedures for addressing the survey results at the school level were essentially incorporated in the Toledo Public School Action Plans. Meetings were held to orient principals to their responsibility for working with staff and parents in the design, implementation and evaluation of specific action plans at the school level. The orientation included:

- Review of the data: (1) Organizing to review data with staff and parents (2) Procedures for receiving data
- Setting school priorities
- Converting school priorities into Action Plan Alternatives
- Selecting action plans (18-month duration)
- Implementing action plans
- Evaluating action plans.

All schools submitted action plans based on the major districtwide priorities or on their own local needs. All

of the action plans were critiqued for the adequacy of their objectives and evaluation plans. The action plans were screened for their relevance to the curriculum in light of public expectations as determined by the survey. When final program clearance was obtained through the superintendent's office, building-by-building arrangements were initiated in response to schools' requests for staff development and materials that were within reasonable budgetary limits.

The major impact of using the survey results in conjunction with test result information and demographic considerations was that educational priorities drove the ensuing budget and staff processes rather than vice versa, which is frequently the case in

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school districts. Simply stated, because we had focused our priorities, cuts were made in areas of least impact on these priorities.

Enough about the process. What changes came about in the district as a result of these efforts? Many—none of which can be attributed entirely to the survey, but all of which were related to the survey results. At the districtwide level, the following changes were perhaps the most significant:

1. The district moved from a five-hour day to a six-hour day to increase instructional time.
2. The district raised its graduation requirement from 17 to 19 credit hours. No other district in Ohio has this requirement.

3. Districtwide, time on language arts was doubled at the junior high school level, while corresponding reductions were imposed in industrial arts and home economics.

4. Driver's education was dropped from the formal curriculum and offered only after school.

5. Eleven schools were closed with some of the savings applied toward improving program levels at remaining schools.

6. While hundreds of staff were laid off, some staff were added in the traditional subject areas.

7. Fine arts was made a requirement for all graduating seniors.

At the school level, specific action plans varied greatly, depending on differing survey results and unique problems or opportunities. In all cases, however, they attacked problems and made use of opportunities in areas that had been established as priorities.

Two events unfolded during the 25-month period following the survey. First, test results in reading and math exceeded the level of any previous year since 1973 and are continuing to climb. Second, in November 1980 the citizens passed a 5.6 mill, \$10.5 million permanent operating levy to support educational programs for Toledo's students and youth. This levy represented the only permanent operating millage passed in any of the eight large cities in Ohio during the entire decade of the 1970s. There had been 37 attempts and 37 failures.

Toledo citizens voted more money for their schools and students in a very difficult time. I left Toledo with a warm feeling toward its educators, its citizens, and its schools. No longer are analogies being made with respect to Mother Hubbard's dog and the Toledo Schools.

Toledo will continue, in present economic conditions, to fight problems of shrinking resources or inadequate dollars to support new demands. Cutback management will remain a concern. Cutting back in Toledo, however, has not meant a decline in quality. Ask any citizen. We did. They voted Yes on November 4, 1980. ■

Reference

Maeroff, Gene I. "The Cupboard is Still Bare in Toledo." *Phi Delta Kappan* 59 (February 1978): 379-382.

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