

Leadership Training for Secondary Principals and Department Heads

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The Instructional Leadership Project (ILP), funded by the Maryland State Department of Education and Anne Arundel County Public Schools, was designed to work toward the goal of improving instruction and reducing incidents of student disruption by meeting staff development needs of principals and department chairpersons in secondary schools.

The project surveyed principals, department chairpersons, and teachers of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, in August 1980, and discovered a discrepancy between what chairpersons with the support of their principals needed to do for their teachers' staff development and what services they were actually providing. The areas of concern proved to be:

- Assisting teachers with planning
- Helping teachers use a wide variety of teaching strategies
- Planning and implementing inservice programs for departments
- Utilizing leadership and group dynamics skills to facilitate change and smooth functioning of a department

- Assisting teachers in working cooperatively to achieve school and department goals.

With these needs in mind, the project staff, consisting of a project coordinator and five resource teachers using organization development and human resources management skills, set out to provide a three-year program for administrators, guidance personnel, and department chairpersons. The program focuses on developing skills in assisting teachers in overall improvement of the instructional program. During the first year, participants receive intensive and individualized inservice training in skills of clinical supervision, interpersonal relations, instructional planning, curriculum implementation, inservice design, teaching and discipline strategies, and department management. During the second and third years they use these skills to assist teachers with improving instruction.

ILP conducts training using five different methods:

- Training sessions—full-day workshops based on project components and

individual school needs designed to develop leadership skills

- School support team meetings—providing the opportunity for department chairpersons and principals to participate in shared decision making focused on improving instruction in the school

- Individual conferences with department chairpersons—providing follow-up on training sessions and continuing support from project resource teachers to implement goals

- Individual planning sessions with principals—adapting project activities to the needs of each school

- Principals' seminars—providing guidance for the direction of the project thereby developing a sense of ownership for principals.

The project was piloted in four middle/junior high schools in August 1980; added two more middle/junior high schools and two senior high schools in August 1981, and an additional five schools in fall of 1982. The process of adding four or five schools a year is to continue until all 30 of the county's secondary schools are included.

Although the ILP works primarily with administrators and department chairpersons, the model of the program is based on translating staff development in instructional leadership into direct services to classroom teachers. As the ILP provides training for department chairpersons, department chairpersons become more comfortable and competent in working with their teachers on instruction. In effect, they become more willing to provide professional improvement materials for their teachers, to use department and team meetings for a discussion of instructional topics, to do long range and unit planning with teachers, to provide inservice, and to participate in clinical supervision.

While it is too early to assess the lasting impact on secondary education in the county, there are data indicating that teachers are receiving increased services and that other changes are taking place. Of the 66 department chairpersons already involved, 55 percent have established regular team planning sessions with their teachers, 75 percent have provided formal and informal inservice for teachers in their departments, and 88 percent have practiced the clinical supervision process and have offered it as a service to the teachers with full support of the principals. **EL**



Credit: Ian Sutherland Lane

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