

provided for a competent review and that the final decision should be made by knowledgeable people who are familiar with professional recommendations and who have studied the candidate textbooks and available information about their effects on learners. Such adoption should be followed,

according to the standards, by appropriate inservice preparation of teachers and supervisors and by formal evaluation of the results of the adoption.

If people at all levels who evaluate textbooks would conform to these standards, the quality of textbooks

would improve miraculously. But even if state and district decision makers abide by these standards, they will have precious little effect if final purchasing decisions in schools are made without regard for standards, primarily as a result of political or social pressure.

Supervision

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Supervising Excellence

A few months ago I attended a U. S. Department of Education conference at which 24 junior and senior high schools from seven midwestern states were honored. I was particularly interested in the supervision/evaluation program of these schools but discovered that, for the most part, the schools were recognized for aspects of their programs other than teacher supervision/evaluation.

Some, however, had excellent programs. Ames (Iowa) High School, for example, a member of ASCD's network on Redefining General Education, had the principal, department coordinators, and individual teachers identify needs to provide the impetus for a wide variety of staff development activities. The district's formal procedure for evaluating teachers includes several opportunities each year for specific feedback through pre-conferences with teachers, class visitation/observation, and post-visitation conferences. Evaluation is based on 32 criteria determined by teachers and administrators and approved by the board of education. If either a teacher or an administrator requests it, outside supervisory assistance is available to any teacher.

For information, contact Ralph Farar, Principal, Ames High School, 20th and Ridgewood, Ames, Iowa 50010.

Evaluation For the Future

Using the talents of the community, staff members, and students, the Millard school board, Omaha, Nebraska, developed a vision statement of its schools' future. The first two of its six goals involve extending both the excellence of learning in all educational programs and the quality of professionalism.

The Millard South High School evaluation program "Improving Instructional Assessment and Performance Through Supervision and Evaluation" includes input by department heads, the assistant principal for instruction/curriculum, and the principal. In Millard's six-step clinical supervision program, teacher observation is based on years of service; first- and second-year teachers are observed three times each year; third-year teachers twice each year; and all others once each year.

The district preconference format has five specific elements; the detailed observation checklist consists of nine teaching skills areas and varied subar-

reas, five coordination factors areas/subareas, and three credibility factors areas. Teacher comments are solicited and plans for improvement are included in the teacher-supervision conference statement. The sixth step, a summative evaluation, is completed by June 1 each year. Additional procedures are required if summative recommendation is for conditional reelection or dismissal.

For information, contact John A. Lammel, Principal, Millard South High School, 14905 Q Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68137.

Change for the Better

Another extensive supervision plan was reported by Adams Junior High School, Rochester, Minnesota. The supervisory program at Adams is part of a staff development plan designed to increase the instructional skills of staff members and to reinforce excellent instruction. The underlying philosophy is that clinical supervision is the best way to reinforce positive things the staff does. But it wasn't always that way.

Traditionally, Adams' administrators visited classes and conferenced with the teachers without providing much

specific data to teachers on their instructional strengths or weaknesses. In other words, administrators were not either reinforcing positive instructional behavior or assisting teachers where needed. Instead, administrators tended to rely on their intuition rather than objective data necessary to supervise effectively.

To change this, school district administrators trained under one consultant for clinical supervision skills and a second for instructional skills. They then began an intensive inservice for teachers using a modeled clinical instruction approach. As skills and vocabulary were developed, the district implemented the staff development plan, which consists of instructional goal setting by individual teachers in cooperation with their administrators, followed by a series of class visitations and conferences between teacher and administrator. Each visit results in the administrator's compiling all the conversation and objective data from a class observation and then writing a clinical lesson plan for the conference with the teacher. The objective of every conference is twofold: to reinforce the effective instructional practices and to provide specific input on areas of need.

Administrators encourage teachers to analyze their own lessons and reach a trust level that enables them to talk freely about how they can improve. Their experience says that by positively reinforcing the good parts of instruction they can be sure it will continue. The conference system also enables administrators and teachers to develop an ongoing dialogue about instruction or other needs. At the end of the year, the administrator writes a summary emphasizing instruction, which is reviewed and discussed by the teacher and administrator. That summary is placed in the teacher's personnel file.

Staff members who need significant corrective action are formally taken off the staff development plan and placed on a remediation program that is far more intense and formal. This reassignment keeps the staff development plan consistent with the district's lifetime employment goal and keeps the program positive.

Arthur Bianchi, principal of Adams Junior High School, believes that his skills in instructional supervision have increased significantly. For any plan to work, a school district must make instructional supervision a no-excuse goal. It is easy for administrators to let administration get in the way of improving instruction, so a firm commitment is necessary. The district's professionals see the potential for growth through better instruction and are willing to use the clinical process for self-actualization. Staff at other levels of development are less enthusiastic but try to use the system.

For information, contact Arthur A. Bianchi, Principal, John Adams Junior High School, 1525 N.W. 31st Street, Rochester, Minnesota 55901.

Teachers' Role in Supervision

Secondary School Recognition conferences have been going on in various regions of the country. One conference for example, honored Brookland School, an urban, open-space, 96 percent minority school located in Washington, D.C. Teachers take a major role in curriculum and instructional development and in planning their own participation in developmental programs, workshops, and seminars. Their supervision/evaluation program is also based on the clinical supervision model.

At the beginning of each semester, teachers submit to the principal learning objectives for each class. Following an initial conference reviewing the teacher's objectives, the principal ob-

serves the teacher's lesson. A board of education-developed objective observation instrument is used for each classroom observation sequence. A post-observation conference is held for each classroom observation—based on the classroom observation criteria—and an improvement plan is developed. After several more classroom observations, the principal prepares a summative evaluation report based on predetermined board of education standards.

For information, contact Shirley W. Hammond, Principal, Brookland School, Michigan Avenue and Randolph, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017.

Rallying for Academics

The Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida, also report teacher evaluation programs in their junior and senior high schools that are based on the clinical supervision format. Awards are given at the end of each year to honor teachers who have excelled. School personnel cite numerous benefits of the program. In four short years, they claim, the predominantly black, urban Rebuilt Senior High School has evolved in reputation from concrete jungle to model school, the first school in the nation known to have pep rallies for academics at testing time. A rise in achievement test scores, a decrease in student dropout rate, and various other improvements have been attributed to the strengthening of standards and the concomitant emphasis on supervision/evaluation programs.

For information, contact Herb A. Sang, Superintendent, Duval County Public Schools, 1701 Presidential Drive, Jacksonville, Florida 32207.

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