The Plan for Supervision in the Decatur School System with Specific Reference to the E. J. Muffley Elementary School

Eldon G. Bickers

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THE PLAN FOR SUPERVISION IN THE DECATUR SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE E. J. MUFFLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
THE PLAN FOR SUPERVISION IN THE DECATUR SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE E. J. MUFFLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Presented to
Eastern Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements in Education 481
for the degree
Master of Science in Education
(Plan B)

by
Eldon G. Bickers
August, 1959
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Gerhard C. Matzner in the preparation of this paper. Also, special acknowledgments to my wife, Ruth, without whose encouragement and understanding the writer would never have attained this degree.
INTRODUCTION

The writer teaches in the E. J. Muffley School, named for Mr. Muffley because he has been a principal for twenty-five years and lives just across the road from the school in Decatur, Illinois. The school has a total of nine elementary teachers; two music teachers that are there part-time; one speech teacher, also part-time; one secretary, and the principal. It will not be of adequate size next year.

The purpose of the supervisory plan should be to find out first what needs to be done. It should work for ways of using resources that will make growth of staff possible. It should also measure the progress which is made in better learning situations for the children and better uses of materials and equipment.
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CHAPTER I

THE PLAN FOR SUPERVISION IN THE DECATUR SCHOOLS

The line-and-staff outline for the Decatur School system is fixed by the school board. It is so devised that a person may see at a glance how the school system is set up.

It is being used first in the paper so that the reader may refer to it in case a question about authority should arise. It should also clarify the terminology being used in the paper about the various positions discussed.

The plan for supervision in the Decatur Schools as outlined in the Manual of Operations appears on the following page.

Requirements of Superintendent

The Manual of Operations has these duties listed in brief form:

The superintendent shall be chief executive and administrative officer of the Board of Education: complete all executive and administrative transactions . . .; be responsible for the direction, supervision and coordination of the duties and responsibilities of all staff members; recommend to the Board for appointment all central office staff members, principals, teachers, . . .; prepare and submit annually to the Board a report advising of needs of the schools; direct the preparation of the annual budget and expenditures . . .; be responsible for the instructional program . . .; be responsible for a special education program, . . .; have the power to initiate such practices among the school employees as he deems necessary to carry out the rules, regulations, and policies of the Board; recommend any change in administrative practices . . .; direct the record keeping for the school system; . . . advise the Board on all matters relative to any building program that may be undertaken; . . . be responsible for the public relations program of the schools and shall endeavor to maintain publicity and public
Lines of Authority

Citizens

Board of Education

Superintendent

Asst. Supt. in chg. of Sec. Ed. and Admin. Asst.

Admin. Asst.

Secondary Principal

Coord. of Teaching Aids

Coord. of Art

Helping Teacher

Coord. of Music

Helping Teacher

Coord. of Health

Nurses

Coord. of Phy. & Safety Ed. & H. S. Athletics

Coord. of Adult & Vocational Ed.

Coord. of Library Services

Area Psychologists

Clerks

Teachers

Janitors

Pupils

Asst. Supt. in chg. of Elem. Ed.

Admin. Asst.

Elementary Principal

Café.

Asst. to Maint.

Maint. Supt.

Asst. to Supt. Business

Maint. Supt.

Maintenance

Bus & Truck Drivers

Janitor

Fireman

contacts as may best serve to inform the community of the needs, achievements and concerns of the schools. 2

The Board further delegates to the superintendent the right to delegate duties and responsibilities to other staff members. The superintendent is directly responsible for the actions of his assistants.

This paper will deal only with the elementary schools. The secondary schools are handled in a similar manner.

Requirements and Duties of Assistant Superintendent

The assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education must have these qualifications; a master's degree or higher with a strong major in educational administration and supervision, with five years of experience. The duties of the assistant superintendent shall be: to counsel with the superintendent on matters pertaining to formulation and execution of policy; to interview all applicants for teaching at elementary levels, evaluate their qualifications, and nominate qualified persons to the superintendent; to coordinate the administrative and supervisory functions of the elementary schools and preside at all meetings of the elementary cabinet; to direct the E.M.H. program at all levels; to coordinate at the elementary level, curriculum development and evaluations, instructional aids, in-service educational program, supervisory aid; to counsel with secondary superintendents to integrate organization and curriculum; to coordinate all student teaching on elementary level; and to perform such other duties as the superintendent may assign.

The assistant superintendent has an administrative assistant with these qualifications: a master's degree and five years' experience.

2Ibid., p. 12f.
3Ibid., p. 9.
The assistant has these six duties assigned to him; to direct the testing program and evaluation and interpretation for grades K-6; to direct the special education for physically handicapped, grades K-12; to do classroom supervision as assigned; to assist with orientation of new teachers through planned visitation days; to assume the responsibilities of the assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education during the assistant superintendent's absence; and to perform such other duties as may be assigned.

In the Decatur system there are several coordinators who are responsible for their particular fields. It is not deemed necessary to list their qualifications and duties. They have charge of coordinating their fields with the curriculum in self-contained classrooms. Coordinators have charge of art, with a helping teacher; music, with a helping teacher; health, physical and safety education; adult and vocational education; library services; and area psychologists.

Requirements and Duties of Principals

The qualifications for both elementary and secondary principals are the same. They must meet the requirements of the state, hold a master's degree, have experience in working with the children of the age of those in the school, have shown evidence of capacity and disposition to work cooperatively with pupils, parents, and school administrative and supervisory staff, have shown evidence of administrative and leadership ability, and have five years of successful teaching.

The duties of the principal shall be:

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 8.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 9.}\]
To be responsible to the assistant superintendents and the superintendent for all supervision, organizations and administration of the building, assist the coordinators in planning and carrying out procedures and policies pertaining to instructional program; delegate all except the major administrative and clerical duties to staff members and assume the principal's function to be mainly one of supervision; view supervision as a cooperative process involving classroom teachers; ... Also, to perform other duties as may be assigned.  

Any school having twenty-five or more teachers has an assistant principal assigned. There are two schools of this size in Decatur. 

The qualifications for the assistants are the same as for the principal. The assistant's duties are to take over administrative and clerical activities that cannot be delegated to the clerk; assume responsibility for such curriculum committee functions as the principal may assign; and other duties as may be assigned.

Requirements and Duties of the Teacher

The classroom teacher also has his share of supervision. The qualifications and duties of the classroom teacher are outlined in the manual as follows: be qualified with the state, have a knowledge and understanding of child growth and development, and be interested in professional growth.  

The duties of the teachers are:

Conduct classes so as to give the students the richest experiences; keep records as requested by the principal; attend building, faculty and department meetings as called; keep informed on the latest research findings in his field of teaching and psychology of learning; prepare daily lesson plans and keep them in the desk for use by a substitute; assist with supervision of the playground, lunchroom and halls; and perform such other duties as may be assigned.

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6 Ibid., p. 27.
7 Ibid., p. 27.
8 Ibid., p. 27.
CHAPTER II

EFFECTS OF SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP ON FACULTY MORALE

The remainder of the paper is an analysis of the supervision and effects of supervision in one particular school, the E. J. Muffley School, where the writer teaches sixth grade.

The Superintendent in charge of elementary education is thoroughly qualified for her position. She has lived in Decatur all of her life so that she is very well acquainted with the city and with the desires of the people. She came from the ranks by way of teacher, principal, and finally supervisor.

Interviews

As one of her duties, the assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education interviews all elementary teachers who are applying for teaching positions. If the first interview is satisfactory to her, she then meets with the applicant and the principal where the vacancy exists. Usually, the final approval is given by the principal. Because the first contact with the supervisor is a pleasant experience, most teachers retain an admiration for her.

Supervision

Another duty of the supervisor that is not so pleasant for a
teacher is close supervision of the classroom by the supervisor and her assistant. Although she is very tactful, she does not hesitate to correct anything she does not like. This is done in the meeting which follows her visit. If possible, the principal is present at the conference. One complaint from the teacher is that many times she or he does not have the opportunity to do much talking.

The assistant elementary supervisor makes many of the visits. These visits are a little hard on a new teacher's morale. After a teacher is on tenure, the pressure of the visits lessens and they are not the important things they once were.

**Effect of Principal on Morale**

Most of the supervision of the classroom is by the principal. The effects of the close supervision is very evident on the teacher's morale. These effects are evidenced by a certain degree of tenseness and the usual amount of grumbling. Although the teachers recognize the job of supervision as an excellent job, the influence of it is felt by all teachers.

The "growth pattern" is another duty of principal and teacher which very often affects morale. This is one of the written reports that both principal and teacher must complete. The principal is available for conferences most of the time, and it would be much better to iron out any difficulties rather than to wait for the growth pattern. During a conference with the principal, problems are worked out and relationships made more flexible.
Harmony in Staff

The principal seems to have full confidence in all members of the staff. She has a wonderful disposition and personality and uses it to full advantage in working with teachers, pupils, and parents. She has never tried to impress the staff with her knowledge or in any way tried to belittle the teachers who work for her. She does not hesitate to compliment teachers on their ideas and suggest that they might be of use to the group. She often says to the group that if she sees something she does not approve of she will tell only that teacher involved. Thus far, the writer has never heard her say anything was wrong in any classroom but has heard her say good things.

Our principal does many things outside her official capacity. Examples: Monday morning meetings with parents in the auditorium to discuss problems they might have with their youngsters and the teaching of adult education classes.

A successful program depends upon a feeling of friendliness and an attitude of harmony in a staff. Immediately upon entering our building a feeling of good will seems to prevail. Teachers call each other by first names, and a good bit of joking goes on among the teachers.

One of the best evidences of harmony is that fact that, when the principal wants a volunteer, she always has more than enough. She does not ask of us what she would not do herself.

The one thing that could cause disharmony for the coming year is the choosing of teachers for split rooms and for the rooms that will be housed in a church near by. Most of the teachers have the feeling they were hired for a certain room and a certain grade, and if they are
moved from that grade or room, the tranquillity of the present situation might be disturbed. This is a situation that will have to be handled expertly.

There is an atmosphere of courtesy between teachers and principal and vice versa. The principal calls and is called by the first name. This does not leave a feeling of discourtesy but rather makes for a better feeling about the building.

To create an atmosphere of permissiveness, a feeling of security must be evolved from each member of the staff. There are relatively few evidences of insecurity on our staff at the present time.

The Decatur School Board has the compulsory further training rule which aggravates some of the teachers no end. For the most part, however, the teachers earn the necessary hours without much grumbling because all the staff has to earn the same number of hours right up through the superintendent. This of course, has more to do with morale than with security.

As Wiles\(^1\) points out, morale is a delicate plant that grows slowly in an atmosphere of mutual respect. It can be severely stunted by one false action. When a single personality is disregarded, the feeling of security and confidence within the total group breaks down, and each member feels, with justification, that if one person has not received fair treatment, it may be his turn next. With the proper leaders, few people should have reason for this belief in the Muffley School.

One thing that helps morale in the Decatur system is the salary schedule. It is not the top in Illinois, but it is far above most of the salary schedules in central Illinois. The writer has placed a salary schedule in the appendix for reference.

Committees

There is in the Decatur schools a committee for each subject taught in the schools. At present the writer is on the committee for arithmetic. This year a new textbook was chosen to be placed in Decatur for the coming year. It was the general opinion of the committee that the text being used was not advanced enough for each grade. Therefore, for the following year Webster's books will be used.

A social committee is picked each year for each school. It is the duty of this committee to plan and choose dates for anything that might occur for the staff during the year. Examples: Christmas party, party honoring teachers, and end-of-year picnic.

Faculty Meetings

The faculty meetings for our school are held whenever the need arises. This usually happens about once a week, but informal meetings are held much more frequently. They are held in the teachers' lounge where each teacher has a comfortable chair and is out of reach of the children for the duration of the meeting. There is still the objection to smoking in the lounge, and some teachers would like this rule abolished.

The meetings are held either at eight-thirty or at three-fifteen.
Since all teachers are required to remain at school until four o'clock, this time is not considered the teacher's time. Therefore, no complaining is heard from the teachers about staying for a meeting after school.

Once a month the Decatur Education Association holds a meeting at one of the three high schools. These are strictly business, and all teachers in Decatur are expected to belong and to attend the meetings. A representative from each building is chosen or volunteers, and that person takes care of all business at the regular building meetings. Usually, this person is given the first item on the agenda of building meetings.

Wiles suggests that one thing bad for morale is the definite danger of a teacher usurping leadership. His first suggestion to prevent usurpation of leadership is to keep committees to a minimum. A staff that is loaded with committee work might produce a leader that staff members might be inclined to follow. This is not always bad, but sometimes the leader takes the followers in the wrong direction.

So often committee work overlaps. This is bad for morale because it wastes so much time that the teacher needs for other work. Therefore, each committee should have its work carefully defined, and if there is evidence of an overlap, the members should immediately discuss this with their superior.

This problem of leadership reaches down to the student body. Some students take problems to people other than the designated person. If this happens, the person should refer the student to the proper person rather than trying to do the job himself.

\(^2\text{Ibid., p. 219.}\)
There is a slight chance of over-mechanization in our building. Occasionally a few things are done for the teachers that should be left to the teachers to do. Coordinating machinery has been set up very effectively, however, and this is not very apt to happen.

To sum up this chapter very briefly, there is very little chance for usurpation to take place in our building. It is the writer's opinion that the morale is too good and the supervision too well done for any group of our teachers to listen too long to any teacher who might try to lead the others astray.
CHAPTER III

SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Hiring of Teachers

More consideration should be given to hiring teachers than to any other part of an administrator's work.

In Decatur all teachers are hired by the supervisor and the principal. Some teachers make the mistake of telling the supervisor that they can teach any grade. This is one of the prime reasons a good teacher sometimes fails to get a position in the Decatur schools. A teacher should simply state the grade level in which he or she feels most secure; there usually will be a vacancy soon.

The supervisor is careful in trying not to put the proverbial square peg in a round hole. Naturally, a supervisor cannot tell by an interview what a teacher is going to be like, so, consequently, the supervisory visits may be expected. The principal is expected to help solve any problem that may arise. Sometimes it is impossible to correct a situation. For example, last year our first grade teacher just could not make an adjustment to living away from home. She had always been very close to her family, and from her reports, she is very happy this year living and teaching much closer to her home.

When one is interviewed, the subject of religion is sometimes discussed but is not a requirement. As far as the writer knows, religion
has little or no significance as to being hired to teach in the Decatur schools.

Another requirement overlooked in some cases is that of color. Decatur does have a few Negro teachers in the system. As far as the writer knows, there is only one Negro teacher in the elementary system. This person has a first grade room where both Negro and white children attend. She is well thought of by both parents and fellow teachers.

The Board places no conditions that a teacher must live in the city of Decatur. This would probably never be expected to happen, because in a city of the size Decatur is, housing is sometimes very difficult. For example, the writer of this paper lives in Bethany and commutes to and from work each day. This has one decided disadvantage; more night meetings would be attended by the writer if he lived closer.

**Orientation**

New teachers to the system or a teacher changing grade levels attend a three-day orientation program just before the opening of school. This is a fine thing, but it leaves a lot to be desired. The main thing wrong with the orientation program is that things are presented to a new teacher so fast that one does not have a chance to grasp everything. Still, it is much better than nothing at all, because a lot of the newness is worn off, and a new teacher feels more at ease.

Teachers who have had experience in Decatur have charge of the orientation program. The administrators would like to have as many different teachers take part as possible. Therefore, each year different teachers volunteer or are chosen to act as moderators for the different
panels and grade levels. The writer is going to serve as moderator for the arithmetic section for the sixth grade this September. It should also prove a very valuable experience for him.

**Vacancies**

Any new vacancy that might occur in the system is listed immediately, and any teacher may apply for that position as long as he is eligible. Teachers already in Decatur would get a chance at the position before a new teacher. Also, principalships are filled, as much as possible, from the group of educators already working in the Decatur system.

The principal of our building came to Decatur and within three years was a principal. Later, when the Muffley School was built, she was asked to take this position. When she did so, another teacher from her former building applied and was chosen principal there.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

An administrator must always remember that as a teacher fails the administrator has also failed. This seems to be the philosophy of the administrators and principals in the city of Decatur.

Any discussion of supervisory service must respect the practical conditions of the moment. It cannot be limited to more enticing what-should-be; it must deal with the more troublesome what-is.¹

In this paper the writer has listed the qualifications, requirements, and duties of the administration of the Decatur school system. The writer has tried to show the plan for supervision and use this plan for specific reference to the E. J. Muffley School where he teaches. The purposes were evaluated and described as they are actually in operation.

Attempts were made to show that a good supervisor must not just have a good formal college education. He should encompass skills in human relationships, an understanding of social trends and forces, educational vision, and capacity for democratic leadership.

From the above the effects of supervisory leadership on faculty morale was taken up and analyzed, as was the selection, induction, and


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improvement of the staff.

It must be a recognised fact that salary, tenure, and sick leave are not the only things that teachers are concerned with. This is very true with the staff of the Muffley school. More important are the effects of the supervisory program and the pleasure in everyday experiences at school.

Not all of the plans taking place in the Decatur system could possibly be described in a paper of this size. However, the ones of primary importance were evaluated as they occurred and took place in the E. J. Muffley School in the city of Decatur, Illinois.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX
INTERSTAFF COMMUNICATION

To: Members of the Staff  
From: DEA Policies Committee  
Date: February 11, 1958

This is the schedule which the DEA Policies Committee presented to Mr. Grant and the Board of Education on February 5. It was accepted by the Board on February 11. Our schedule has been improved by a $300 increase at the beginning of the schedule and a $600 increase at the top of the schedule. The average increase per teacher is approximately $509.

**SALARY SCHEDULE FOR 1958-59**

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**Principles Applied**

1. A $300 increase at the beginning of the scale will maintain Decatur's good competitive position for securing inexperienced teachers. If the salary for the beginning teachers is increased, all of the teachers should be raised accordingly.

2. Increments are uniform ($175 per year below the M.A. and $200 per year at and above the M.A.); Thus giving the inexperienced teachers increments when they are most needed and increasing Decatur's holding power of teachers in this group.

   a. To increase the spread for B.A. from $1,800 to $2,100.
   b. To increase the spread for M.A. from $2,100 to $2,400.

3. This schedule is prepared on a basis for a school term of nine months.