The Matrimonial Concept of School Public Relations

James C. Van Delinder

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THE MATRIMONIAL CONCEPT
OF SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS

James C. Van Delinder
THE MATRIMONIAL CONCEPT
OF SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS

A Paper
Presented to the Faculty of
Eastern Illinois University
In Education 580

In Partial Fulfillment
Of The Requirements For The Degree
Master of Science in Education

Plan B

By
James C. Van Delinder

August, 1961
APPROVED:

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DATE:__________________________
As indicated in the first chapter of this paper, there is no shortage of concepts of school public relations. Many books and articles have been written on the subject, an American Association of School Administrator's yearbook has been devoted to the subject, and one can even join the School Public Relations Association to further study the subject. That there is an abundance of material, then, should not be surprising. The nature of the material, on the other hand, is of interest here. For one thing, the area of public relations itself has been steadily growing in commerce for almost two decades. For another thing, school men have realized for an even longer time that they need the support of their public. These two facts are significant because commerce and school men have been growing closer and closer in their findings. More and more is being understood about public relations, and more and more of this knowledge is being used by school men.

A superintendent of schools can buy any number of books to guide him in the wise uses of techniques of gaining public support. Attempts are made to help him understand the principles of mass media, social psychology, and social leadership. An educator can even get help in picking a specialist to be in charge of public relations who has made a career of gaining public support for the employing school system. Contrasted with these examples of highly specialized, highly trained public relations people, however, many other people are also responsible for public relations: teachers, maintenance staffs, clerical staffs, and the pupils themselves.
Thus it may be seen at the outset that one of the biggest problems in school public relations is inherent in the vastness of its scope. There should be little wonder that it is difficult to find a single concept which can easily guide the schools to simple, effective, and successful public support when the fact is accepted that no single person, or official, can possibly control all of those activities which comprise school public relations. Items published in a newspaper are only a small portion of the public relations that take place. The dissemination of information through regular channels is simple and easily controlled by one person, or official, But much information is disseminated through irregular, less formal channels, and it is through these that no one person can hope to maintain any true order. What superintendent could hope to regulate every casual, routine, or explanatory remark made by every teacher to every pupil, every parent, every friend, or every other teacher?

Instead of building a concept to guide one person, then, the purpose of this study is to build a concept which will guide the many people who are informally responsible for a school's public relations.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The data used in the following study can be grouped in two classifications: the broad survey of current and available literature, and the verbalization of certain applicable perceptions.

The method used is largely rational in approach and philosophical in nature. It has been observed that some of the problems which loom as obstacles to that support which any school so direly needs are the result of poor public relations. It should logically follow that if a better concept of school public relations can be found, then some of these problems can be eliminated. The question then becomes one of determining the way in which a better concept can be found.

The first step is to examine and evaluate those concepts which are in current use. It goes without saying that many concepts now in use may not have any labels, and they also may not be described in print as yet. The examination is made by surveying and evaluating some of the current literature on the topic. The evaluations are a combination of reasoning and documentation.

The second step is to summarize and enumerate those factors in the current concepts which logically and perceptibly appear to be the fundamental causes for failure—the reasons for their being poor. These factors should then serve as a criterion for a better concept.

The third step calls for a description of some new concept which is the result of having perceived things which can be so described because
of their similarities to other more common perceptions.

The fourth step is the testing of that new concept against the criterion established in the second step.

The fifth step is the attempt to draw some conclusion or conclusions from the study itself.
CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF EXISTING CONCEPTS

The purpose of this section is to review some of the existing concepts of public relations. Something of value can be gained from such a review, for while most of the following concepts are stated negatively, there is merit in looking at them in reverse, a re-statement in positive terms.

James J. Jones lists four concepts: indifference, selling the schools to the public, educational interpretation, and cooperative endeavor.

The Concept of Indifference

Confidence in the schools is maintained through a motionless or 'let alone' attitude. Where the public is satisfied, and all appears well, indifference to the home and the community will likely continue to be the prevailing philosophy.¹

Aside from the obvious faults to be found with an attitude of indifference in any endeavor, there is something far deeper in such a concept as applied to education. To be sure, the school might some day need help, and on that occasion it would find it most difficult to explain itself and make its needs understood to a community it had hitherto ignored. What is more, that help might not be forthcoming.

Of deeper significance, however, is the fact that the community has a right to be considered in matters of education. This right is as basic

and essential as matters of defense because the community has a right to protect itself against ideological enemies as well as physical enemies. The school and community are balances of power, the school striving to teach certain truths which will stand the test of any attempts to pursue false goals, and the community insisting that its children be taught democratic ideals.

Any attitude of indifference is also wrong because of its power to be divisive. To be indifferent is to ignore the needs of the community, and to do this is to gradually train the child in directions apart from those desired by the parent, thus to divide them.

The Concept of Selling the Schools to the Public

It is inadequate as a concept of school-community relations largely because it tends to imply something selfish and destructive.

A community cannot buy something which it already owns, and the public schools do belong to the people.²

It is in this concept that the greatest dangers exist, some of which are inherent in the attitude itself, and some of which are disturbingly apparent in the public relations activities of commerce.

Inherent in the selling attitude itself are tendencies to look upon the community as not knowing what it wants, the need to create a market, and the idea that education has no intrinsic value even if the community could recognize it; therefore, it must be sold. There is no selling necessary when a man enters a clothing store and asks for a specific suit right down to details of size, style, and price. Any salesman will admit that this type of transaction is easy because the man knows exactly what

²Ibid.
he wants. If the community knows what it wants, there is no need for selling education to that community.

This concept also implies that there is a need to create a market, or the community does not naturally care about its schools, therefore, it should be made to care. This is totally unfair because it too easily relieves the community of its responsibility. Any community will soon learn to side step continual, obvious efforts to create a market, because any buyer soon becomes wary of salesmen, who, through repetition become recognizable as salesmen.

But most tragic of all, the effort to sell education overlooks the intrinsic value of education itself. The good educational program will reap its own profits in a better product, and it will not need selling. To try to sell the school is to say, in effect, that it needs "salesmanship," "pushing," "ballyhooing," etc. Anything that needs such help must be less than desirable. It promotes an automatic suspicion about its true worth.

More serious than these, however, are the subtle reasons for suspecting those programs which need to be sold to us. There has been a disturbing tendency in the past decade which has seemingly taken us too close to the brink of what might be called thought control. George Orwell warns of this idea in his novel, 1984, and similar dangers are exposed in the book, The Hidden Persuader, by Vance Packard. The latter states that millions of dollars are spent just to determine buying habits and the psychology of merchandising. To condone the concept of selling the schools to the public is to encourage school salesmen to adopt similar commercial methods; to emphasize those things which they want us to believe, the
successes of the educational program, the brighter side rather than the 
true side of the package. While there is a practice which is accepted in 
legal transactions, the danger is too imminent for educational transac-
tions to carry the caution: let the buyer beware!

The Concept of Educational Interpretation

Although occasionally there may be isolated instances 
of a two-way process, interpretation seldom admits any 
arrangement whereby school-community relations become an 
interaction of school and community. 3

This concept also seems too divisive in nature. By emphasizing 
the need for each to be interpreted to the other, too much attention is 
called to the fact that the two (school and community) stand apart and 
therefore need interpreting. Too little is granted the possibility that 
many of the needs may be held in common by both the school and the 
community.

More than this, however, is the implied lack of active participation. 
To interpret one another's needs is by no means to do anything about 
meeting those needs. At best, interpretation would hold forth the hope 
that one would be able to understand the other's needs. But more than 
this is needed, for the school must not only know the community's needs, 
it must try to fulfill them; the community must not only know the school's 
needs, it must recognize them as its own needs.

The Concept of Co-operative Endeavor

About this concept, Jones states that it is the view of the Depart-
ment of Elementary School Principals of the National Education Association

3 Ibid., p. 232.
that: "Together, the public, the profession, and the children will understand, support, and believe in their program of education."^4

William A. Yeager has this further comment on the concept of co-operative endeavor: "A philosophy of co-operative endeavor in the interests of complete child welfare provides most adequately for that type of education satisfying the needs of the whole child."^5

Up to this point, then, the concept of co-operative endeavor has emerged as the most acceptable concept of school public relations. It shall be one of the premises of this study in a later chapter to show that cooperation is good, but it is not enough.

To turn to another source, Harlan L. Hagman lists seven concepts of school public relations, the first five of which are undesirable.

The "Little Nell" Concept

The author cites the following weakness: "A common concept of school public relations makes it of important concern to the administrator only when assistance is to be sought."^6

By looking at the positive meaning behind the negative value of this concept, it can be seen that school public relations should be of important concern to the administrator at all times.

The Fire-Wagon Concept

Because this concept holds public relations in readiness for an

^4Ibid., p. 233.


alarm, it is also based on the premise that the need for public relations is spasmodic, and temporary. To re-state these two concepts in positive terms is to say that school public relations should be continuous.

The Ounce of Prevention Concept

This concept is negative because it presumes, even expects things to go wrong with the educational program. To need preventive measures is to need to defend against a possibility of something going wrong. To build preventive techniques is to be prepared for, to expect something to go wrong, and is, therefore pessimistic. From this, it can be said in positive terms that school public relations should be optimistic.

The Show-Window Concept

About this concept, Hagman writes, "Exhibits, concerts, plays, newspaper notices, and speakers' bureaus provide views of the school program." From this concept, it can be more positively concluded that a public relations program should be based on sound value judgments; that activities should be granted their intrinsic value, not their showcase worth.

The Golden-Stairs Concept

If some school administrators were to answer a question in all frankness, they would affirm their belief in school public relations administration as a means of climbing the professional ladder in their own careers.

Here it can be concluded that a public relations concept should be broad, inclusive; therefore democratic.

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7Ibid., p. 336.
8Ibid.
9Ibid., p. 337.
10Ibid.
The Partnership Concept

To the extent that the school public relations program includes community interpretation as well as school interpretation, it is good but perhaps still unsatisfying in the light of present-day educational objectives.\textsuperscript{11}

So far, then, two concepts of school public relations have emerged as positive, potentially acceptable concepts: co-operative endeavor, and the partnership concept. These two concepts would appear to have similar rank because of the likeness between the terms co-operative and partnership. It shall be one of the premises stated in a later chapter that the term partnership is unacceptable as a concept of school public relations.

The Social-Leadership Concept

The administration of school public relations becomes the activity through which the school works in its task of democratically leading the community in a program of social betterment through education.\textsuperscript{12}

It shall be a third premise of this study that the concept of social-leadership is too limited in application in that it is a guide for one person--the official who is primarily responsible for the formal public relations program. The purpose of this study is to formulate a concept which may be applied by many persons.

In summary, two significant steps have been taken toward an understanding of school public relations by this survey of some of the more important existing concepts of school public relations. First, by evaluating those concepts which are not desirable, and by re-wording their negative statements, it is possible to build a clearer precept of a

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 338.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 340.
desirable concept. Second, it becomes easier to see the direction that must be taken in any attempt to carry further those concepts which are regarded as basically acceptable.
CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A DEFENSIBLE CONCEPT

From the review of existing concepts, it is possible to list the following characteristics as being explicitly, or implicitly recognized in a defensible concept of school public relations.

The Community's Rights and Needs Must be Considered

The school is the property of the public. The school has no rights except those given to it, lent to it, or delegated to it by the public which it serves. To ignore the public, or to adopt an attitude of indifference is to assume more power than the school can rightfully assume. On one extreme there is the right to pursue truth, and this right has been given to the school. On the other extreme is the right of ownership, and this right has been retained in full by the public.

School-Community Relations Should be a Two-Way Process

The school should make every attempt to interpret itself to the community, and the school should likewise make every attempt to interpret the community's needs. But more than understanding each other and the needs of each, there must be action taken to fill those needs so that further evaluation of needs, and, therefore, further interpretation can come about.

Education Should be Recognized as a Co-operative Endeavor

The defensible school public relations concept should recognize that many social institutions are necessary in the total educative process, of
which the school is only one, albeit the greatest formal institution.
In order to bring about the best education possible, it is necessary for these institutions to co-operate. Only through co-operating to determine the child's needs can the school and the parent reach an understanding of those needs, and only through co-operating can the school and the public work to fulfill those needs.

School Public Relations Should be Continuous

In the sense that a concept of school public relations is communication, it is vital that this communication be continuous and free-flowing. To look at it one way, it appears that to stop communication is, in effect, to dam it up. When it eventually becomes necessary to start the flow again, this sudden communicating will resemble a flood, carrying with it some of the dammed-up information that was held back. A natural response to breaks in the flow is one of suspicion. It is understandable to wonder, "What is being held back," "What is being hidden?" To be continuous in communications is to let the truth fight for itself, too. If the public relations program is continuous, free-flowing, and therefore always current and complete, problems will be recognized in their true light. There is no evidence to indicate that the public cannot competently evaluate problems if all of the facts are known.

To stop communicating is to run the risk of hiding helpful information as well as that which might be temporarily regarded as harmful information. Within that realm of helpful information might easily exist certain causes and influential factors. If a problem arises in which some of the underlying causes have at one time been withheld, for instance, it will become necessary to uncover those causes. In the process of
uncovering, the resulting suspicion can carry over from the hiding to the causes. Once suspicion is cast upon the causes, intelligent solutions become difficult.

School Public Relations Should be Optimistic

To be optimistic is little more than to be assured that future results will be successful, rather than fruitless. To accomplish this sense of assurance is to have confidence, to trust in the methods, the principles, and the people with whom we work. More, it is to have faith. Much faith is placed in lesser things every day. People trust their very lives to their faith that some driver will stop because a light shows red instead of green. It is not unreasonable, then, to expect democratic methods of implementing sound principles in an honest atmosphere to produce valuable results.

School Public Relations Should be Based on Sound Values

Sound values are those values which accurately reflect the philosophy of a school as arrived at between the school and its public. If a school (and its public) has decided to stress the whole child, and the definition includes every child, then an attempt should be made to balance the program. An unbalanced program in favor of the child's physical needs, for instance, is not an accurate reflection of the philosophy to educate the whole child. An unbalanced public relations effort in favor of such a need would thus be also an untrue reflection of such a philosophy.

In a school where the public relations program accurately reflects the philosophy of educating the whole child, there is little opportunity
for such concepts as the "showcase" concept. Where it is realized that the child should have a balanced education, it is also realized that his activities should be balanced in value. Where this realization exists, there should be a balanced program of recognition.

School Public Relations Should Be Broad and Inclusive

First, it is desirable to impress upon each employee of the school system that he is a public relations agent of the school. He is not an agent by virtue of election, or appointment. He is an agent by virtue of the irrevocable fact that all that he is and does is a part of the image of his school. It is not only unfair to expect one official to take the bulk of the responsibility for a public relations program, it is highly impractical to do so. Because no one person can possibly exercise control over all of the public relations activities, no one person should be held entirely responsible. The public relations responsibility is one which must be shared.

Second, in expecting each employee to act as an agent, it is only just that he be given full and free access to the principles of his agency. He, too, should understand the philosophy which he is expected to reflect.

Third, by recognizing that everyone has a stake in the public relations program there is put into effect a process which education has admitted as one of its goals: democracy. If education truly believes that democracy is good, education must be willing to use democracy, for therein all proof will lie...the product.

School Public Relations Should be Adaptable

In research, theory, and indeed in experience, it has been found that one of man's first needs is to adjust. He must adjust to his environ-
onment, but environment changes; therefore he must be able to adjust to change, also. Like man, himself, his tools should also be able to adjust. A public relations concept built upon principles that are too rigid is in danger of becoming obsolete, or ineffective at best. Thus it becomes necessary for a defensible concept of public relations to recognize that communities will not only differ in their goals and needs, but those same communities will undergo changes in their goals and needs. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that a good, adaptable public relations program will be capable of keeping up with those differences and those changes of natural origin.

In addition to these, further characteristics of a defensible concept have been stated in a list compiled in Public Relations for America's Schools. Due to the overlapping and duplication of principles in the previous pages with some of those on this list, the listing is not to be taken as complete.

**School Public Relations Must be Honest in Intent and Execution**

The public relations program must be in the first instance identified with honesty or integrity. This is undeniably so, for by the very nature of public relations the character of its effort is on display for critical examination by numerous publics. Any misrepresentation carries not only the burden of its own lost opportunity to inform, but the doubled penalty of eventual public censure and wrath.

**School Public Relations Must be Intrinsic**

This principle means, therefore, that the public relations value of the educational program itself is the

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14Ibid., p. 18.
proper basis for the school public relations effort. A public relations effort so conceived will be intrinsic. At the same time, the artistry of the public relations effort will be in its anonymity as well as in its intrinsic quality.15

School Public Relations Must be Positive in Approach

This principle does not suggest that the public relations effort should treat only the light, obviously correct, non-controversial aspects of the school program. But the reaction of the school's publics to these difficult problems will be favorable to schools only if facts, analyses, and conclusions are presented in positive terms. Problems will be considered more readily when constructive solutions are offered. Inadequacies then are apt to be treated not as past failures but as opportunities for future improvement.16

The Ideas Communicated Must be Simple

The teacher is already a stereotype. The school system already is more or less personalized in the superintendent, and the public constantly rationalizes its decisions. Because of these human tendencies, the effective public relations program must be expressed in simple terms. Large publics cherish simple definitions, summarized conceptions, simple narrative, musical brevity of language, and the personified abstraction. These must be put honestly to the task of securing public support and understanding of the schools and of their relationship to the general welfare.17

In summary, it has been shown that a defensible concept of school public relations has certain characteristics which distinguish it from less desirable concepts of school public relations. Among these are: simplicity, honesty, adaptability, optimism, intrinsicism, co-operation, interaction, and democracy.

15 Ibid., p. 21.
16 Ibid., p. 24.
17 Ibid., p. 33.
CHAPTER IV

THE MATRIMONIAL CONCEPT

As a first step in laying the foundation for a new concept in school public relations, the four following definitions of school public relations are offered as being representative and indicative of most such definitions.

It is a process which seeks to foster understanding and friendly working relationships between schools and their communities.18

Public relations is the formulation and maintenance of policies designed to win and hold, through publicity and personal contact, the good will of the people.19

Public school-relations are that phase of school administration which seeks to bring a harmonious working relationship between the schools and the public which the schools serve.20

School public relations, then, is a process of communication between the school and the community for the purpose of increasing citizen understanding of educational needs and practices and encouraging intelligent citizen interest and cooperation in the work of improving the school.21

These definitions are cited for the purpose of calling attention to certain key words. These key words, while sometimes differing, are quite similar in connotation and intent. The words are: friendly, good will, harmonious, and cooperation. It is the purpose of this part of the study


to create a concept in public relations which is true to these key words.

Aside from the fact that these definitions used such key words as working, understanding, and relationships, all of the key words previously listed have at least one thing in common: they presume a unity. There must be a unity in a friendship, or the "friends" are mere acquaintances. There must be a unity in good will, or it shall mean the mere tolerance of one another. There must likewise be a unity in the word "harmonious," or the term loses all meaning, all hope of productivity, and any results will depend upon coincidence. Finally, there must be a unity in the word cooperation or the prefix will be untrue.

Unity is expressed another way in the statement by Jones, repeated here from page seven:

Together, the public, the profession, and the children will understand, support, and believe in their program of education. 22

Thus it is that the program of educating children is our job, our responsibility, our duty. It is the plural, uniting pronoun which is the best symbol of this unity dealt with so far. To say that we have needs, that they have achieved, is to be inclusive. To refer to the needs of education as my needs, or your needs, and to refer to the achievements of education as my achievements, is to exclude: to divide.

Still another approach to unity can be found in this statement:

The administration of school public relations becomes of high importance in the organization of democratic education for compelling reasons springing from a conviction that the preservation and extension of democracy can be achieved

22 Jones, op. cit., p. 232.
only through education and then only if education purposes strongly to preserve and extend democracy.23

This description of unity can be compared to an interaction between democracy and education, and thus the nature of this unity can be seen more clearly. It is not a unity just for the sake of being whole, or together, or achieving a oneness. It is a unity for a specific purpose: to propagate its social species—democracy.

It is this unity, then, which is the first premise upon which the matrimonial concept is built. This unity is, however, of people and for people, and thus it must be known who these people are, and for whom they must have unity. These people are, for the purpose of education, those directly and indirectly responsible for carrying out that education. Those directly responsible are called professional people, while those indirectly responsible are called lay people. It is obvious that there are degrees of directness of responsibility. The teacher is properly regarded as having the highest degree of direct responsibility, and the parent as having the highest degree of indirect responsibility. (In truth, the parent belongs at the head of each category, except that he has delegated his direct responsibility to the professional educator, just as he has delegated, as a citizen, his direct governmental responsibility to his elected representative, the professional governor.)

This unity of professional people and lay people is for the benefit of those people called students, pupils, or the children. And this principle must always be kept foremost in mind: the unity is for lay and professional people, but it is for the children. When unity of education
becomes a unity which is primarily for the good of some other goal, and it thereby attaches only secondary importance to the betterment of the child, then it is no longer unity at all. Instead, it is a personal goal which others have been asked to adopt.

In summary, the nature of this unity is as follows:

1. Unity is vital to education because the task of educating requires efforts which are combined, friendly, and cooperative.

2. The units to be combined are called lay people and professional people.

3. The purpose of unity is the same as the purpose of education itself: the child.

4. If these united efforts are successful, education can fulfill its purpose, and the ultimate result will be the preservation of democracy.

To carry this unity one step farther, it would be helpful to describe it in another way. If a line were drawn to symbolize a continuum of relationships between people, the word "enemy" would probably be placed at the lower, or furthest extreme on the negative side of the middle of that line. It is logical to assume that in man's relationships with other people, the extreme, negative, most undesirable relationship would be that of "enemies." Enemies presume a hostility, a lack of trust, a hatred, and a will to do harm. These attitudes represent the ultimate in man's failure to get along with his fellow man.

The middle point on this continuum might be labeled by some such word as "strangers." If to move in one direction from the middle is to have attitudes or feelings against people, then to have attitudes or feelings for people would, of necessity, be to move in the other direction
from that mid-point. What, then, lies in the middle? The middle must represent a no-man's land, or void. Those people to whom man has no feelings or attitudes are most likely those people whom man does not know: strangers.

But what of the other extreme, the furthest point on the positive side of the middle, the upper-most extent of man's feelings and attitudes for a person? If enemy is the other extreme, can this extreme be something approaching a mate? If hatred is the principal emotion between enemies, then should not the principal emotion on this extreme be love? If enemies wish each other harm, will not those on this extreme wish each other good? If an enemy represents man's ultimate failure to get along with another, then a mate, a husband or wife, should represent man's ultimate success in getting along with another.

One social scientist agrees with this precept. In a pamphlet entitled ABC's of Scapegoating, there is a continuum similar to the aforementioned line of relationships. It is a continuum of social relationships among human groups. At the top, and symbolized by an arrow pointing toward friendly, there is the term "cooperation." At the bottom, and symbolized by an arrow pointing toward hostile, is the term "scapegoating." On the positive side of the continuum, the first term from the middle is tolerance, the second is respect, and the top is, as noted above, cooperation. These two continuums differ in two ways: the matrimonial concept would liken the school and its public to individuals rather than groups, and it would extend the continuum to greater relationships and ultimately to that ideal unity called marriage.

The matrimonial concept of school public relations is based on three premises.

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1. Inherent in the wording and structure of various, representative definitions of school public relations there is a presumed unity.

2. The ultimate form of unity among people is marriage.

3. In "marrying" the school to its public, there is only a re-uniting of that which was united in the beginning, for the earliest attempts at education were simple and united. The first records of Colonial American education indicate that the simplest form of education took place. The parent, the community, all of the publics understood and supported the school in its job. People knew what was being taught, and why it was being taught. To document this, Yeager has the following to say:

We have seen that, in earlier periods of American educational history, the school was in many ways a considerable community force. The school lived close to the people. It taught subjects which the people, for the most part, understood. The school was the community center. Local public opinion controlled the school in every way.24

It is the major contention of this study, then, that a concept of school public relations can be compared to, and defended as, the marriage of the school to its public.

24 Yeager, op. cit., p. 104.
CHAPTER V

IN DEFENSE OF THE MATRIMONIAL CONCEPT

Of the many and varied social forces at work, two of them can be said to have a close, united relationship. It appears that the school and its public are like the partners in a marriage. There is a unity demanded of these two if they are to accomplish their goal of educating children. This unity is so vital and of such high nature that it is the kind of unity that one would expect to find in a marriage.

Because the purpose of this unity is so valuable, and because the result is so crucial, the relationship between the school and the public must be completely unselfish. Anything and everything must be sacrificed for the good of the child. It is in a marriage that one determines to subserve one's own personal desires to that of another.

Because the nature of the work to be done and the goals to be achieved are so difficult and complex, it requires the full and free efforts of both parties to carry on the program. In fact, it requires the highest form of partnership, the marriage of forces in behalf of another party: the child. In the usual concept of the term partner, one joins with another for the purpose of knowing a profit. Paramount in the forming of the partnership is the motive of profit, or at least personal betterment of some sort. But the partnership called for in educating the child is one that requires no thought of personal gain whatever. On the contrary, it calls for the sacrificing of one's personal gain for the sake of a third party's personal gain.
The importance of the job of education also requires that an intimacy should exist between the school and its public. It is through intimate knowledge of each other that much communication becomes both possible and unnecessary. Communication becomes possible in a marriage because the parties develop methods which supplement, complement, and transcend the usual methods of communication. Both parties develop an understanding of the needs, the desires, and the attitudes of each other. Both parties soon learn to interpret these needs, desires, and attitudes through more subtle means of communication. A wife soon learns her husband's moods by the way he hangs up his hat, or greets the children. It is through understanding each other that these languages come about.

It is also true that in a marriage much communication is unnecessary. It is not necessary for the parties in a marriage to communicate all of the details of much that occurs in their lives because an intimate knowledge of one another permits each to fill in for himself the trivia, and to skip over the details which lead to conclusions. Intimacy not only develops one's ability to know and predict the other's behavior, it also develops one's ability to know and predict the other's thought processes.

In an attempt to bring about a completely unselfish, intimate, and highest form of partnership, there must be trust. It is in marriage that trust becomes possible. In all other forms of contracts, relationships, and dealings among people, there is always the probability that sooner or later, to all men will come the day when self-preservation demands that they think of themselves first. There are rare cases of heroism in which a man has made a supreme sacrifice for a brother, or a comrade. In even rarer cases, man has sacrificed for a stranger, but it is common, almost expected, that husbands will sacrifice for wives, and vice versa. It is
the knowledge that a husband will die for her that permits a wife to trust him with her life. Taken to its fullest meaning, this trust then becomes faith. The school and the public must also have faith in one another, in one another's motives, and in one another's methods.

It is in marriage, and only in marriage, that such qualities as these are possible.

As a concept of school public relations, the marriage of the school to its public will meet those characteristics of a defensible concept as stated in Chapter II of this paper.

1. The matrimonial concept considers and recognizes the needs and the rights of the public. Not only does a husband see the needs and rights of his wife, he accepts them as his own. He willingly takes on the responsibility of meeting those material needs of his partner as the natural performance of his part in the union.

2. The matrimonial concept promotes a two-way process. In any relationship where each party regards the other as an equal in the fullest sense, there is the freedom to bring about a two-way process in the solving of problems. Husband and wife regard problems as mutual problems, the work to be shared, and the needs as common needs.

3. The matrimonial concept is a co-operative endeavor. The highest form of realization that we are not without dependence comes about in a marriage. As one party learns to depend upon the other for certain functions, he also deepens in his appreciation of that party's value. Once this appreciation and this dependence is solidified, the marriage partner more totally agrees that he could not do the job by himself. Important to the attitude of co-operation is the belief that each part is
essential to the whole, each dependent upon the other, and their binding agent is co-operative endeavor.

4. The matrimonial concept is continuous. There is no need for husband and wife to stop communicating. The continuous flow of communication, while not necessarily characterized by perfect agreement, still serves the vital function of permitting eventual agreement through the intelligent analysis of complete information.

5. The matrimonial concept is optimistic. For the school to regard itself as married to its public demands optimism. Intelligent people do not enter into a bargain, a contract, or a marriage unless they believe the result will be a success. If most people believed it hopeless to enter into an agreement, they would give up. It is the hope, the expectation that something good will result, that causes agreements to be made, marriages consummated, and partnerships formed. If the school can believe that its public has the child's interests at heart, a will to do its best for the child, and a desire to work out the best possible solutions to problems, then the school has every right to be optimistic about such efforts as they might jointly undertake.

6. The matrimonial concept is based on sound, intrinsic values. If the school regards itself as married to its public, then its governing philosophy will be one which has been arrived at by both parties. Both will have had a part in the formulation of that philosophy because the philosophy will have grown out of the needs of both. Because both have built the philosophy, each will know what that philosophy is. To know the philosophy is to know when it is being implemented, and to know when it is being ignored. The awareness of long-range goals should make possible the awareness of intrinsic value, because the little successes
that occur will appear to be just what they are; steps toward a goal, advances, progress.

7. The matrimonial concept is broad, inclusive, therefore democratic. The equality found in a marriage is the highest kind of equality. It is an equality so recognized and so highly respected that in terms of giving, it is almost an inequality. Rather than a business partnership, which implies a 50-50 basis of equality, a point at which each party will stop because personal fairness is sought, marriage promotes a desire to give more than one's share, to go more than half-way in one's dealings. There is a willingness to listen, because there is a reluctance to take out more than one's share, there is a hesitation to be too rigid because to be wrong would be to promote unfairness, inequality. The highest form of democracy can be found in a marriage, because rights are anticipated, and considered, not just obeyed.

8. The matrimonial concept is adaptable. This feature of a school public relations concept is somewhat dependent upon some of the other characteristics. In order to be adaptable, the concept should recognize and be assured of some other conditions necessary in the carrying out of the program. The concept can be adaptable if there is a continuous, free, honest exchange of information, and if the environment is one of trust and confidence. But in this concept there is the potential for adaptability because there is freedom in a marriage which makes possible the adjustment to change. Everyone reacts somewhat differently to change. One of the best methods of adjusting can come about through understanding how others adjust. There is a confidence born of learning that one's method is the same as another, or achieving success by using another's, or by the satis-
faction of helping another use one's own, successful method. In a marriage where each party has been free to discuss the pain of adjustment and has had the value of more objective views, there is a courage to face other changes.

9. The matrimonial concept demands honesty. It is the permanence of a marriage that promotes honesty within it. Each party in a marriage must realize that so much is at stake, so much depends on it, that honesty is not only good, and desirable, but it is demanded. A marriage with honesty will succeed; without honesty it will surely fail.

10. The matrimonial concept is positive. The willingness to join together, to become legally and morally as one, is positive. For the school to want to become one with its public is to display confidence in the public and the public's motives. To desire union is to stress the equality, the freedom of serious defects, the similarity of purpose. To offer union is to recognize the value, the importance, and the need of the other party in accomplishing a purpose. Because marriage is regarded as a serious, binding, and lasting relationship, this concept looms even more positive in nature. There is no hesitation, doubt, or negation implied in the desire to wed.

11. The matrimonial concept is simple. To describe the roles of the school and its public as marriage partners is to describe this relationship in the simplest of terms. Once it is clear and understood that this relationship does and must exist, the burden of proof is transferred to those who would spoil that relationship by exhibiting attitudes not in tune with such a relationship. If any segment of the public should attempt to deny support to the school, it would have to show good cause for doing
so. To claim a lack of confidence in the school would not suffice, for a husband does not deny his wife those things she needs on such a basis. If any employee of the school should attempt to minimize the needs of the public, he would have to show just cause, for again it is he who is trying to defend a departure from the status quo. Where the school and its public are divided, or their relationship is vague and undefined, it is easier to deny support and ignore needs without challenge. If the relationship between a school and its public is complicated, then it is harder for most people to see when that relationship is in danger.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions have emerged from this study of school public relations. In surveying certain predominant concepts as defined by two authorities in the field, at least one conclusion can be drawn. Those concepts which have proven inadequate have failed because they did not live up to at least one important principle of school public relations. Because there are a number of concepts which have failed, it follows that there must be a number of important principles which determine the nature of any potentially successful concept. In other words, there is no single, simple principle by which a concept may be formed. The guidance and leadership of a sound public relations program requires an understanding of all of the important principles of school public relations.

In surveying certain prominent lists of characteristics of school public relations, and in culling from certain predominant concepts an additional list of characteristics, another conclusion can be drawn. Any concept of school public relations is highly complex by virtue of the many characteristics which are necessary to define that concept.

In attempting to establish and defend an original concept of school public relations, two further conclusions are made. (1) The concept of democratic social leadership as established by Hagman is the most eminent concept of those studied. It is apparently a sound concept by any standards. It would be presumptuous to claim an improvement over such a concept. It is, instead, the utility of the concept that is the problem.
for this study. Mr. Hagman's concept is more than adequate for use by administrators and others who are in a position to determine public relations policy, and who are in a position to carry out the over-all program. The goal of this study has been to create a concept which can be understood, carried out, and believed in by those many, unofficial, and natural agents of the school's public relations. (2) Nor is there anything basically wrong with the concept of cooperative endeavor, for this concept is essentially aimed in the same direction as this study: a description of the relationship between a school and its public. This study has tried to carry that relationship one step further, for it has been perceived that the relationship between a school and its public is more than is implied in the term cooperative endeavor.

The matrimonial concept is a concept which simply describes the relationship between a school and its public. As a simple concept, it can be given to, understood by, and used by all of the agents of a school system. As a concept built upon the need for unity, perhaps it can have a unifying effect.

It is possible that this concept could be termed idealistic in nature. If it is too idealistic, there is still the chance that it is of some value. For somewhere between the inadequacies of what is and the impossibilities of what should be there must lie a concept which will succeed. It is hoped that this matrimonial concept at least points the direction.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


