The Role of the Teaching Principle

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THE ROLE OF

THE TEACHING PRINCIPAL

(TITLE)

BY

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS

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DATE

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DEPARTMENT HEAD
selecting teachers with special abilities in different fields, such as music, art, and physical education, so that the children may be furnished with comparable service to those in larger schools.\(^5\)

When a comparison is made between teaching and non-teaching principals, generally speaking, the teaching principals are the "have nots" on special teaching personnel. As an example, sixty-six percent of the non-teaching principals reported having speech supervisors available as compared to thirty-four percent of the teaching principals.\(^6\)

III. GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT

**Guidance.** The guidance service in the elementary school has emerged because high school and college personnel have shown an interest in it and have seen the influence it has on pupils as they become older. The elementary school has also become interested because they are concerned for the whole child.

In the elementary school the specialist assists the teacher rather than serving the child directly, because the

\(^5\)Otto and Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

\(^6\)National Education Association, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
teacher in the elementary school is with the child all day and knows him well. In the high school the specialist deals directly with the student. 7

Where does the teaching principal fit into the guidance picture? It is the over-all responsibility of the principal to see to it that an adequate guidance program is available to the students in his school although his function may be largely stimulative and supervisory. 8

The teaching principal's concern with guidance is working with the counselor. He will need to schedule the counselor into the total school program and then provide time before and after school for his own consultation with the counselor. Other than this he will work with the counselor in the same capacity as any other classroom teacher. 9

Placement. Within the framework of the general policies of the school system, the teacher, using tests and other data available, works with the parents, child, and principal in determining the promotion and placement

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of the child according to his needs. About half the teaching principals use this procedure as compared to seventy-six percent of the nonteaching principals. More teaching principals rely on the teacher to decide the failure or promotion of the child than do nonteaching principals. ¹⁰

IV. HEALTH SERVICES

**Physical.** Because of the school's interest in the physical well-being of the child, health services are being provided through the school. These services may be interpreted as being preventive and protective, advisory, educational, and emergency.

The principal has the primary task of organizing and utilizing effectively the services to be carried on through the school. The preventive and protective type health services may include the physical examination, immunizations, dental examination, vision and hearing tests, and exclusion from school of all students with communicable diseases.

The advisory aspect may be the suggested correction for any defects that had been discovered through the examinations or teacher observation.

The teaching principal can rely to a great extent upon the County Health Department for these health services. They are an invaluable aid to the teaching principal if he has a good working relationship with the department.\textsuperscript{11}

The afore mentioned services take on more meaning with yet another aspect, health education. The health program of the school may include such areas as hygiene, physical education, and health instruction. The burden of administering and supervising these programs are the responsibility of the principal.\textsuperscript{12}

Emergency services may be those arising because of illness or accidents happening at school. If a child is hurt or becomes ill, the degree of injury or illness must be determined by the principal. The child's parents should be contacted, if possible, and they should make the decision. In emergencies the principal must make the decision to consult the doctor.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Mental}. The teaching principal should be familiar with the field of mental health because cooperation and

\textsuperscript{11}Statement by Phillip Ayers, Teaching Principal of South Side School, Effingham, Illinois, in an interview, June, 1967.

\textsuperscript{12}Otto and Sanders, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 232-9.

\textsuperscript{13}Hansford, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 97-99.
feed-back is essential between the visiting teacher or social worker, the classroom teacher, the school psychologist, and the principal. The aim is to help the child with his problems as they exist within his own environment.  

direct the organization if it is to function with effectiveness, dispatch, and smoothness.²

The success or failure of a P. T. A. will be determined by two important factors; the kind of planning done, the kind of leadership provided. Much of the planning is done by the principal who provides much of the leadership. One may conclude that the principal will determine to a great extent whether or not the P. T. A. is successful at his school.³

II. THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The school community may be considered a number of overlapping groups of people in which individuals hold membership and live within a geographic area. In working with community groups, the principal needs to find effective methods of communication and interaction. He must sell the school to the public.

One method of communication is publicity. Just as business uses advertisement to sell its product, so the


CHAPTER VI

CLERICAL WORK

In the area of clerical work we find all types of office work which must be done. The teaching principal needs to prepare reports for the administrative superiors so that they may be compiled for presentation to the board of education or the state. For many of these reports official records must be kept on file and readily available.

He needs to manage the office and to inventory equipment and supplies, and as supplies run low he must order more for distribution to teachers. If a piece of equipment becomes broken he must see to its repair.

Correspondence must be dealt with promptly. This may range from answering letters from other school districts to writing memorandums and bulletins for his building or handling building or organization publicity.¹

Many other "odds and ends" such as answering the telephone could be mentioned. Undoubtedly many of these items can be handled by a competent secretary. The majority of principals are not skilled stenographers,

typists, or clerks and therefore spend more time at these meaningless tasks.²

Although considerable progress has been made, the situation still leaves much to be desired as is indicated by a survey of 1958. At that time only twenty-two per-cent of the teaching principals had any secretarial help.³


CHAPTER VII

COMMUNITY

The public school cannot exist separately and apart from society. The principal values a good relationship between the school and the home as well as with the school community. Because there will be little difference in the way they work with the community, no distinction will be made between the teaching principal or nonteaching principal.

I. P. T. A.

"In many communities the parent-teacher organization is one of the most important parts of the power structure devoted to the advancement of education."¹

The principal needs to regard the P. T. A. in this light and consider it a part of the school and its total program, not as being a separate and outside operation. In working with the P. T. A., the principal will need to

school publicizes what it wants the community to know. It interprets its programs and requirements to the community and seeks a cooperative endeavor with the community to advance the educational programs in the school.⁴

The principal needs to work continuously with the community. In the final analysis the community will determine the quality of education by the provisions it makes for education.⁵

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⁵Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., p. 137.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Although teaching principals are usually found in small schools they are expected to perform many of the same duties as those done by nonteaching principals. The methods used and the time allotted by each differs. In order for the school to operate smoothly, the administration of the school must be handled efficiently and tactfully by the principal whether he is a teaching or a nonteaching principal.

The teaching principal has another major function which we refer to as supervision. He is responsible for providing the instructional leadership necessary to improve the teaching-learning situation.

The teaching principal seldom has time for direct classroom supervision. He does not have enough free time to get into the classroom and observe, to assist the teacher, and modify the program where necessary or desirable. Most supervision must be performed indirectly and must be concerned with upgrading the school as a whole rather than working directly with the individual teacher. The involvement of teachers in in-service programs is one method the teaching principal may use to improve the school programs and promote self-improvement among the teachers.
Because of the teaching principal's dual responsibilities of administering and supervising, as well as teaching all or part of the day, he needs to plan carefully. In trying to make the best of an undesirable situation, he should utilize the time before school, during the noon hour, and after school for administration and supervision. He may exchange classrooms with another teacher who is having difficulty with a student or with some other instructional problem.¹

In the area of pupil personnel the teaching principal is discovering new fields of endeavor as he works to educate the whole child. His work with the social worker, guidance counselor, or school psychologist is a new experience to the teaching principal as these special teachers begin working in the smaller schools.

The P. T. A. and the school community will demand some of the principal's time. He will need to be active in both and provide leadership. As he "sells himself" to the community, he sells the school. He will work hard in public relations and provide as much publicity about the school as he can to the community.

Although progress has been made in provisions for clerical help, much more needs to be done. Usually the principal is not trained in this kind of work and needs the services of a good secretary for himself and his teachers.

One may ask what the future holds in store for the teaching principal. With the emergence of the elementary principal as one of America's most important educators, we will find change forthcoming. The trend of freeing the principal from classroom responsibilities will continue as his responsibilities increase from head teacher to those of a cogent administrator-supervisor-executive. 2

The principal's role will continue to change as we move into the future, and a different function will emerge as his key responsibility. Because of the new programs in math and reading, plus the technical aspects of music and art, the principal will no longer be considered the teacher of teachers.

He will exhibit his talents as principal chiefly by creating and maintaining, through continuous analysis and revision, the best school program possible for the

students of his community. In doing so he will rely heavily on the participation and advice of specialized persons in the central office, the universities, the community, and on his staff.  

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3Donald A. Erickson, "Change in the Principalship: Cause for Jubilation or Despair," National Elementary Principal, XLIV (April, 1965), pp. 16-20.
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