

tion of traditional elementary and secondary school programs, the intermediate unit or similar regional organizations are used for operating selected elements of the educational program, such as technical-vocational schools and community junior colleges.

Multi-district combinations have been established for the sole purpose of service or research activities with little or no concern for intermediate administrative responsibilities within a state's legal structure. Most notable among these are projects established under various provisions of Federal legislation or sponsored by foundations and accrediting agencies. Completely ignoring usual geographical or administrative relationships, the variety of cooperative efforts range from "computer linkage" of schools in several states to joint projects and service efforts of two or more adjacent counties.

While the struggle to reduce or eliminate small, inefficient school districts continues, means of overcoming problems assumed to be inherent in exceptionally large districts have been receiving increased attention. Initial efforts have included the establishment of sub-districts within large districts with considerable decentralization of administrative planning and decision-making. Other proposals to break up the big districts range from the creation of autonomous boards and separate administrative staffs to the establishment of super-boards and staffs with responsibility only for financial support and over-all planning. The latter pattern would encompass a number of sub-boards and staffs assigned basic responsibility for policy and administration related to curriculum and instruction within the several smaller districts.

Whether or not adequate data exist for determining precisely the optimum size of a school district is open to conjecture; there are some reasonably clear minimums and somewhat less clear maximums. Within these boundaries, the search for the optimum size takes a variety of forms.

The size of a school district, of course, is only one of many factors associated with organizational arrangements which provide conditions for an upgraded educational program. Consolidation of individual schools of inadequate size within reorganized districts remains a problem in many areas. In addition to questions of school size, the choice of the particular grades to be housed together constitutes an important element of school organization. Other questions centering on aspects of an individual school—the range of programs offered,

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for example—also contribute to the state of flux as teaching and learning become better understood.

Several school districts which have engaged in decade-long efforts to develop a junior high school level now find themselves making a thrust toward a "middle school" pattern of organization. Other school districts are bound by established facilities and concentrate on improving educational practice for whatever group of children might be conveniently housed together. The trend toward extending formal educational opportunities beyond the traditional scope of elementary and secondary school is also a part of this kaleidoscopic system.

Political and social forces which impinge on the rate and nature of developing patterns of school district organization are many and varied. They range from anxieties created by perceived or actual relationships of proposed changes to radical integration, to community fear of "losing their school." In addition, some suburban area residents tend to react negatively to the prospect of being reunited with the inner city from which they so recently "escaped."

The forces of change also have a direct impact on members of the professional education family. Administrative problems related to centralization and decentralization are commonly associated with organizational changes within schools and school districts. Efforts to decentralize and place decision-making authority as close to operational levels as possible must be tempered with judgment about the competence of the decision-makers and the information available to them. With judgments increasingly contingent upon factors external to specific situations, this dimension of school district organization also undergoes constant change. Emerging information systems now make available vast amounts of data in a brief time and tend to re-centralize decision-making at higher levels within an organization.

Three significant and interlocking thrusts have accompanied the increasing size of schools and school districts. The first thrust is toward a more systematic approach to internal organization and operation. This is reflected in establishment of automated procedures for a wide variety of administrative functions. Closely related to these procedures is a thrust toward more rigid structuring of the environment within an educational enterprise. This comes in part from a change in attitudes of administrators and a legitimate effort to discover ways to enable individual members of an organization to have a voice in organizational goals and methods of operation. The ten-

dency toward more precise role definition also stems from a concern for certainty in organizations where changes in personnel are commonplace. A multitude of pressures has decreased the opportunity to "work things out on an interpersonal basis."

As if to offset the dysfunctional tendencies of the first two, a third thrust is toward increased attention to human relations. The literature for prospective and practicing educational administrators and supervisory personnel is full of suggestions for more effective group management.

It is obvious that schools and school districts in America will continue to experience shifts in size. Pressures for centralization, the desire for decentralization and the myriad other problems connected with changing organizations will remain. Also persisting will be our society's tendency to cling to established patterns. Uncertainty as to how to handle emerging relationships, where goals are not always clear, will continue to have a stabilizing effect within the educational structure.

Since the purposes of a school are achieved through efforts of people, administrative and supervisory personnel make their greatest contribution through effective relationships with those who deal directly with pupils. Each member of the school team consequently has an obligation to manage conflicts, to promote cooperation and to effect coordination.

Responsibilities shared by administrative and supervisory personnel include establishment of a proper climate among the community, staff and students for effective implementation of emerging school practices. The role of clarifying objectives, planning for and organizing human and material resources for school operation, establishing conditions for most effective performance, and evaluating effort must also be roles shared by each professional on the school staff.

As is widely known, increasing specialization accompanying the explosion of knowledge and the growing awareness of the many kinds of competence needed to make education effective, will make it increasingly difficult for a single administrator to keep pace with staff members in their respective fields of proficiency. This specialization will make it increasingly important that representative professionals within a school and/or school district share their ideas in the decision-making process.

Library service personnel too must be more than mere reactors to change; they must be involved in the heart of administration, in the

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developing process of goal setting and in assessing the potential impact of reaching these goals. Their participation is of value for reasons beyond the extended insight brought to the choice table. Individuals have more interest in an organization whose objectives they share and which they had a voice in establishing. Enhanced interest is accompanied by enhanced performance. Establishing the blueprint for organizational activity—planning—must also involve those responsible for carrying out policies. There are a number of weaknesses in the separation of planning from doing. Participation in planning will reap benefits similar to gains which accrue from involvement in goal-setting.

As organizations grow in size they tend toward bureaucracy. Large organizations typically are characterized by an emphasis on form, task specialization, and established patterns of operation with as little as possible left to chance. Within such a system administrative and supervisory personnel must strive to avoid devotion to routine, guard against displacement of goals with means, and provide the flexibility necessary for individuals to deal effectively with new situations.

Another concern of administrators and supervisors with respect to organizational structure is how to offset the tendency for groups to become separated from one another and from central lines of authority. Through desire for autonomy, struggle for status and loyalty to a vocation, individuals and groups tend to want their activity placed in separate departments with access to top-level administration. In organizations of all types, increasing specialization requires increased mechanisms for coordination. Participation in over-all management decisions can help reduce such problems of large organizations.

Regardless of the functions of a system, someone has to be concerned with setting standards, observing and evaluating results, and taking corrective action when necessary. The critical control functions of budgeting and financial processes of any system highlight the importance of extensive involvement in budget-making.

It is the responsibility of administration to innovate to improve performance, minimize costs, and achieve greater human satisfactions. Although organizations of all types must change in order to remain viable, most public school districts are not characterized by major operating innovations. In addition to the fact that it takes all the energies of most systems just to maintain the status quo, organizations generally are not structured to foster change. The process of initiating

new procedures or processes to meet new demands is particularly dependent upon staff involvement and commitment.

The specialist must define his professional responsibilities, search for a yardstick to evaluate resources allocated to special programs, and interpret the contribution of his services in terms of benefits for pupils. Obviously, it is not unusual to find divergent expectations among school personnel, parents, and pupils. Though there is a need to work toward congruence of role expectation, absolute agreement is not necessary. It is important that all involved in an educational enterprise be aware of and consider the expectations others have of their respective roles. Each position in a school structure is defined in relation to other positions. While each position in the school structure impinges upon other positions, the world does not look or feel the same to all.

Our national pattern of public education has impressive strength, and the untapped resources for its support are extensive. Though we continually engage in a search for certainty, final answers may never come. There is nothing on the horizon which should alter our commitment or make the promise of the future less bright, however, as long as each of us can be involved in the search and can participate in the decision-making process.