

Fostering Growth: Preservice and In-Service

*A county system organizes
for professional growth.*

MONTGOMERY County, Maryland, has a system-wide, coordinated program of staff development. This program shows concern not only for improving instruction but also for fostering continuing personal and professional growth. Implicit is the concern for promoting the professional effectiveness and growth of teachers and prospective teachers and for increasing their personal satisfaction and adjustment.

Staff development opportunities are abundant and varied, offering all teachers, administrators and supervisors many choices to facilitate individual growth. Montgomery County provides in an organized way for workshops, study groups, and consultant services; for sabbatical leave, attendance at local, state and national conferences and conventions; for in-service experiences, class and school intervisitation, and teacher exchange with other nations; for leadership training, special scholarships, and

administrative internships; for extensive and continuous research and curriculum revision; for student teaching placement and supervision; and for the coordination of off-campus university courses provided by several local institutions of higher learning. Many facets of this program have been developed and are being operated cooperatively with colleges and universities, both local and out-of-state with vigorous public school support and continuous evaluation aimed at improving their quality and increasing their number.

From Beginner to Career Teacher

Because curriculum and instructional improvement is dependent in part upon the rapid solution of personnel problems, Montgomery County places strong emphasis on systematic and cooperative efforts with teacher education institutions, providing laboratory experiences for approximately 300 senior student-teachers each year in addition to opportunities for observation and visitation by some 500 sophomore and junior majors in education. Screening out unsuitable candidates thus becomes a joint responsibility. The school system not only

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strengthens the quality of preparation and the opportunities for recruitment, but also provides practical in-service training of a high quality.

Perhaps no better or more practical opportunity can be offered the individual teacher for keeping abreast of the latest findings in the field nor for examining one's philosophy and practices, than the implicit challenge of guiding and counseling an alert student-teacher.

In addition to cooperative supervision and seminar meetings, new insights into latest research, subject matter, and learning theory should—and usually do—accompany the experience. Cooperating teachers, although identified by principals and supervisors as capable, serve the profession voluntarily in its need and responsibility to train its own members, thus exhibiting one of the marks of the profession.

There is increasing cooperative participation with colleges and universities as experimentation moves ahead with five-year programs of preparation such as the Peabody Study-Teach and the Johns Hopkins MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) Programs and also with cooperative scholarship programs such as the one Syracuse University is currently engaged in to prepare special education teachers. Consultants from these higher institutions join the public school supervisory and resource teacher staff in providing help for new and experienced teachers as they explore ways of improving instruction, and of understanding children, content and method. The Child Study Program for both teachers and parents, and for training future leaders within both groups, the UMMaP program (University of Maryland Mathematics Project) and numerous other jointly sponsored extension and off-campus programs are taught by faculty of

various institutions from which Montgomery County's teachers are seeking advanced degrees.

Classes meet within the county at centers convenient to teachers. The courses offered are geared to the needs of Montgomery County and its teachers, and are planned cooperatively by public school and university personnel. During the past year more than one-third of the instructional staff of 4,100 participated in 45 different courses or workshops, exclusive of on-campus or summer participation. Continuous growth as a result of participation in such activities, together with assessment by systematic evaluations of performance, moves teachers forward from probation to improved effectiveness to career recognition (and to the salary increases that go with it). Thus is excellence in education pursued in Montgomery County made even more to be desired and more feasible.

Professional Advancement and Leadership Training

A local leadership training program to produce a more immediate supply of leaders has been developed and includes three phases: preparation and selection of potential leaders, orientation of beginning leaders, and education and in-service training for continuing growth of experienced leaders.

The framework of the first phase is a seven-point program that begins with eligibility. Any teacher who holds a master's degree and who has a minimum of four years of teaching experience may participate if he so desires.

The second point covers endorsements. Principals and supervisors are requested to submit confidential endorsements and recommendations for all par-

ticipating teachers under their jurisdiction.

The third point has to do with examinations. The Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey, has prepared an examination designed to test professional competency in respect to the needs of Montgomery County. Any eligible teacher interested in enlarging his professional responsibilities may apply to take the examination at the expense of the school system.

The oral interview constitutes the fourth point in the program. For each applicant, an oral interview is arranged with a committee composed of representative teachers (his peers), principals, and supervisors. This committee attempts to evaluate the applicant on the following characteristics in terms of the applicant's area of interest: academic preparation, experience, personal appearance, poise, speech, ability to converse fluently and intelligently, and emotional control.

In addition to these steps, all those interested in professional advancement may take a special workshop course that is offered by the University of Maryland in cooperation with the Montgomery County public schools, a workshop designed to ensure understanding of policies and procedures in relation to goals.

For those who complete this course successfully, and for experienced administrators on the job, an advanced group workshop in educational leadership is also offered. Admission to this workshop is on an invitational basis and depends upon the interest of prospective participants in an administrative or supervisory career. Admission also depends on an estimate of applicants' ability to examine practical problems of educational policy and operation, and to develop constructive plans to solve the problems.

Another cooperative innovation in the training program is on-the-job training in the form of administrative internships. Interns are processed through the general screening for all candidates in the training program for educational leadership. They participate in an interview with staff representatives of both the University of Maryland and the Montgomery County public schools, and are selected cooperatively by the two participating sponsors. Once selected, the interns are relieved of their teaching assignments and transferred to the Intern Program.

Interns are expected to register for the intern course at the University for the school year. The Intern Program carries eight semester hours of credit for the year and it is possible for an individual to earn an additional six hours by enrolling in individual course work at the University. In addition to the year's work, interns are expected to enroll for two full semesters at the University, and to complete residency requirements for an advanced degree.

The intern in his public school work is assigned to a planned program providing him with experiences in a variety of phases of school administration and supervision.

It should be pointed out here that the framework of this seven-point preparation for leadership is flexible. Administrative appointments may be made even though the individual concerned may not have participated in all of these steps. Other things being equal, however, the individual proving himself extremely competent in all respects is always given more favorable consideration.

The orientation of beginning leaders includes seminars, workshops, meetings with consultants, department heads, and specialists within the system. There are

numerous discussion meetings during this one-year program where the new leaders can talk over their problems freely.

A unique opportunity for both new and experienced leadership personnel has been developed in cooperation with the National Training Laboratories staff of the NEA along lines similar to their work at Bethel, Maine. This laboratory type workshop is set up in facilities furnished by the State Teachers College at Frostburg in a beautiful "cultural island" setting and is designed to help educational leaders learn more about themselves and their relationships with those with whom they work. Activities making up the program include information sessions with leading researchers in university and training centers concerned with leadership and organizational problems, sensitivity training groups to learn about what happens in groups and what causes breakdowns and disruptions in work and staff teams, and back-on-the-job application of practiced skills of leading and influencing others in organizational situations. Over 150 administrative and supervisory staff members have participated in this one-week workshop during the three summers it has been offered.

Allusion has been made to the series of monthly meetings for newly appointed administrators and supervisors. The major purpose of these meetings is to provide a forum in which problems of mutual concern can be explored and clarified, with the opportunity to become better acquainted with the school system. These orientation meetings play an important part in the development of new administrators and in giving them confidence to move ahead. Benefit is derived from open discussion, where common problems can be aired, points of view

clarified and exchanged, and security obtained from the realization that individual problems are common to many.

The final phase of the program provides inspiration, stimulation and continued growth for the county's experienced leaders through seminars, workshops and discussion groups. With these experienced leaders, the main emphasis is on the use of consultants, often outside leaders and experts with national reputations in the fields of educational leadership, supervision, curriculum, human growth and development, and academic subject matter.

Underlying the discrete programs described here are goals that continue from year to year. Because of constant growth and the constantly changing world, school policies and procedures must be flexible. Continued examination, clarification and interpretation are demanded if improvement of instruction is to be the continuing goal.

Unified Summer Program

A variety of offerings for children including both remedial and enrichment opportunities has been extended during the summer months, making it possible to use the summer school as a laboratory and demonstration school for staff development. Because routine pressures normally accompanying the regular ten-month school year are largely eliminated in the summer and since salary is provided for those teachers and other staff members who participate, more teachers than can be served request to take part in summer activities that are as varied as the participants themselves. Many areas of subject matter, method, curriculum design and development, leadership training, organization, group proc-

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preparation. New avenues are needed, too, between colleges and school systems in order to blend preservice and in-service education experiences into a coordinated whole. And new avenues of cooperation are needed between and among teachers, principals and supervisors to more effectively utilize the special competencies of each in the continuing education of teachers. The times demand a bold new look in the education of America's teachers. The time to begin on the task is now.

—GEORGE W. DENEMARK, *Dean, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.*

Fostering Growth

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ess, learning theory, research, creative and critical thinking, and special education constitute some of the programs and problems that teachers, administrators, and supervisors explore together in these summer seminars and workshops. Some of these experiences provide a laboratory setting for using children in enrichment and remedial programs for demonstration teaching, followed by critical analysis and discussion. Wherever possible these offerings are given in cooperation with universities or colleges and provide graduate or renewal credit if needed.

The summer program is broad enough to include a considerable number of teacher scholarships for a wide range of selected staff to attend various and often far-flung graduate schools that offer courses or workshops of immediate or special interest and concern to the Montgomery County public schools. As an integral part of the total summer program, new teachers of foreign language and junior high mathematics are employed at full salary to attend two-week workshops to orient them to content and

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method in their fields as practiced in our county school system.

In carrying out such a staff development program, it should be obvious that the staff of the entire school system is involved collectively and individually at one time or another, not only instructional staff, but secretarial, business affairs, custodial, and maintenance staffs as well. It should be equally obvious that while all leadership personnel must be concerned and must take action to foster continuing growth, essential coordination of certain facets on a system-wide basis ensures more far-reaching results, broader participation, and fewer gaps. Finally, it should be clear that cooperative action must be taken on the part of school system, teacher education institutions, professional organizations, and the career teacher himself if the existing gap between personnel realities and curriculum ideals is to be bridged.

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