Professionalization of Supervisors and Curriculum Workers

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WITH the recent increase in the need for supervisors and curriculum workers, superintendents and personnel officers in many school districts have been asking such questions as, "Where can we find persons for these positions? What qualifications should we look for? What preparation can we expect them to have?" Naturally, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the only organization for all supervisors and curriculum workers, is expected to provide answers to these inquiries, to give assistance in the search for qualified supervisors and curriculum workers, whether for positions in general areas or in special and subject fields. Supervisors and curriculum workers too are interested in the problem of professionalization in order to improve the quality of their services.

To help supervisors and curriculum workers focus on the problem and decide on a course of action the ASCD Committee on Professionalization of Supervisors and Curriculum Workers has studied the situation. During the past year members of this Committee have presented seven articles in *Educational Leadership* under the heading of "Issues in Professionalization." In four of these articles the point was made that if supervisors and curriculum workers are to improve the quality and quantity of their services they must work toward defining their roles and functions, developing procedures for selection and recruitment, establishing preparatory programs based on research findings and best available knowledge, and securing appropriate certification requirements. In other articles, ways by which the medical profession proceeded to professionalize itself were described, steps taken by the Georgia Teacher Education Council to professionalize supervisors in that state were presented, and the work that ASCD has done in the area of professionalization of supervisors and curriculum workers was reviewed.

What must all supervisors and curriculum workers do if the goal of their professionalization is to be achieved? This concluding article in the series attempts to summarize the preceding arti-

cles and working papers of the Committee and to point a direction for the profession.

Characteristics of a Profession

Shafer[1] set forth the following factors as characteristics of a profession: specific entrance requirements, preparatory training, field experiences, certification standards, and ethical practices all of which are controlled and policed by the membership. A brief examination of the ways the profession of supervisors and curriculum workers meets these criteria and some suggestions of steps to be taken are given below.

Entrance Requirements. At the present time there appear to be no specific requirements for admission to the profession, but rather "there are only two kinds of selection procedures being carried on in most of the preparing institutions. One is self selection . . . [The other is] to meet the general requirements for admission to graduate study."[2] Such procedures certainly are inadequate and inappropriate for a profession.

Identification of prospective supervisors and curriculum workers should be the responsibility of individuals in school systems and in preparing institutions. Preparing institutions, in cooperation with school districts, should develop a plan for selective admission and retention of persons of professional promise. Standards for selection and retention should reflect experience, previous academic and professional preparation, commitment to professional goals, and intellectual ability. Only those who are admitted to the program should be permitted to study in the program.

Preparatory Training and Field Experiences. Currently preparatory programs for supervisors and curriculum workers are extremely varied and appear to reflect the lack of agreement on professional role. "Some curriculum and supervisory programs parallel almost exclusively the programs for school administrators; others do not define any specific program; some mandate specific courses, others outline broad experiences, or attempt to predict programs on desired behavioral outcomes."[3]

Even though extensive research is needed to determine the nature of effective preparatory programs for supervisors and curriculum workers, there are some guidelines which are recommended at the present time. In preparatory programs sufficient opportunities should be provided to develop a broad orientation to educational and social theory, learning theory, personality theory and research design. Preparatory programs also should provide a background of knowledge in the related areas of educational administration, guidance, pupil personnel, and measurement and evaluation.

In addition, a student preparing for supervision or curriculum work in a special or subject area should have advanced work in that area. The professional sequence should demand a minimum of two years of study beyond the

[1] Harold T. Shafer. "What Does the Flexner Report Say to ASCD?" *Educational Leadership* 23 (3): 235; December 1965.

[2] Robert S. Thurman. "Identifying Potential Leaders for Supervision and Curriculum Work." *Educational Leadership* 23 (7): 589; April 1966.

[3] Maurice J. Eash. "Preparatory Programs for Supervisors." *Educational Leadership* 23 (5): 359; February 1966.

bachelor's degree and should combine formal academic classwork with supervised field experience, a combination which bears a rather direct relationship to demands that all supervisors or curriculum workers will face. It is highly recommended that the number of preparatory institutions be limited in order to bring a balance between supply and demand and to assure adequate programs.

Certification Standards. Through certification a profession sets about to eliminate the incompetent from its ranks and to increase the competency of those admitted to the profession. Certification requirements are extremely varied from state to state. A 1964 survey revealed that in 36 of the 50 states there were 71 certificates for supervisors and curriculum workers and that, of the 71 certificates, twelve "were for supervision of special subject matter areas and two entitled the holder to supervise both general and special subject areas."[4] With not quite three-fourths of the states requiring some kind of certification for supervisors and curriculum workers, there is much to be done if professionalization is to come about. Of course, certification in itself is not enough. The requirements for the certificate must be evaluated too.

Certification must reflect the role and function of supervisors and curriculum workers and should be based on a preparatory program developed by a college or university in cooperation with school districts and approved by the state department of education. In the article already mentioned, Hallberg enumerates seven principles to consider in establishing and revising certification requirements.

Ethical Practice. In the establishment of certification requirements, provision must be made for the profession to enforce professional ethics and standards. Provisions should exist to revoke a certificate when the profession has determined that an individual does not meet established criteria. Reasons for revocation would include: inability to perform competently, personal behavior detrimental to the profession, and/or professional behavior in conflict with an established code of ethics.

From its study of the professionalization of supervisors and curriculum workers, the Committee found that some criteria for a profession seem to be met in part but not enough to assure qualified and competent supervisors and curriculum workers. This certainly means that the profession has much work to do.

Concern of the Profession

In establishing entrance requirements, preparatory programs, and certification standards, reference is frequently made to the nature of the work of supervisors and curriculum workers, and to the tasks that they perform. The roles and functions of supervisors and curriculum workers determine to a large extent who enters the preparatory program, the nature of that program, and the license to be received. It follows then that a study of the roles and functions is imperative. It is an essential first step. Allen points out, though, that these roles and functions keep changing, that during the

[4] H. Irene Hallberg. "Certification Requirements for General Supervisors and/or Curriculum Workers Today—Tomorrow." *Educational Leadership* 23 (8): 623-24; May 1966.

decade from 1955 to 1965 there appeared to be "more persons involved [in supervision], more ways of getting supervision done and more inherent problems" than during the previous ten years.[5]

This would make it impossible to outline once and for all the duties of supervisors and curriculum workers. Rather, it is necessary that roles and functions be examined periodically and systematically in order to modify and change selective procedures, preparatory programs, certification standards, and in-service programs to be sure that supervisors and curriculum workers can carry out the tasks facing them and can function in new roles as these emerge. This is no small task, but it is an important one, one which all supervisors and curriculum workers, whether field persons or college persons, whether generalists or specialists, must face.

The Committee on Professionalization of Supervisors and Curriculum Workers will attempt to give leadership in the matter of professionalization through (a) publication of a booklet dealing with major areas of concern in professionalization; (b) preparation of a list of recommendations in the areas of role, selection, preparation, accreditation and certification; (c) development of a working kit for use by state units; and (d) regional conferences for chairmen of state professionalization committees. Upon the request of unit presidents or chairmen of state committees on professionalization of supervisors and curriculum workers, members of the ASCD Committee will be willing to assist affiliated units in an attempt to bring about professionalization of supervisors and curriculum workers in their states. Names of ASCD Committee members are listed at the conclusion of this article.

If complete professionalization really is to come about, however, each affiliated unit and each member of ASCD will need to assist. Only through a united and concerted effort of all can the professionalization of supervisors and curriculum workers be accomplished.

[5] Rowanneta S. Allen. "Role and Function of Supervisors and Curriculum Workers." *Educational Leadership* 23 (4): 332; January 1966.

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