Professional problems of elementary and secondary teachers in Sanders and Mineral Counties

John Barton Michalson

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PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS
OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS
IN SANDERS AND MINERAL COUNTIES

by

JOHN BARTON MICHALSON
B. A. Eastern Washington College of Education, 1943
Presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
1954

Approved by:

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

Date

Aug 13 1954
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine what problems concern teachers in Sanders and Mineral Counties of Montana, and to analyze the way in which these problems were identified and reported on a free-response and a check-list type of questionnaire. Another purpose was to determine priority of these problems as indicated by these responses.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The value of a study of this kind is probably best expressed by Ward G. Reeder when he says, "The teacher primarily determines whether the school will be efficient."¹ Waurine Walker extends the idea further with this statement, "Only as we identify and eradicate teachers' problems can we hope to improve the services teachers give to children."²

Other reasons for the study's importance are as follows:

1. To provide school administrators with information regarding problems as teachers see them.

2. To provide teachers with an opportunity to clarify


their thinking as to what problems concern them most.

3. To give administrators a possible key to the improvement of staff morale. As Kimball Wiles says in his book on supervision, "Groups grow in unity, strength, and effectiveness as individual members find in them satisfaction of their desires."³

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this study the term "teachers" was used to refer to the regular classroom teachers and/or any other certified personnel employed in the schools of Sanders and Mineral counties of Montana.

The term "problem" was used in reference to any response which was given in answer to Questionnaire I or Questionnaire II, which were submitted to the teachers.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

In this study an attempt was made to get statements of professional problems by the elementary and secondary school teachers of Sanders and Mineral counties as they saw them.

The first step in the procedure was the preparation of a questionnaire form which could be submitted to the teaching personnel of the schools in Sanders and Mineral counties of Montana on which they could list in a free

response manner problems in their present school positions. In Appendix A are samples of the form letter covering the questionnaire and the questionnaire itself. These forms were then submitted to the School of Education of Montana State University for approval.

After Questionnaire Form I was approved, the superintendents of the eight schools in Sanders and Mineral counties having both secondary and elementary schools were contacted by letter, telephone, and/or personal interview to secure their cooperation in distributing the questionnaires to their staff members. Sufficient questionnaire forms were then sent out to each superintendent accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes.

As the completed questionnaires were returned, they were classified and listed according to the number reporting each type of problem. This listing was used in the preparation of Questionnaire II, which was a rating-scale form on which the teachers were asked to indicate their ratings of twenty problems by checking the following items: critical, very important, important, unimportant, not a problem. A copy of the covering letter and Questionnaire II are contained in Appendix B.

Returns from Questionnaire II were tabulated to determine the problems which were given the greatest degree of priority by the teachers responding. Firth method of tabulation used was to total the number of times each problem was marked important, very important, and critical.
These were then arranged in descending order. Table I in
Chapter III presents the results of this method of tabulation.

Since the first method of tabulation did not give a
clear differentiation for all of the problems and did not
take into consideration problems marked unimportant or not
a problem, a method of weighting was devised whereby a
single score could be derived for each problem. The
problems were weighted according to the following plan:
four for each "critical" response, three for those marked
"very important", two for "important", one "unimportant",
and zero for "not a problem". Results of this method of
tabulation can be found in Table II.

In order to contrast the problems marked "critical"
with those marked "not a problem", two tables were compiled
listing the problems in descending order of importance
according to the number of times they were marked "critical"
and according to the times they were marked "not a problem".
Tables III and IV present the data thus derived.

The problems identified most frequently on the free-
response questionnaire were compared with those found to
have first priority on the check-list to determine if there
was any relationship.

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

Included in Chapter I are the statement of the
problem, importance of the problem, definition of terms,
statement of the method of procedure, and finally this
statement of the organization of the study into chapters.

Chapter II has been included to give the reader a background of previous related studies.

Priorities of the problems as seen by teachers have been presented in Chapter III. The raw data have been treated in several different ways to make clear the position of the teachers as to problem priority. In this chapter will be found several tables presenting the priority data in a statistical manner.

Specific examples of problems submitted on the free-response questionnaire are presented in Chapter IV with a brief analysis of the way in which teachers presented their problems.

In Chapter V will be found a brief summary of the study and a statement of conclusions.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

SCHOOL-PROBLEM LITERATURE IN GENERAL

School problems have been the subject of numerous studies, but nearly all of these studies started by suggesting problems which have existed to a lesser or a greater degree for many years and then getting an evaluation of these specific problems. Only very recently have any studies been made in which teachers, themselves, have been contacted in order to determine what they consider to be problems. In all but two of the studies which were reviewed, teachers were polled by means of questionnaires in which problems were already suggested.

Morris Wallace in his study completed at Columbia University in 1948 stated that "this study seeks to identify the problems that confront a newly appointed teacher during his induction into a teaching situation new to him, and to ascertain the identity and relative helpfulness of certain induction techniques that can be used to help the new teacher achieve maximal teaching success". Wallace made use of the personal interview technique with newly inducted teachers, trial questionnaires and finally a check list was

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devised and submitted to teachers in summer session classes at Columbia University, who had been in their present teaching position from one to four years. Most of the teachers covered in this study were from urban areas with only 27.2 per cent from rural areas and towns with populations below 5,000.

The problem of gaining a clear and workable understanding of the school's philosophy and objectives was ranked as the number one problem. Conditions of work— inadequate materials was ranked second. Third in rank was the problem of demands for teachers' time and energies after school hours. Other problems listed in Wallace's study which have their parallel in problems reported in the study with which this paper is concerned were: disciplinary problems and conditions of work— inadequate building facilities, 6.5; teacher class load, 8; establishing good teacher-pupil relationships, 17; pupil-teacher ratio, 21; problems encountered in establishing working relationships with parents, 23; conditions of work—drab, unattractive surroundings, 13.5; utilization of auxiliary teaching aids, 25. Twenty-five problems were listed on Wallace's check list. He weighted the problems 0, no difficulty whatever; 1, slightly difficult; 2, moderately difficult; 3, significantly difficult; 4, very significantly difficult; 5, extremely difficult.

A study was conducted in New York state, exclusive
of New York City, by Hedlund and Brown\textsuperscript{2} to determine conditions that lower teacher morale. This study made use of fourteen factors which were ranked in order of priority by the teachers of New York state. "Salary insufficient for living as well as others with similar responsibilities" was ranked first, while second in priority was "inadequate opportunity for financial advancement in classroom teaching". Only 44 per cent of the teachers reporting said they would seek teaching again or recommend it to a promising young person seeking advice regarding a profession.

Chase recently completed a study in the North Central States in which he surveyed the factors for satisfaction in teaching. The three factors which he found were considered most important were: (1) Extent of participation in curriculum, (2) Extent of participation in making policies for grouping, promotion, and control of pupils, (3) Extent of participation in preparation of salary schedules.

PROBLEM STUDIES MADE IN MONTANA

In the most recent study of the problems of teachers in Montana, completed in 1953, Adrian Langstaff\textsuperscript{4} made a


study of the problems of the certificated personnel of the Billings Public Schools. Differing from most other studies, this study by Langstaff gave the teachers an opportunity to report on a free response basis. The purpose of the study was to develop a plan whereby "teachers may without discomfort bring their problems to the attention of their superintendent". Langstaff feels that if the procedure of his survey were followed that teacher problems could be identified in a comparatively short time.

After the teachers reported on the free-response basis the problems confronting them, the problems were classified and resubmitted to them for ranking as to priority. The results of the priority rating scale showed that the Billings teachers felt the problem which needed attention first was to relieve overcrowded classrooms and second, "What to do with students passed along, but unable to fit into the grade". Among the problems listed in the first ten were, "students' apathetic attitude and indifference to learning", "inadequate salary", "too little time for relaxation when a teacher may shed his responsibility toward pupils", "discipline", "noise", "curriculum packed too full to give all effective instruction", "no rooms to allow for group activity".

In 1935 Sonneman conducted a statewide survey in

5Ibid., p. 7.
which he polled Montana administrators on practices at that time on seven personnel policies. In his conclusions Sonneman suggested that a systematic course in the administration of teacher personnel would be of considerable value to beginning superintendents.

Mammen completed a study in 1950 on the problems of a beginning principal in which he reported first hand on problems as he encountered them. In his treatment of the study he told how he solved the problems when he met them, solutions recommended by experts in the field, and finally how he concluded they should be handled.

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CHAPTER III

TEACHER RATING OF PROBLEM PRIORITY

COMPARISON OF TWO TYPES OF RESPONSE

On the basis of the returns from the free-response questionnaire, the problems were classified and listed in order according to the number reporting each type of problem. This listing can be found in Questionnaire Form II in Appendix B.

In comparing the order on the basis of the number of times reported in the free-response questionnaire and priority ratings according to the check-list questionnaire response as listed in Table II, several marked differences can be noted. Problem 20, "How to stimulate students to want to learn required subject matter", on the basis of number of times reported is listed as second in priority when it is presented to the teachers as a problem. This seeming contradiction may be due to the fact that teachers recognize its vital importance when presented as a problem, but are not constantly confronted with it in practice. Discipline problems which were reported most frequently among the free responses were relegated to the position of 6.5 on the priority scale on the check-list. This would seem to indicate that, though discipline problems come first to the mind of teachers in a free-response situation on problems, they do not feel it is the problem which most vitally concerns them.

-11-
Problem 15, "How to establish better parent-teacher relationships", and problem 16, "Lack of parental interest in school or school work", according to the number of times reported are raised to the positions five and three respectively when rated according to priority, while problem 3, "Limited school financial resources" and problem 4, "Lack of proper equipment", dropped to positions sixteen and nineteen on the priority scale of the twenty problems rated. Teacher morale as a problem rated in tenth place both on the number of free responses and the priority rating scale.

PROBLEMS RATED IMPORTANT, VERY IMPORTANT OR CRITICAL

In Table I the problems were ranked according to the total number of times they were rated important, very important, and critical. All of the problems listed in Questionnaire II were marked important, very important, or critical by 45.8 per cent or over of those responding. Two problems, "How to stimulate students to want to learn required subject matter," and "How to care for both extremes of the exceptional child in one classroom" were marked by 89.58 per cent of those responding. To put it another way all but 10.42 per cent of those responding felt that these two problems on individual differences were important, very important, or critical.

Seventy-five per cent of the problems were given a priority rating of important, very important, or critical.
### TABLE I

PROBLEMS RATED IMPORTANT, VERY IMPORTANT, AND CRITICAL BY FORTY-EIGHT TEACHERS OF SANDERS AND MINERAL COUNTIES OF MONTANA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems Reported</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to care for both extremes of the &quot;exceptional child&quot; type in one classroom</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to stimulate students to want to learn required subject matter</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to handle individual differences properly with limited financial and physical facilities</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to establish better parent-teacher relationships</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline - lack of coordination of effort among teachers, administrators, and parents</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too great a work load to permit best results</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental interest in school or school work</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum planning in small high schools (How to meet individual needs)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical plant of school inadequate (overcrowded classrooms, etc.)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of teacher cooperation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher morale</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to handle visual aids to their greatest benefit</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty inadequate to care for number of students</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of competition in and out of the classroom</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited school financial resources</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cooperation by teachers in the performance of extra-curricular work</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unethical teacher, who takes problems &quot;down town&quot; before trying to solve them at school</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of proper equipment</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossip by and about faculty members</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation of community (i.e. distance from physician, buying centers, etc.)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**TABLE II
PRORITY RATINGS OF PROBLEMS SUBMITTED BY TEACHERS OF SANDERS AND MINERAL COUNTIES OF MONTANA, 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Rating</th>
<th>Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How to care for both extremes of the &quot;exceptional child&quot; type in one classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How to stimulate students to want to learn required subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of parental interest in school or school work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Too great a work load to permit best results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How to establish better parent-teacher relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Discipline - lack of coordination of effort among teachers, administrators, and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>How to handle individual differences properly with limited financial and physical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Curriculum planning in small high schools (How to meet individual needs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Physical plant of school inadequate (overcrowded classrooms, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teacher morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Faculty inadequate to care for number of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Gossip by and about faculty members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Unethical teacher, who takes problems &quot;down town&quot; before trying to solve them at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lack of teacher cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>How to handle visual aids to their greatest benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Limited school financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lack of competition in and out of classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Isolation of community (i.e. distance from physician, buying centers, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lack of proper equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lack of cooperation of teachers in the performance of extra-curricular work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Priority was determined by weighting responses. (i.e. critical responses were given a rating of 4, very important 3, important 2, unimportant 1, and not a problem 0.)*
by more than one-half (54.16 per cent) of the teachers answering the questionnaire. Eleven of the twenty problems were marked as ranging in priority from important through critical by 64.58 per cent of the respondents, while six of these were rated important or over by 81.25 per cent of those responding.

**PRIORITY RATING SCALE**

All of the problems concerning individual differences and needs were placed very high on the priority scale by the teachers of Sanders and Mineral counties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How to care for both extremes of the exceptional child type in one classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How to stimulate students to want to learn required subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>How to handle individual differences properly with limited financial and physical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Curriculum planning in small high schools (How to meet individual needs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Billings teachers reflected somewhat the same attitude when they placed the problem of what to do with students passed along, but unable to fit into the grade in the second priority position and the problem of students' apathetic attitude toward learning among the top ten. How to relieve overcrowded classrooms which was rated of first priority by the Billings teachers was given the 8.5 position by the teachers of Sanders and Mineral counties in the form of "physical plant

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inadequate, overcrowded classrooms, etc." Other problems which were closely allied to those listed among the top ten in the Billings survey were given the following ratings on the priority scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Too great a work load to permit best results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Discipline - lack of coordination of efforts among teachers, administrators, and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teacher morale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problems concerning lack of parental interest in school or school work and how to establish better parent-teacher relationships which were ranked as 3 and 5 respectively in priority in this survey were not listed among the top ten in the survey made by Langstaff at Billings, and were ranked as twenty-third in priority in a list of twenty-five problems which were studied by Wallace in his survey of the problems of newly inducted teachers. However, the stand of the Sanders and Mineral county teachers is supported wholeheartedly by William McGehee and W. Drayton Lewis in their study of parental attitudes toward children. They say:

One of the most important social factors in the development of a child is the attitudes of his parents toward him and the general home situation. The findings of this study seem to indicate that the differences between superior and retarded children can not be set forth solely in terms of mental ability.

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The newly inducted teachers in Wallace's study ranked disciplinary problems and inadequate building facilities at 6.5, teacher class load at 8, conditions of work (drab, unattractive surroundings) 13.5, teacher-pupil relationships ranked 17, pupil-teacher ratio 21, and utilization of auxiliary teaching aids 25.

The importance of an inadequate school plant as a problem was recognized by the teachers of these two western Montana counties when they gave it a priority of 8.5. Their opinion is substantiated by the stand of the Billings teachers who placed it in the number one position and by the Association of American School Administrators when they said:

Neither teachers nor pupils can do their best work in poor environments. If teachers are expected to keep themselves at their best, the schools must not neglect the physical comforts that will make their work easier. Physical surroundings can irritate teachers and other school employees and interfere with morale. Dingy walls and ceilings, dirty windows and floors tend to lower standards of teaching performance and breed discontent and dissatisfaction.

The problems rated 12 and 13 reflect the concern of teachers with the ethics of the profession. Gossip by and about faculty members was rated twelfth on the scale of twenty problems reported, while the unethical teacher, who takes problems downtown before trying to solve them at

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4 Wallace, op. cit.
school was rated number thirteen in priority.

COMPARISON OF PROBLEMS MARKED CRITICAL
AND THOSE MARKED NOT A PROBLEM

In Tables III and IV the problems rated on Questionnaire II have been ranked as to importance according to the number of times they have been marked critical (Table III) or how many times they were marked not a problem (Table IV).

Parent-teacher relationships were a definite cause for concern among the teachers. Nineteen of the forty-eight responding felt that lack of parental interest in school or school work was a critical problem, and how to establish better parent-teacher relationships was rated critical by twelve respondents, while only six reported that it was not a problem. Nine teachers reported lack of parental interest in school or school work was not a problem. The fact that nearly as many teachers reported "physical plant of the school inadequate" not a problem as reported it as a critical problem would seem to indicate a difference in school situations rather than difference in opinion as to its importance as a problem.

Only four of the teachers marked the ethical problems as critical while thirteen and fifteen respectively marked the two problems of ethics as not a problem. Apparently only in a very few instances in the schools surveyed does the problem of faculty ethics present a serious problem.

All problems were marked critical by at least two or
### TABLE III

**PROBLEMS MARKED CRITICAL BY FORTY-EIGHT TEACHERS OF SANDERS AND MINERAL COUNTIES OF MONTANA, 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Number Marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of parental interest in school or school work</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Physical plant of school inadequate</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>How to establish better parent-teacher relationships</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>How to stimulate students to want to learn required subject matter</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Too great a work load to permit best results</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Discipline - lack of coordination of effort among teachers, administrators, and parents</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How to care for both extremes of the exceptional child in one classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Limited school financial resources</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Curriculum planning in small high schools (how to meet individual needs)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Faculty inadequate to care for number of students</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Teacher morale</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Unethical teacher, who takes problems down town before trying to solve them at school</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Gossip by and about faculty members</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lack of proper equipment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lack of competition in and out of the classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>How to handle visual aids to their greatest benefit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lack of teacher cooperation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Isolation of community (i.e. distance from physician, buying centers, etc.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lack of cooperation by teachers in the performance of extra-curricular work</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE IV

RANK ORDER OF PROBLEMS ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF TIMES THEY WERE MARKED "NOT A PROBLEM" BY FORTY-EIGHT TEACHERS OF SANDERS AND MINERAL COUNTIES OF MONTANA, 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Number Marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>How to handle individual differences properly with limited financial resources</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Too great a work load to permit best results</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How to care for both extremes of the exceptional child type in one classroom</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>How to establish better parent-teacher relationships</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>How to stimulate students to want to learn required subject matter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Curriculum planning in small high schools (How to meet individual needs)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Discipline - lack of coordination of effort among teachers, administrators, and parents</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lack of parental interest in school or school work</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>How to handle visual aids to their greatest benefit</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Teacher morale</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Physical plant of school inadequate</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Isolation of community (i.e. distance from physician, buying centers, etc.)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Gossip by and about faculty members</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Lack of competition in and out of the Classroom</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Lack of teacher cooperation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Faculty inadequate to care for number of students</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Limited school financial resources</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Unethical teacher, who takes problems down town before trying to solve them at school</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lack of proper equipment</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lack of cooperation by teachers in the performance of extra-curricular work</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more of the teachers. This would seem to indicate that all of these problems should be given some consideration by the administrators of these schools.
CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS AS THE TEACHERS SAW THEM

In the first questionnaire which was used in this study (see Appendix A) the teachers were asked to list four or more problems which they had regarding their work in their present school position. They were further asked to give an example to show why it was a problem and in what way it affected them.

Some of the returns from this questionnaire are presented in this chapter to illustrate the problems as the teachers saw them and to show the manner in which they defined their problems in a free response situation.

Problems of individual differences were given top priorities on the rating scale in Questionnaire II. Following are some examples of individual difference as reported on the free-response questionnaire together with the examples and effects given by the teachers to indicate why they were problems.

Problem
A seven year old child who appears to be a non-learner

Example or Effect
We have no way of testing this child for I.Q. Parent will not cooperate by sending him for a physical or mental check-up. School provides no facilities for this type. I feel it wasted time for him as he should be learning to use hands in some constructive way.

Problem
Many students are enrolled in Algebra and Geometry who do not have very much ability.
Example or Effect
The slow students hold back the better students making the better lose interest and the whole class covers less than is necessary.

Problem
Range of intellect in classes

Example or Effect
Small school—(40 students)—all students required to take algebra, chem. or physics. Very few of the students wish to take the courses (compulsory) and when you have an IQ range of below 80 to 125 there is a great gap in the amount of material the student can absorb or even understand.

Problem
I have several pupils in my room that are a year or two behind in their reading level and yet they must be kept in the class because of their chronological age. What methods can you use to teach them the required fundamentals of a particular grade when they can't read the subject content?

Example or Effect
I seem to take more time with the few that are slow than the ones who are above average and should require additional attention. The few who are exceptionally good do shift for themselves, when I'm working with the slow group. I feel the above average child needs special attention, if you had time enough in the school day.

Problem
There are too many students (30-34) in my junior high classes to give enough individual attention to each student.

Example or Effect
The slow readers need extra time to do more supervised remedial reading. Their lack of improvement in reading reflects in their achievement tests and in their accomplishments in other subjects.

Problem
Having "slow learners" in same class with children of superior learning faculties.

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Example or Effect
The slow learners take most of 30 min. study period, receiving help from me while the top students finish in 10 or 15 min. and have time to waste or are bored. The children with higher I.Q.'s are running errands, etc.

Lack of parental interest in school or school work was rated as third in importance on the priority scale, while "how to establish better parent-teacher relationships" was rated fifth in priority. Some free responses of the teachers on these problems follow.

Problem
Social schism between school and its personnel and community

Example or Effect
Makes for lack of sympathy on each side of other's motives and goals and aspirations.

Problem
Student's attitude and/or parental attitude

Example or Effect
Students and/or parents take a nonchalant attitude school--evident in lack of interest and failure to do acceptable work--makes it harder to teach and holds back better students.

Problem
Children who persist in being tardy

Example or Effect
Same children are late day after day. No cooperation from parents.

Problem
Careless attitude of the parents in regards to their children's education.

Example or Effect
Your problem children in school are those that have poor home environment. By this I mean broken up families, or where both father and mother work. In other words the families are putting money making ahead of raising
children correctly. The lack of discipline in the home carries on into school.

Problem
A boy who apparently has had no training in the common niceties

Example or Effect
Punishment as given at school does not solve the problem.

Problem
A child who is listless and tired in school or stays out half days.

Example or Effect
Parents take child to movies several times a week. Child is kept out half a day to sleep or is tired in school.

Problem
Lack of parental interest

Example or Effect
I have a few "A" or "B" students who are not passing largely because there is no interest at home. I think every student should be "pushed" from home to attain higher scholarship. This lack of parental interest also shows up in participation in extra-curricular activities, in student lack of interest.

Discipline problems were mentioned most frequently on the free-response questionnaire and were rated 6.5 in priority on the rating scale. Some teacher listings of discipline problems are given below.

Problem
Need for stronger administrative backing, especially in discipline.

Example or Effect
A student sent to the administrator who returns to tell fellow students "nothing happened" will undoubtedly become more of a problem than he previously was. I think this is chiefly because the administration is "too friendly" with the students in general.
Problem

Discipline

Example or Effect
When a group of students are difficult to handle, it is hard to maintain a study level in the classroom. That is, students who actually desire to learn are disrupted. Instead of giving his time to the interested student, the teacher must waste his time with a few with no desire.

Problem

Lack of discipline in home, school, and community

Example or Effect
Parents declare, "I can't do a thing with her (or him) at home. Too many privileges and too much freedom in schools. Local authorities "close eyes" rather than "make a fuss."

Problem

The friendly attitude of teacher and pupil has become too friendly.

Example or Effect
The too friendly attitude of teacher-pupil has a tendency for the children to become careless in their respect for a teacher. I think one or two teachers in a school system, by becoming too friendly with their students, make it hard on both teachers and students, especially in discipline.

Problem

Discipline

Example or Effect
Difficult to control students and to conduct classes. Should be more uniform policies governing it.

Problem

This problem is probably quite common. Students get away with murder in one classroom.

Example or Effect
Without discipline, students get into trouble, and thus form poor opinions of school. If they can do it one place they will try other places.
Problem
Teachers who do not have discipline

Example or Effect
Extra-curricular activities not disciplined—something like band where all grades are represented—makes discipline hard for other teachers.

Curriculum planning gave considerable cause for concern as indicated by its priority rating of 8.5. Some typical problems are reported below.

Problem
Outmoded curriculum and lack of proper teaching facilities

Example or Effect
College prep curriculum in community that has little interest in its school and whose graduates make little use of required course work. Trying to teach science courses without lab facilities has created quite a hardship. Texts are antiquated (1934). Lack of reference material.

Problem
That of class scheduling in the small high school where it is attempted to give each student college preparatory and also poorly equipped vocational opportunities.

Example or Effect
Using four high school teachers teaching a full schedule, individual school classes must have subjects the same period. Our vocational subjects and college preparatory subjects must fall in the same class periods. Our vocational teachers must also teach college preparatory subjects. Scheduling is difficult to say the least.

Problem
What to do in a small school with high school students who are not fitted to high school.

Example or Effect
We have several high school students who are not handling their subjects as they should to be in high school. They are too immature to expel from school for they would have no way to make a living. What to do with them?
Problem
How to have all extra-curricular activities and still end the school day at 4 P. M.

Example or Effect
We have a large number of bus students. They should have the same opportunities for extra-curricular activities as the town students. The problem is to stretch the school hours so the bus students may participate.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

The teachers of all the schools in Sanders and Mineral counties of Montana having both secondary and elementary schools were contacted in order to determine what the teachers felt were their most pressing professional problems in their present work situations. This was done first by means of a free-response questionnaire on which they listed and described problems. The next step was to classify the problems and resubmit them to the teachers in check-list form to obtain their priority ratings on the list of twenty problems. The problems were classified according to a rating scale of: critical, very important, important, unimportant, or not a problem.

All of the problems were marked critical by at least some of the teachers. Problems rating highest in priority were those concerned with individual differences. Next most important in rating were those concerning parent-teacher-pupil relations.

Other problems placed high on the rating scale by the teachers included: "too great a work load to permit best results", discipline, curriculum, inadequate school plant, teacher morale, and "faculty inadequate to care for number of students".

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CONCLUSIONS

Since all of the problems listed were marked critical by at least some of the teachers, administrators would do well to investigate the situation regarding these problems in their own school systems.

Problems concerning individual differences with especial reference to the wide range of mental abilities within one classroom were marked critical by more teachers than others and were placed at the top of the priority rating scale. Such procedures as enrichment programs and/or special classes for the mentally retarded and the gifted would seem to be indicated in order to have satisfied teaching personnel.

It appears that the teachers of these two counties for the most part are more vitally concerned with the welfare of the student than they are with their own personal welfare. It is worthy of note that no mention of salary was made on any of the questionnaires returned.
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Covering Letter

St. Regis, Montana
April 12, 1954

Dear Fellow Teacher:

Everyone has problems, some big, some small. By asking a few questions of a comparatively large number of people I hope to develop a plan by which teachers can present and possibly find a solution to some of their problems.

Attached are two sheets on which are provided spaces for defining problems connected with your present school position. In addition in Part B after each problem would you give an example to show why it is a problem and indicate in what way it affects you.

Please do not sign your name as it is felt that the validity of this study depends to a great extent on the degree of anonymity which can be maintained.

A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

After the results of this inquiry have been tabulated and classified, they will be returned to you, to give you an opportunity to rank them as to priority.

Your cooperation in helping with this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ John B. Michalson
QUESTIONNAIRE I

PROBLEM I
Part A
List a problem you have regarding your work in your present school position in the space provided below.

Part B
Give an example to show why it is a problem and indicate in what way it affects you.

PROBLEM II
Part A
List a problem you have regarding your work in your present school position in the space provided below.

Part B
Give an example to show why it is a problem and indicate in what way it affects you.

PROBLEM III
Part A
List a problem you have regarding your work in your present school position in the space provided below.

Part B
Give an example to show why it is a problem and indicate in what way it affects you.

PROBLEM IV
Part A
List a problem you have regarding your work in your present school position in the space provided below.

Part B
Give an example to show why it is a problem and indicate in what way it affects you.
COVERING LETTER

St. Regis, Montana
May 21, 1954

Dear Fellow Teacher,

On the attached sheet is a list of the problems which most frequently appeared in answer to my original questionnaire on teacher problems.

Would you take a few minutes and mark an (x) after each problem in the proper column to indicate your rating of its importance.

If there is a special problem which is bothering you, feel free to add it to the list.

Thank you very much for the cooperation you have given me in this study.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ John B. Michalson
QUESTIONNAIRE II

Please indicate your opinion of the importance of the following problems by marking an (X) in the proper column.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
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<td>Curriculum planning in small high</td>
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<td>7. schools(How to meet individual needs)</td>
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<td>How to handle individual differences</td>
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<td>8. properly with limited financial and physical facilities</td>
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<td>classroom</td>
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