Some basic problems of a beginning principal

Donald John Mammen

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SOME BASIC PROBLEMS
of
A BEGINNING PRINCIPAL

by

Donald J. Mammen
B. A., Montana State University, 1947

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education.

Montana State University
1950

Approved:

Chairman of Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some Basic Problems of a Beginning Principal is a study prepared by a beginning principal in the field of administration. The problems presented here are those which he encountered in his first year of work.

THE PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY

The purposes of this study may be summed up as follows:

(1) To prepare a report of the actual problems faced by a particular beginning principal because such a report might be of value to those who will at some future time become administrators of small public schools.

(2) To compare the manner in which this beginning principal met and solved his problems in a real school situation with the theoretical presentation and solution of administrative problems by students of school administration.

(3) To appraise the methods used by this particular beginning principal in solving the problems arising in con-
nection with his position as an administrative officer.

(4) To make some general recommendations regarding the handling of some of the basic problems which are likely to confront any beginning administrator.

(5) To suggest to administrator training institutions some of the ways by which they might better prepare the beginning administrator to meet the problems he will face in his first position.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THIS STUDY WAS INITIATED

First, second and third class school districts within the state of Montana employ a superintendent or principal as supervisory officer over both the secondary and the elementary school within the limits of each district. These officials perform under the direction and control of boards of trustees of their respective districts.

According to the Montana Educational Directory published by the State Department of Public Instruction for the state of Montana, school districts are classified and employ superintendents and principals as follows:

A first class district is one which has a population of eight thousand or more; it employs a superintendent who has had at least five years experience in public school work; it is controlled by a board of seven trustees.¹

A second class district is one which has a population of one thousand or more and less than eight thousand; it employs a superintendent who has had at least three years experience in public school work; it is controlled by a board of five members.  

A third class district is one with a population of less than one thousand and is controlled by a board of three members. A third class district may employ either a superintendent or principal or both. The one and two room rural schools of which there are nearly two thousand with an enrollment of approximately twenty thousand are under the supervision of the county superintendent.  

In the third class district no teaching or administrative experience is required to fill the position of administrator except that which may or may not be written into the minutes or other school records by boards of trustees.  

The increasing present day shortage of teaching and administrative personnel has forced boards of trustees to employ inexperienced officials when it has been found necessary to fill the gaps in the teaching and administrative staffs of third class schools. It is therefore within the third class district or smaller rural school that the beginning principal will usually start his administrative career.

The author of this study was employed in a third class


\[2\] Ibid., p. 6.

\[3\] Ibid., p. 11.
district school in Montana under the conditions prevailing in the preceding paragraphs. He had had no previous experience as an official in the public schools of the state of Montana nor in those of any other state.

The writer before taking this position decided that, in partial fulfillment of the requirements set forth for the Degree of Master of Education by the School of Education at Montana State University, he would prepare a paper concerning some of the basic problems encountered by him during his first year's work in the administrative field.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

Throughout the entire paper the reader is introduced, first, to the problem as it was encountered and worked on by the beginning principal; second, to the probable solution of the problem by the experts in the field of education; and third, to the conclusions drawn by the author.

Chapter Two deals with the beginning principal and his entry in the community, his selection of a home, his participation in various civic and fraternal organizations of the community, and his relations with the public press.

In Chapter Three the writer discusses the administration of the teaching staff. The basic divisions of the chapter are: types of teachers, the teacher's meeting, the
teacher's participation in extracurricular activity, and the parent-teacher association.

Chapter Four is concerned with the administration of school business affairs. The areas covered in this chapter are: school budgetary procedures, the state school film library, school records, and the ordering of school supplies.

Chapter Five is devoted to a discussion of the administration of pupil personnel. In it are discussed such problems as: entry age for school children, disciplinary action on the part of the principal and the teachers, the pupil and student government, and the democratic as against the autocratic approach in the classroom and on the schoolground.

In Chapter Six the reader meets the school custodian. Much of the successful operation of the school plant depends upon the relationship between the principal and the custodian. The chapter is primarily concerned with the difference in opinion as to the manner in which the building and the facilities of the school are used by the public in general.

Chapter Seven is a summary of the study. It attempts to generalize the basic problems of the beginning administrator. It includes recommendations based on the reading and experiences of the writer.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the book, Administration of Village Schools, Reavis points out:

Writers in educational administration have generally left out of consideration the organization, administration, and supervision of small schools. The great mass of the literature on educational administration has dealt chiefly with the problems of the middle-sized and larger community. Likewise, courses of training in administration have tended to deal with the work of the larger schools. As a result, the officers in charge of schools in small communities have been deprived of the wealth of vicarious experience which is available to officials who serve in larger schools.4

Reavis also says that in most small communities, towns, and villages, problems are as many and, usually, as difficult as are those of administrators in large centers, and as a matter of fact, the responsibility for effective performance of duties is more definitely fixed in the smaller communities than in the larger areas.5

According to Bolton, Cole, and Jessup a large number of excellent books have been published on various phases of school administration. Almost without exception they deal with problems relating to large cities. Most superintendents must begin their work in very small school systems.

4Floyd T. Goodier, and William A. Miller, Administration of Village Schools, (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company, 1938), Foreword, p. V.

5Loc. cit.
These superintendents desire to find literature that might assist them in meeting the numerous concrete problems they are certain to face. The observations and studies of current conditions made by Bolton, Cole, and Jessup recognize the difficulties of hundreds of young superintendents out in the field.  

R. V. Hunkins says that the literature of school administration and supervision has been written very largely for conditions in city schools. In fact he says that few writers of standard treatises on school administration or supervision have had in mind places anywhere as small as five thousand. Most of the treatises, on the contrary, have been written for cities of fifty thousand or over, which comprised only about one and two tenths per cent of the incorporated places of the nation.

He also says that the seriousness of the situation is further emphasized by the realization that among the school superintendents in our extremely large percentage of smaller communities are to be found almost all of the beginners in the profession. Moreover, these superintendents are working in places recognized to be the most conservative.

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in providing educational facilities. Furthermore, the
daily duties of these executives in smaller schools are
decidedly different from the duties performed by superin-
tendents in larger schools. Consequently, the reference
materials available for those in charge of city schools, at
least the more practical aspects of such materials, are not
suited to the requirements of smaller school superintend-
ents.  

The writer, after scrutiny of available literature
in the field of small school administration, in agreement
with the authorities noted, has concluded that such informa-
tion is very limited.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study was developed primarily as a means of
self-evaluation for this particular beginning principal. It
was believed by him that an analysis of his mistakes, would
in the end, enable him to perform better the task of admin-
istrating the public schools.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE AND SOURCES OF DATA

The author of this study knew, or was comparatively

7R. V. Hunkins, The Superintendent at Work in Smaller
certain, that he would, at a later date, be engaged as an administrator of the public schools. On his entry in the graduate school at Montana State University, he selected his problem, Some Basic Problems of the Beginning Principal.

The findings of the practical study in the field could be compared with theoretical solutions of administrative problems, probable solutions gained from experts in the field of educational administration.
CHAPTER II

PUBLIC SCHOOL RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY CONTACTS

Several aspects of community relationship are discussed in this chapter. The first of these is concerned with the beginning principal and his entry into the community; second, the selection of a home; third, the beginning principal and his participation in various civic and fraternal organizations in the community; and fourth, the beginning principal and his relations with the community public press.

As the author prepared to take over his responsibilities as principal of his school, he wondered about many things. Would it be like his instructors had said it would be, and would it be like the material incorporated in the many educational volumes he had read during his college career?

The writer was indeed fortunate to have come in contact with numerous instructors who had spent much time in the field of elementary education. Acting upon their sound advice, he was able to overcome many of the obstacles in his path, but in some areas the author found himself almost entirely dependent upon his own resources. That is comprehensible for it would have been folly to expect that
any instructor could follow the student into the field to prevent all errors in policy-making and judgment. The prevention of these must depend largely upon the official in charge of the school. Too, no one could possibly foresee all of the specific problems any given administrator would face; consequently, training in the field of administration would of necessity consist chiefly of general principles.

**PRE-COMMUNITY ENTRY**

Pre-community entry refers to that period in which the beginning principal has not yet entered the community where he intends to work.

Kyte says:

If the principal is new to the position, he should spend considerable time in becoming thoroughly familiar with the existing conditions. He should make some of his analysis before the school term begins.¹

Upon the completion of his first year as an administrator, the writer was convinced that he did not properly heed the sound philosophy recommended by Kyte. Let us see what he did and did not do.

In June of 1948, he signed a contract to act as principal of a school in a small town. At the time of his

first visit there, he met and conversed with the members of the local board of trustees. After having been interviewed by them, he was introduced, by one of the members of the board, to two spring graduates of the elementary school. At the suggestion of the chairman of the board, the boys volunteered to show the beginning principal the school plant, the grounds, and outbuildings over which he was to be supervisor.

An inspection of the plant was begun. During the inspection, the author asked the boys many questions about the facilities of the school. The boys answered his questions readily and eagerly.

First, a tour was made of the playground and outbuildings. Playground equipment was carefully scrutinized. Any sign of deterioration was noted.

Next the plant itself was inspected. Upon entering the building, the beginning principal visited each room in turn, noted the number of desks in each, examined the blackboards, the room cabinets, and the halls and cloak rooms for each room. An auditorium which had been converted into a gymnasium was also noted.

Was the initial survey of the probable place of employment carefully planned and executed by the beginning principal? What do noted authorities in the field have to
say about the method of procedure prior to the time the
beginning principal assumed his duties as an administrator
of a public school?

Kyte and his associates have set forth the essential
phases of the survey which every beginning principal should
make before his entry into a given community.

He points out that the educational needs of a school
should be determined in part by a consideration of communi-
ty conditions and community demands.

His first specific suggestion is that the beginning
principal secure a detailed plan of the community from the
city planning commission's records. From this he can form
a fairly accurate impression of the community. Besides ob-
taining the plat of the community, he should also investi-
gate the cultural aspects of the area. He should know what
the primary source of income is for the district and adjacent
areas. He should also investigate fully the nature of eth-
nic groups in the vicinity to determine to what extent life
in the community is influenced by them.

Items of importance which he feels should be observed
are the location of his own school, public parks and play-
grounds, public buildings, the high school, areas of dense
population, main thoroughfares and side streets which may
or may not constitute traffic hazards, hospitals, theaters,
churches, and people.\(^2\)

In addition the principal should survey his community by making use of all assembled data in the school records and census.\(^3\)

He also suggests that the school plant and its equipment should be surveyed from the standpoint of determining their effectiveness for all educational purposes. This investigation should indicate how they affect the children. Careful thought must be given not only to direct influences on teaching and learning but to the indirect effects on organization, administration, and supervision.\(^4\)

Although the beginning principal made a preliminary survey of the school in which he was to work, it was far from being the sort of investigation authority says he should have made. Even though he was new to the community his professional responsibility should have led him to exercise completely the demands of his office. The survey which he made was superficial resulting in an inadequate knowledge of the community and the school. In addition the educational plan suffered a definite set-back due to

\(^2\text{Ibid.}, p. 34.\)
\(^3\text{Ibid.}, p. 43.\)
\(^4\text{Ibid.}, p. 62.\)
the fact that much of the principal's time, during the first few weeks of school, was devoted to the investigation which should have been made previously.

COMMUNITY ENTRY

Community entry pertains to the period in which the beginning principal is adapting himself to his new surroundings.

This beginning principal actually had no concept of adaptation to new surroundings. He did not know what was expected of him nor did he know how to make himself a part of the community.

The following statements made by Hunkins might be considered as probable solutions for the beginning principal:

The young principal must early recognize that his ability to get along favorably in the community is as much a part of his professional equipment as his ability to effect an efficient internal organization of the school. It behooves the young principal, therefore, to cultivate in a sane and wholesome way that side of his nature which will facilitate his contacts with human beings. This may require conscious effort at first, but in time naturalness will come.5

Hunkins goes on to say that it is essential that a principal adapt himself promptly to the general nature of the community. This will require a little scrutiny of conditions and sometimes a little reading in a field of activity that may be dominant in the community and with which the principal has had no previous contact. Without such scrutiny and study a principal may commit what seem to the residents to be unpardonable errors in comment or in interpretation of incidents. Local people are not usually conscious of the differences that may exist between their conditions and conditions in other places or conditions in general. They are therefore not disposed to be forgiving, especially toward a principal who is supposed to be wise, for a lack of knowledge about things that are well known to them.  

As in the initial survey, the beginning principal took no time to familiarize himself with the general nature of the community. During his first weeks there he remained passive waiting for the community to act. He should have, according to the authorities, taken the initiative and met the people. Had it not been for a friendly populace, the beginning principal might have had a difficult time.

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6Ibid., p. 160.
THE SELECTION OF A HOME

Due to the present day shortage of housing in almost all communities, the beginning principal, prior to the signing of a contract, should be assured that he has a place to live. In some communities farsighted school trustees have purchased homes for their officials, but that is not true of all communities. The writer did not fully investigate the choice of a homesite on his initial assignment and at a later date found that he had used poor judgment. His home was not at all satisfactory since it was in a general run-down condition.

In the book *Administration of Village Schools* by Goodier and Miller criteria are set up regarding the home for the principal. It is as follows:

If the superintendent is unmarried, he is faced with the problem of securing furnished rooms, an apartment, or a house. In most villages or small cities, this will probably be a house. It is usually not wise to buy a place at first, even if the superintendent is able to do so. His tenure is too uncertain and his knowledge of real estate values too limited. If possible, the house rented should be in a desirable part of town from the standpoint of pleasant surroundings including congenial neighbors. Distance from the school is not important in a small city. But it is important that the general public be not ashamed of the house where their chief school executive lives. It is better to pay a larger rent and have a location that commands respect than to save money by living
in surroundings that are not socially acceptable.\footnote{7}

Investigation shows that literature available regarding the selection of a home for schoolmen does not reflect the signs of the times. As in the case of the beginning principal one may be assured of a home, but he is not assured that it will be a good one in a selected location.

THE BEGINNING PRINCIPAL AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Each community into which the beginning principal travels will have its share of civic and fraternal organizations. Probably those which should be mentioned here are organizations such as: the Rotary Club, the American Legion, the Masonic Lodge, Civic Athletic Association, Rodeo Association, Wildlife Association, and the Parent-Teacher Association.

This beginning principal met and became acquainted with these various groups during his first year as an administrator. During his college career warnings had been given in various educational classes as to the number and variety of demands made upon a principal by communities.

However, he was not fully prepared for the deluge of

activity which descended upon him during the first month of his initial assignment. He had taken the grim warnings of expert consultants lightly and later suffered the consequences of his unthinking actions.

The first week in September 1948, the beginning principal was approached by the president of the Rotary Club. He was told that meetings were held on Thursday evening of each week, that the meeting usually consisted of a dinner followed by a short talk by a prominent citizen. The fee for joining the group was ten dollars and a one dollar dinner fee each week thereafter.

The beginning principal was invited to attend the next regular meeting. Not knowing whether to say yes or no to the invitation, he accepted.

Toward the close of the same week, the principal was making purchases in a local store. The manager of the establishment approached, shook hands, and said, "You are just the man we have been looking for. We have in our community an organization which we call the Civic Athletic Club. Now, its purpose is to promote the welfare of all the young people here. Our last year's coach is no longer with us. We would like to have you take over the city basketball team, coach it, arrange for games, provide for a gymnasium, care for the equipment, and obtain referees for the games."
The beginning principal wanted to be co-operative with the various local organizations. Again, he did not know whether to say yes or no to the request, but he accepted.

Two weeks passed and the first meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association took place. The principal and his teachers were introduced to the group. He was asked to make a short talk for which he was not prepared. At the meeting it was suggested by the president that the principal be made chairman of the program committee. Once more, not knowing whether to say yes or no to the suggestion, he accepted.

In the same month the principal was approached by three other organizations. Not knowing whether to refuse or to comply with the desires of these groups, he took the easy way out and agreed to participate in three additional clubs.

With the arrival of the school basketball season, the beginning principal found himself swamped with community activity. He could not properly perform the duties required of the administrator. His days were filled with teaching duties, and the evenings, which should have been retained by him for administrative functions, were occupied by community club activity.

In addition to the malfunctioning of his administrative
duties he could not keep pace with his teaching schedule. From necessity, classroom work which should have been care-
fully prepared, was gone over hastily.

How far can the beginning principal go toward par-
ticipation in community activity? How can he successfully
maneuver a situation so that he will not offend the public
and yet retain sufficient time for the administration of
his office?

Some recommendations concerning the actions of the
beginning principal in his relations with local public
organizations are presented here by authorities in the
field.

Hunkins says that one of the important connections a
school principal has with the people of the community is
through membership in some local organizations. The clubs
he should join are "those which stand for constructive
development of the community such as the Rotary Club or
clubs which give him an opportunity to know 'leaders' in
the community."\(^8\)

There are other organizations which the principal
will wish to join for personal reasons, such as, wildlife
clubs, athletic clubs, or lodges.

\(^8\)Hunkins, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
However, Hunkins warns:

Certain precautions should be taken in this connection. The young superintendent should not join so many organizations that his time for effective school work is hampered. He should not align himself with any organization that is based upon antagonism for respectable people in the community. The school principal's pupil-clients, and his supporters, the taxpayers, come from all classes, and he has no right to affiliate with any organization that maintains open or secret hostility to any appreciable number of them. In short he should not join associations that are radical or factional in nature.\(^9\)

Goodier and Miller both say:

The position which the principal ought to take with regard to these groups is not always easy to determine. All of them are entirely legitimate organizations, worthy of the sanction and active support of good citizens. They all need leadership. The principal with his background of education, his interest in social progress, and his position as head of the greatest single community enterprise is in a strategic position to exercise leadership. As others sense this he may be besieged with requests to join the different groups and accept office in them. On the other hand, the school system ought not to be neglected. If the principal is to head a successful school administration, he needs time to read and study, to visit schools other than the one over which he has supervision, and to attend educational conferences, as well as to perform the routine duties of his office.\(^10\)

Further they say:

The young schoolman must guard against this American weakness. In his desire to make friends

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\(^9\)Ibid., p. 149.

\(^10\)Goodier and Miller, op. cit., p. 10.
and to be a "man among men," it is easy for him to justify accepting membership in too many clubs or lodges. Each invitation comes as "just one more," and, like Rip Van Winkle in the play, he is in danger of losing count of the total. For the first few years, at least, a principal may better run the risk of being considered somewhat of a recluse, rather than fill his evenings with meetings of different community groups, no matter how legitimate each in itself may be. In the long run, the thoughtful residents of the town respect and admire the school leader who lives for the school and who engages in other community activities only as they correlate with school interests and do not encroach upon the time which rightfully belongs to school duties.11

Goodier and Miller have set up guiding principles which can be used to advantage by any beginning principal. These are:

Support all the educational features of these different community groups in a manner that does not call for membership.

The principal may show an interest in organizations by excusing pupils from school to take part in public performances, even going so far on occasions as to change their school program for outside activities.

Accept membership in a limited number of community groups where the educational element is conspicuous and share the leadership as opportunities arise.

Learn to budget time. It is easy for school principals, like other executives, to waste time. Forming the habit of planning a schedule for the working hours of the day and week is a real asset. True, such a schedule must be flexible and frequently disarranged. But even so, it will be worthwhile.

Keep the school first. The principal should take part in community activities of an educational

11Ibid., p. 4.
nature, but never to the exclusion of the school duties for which he is employed and for which services he draws his monthly pay check.¹²

Experience has proved to this beginning principal that there are, as indicated by authorities, limits to membership in organizations. Probably the predicament in which the writer found himself was due to his inability to take a firm stand against over-affiliation with community groups. He, in his desire to be too much of a good fellow, failed, in part, in the administration of his school. He learned, the hard way, that one man cannot be in two places at the same time.

THE BEGINNING PRINCIPAL AND THE PUBLIC PRESS

R. H. Lane says, "Practically every school district in the United States is 'covered' by some sort of newspaper, from the rural weekly with 'boiler plate insides' to the metropolitan daily."¹³

Lane's statement was true of the municipality in which the beginning principal worked. Local news was published each Thursday.

He co-operated with the press the first few months of

¹²Ibid., p. 11.

the school year. In the first week of September he sent a full report covering the teaching staff to the editor. He also gave notice of important meetings which were to be held in his school. In addition, he occasionally published editorials about the children and the activities of the school.

He made a fair start, but as the school months progressed he found himself devoting less and less time to the public press. So much of his time was consumed by regular administrative duties, classroom procedure, and community activity, that toward the end of the school year he ignored the public newspaper almost completely. It was easy for him to ignore his publicity agency. Was the publicity agency ignoring him?

One day in late spring the beginning principal met the local publisher in the post office. "Why is it," said he, "that I no longer receive information regarding your school? What has happened? Don't you like our newspaper?"

The principal said nothing. The publisher went on to say, "Now, Principal, use your head. We will publish anything you want published. We want pictures of the children and class activity; we want articles written by you, the teachers, and the children. Now let's get together and
see if we can't give that school of yours the attention it deserves." He departed without another word or a backward glance. The ire of the publisher had been roused.

What steps can be taken to help future beginning principals avoid a similar situation? How important is public school publicity?

Authorities in the field of school publicity say many things about the importance of the public press and its relation to the school.

Goodier and Miller say:

School publicity has quite a different function from that of ordinary advertising. Its sole purpose should be the wide dissemination of accurate information about the schools. The schools are public in the sense that they are supported by compulsory taxation and open without tuition charge to all children between certain legal ages. The general public has a right to information about the schools and will certainly have a keener appreciation of public school education and be more ready to support it adequately when kept informed.14

Furthermore, they say that it is hard to overemphasize the importance of proper relationships between the schools and the local newspapers. Most newspapers are much interested in the public schools of their locality and the activities of the schools. This is necessarily true because the patrons of the schools are the subscribers of the newspapers

14 Goodier and Miller, op. cit., p. 284.
and school events are of genuine interest to the readers of the paper.\textsuperscript{15}

Grinnell also stresses the importance of the newspaper. He says:

The newspaper, therefore, is as effective a medium for public school interpretation as can be found outside the school itself. People attach importance to what they read in the newspaper. Perhaps no other way of presenting a fact to the community is so immediately arresting or so apparently unplanned and natural. That school men have realized the importance of the newspaper in school interpretation is attested by the increase in school news in recent years. That they have not yet sufficiently realized what they must do to utilize fully this valuable medium is obvious when one scans the newspaper for news of the public schools. Such news is still relatively rare in all sizes and types of newspapers. One wonders why it should be so when no subject is dearer to the parent's heart than his children, and no curiosity more easily piqued than that which touches on what his children are doing in the many hours they spend away from home. Here is the interpreter, ready to throw its resources of skill and circulation into telling what those children do at school and what the school does to them, and yet with tragic indifference or incompetence the school executive turns away to busy himself with stifling details which might as well be passed on to a subordinate officer or to a clerk. The newspaper is ready because the school is news, live news, intimate news. School men, far too often, are not ready because they do not know that the school is news. They are not ready because they have not learned to recognize news.\textsuperscript{16}

Cubberley declares that every principal in a city of

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 287.

any size should think out and put into effect some form of a school publicity program, covering both school publications and the local press. The items of interest about a school are largely seasonal; consequently a school publicity calendar can be drawn up and news and events anticipated and articles about them prepared. The schools need a well thought out program of continued publicity, rather than a deluge of it only at times when the school needs a tax increase or desires to put over a bond issue.

The press, usually, is willing to help in the matter if the right type of news is supplied. The responsibility for the right interpretation of the school to the public, however, rests with the schools rather than with the press. If the schools desire more school news in the papers they must gather and organize that news. Here again the final responsibility for proper publicity rests with the principal aided by his teachers. ¹⁷

With emphasis, Hunkins says,

To withhold information about the schools in an effort to retain popular good will would but defeat its own purpose by leading to suspicion. The only recourse is to keep the public intelligently informed about the schools which they own and control, and rely upon the published and otherwise

disclosed achievements of the school to retain public favor. This necessity for retaining the good will of the people is the primary reason for promoting efficient school publicity.18

Lane lists the following points which parents are interested in learning through the press:

(1) how children are getting along in school,
(2) what methods of instruction are being used,
(3) what the schools are doing in developing and maintaining an adequate health program, (4) whether public education is worth what the public pays for it, and (5) how children behave in school.19

Here this beginning principal can be positive. There was no excuse for his injudicious treatment of the public press. He nearly lost one of his most valuable assets in the community, the editor.

In agreement with the authorities, the writer confesses that the relations with the public press cannot be overemphasized. It is indubitably the duty of the administrator, in co-operation with the teachers and pupils, to publicize the school at every opportunity. Any excuse such as, "there wasn't time," is not valid.

18Hunkins, op. cit., p. 163.
19Lane, op. cit., p. 49.
CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEACHING STAFF

This chapter deals with the teacher. It is concerned with the type of teacher employed by the board of trustees under which this beginning principal worked, with the teacher's meeting, with the teacher's participation in extracurricular activities, and with the Parent-Teacher Association.

It might not be irrelevant to state that the author, in the development of this chapter, has not intended to disparage his teachers in any sense of the word. He has presented the material in this chapter objectively and without prejudice.

TYPE OF TEACHERS

When the beginning principal took over his duties as administrator of his school, his teaching staff had been previously selected by the local board of trustees.

Teacher A was chosen for the first and second grades. She was the mother of four children ranging in age from two weeks to five years. She had undergone a major operation at the birth of her child and with the beginning of the school year was far from having fully recuperated from the effects of the operation. Although teacher A was the holder of
the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education and an excellent teacher in the classroom, she was unable, from a physical standpoint, to meet completely the demands made upon her by the school and by her large family.

For the third and fourth grades the trustees hired teacher B. She was the mother of a four year old daughter. She had completed three years of college work in education and had been teaching school for nine years. She was an expert teacher in all respects. However, she lived in a small neighboring community nine miles from her position. The distance kept her from fulfilling all the duties expected of her as a teacher in the public school.

The fifth and sixth grade position was filled by teacher C, who was the mother of an infant four months old. She was teaching to provide for the child. Although she resided near her place of employment, it was necessary for her to leave her baby with its grandparents in a city thirty miles distant. She tried to fulfill her obligations as a teacher, but the bonds which tied mother and child together were far stronger than those which bound her to the school. She had completed three years of college work in education and seven years teaching experience.

The beginning principal was the teacher of the seventh and eighth grades.
If the teachers are not able to carry the load expected of them, the burden of the school's functions obviously falls on the principal who is charged with the continued successful operation of the school. The beginning principal, therefore, is confronted by many problems with which he would not otherwise have to contend. This was the situation encountered by the author.

THE TEACHER'S MEETING

On September 5, 1948, the beginning principal called his first teacher's meeting. He had written down the points he wished to cover. Among these were: (1) the principal's philosophy of education; (2) the philosophy of education from the teacher's point of view; (3) pupils' marks and report cards; (4) maintenance of registers, class records, and school records; (5) time of arrival at school and departure from school by the teachers; (6) parent visits and conferences; (7) disciplinary action on the part of the teachers; (8) parent-teacher meetings; (9) pupil retardation and promotion; (10) playground supervision; (11) hall and gymnasium supervision; (12) lunch hour duties; (13) classroom procedure and extracurricular activity.

Even though some phases of educational planning had been overlooked by the beginning principal at his first
meeting, he was off to a fair start. It was his opinion that if he had overlooked a part of the program of educational planning in co-operation with the teacher, he could pick up the odds and ends at a later date.

As the reader will remember, teacher B lived away from her job. It was necessary for her to commute between her home and the school by bus. She arrived daily in the morning at eight-fifty o'clock and left daily promptly at dismissal time. As a result, her attendance at pre-school or post-school teacher's meetings was automatically prohibited.

Teacher A and teacher C arrived at eight-thirty in the morning, but teacher C was compelled to leave school promptly at dismissal time. The home in which she roomed and boarded demanded that she be present when meals were served, or she go without.

There was no possibility of having a teacher's meeting before school or after school. Apparently the only time available was during the noon hour or during the time school was in session.

First, the beginning principal attempted scheduling meetings during the noon hour. He soon found that such a scheme was impractical, since the rooms, halls, and playgrounds were left without supervision. Teacher C complained
that the lunch hour, except for noon lunch duty, should be hers to do with as she pleased.

Next, he tried scheduling meetings during the regular school hours, that is, from three-thirty o'clock to four o'clock in the afternoon. His plan would have worked had it not been for the fact that he was able to dismiss only about sixty per cent of the pupils. The other forty per cent, since they were transported, were compelled to await bus transportation from the school at four o'clock. As a consequence of no supervision, the children who remained ran wild about the school and on the playground. The meetings were continually interrupted by little Jimmy and little Nan claiming that Bobby had hit him or that Judy wouldn't let her have the swing.

What did the beginning principal do? Meeting with failure at every turn, he finally decided to discard the teacher's meeting. It seemed to him to be the only solution to his problem. Should he have done so?

The consensus of several noted authorities challenge the action of the beginning principal. One of these, Ellwood P. Cubberley, testifies:

The welfare of the school demands periodical meetings with teachers, and that they are everywhere recognized as an essential element in preserving the unity of a system of schools. The meeting is needed for considering together the
educational policy of the school system, for the
discussion of certain phases of school work and
the progress of instruction, somewhat for admin­
istrative purposes, and for inspirational pur­
poses. The planning and direction of this meet­
ing requires much care and thought, if the work is
to be done well, but it will repay in results the
effort spent upon it. Each meeting should have
some definite purpose, and the teachers who attend
should be made to feel that the meeting is worth
their time. If the superintendent is the master of
his problem he will find in the meeting his own
largest inspiration to effort, and he will reap re­
turns from it in the increased ease of supervision
and the more wholesome attitude of his teaching
force toward their work which will repay him for
the time and energy it demands. ¹

Emphatically, Briggs says:

No principal devoted to professional leadership
of the school entrusted to his responsibility will
fail to use, continually and as effectively as he
can, teachers' meetings as one of the two most im­
portant means of supervision. The other important
means is individual conferences. ²

Reavis, Pierce, and Stullken say:

The teachers' meeting is a generally accepted
device, and, if properly used, it becomes a chal­
lenge to a principal and a test of his professional
engineering as to whether or not he can make it
effective. ³

¹Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration,

²Thomas H. Briggs, Improving Instruction, (New York:

³William C. Reavis, Paul R. Pierce, and Edward H.
Stullken, The Elementary School, (Chicago: University of
Cooke states:

The typical teachers' meeting has a twofold function, namely, (a) to facilitate the general administration of the school, and (b) to improve the teachers in service.

The grade teachers' meeting is vital and essential to the improvement of teachers in service, because problems dealt with in such meetings are usually of an instructional nature.\(^4\)

Having failed in the organization of the teachers' meeting, the beginning principal left the needs of the teacher to chance, believing that if problems arose within the classroom, the teachers would seek counsel and advice. His judgment proved to be unsound in that none of the teachers sought his counsel except on very rare occasions. Confusion was apparent on the part of the teachers and the principal. Problems seemed to arise from nowhere with no concentration of group effort to solve them. In other words, the unity of the school system fell apart. Once gone, reinstatement of the teachers' meeting was next to impossible. The leadership the beginning principal should have demonstrated in the conduct of his official position was mediocre where it should have been of unusual quality.

THE TEACHER'S PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Here again the beginning principal encountered insurmountable problems. Among the extracurricular activities the beginning principal found firmly rooted in his school were girls' and boys' athletics, school clubs, and a school publication.

At the start of the school year, the beginning principal assumed that the teachers would aid in carrying on the athletic program as a part of their teaching duties. First, consider teacher A. It was true that she had been seriously ill, and therefore, was unable to participate in the athletic program at all.

Consider next, teacher B. She informed the beginning principal that she had broken her back while playing basketball some years before and that she was physically unable to participate in any kind of athletic program.

Teacher C simply would not or could not participate. No explanation was given.

The beginning principal found himself burdened with the program. He spent long hours before and after school hours trying to maintain a balanced extracurricular athletic program.

In respect to the school clubs, the beginning prin-
cipal met with less difficulty. Some were organized by the principal and children within the school, and others, such as the 4-H Club, were led by citizens of the community. Since the organization and continued operation of the clubs depended more or less upon the students themselves, and since they were under the guidance of the principal and parents, no special effort was required from the teaching staff.

On the other hand, the publishing of the school newspaper was extremely difficult. At the first staff meeting the beginning principal conferred with other members of the staff on the probability of continuing the school newspaper. He asked for suggestions and called for volunteers to help edit the paper. None volunteered to aid, but several said it would be nice if it could be kept alive and going. As a result the beginning principal edited the paper for several months, but because of the large volume of work connected with it and the lack of teacher help, it was discontinued.

What part should the teacher take with respect to these activities? Should the principal expect active participation in them? Was he directly responsible for the failure of the extracurricular program?

School Administration, says:

The success of any program of extracurricular activities depends largely upon the willing and intelligent co-operation in the program of the teachers of the school. Although school officials are always responsible for the general administration and supervision of the program, they cannot be expected to give the multifarious and diverse activities the close supervision that is needed; in consequence, the responsibility for this close supervision is being delegated more and more to the teachers of the school, and the work is being regarded as a regular and important part of the teacher's duties.\footnote{Ward G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 644.}

Goodier and Miller declare:

In the co-curricular activities the teacher holds the same key position that he does in the curricular subjects. . . . The teacher must appreciate the characteristics of the age level of the children whom he teaches, and the contribution which the co-curricular activities can make to the development of these particular characteristics. He must see where the curricular work can be used to stimulate activities and vice versa. Interested, enthusiastic, and understanding teachers can make a program of co-curricular activities successful. Otherwise it will be a failure.\footnote{Floyd T. Goodier and William A. Miller, Administration of Village Schools, (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company, 1938), pp. 234-235.}

Chamberlain's viewpoint is this:

Teaching is a professional work and, as such, does not lend itself to "clock punching" or other formal procedures. In any school or school system there is a certain amount of work to be done in order that the educational program may go forward. Some of this work is not represented in teaching assignments, and therefore, cannot be allotted to particular teachers. Nevertheless, it represents a responsibility of the administrative and teaching staffs that cannot be evaded. As in other professions, the important consideration is the goal to be reached rather than the
number of hours to be served. Teachers are within their rights in insisting on reasonable assignments of work and on equitable distribution of teaching loads. On the other hand, they must be willing and ready at all times to lend assistance in the tasks essential to the welfare of the school.  

Oerton says:

Largely because of the recent development of extracurricular activities in practically all schools, a premium has been placed upon the teacher who can "double". Progressive principals are now keenly aware of the need for new adjustments in the mechanics of teaching, to meet demands of the new education which has changed the school as a place where boys and girls prepare for life by imbibing more or less perfunctorily from accumulated knowledge of the past, to a place where children actually live and move and breathe in a social life filled with possibilities for learning by doing and accomplishing through meaningful individual and group exercises. In modern school systems it is quite evident that teachers who are able to teach academic subjects only and who have no interest in, nor ability to direct or supervise, some extracurricular activity, are, notwithstanding the possibility that they may be excellent teachers of academic subjects, surely and swiftly losing opportunities to acquire and hold positions of trust and responsibility.

Quoting Chamberlain once more:

It is not enough, however, that the teacher merely know how to perform or direct some extra activity. If the allied activity program is to make the contributions to the educational process of which it seems potentially capable, every member of the teaching staff must grasp its significance in terms of gen-

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eral educational objectives, must recognize its close relationship to the curricular program, and must familiarize himself with the purpose of the entire activity program and the problems associated with its administration and supervision. Unity of purpose and co-curricular program, and the teacher whose conception of the work involves only a single independent activity and its immediate ends will hardly make the kind of contribution needed today.\textsuperscript{9}

Again Goodier and Miller say that the school newspaper holds excellent possibilities as an activity in town and village schools at the elementary level. In addition to its value as an extracurricular offering, it can be made a valuable appendage to the English work in the classroom. It provides a means of expression for pupils, helps to distribute school news, creates school solidarity, and may be a means of developing hidden literary ability. Even in the first grade this activity may be carried on in some form. Pupils can contribute information about themselves, their friends, and classmates.\textsuperscript{10}

Forcibly Bolton, Cole, and Jessup say:

All teachers should consider it a privilege to be on the alert for desirable news items for the school paper and the "school notes" in the local newspaper. In addition committees of teachers should function in preparing copy for these papers.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{9}Chamberlain, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 448.

\textsuperscript{10}Goodier and Miller, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 241.

The problem related to the teacher and extracurricular activity remained, in the main, unsolved. The beginning principal did expect that the teachers should play an important part in the program without urging on his part, but he was unable to accomplish those ends. Authorities are agreed that the teacher should do this and should do that, but if democratic administration is to be the approved system in education, the big question, "How", remains unanswered.

THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

In the community in which the beginning principal worked the Parent-Teacher Association had been active for three years. It boasted a membership of seventy-two mothers and fathers. Interest in the school and its welfare was keen.

During the first teachers' conference, the beginning principal remarked that he thought it would be well if all teachers attended the meetings held the third Thursday of each school month. The first meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association was well attended by both parents and teachers.

As the time for the second meeting drew near, teacher A requested that she be excused from attendance because of conditions at home. Teacher B asked to be excused since she
was unable to get transportation. Another teacher said that she could not attend because she was keeping boarders in her home and found it impossible to accomplish her household duties in time to get to the meeting.

The beginning principal was very sympathetic toward the teachers. He excused them from attendance and for the rest of the year found himself alone at the meetings or occasion­ally with one other teacher present.

The beginning principal learned that some of the parents were not at all pleased with the lack of attendance on the part of the teacher. Interest in the Parent-Teacher Association gradually subsided. At the end of the school year only a smattering of parents bothered to attend the meetings at all.

How important is the Parent-Teacher Association to the community? Should the teacher be professionally minded enough to participate without compulsory attendance requirements on the part of the beginning principal?

Farley says, "The Parent-Teacher Association is one of the most important means of securing all kinds of cooperation from patrons and public."12

Bolton, Cole, and Jessup say:

Very frequently, teachers, especially the beginning teachers fresh from college, look askance at the organization and do not co-operate. The superintendent should forestall that situation. He should lead the teachers to realize that the support of the schools by the taxpayers depends very largely upon this organization.13

Goodier and Miller declare:

Teachers should be active members of the association, willing at all times to participate in programs and to furnish numbers for the programs from pupils in their rooms.14

Say Riebe and others,

Every teacher should be an active, loyal, enthusiastic worker in her school's parent-teacher association. She should welcome the opportunity to participate in the meetings of this organization by giving talks; by preparing children to appear on the program, by assisting in serving refreshments, etc.15

The Parent-Teacher Association should be a strong influence in every community in the development of better relations between the home and the school. Gould and Yoakam stress the importance of the association. They say:

It has not realized its potentialities in many communities because of the reluctance of teachers and educators to participate in the formation of its policies and the direction of its activities into the most useful channels. It is expected that if a group of parents interested in co-operating

14Goodier and Miller, op. cit., p. 293.
with the school is ignored by the teachers and school officials, a feeling of distrust and perhaps suspicion will develop. The Parent-Teacher Association should be a vital instrument for establishing direct contacts between parents and teachers, thereby putting the teacher in a more favorable position to guide the behavior of the children and at the same time to contribute to the development of a co-operative attitude on the part of the parents. It can only achieve the purposes for which it was created by the teachers and the parents working together on the solution of those problems which neither can solve singly.16

In agreement with the authorities already noted, Jacobson and Reavis assert:

No principal can overlook the social aspects of a parent-teacher organization. For many parents it serves as a needed social contact. For all parents it offers an opportunity to become acquainted with the present or prospective teachers of the child. From such an understanding, the organization can go on to an interpretation of what is being done, answering questions which are of concern to parents and interpreting the entire school system.17

Here again the authorities agree that the teacher should actively support the parent-teacher association. From the literature studied the author assumes that compulsory action on the part of the principal should not be necessary. Professional responsibility of the teacher should be such that it will lead her to make the desirable


contacts which might assure, in part, the success of a parent-teacher organization.

Perhaps, however, this beginning principal could have at the very beginning made clear to his teachers in a diplomatic manner, that he felt that attendance at the parent-teacher meeting was essential to the welfare of the school. Whether the teachers would have attended is a matter for conjecture.
CHAPTER IV

ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS AFFAIRS

In this chapter the matter of the principal's problems in the administration of school business affairs will be considered. Only those phases of school business administration in which problems arose will be included. These include: school budgetary procedures, the state school film library, school records, and the ordering of school supplies.

SCHOOL BUDGETARY PROCEDURES

Two years prior to the attainment of his Bachelor of Arts Degree, the writer had determined that at some future time he would be an administrator of the public schools. Although he knew or was reasonably sure of his intended purpose, he failed to plan his college curriculum to his best advantage. Many of the courses, which he entered, were picked at random to fill in the so-called gaps. Somehow he managed to slip by two years of undergraduate study and one full year of graduate study without having taken a single college course in school finance or school accounting.

A copy of the school budget may be found in several places, such as, the office of the county superintendent.
of schools or the office of the school principal. Although
the beginning principal had access to these copies of the
school budget, he did not take time during the year to study
it to any extent. He looked over the items on the budget
but did not pay much attention to them.

In June 1949, the clerk of the board called a meeting
of the board of trustees to make up the budget for the next
year. Each item on the budget was discussed by the members
of the board. The beginning principal took very little part
in the discussion. When the estimated budget was completed,
he discovered that except for salary increases for the
teachers, it was a replica of the previous year in every
detail.

What kind of planning should have been undertaken by
the principal before the estimated budget was considered by
the board? Is an evaluation of the budget essential from
year to year? Was the beginning principal at fault in not
preparing the budget?

In a review of budgetary procedures Hunkins states
that determining the amount of money required for each class
of expenditures is not a complicated matter for a small
school. In a small school the principal may carry some of
the figures in his head, but he will not, of course, trust
his memory for all of the data. He will be forced to consult
the records for most of them. The point is that for smaller schools the information required in making the budget is simple and highly centralized. This simplicity, however, must not lead the principal into carelessness; each item must be soundly determined and its defense made available.¹

Bolton, Cole, and Jessup claim that a principal coming for the first time into a new position must prepare his budget data very carefully. While the budget must be officially made and approved by the school board, the principal is responsible for preparing it for their consideration. He should begin its preparation months ahead of the time when it is presented to the board.²

Ex-Superintendent F. E. Spaulding of Cleveland, in discussing why a school budget should be well planned and analyzed, has the following to say:

The school budget is the most influential factor in educational procedure. It determines organization, methods, and results; the size of classes; means and materials of education; and educational values; in fact, no phase of education escapes the influence of the budget—whether a budget is made or not.³


Morrison, in his book *The Management of the School Money*, says:

The process of budget-making begins with the several units of the school system. It begins a long time before the budget document goes to the board of education, and if it is at all scientific, it grows out of a severe analysis of the functional distribution of the several cost sheets and out of an analysis which is intimately concerned with the defensible instructional purpose of each unit of the school system, whether the unit be a school or an accessory enterprise. . . . Sound financing itself implies a competent understanding of the underlying economics of public instruction plus a competent apprehension of the principles of instruction itself. A budget which is allotment of money and nothing else is no budget at all.⁴

Reeder's analysis of the importance of the budget is clear-cut. He says:

The school budget is a financial plan for a specified period of time. It states in dollars and cents the philosophy and the policies of the school system. The way in which it is made affects the school system in all its phases. It determines the amount and the quality of personnel and of material, and it likewise determines the phases of the school program which are to be emphasized and also those which are not to be emphasized. . . . Making the school budget is one of the most difficult as well as one of the most important tasks which the board of education and the superintendent of schools have to perform.⁵

Reeder asserts:

The budget should be inclusive and analyzed in

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much detail. . . . Every item for which an expenditure is contemplated, even though the item amounts to only a few dollars, should be listed at some time in preparing the budget. . . . Only by securing detailed information can the budget be accurately prepared; and only by means of such information can it be defended before the adopting authority.

Further he says:

Since the budget is a financial plan for the ensuing school year, it should be prepared as close as possible to the beginning of the fiscal year which it is to serve. If it is made too long before the beginning of the fiscal year, the task of estimating school needs will, of course, be more difficult. On the other hand, if it is not made several weeks before the fiscal year begins, there will not be sufficient time for conducting the necessary conferences and hearings and for making needed revisions . . . . The authorities are agreed that the budget should be prepared and adopted from sixty to ninety days before the beginning of the fiscal year to which it applies.7

Obviously the beginning principal did not follow the budgetary procedures set forth by experts in school finance. In acknowledgement of what authorities say, he should have made a detailed study of the needs of his school during the winter months so that he would have been better prepared to estimate budget requirements at the first budget meeting in the spring.

6Ibid., pp. 382-383.
7Ibid., pp. 385-386.
THE STATE SCHOOL FILM LIBRARY

To the beginning principal the functions of the State School Film Library did not seem important. When he took over his duties in his new position, he paid little attention to the film library. In his opinion there was ample time to establish contact with the agency.

The beginning principal had known four months before the start of the school year that his school was equipped with an excellent projector unit. Conditions for showing film within the school were ideal.

In September he requested that the teachers turn in a list of the films they wished to use during the year. He did not hurry the teachers, nor did he hurry himself. Late in October he mailed the selected film list to the state agency.

The consequences of the beginning principal's inattention were as follows: (1) other schools had reserved the most recent films; (2) the State School Film Library was unable to book films at the times the teachers wished to use them; (3) the films chosen by the beginning principal's school were not on the educational level of the children; (4) rental was paid on films which were not received.

The direct results of the principal's action were
apparent. But what characteristics of a good visual education program were given little or no consideration?

Amo De Bernardis, supervisor, Department of Visual Education in Portland, Oregon, says:

In any school the leadership which the principal exerts in organizing and guiding his school will be felt in all phases of the teaching and learning process. He is the key person in any major development which takes place in the school. The audiovisual program is no exception. His attitude and effort toward audio-visual materials will determine how well these tools are used in the classroom of the school.8

Further, Bernadis states that audio-visual aids are some of the important tools which are required in order to do any effective job of education. Just as the doctor, the electrician, or the plumber requires a variety of tools to do his work, so does the school. No longer can the textbook be looked upon as the exclusive tool of education. How effectively the tools are used in the instructional program will in a large measure determine the real result of the educational program of the school.9

In the book, Motion Pictures in Education by Dale, Dunn, Hoban, and Schneider, Brunstetter is quoted as follows:

Creative administration demands vision before supervision in outlining the direction of the educational program. . . . Effective utilization of


9Loc. cit.
audio-visual materials of instruction must be planned in terms of local objectives, curriculum needs, available services, and plant facilities. Preliminary investigation is needed of the courses of study for which superior films are available; courses of study which need more effective materials of instruction; courses of study for which teachers need more command of subject matter; desirable courses which might be initiated if suitable materials of instruction can be secured; special projects and activities, such as extracurricular work, teacher training, adult education, and the like, to which audio-visual aids might contribute.\textsuperscript{10}

In order to have had a suitable visual aid program in his school, the beginning principal should have arranged for a teachers' meeting where he and the teachers, in group conference, could have selected desired films for each room. This probably should have been done early in May. Requiring a list of films from each teacher is not workable since a certain amount of repetition in choice of film occurs, resulting in a great deal of sifting and loss of time for the principal.

No investigation of courses of study of local objectives was made nor even remotely considered. Some degree of association with things being taught came into the picture, but in the light of the suggestions made by Bernardis and Brunstetter, one could say that films were just ordered and

that was all.

SCHOOL RECORDS

It may startle the reader, somewhat, to learn that at the opening of the school, the beginning principal knew less about school records than his teachers. Only twice during his college career did he come in contact with a school record of any kind. On both occasions the record displayed was the pupil's report card.

Actually, if a teacher had asked the beginning principal a question about her attendance register on that first day of school, he would have been unable to answer her. He knew that such records existed, but he did not know what they contained.

In addition to his lack of knowledge of school records, the beginning principal failed to maintain adequate records in his school, that is, few were kept and those were not properly filed.

Hunkins points out that for the most part indications are that our smaller schools do not keep sufficient records. The less urgent need of records for immediate administrative use seems to lead to a general neglect that results in the omission of records that are really necessary to the school as a continuing institution. The outcome is a school starts
and stops with each change in administrations. A system of records is needed to bridge the gaps between administrations, if for no other reason. If a principal in charge does not need much registered data for his own immediate use, he should at least leave something in the way of records for his successors.\(^\text{11}\)

Bolton, Cole, and Jessup indict strongly the principal who fails to keep adequate records. They say that there are certain types of records made and the manner in which they are kept and preserved is a good index to the efficient executive. Slovenly and inadequate records indicate an administrator is thinking loosely and planlessly. Whenever a new executive assumes charge of a school system the first thing he needs is a complete and accurate knowledge of the school system.\(^\text{12}\)

Grinnell says:

Essential to the successful operation of a program of school interpretation are forms and records. They provide a check on what has been done and a basis for future effort. Moreover, they can play a very important part in the day-by-day service of interpretation.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{11}\) Hunkins, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 121-122.

\(^{12}\) Bolton, Cole, and Jessup, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 80-81.

The fact that the beginning principal did not come in contact with school records during his college career did not excuse his lack of knowledge of what they contained. A little initiative on his part probably would have overcome his deficiency. He knew that the city in which the university was located was full of records. All he had to do was look for them. Schoolmen he had known in this vicinity had been more than co-operative, and one administrator even offered to show him the way records were kept in his school.

In respect to his own school the beginning principal should have maintained records in the manner prescribed by authorities.

THE ORDERING OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES

To the beginning principal the ordering of school supplies seemed to be an unimportant matter. It was his presumption that school supplies could be ordered after the school term began. Too, being new to the administrative field, he was not sure that he knew what items should be included in an order of this kind.

Bolton, Cole, and Jessup say:

As far as possible it is important to order supplies in quantity and in advance. It is uneconomical to order in dribbles and only when needed. The need for office supplies, crayons, erasers, ink, replacement fixtures, athletic equipment, etc., can
be usually determined during the long vacation, be ordered, and on hand at the opening of school in the fall.  

Says Moehlman:

The efficiency of the teaching process depends largely upon the question of adequate educational supplies and reading material. The vital importance of the quality and quantity of instructional supplies is not understood by the layman and only occasionally appreciated by the educator. It represents a much-neglected and even abused phase or organizational practice.

According to Cooke, Hamon, and Proctor:

The instructional and janitorial supplies and equipment which will be needed during the school year should be determined long before they are actually required for use.

Further they say:

The procedure in determining the needed equipment and supplies will vary according to the size of school system and staff organization. In the very small school system, the superintendent of schools will determine the supply budget by consulting his teachers, clerks, and janitors as to the supplies they will need, by checking his store-rooms to see what he has on hand, and by considering purchases and expenditures for previous years. He will consider also probable changes in enrollment, curriculum, and methods, and the effect these changes will have on the nature and quantity of equipment and supplies needed.

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14 Bolton, Cole, and Jessup, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
17 Ibid., pp. 139-140.
Even though he had not begun work nor had not been associated with the school he was to supervise, the beginning principal should have realized that schools cannot operate efficiently unless sufficient supplies are on hand the first day of school. He should have surveyed his school to determine its needs immediately after signing his contract, for from that moment on he, in his opinion, was the official in charge of the school.¹³

¹³See Appendix for list of supplies.
CHAPTER V

ADMINISTRATION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL

This chapter will be concerned with several phases of pupil administration which were a source of difficulty to the beginning principal. One of the problems which gave him trouble was the entry age for school children; another had to do with disciplinary action on the part of the principal and the teachers; another, the pupil and pros and cons of student government; and finally, full democratic procedures against a measure of autocracy within the classrooms, on the playground, as well as in the administrative relationship with teachers.

ENTRY AGE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

In the school in which the beginning principal worked, a kindergarten had been established for pre-school children. It had been the custom in the community to admit children to the kindergarten at ages of three and four years. Those children who had completed a year of kindergarten work were admitted to the first grade the following year regardless of age. This condition, it was believed by the beginning principal, would lead to a number of retardation cases.
The beginning principal arbitrarily set the entry age for school children in the community according to criteria set up by schools in adjacent areas. The regulation stated that no child who had not reached his sixth birthday by October thirtieth following the opening of the school year would be admitted.

The parents who could not enter their children in the first grade were angry, maintaining that it was foolish to force a child to remain in kindergarten two or three years.

Two quotations from the Montana School Laws seem pertinent to this problem. Section 1057 of chapter ninety-eight states:

The school board of any school district in the state shall have power to establish and maintain free kindergartens in connection with the public schools of said district, for the instruction of children between three and six years residing in said district, and shall establish such course of training, study, and discipline, and such rules and regulations governing such preparatory or kindergarten schools, as said board may deem best; provided, that nothing in this act shall be construed to change the law relating to the taking of the census of the school population or the apportionment of state and county school funds among the several counties and districts in the state; provided, further, that the cost of establishing and maintaining such kindergartens shall be paid from the school funds of said district, and the said kindergartens shall be a part of the public school system and governed, as far as practicable, in the manner and by the same officers as is now or hereafter may be provided by law for the government of the other public schools of the state;
provided, further, that the teachers of kindergarten schools shall pass such examination on kindergarten work as the kindergarten department of the state normal school may direct; provided, that a certificate from a kindergarten teacher's institute of recognized standing shall be recognized by the state normal school.¹

Section 1056 of the same chapter states:

Every public school not otherwise provided for by law shall be open to the admission of all children between the age of six and twenty-one years residing in the school district, and the board of trustees shall have the power to admit children not residing in the district as hereinbefore provided; provided, however, that trustees may establish continuation schools, part-time and night schools for persons over twenty-one years of age; provided, that none of the funds apportioned under section 945 shall be expended for such purposes.²

Since parents learn in one way or another, the contents of laws regarding the school, it would seem that this problem was the result of a misunderstanding of the differences in the kindergarten and the grade school, the first being a means of initial social adjustment and the second, a combination of social adjustment and learning. Attendance in the kindergarten does not imply that the child is ready for the first grade regardless of age. Some kind of an adult education plan might have solved the problem.

¹Montana School Law, (Helena: State Department of Public Instruction, 1949), Chapter 98, Section 1057, p. 83.
²Ibid., Section 1056, p. 82.
DISCIPLINARY ACTION BY PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER

It can be said, generally, that in almost every school, problems in the discipline of the pupil will arise. The beginning principal's school was no exception. The problems arose not so much from the pupils themselves, but from the administration of corporal punishment on the part of the teachers. Several times during his first year, the beginning principal felt the wrath of an enraged parent whose child had been disciplined by his teacher.

Whose prerogative is the administration of corporal punishment? Is it possible for a beginning principal to prevent physical contact between the teacher and the pupil?

Chapter one hundred-on, Section 1081, of the Montana school law says:

Whenever it shall be deemed necessary to inflict corporal punishment on any student in the public schools, such punishment shall be inflicted without anger and only in the presence of teacher and principal if there be one, and then only after notice to the parent or guardian; except that in cases of open and flagrant defiance of the teacher or the authority of the school, corporal punishment may be inflicted by the teacher or principal without notice. 3

Goodier and Miller make this statement:

The superintendent is the ultimate authority in

_3 Ibid., Section 1081, p. 88._

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disciplinary matters. Each teacher should understand from the first that he will be expected to manage as much of his own discipline as possible. This is vital in the development of an efficient teacher.4

Perry expressly states the position of the teacher in the following way:

The legal authority of the teacher is expressly defined in various documents, with which every teacher should be familiar. She finds the terms of her authority written in the constitution of her State, in the regulations of the state department of education, and in the directions issued by her school board and by the local superintendents. Every teacher should be thoroughly familiar with these terms so that she may exercise her authority over her pupils in accordance with them.5

Even though, the teacher, in the presence of the principal, has been vested with a degree of authority over the pupil, there seems to be some doubt as to the social value of his means of control. Falk has this to say about our present dynamic society:

It is apparent that from the authoritarian point of view society, at least in its ideal sense, is static. Any efforts to establish society on a basis different from the one it rests on at the moment is antisocial. To agree that society can be differently ordered means to encourage social experimentation on the parts of those whose sharing in the authoritarian control of society is not sanctioned by the dominant social attitudes.

That the authoritarian principle in society and its ideological justifications carry with it implications of corporal punishment in the school has

been pointed out. The fact that the authoritarian principle of social control is generally associated with the conception of social fixity, strengthens that implication. Obviously, corporal punishment cannot be suggested as a stimulus to reflective thinking, investigating, and experimenting. All that its upholders expect from it—and even the validity of such expectation is questionable—is the fixing of specific knowledges and reaction mechanisms. The use of corporal punishment as well as indoctrination can be justified only on the assumption that certain ideas, ideals, values, and attitude and reaction patterns can be expected to be of such importance in the adult life of the individual that they must be at all costs fixed in the organism of the learner. In a static society, such argument obviously may enjoy considerable force, but where society changes rapidly it cannot be validated. However, where society changes not at all or with a slow tempo, the teacher can conceivably draw up a list of situations with which the child, when he himself becomes an adult, will, in all likelihood, be confronted. Conceivably too, the teacher can draw up a list of reactions, values, ideals, attitudes, and knowledges that will function desirably in the meeting of the demands of these situations. Of course, even in such a static society, ample room is left for doubt as to the ethical value of corporal punishment and its efficacy as an instrument for inducing learning. Based solely upon a superficial view of the elements of a static society, a case can be made out for corporal punishment.6

The author of this study agrees with authorities that corporal punishment is not desirable in the school. Although he informed the teachers on his staff that he did not believe that corporal punishment should be administered at any time,

such punishment prevailed. So far the problem of what to do about infliction of corporal punishment by the teacher remains unsolved.

THE PUPIL AND STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The predecessor of the beginning principal had established a council for student government within the school. Several months after the beginning principal took over his duties, he abolished all forms of student government which had been created. His decision was based on an investigation made by him which revealed that: (1) the children held trial courts over which no teacher presided; (2) the pupil judge and jury were selected on the basis of popularity; (3) punishments meted out to pupils found guilty of an offense included: (a) loss of the lunch hour period, (b) writing out definitions of all the words under various alphabetical sections of the dictionary, (c) writing phrases and sentences on the board one thousand times, (d) administering of corporal punishment by a classmate—the size of the paddle used varying with the seriousness of the offense, (e) requiring children to do menial tasks, such as, scrubbing the hall floor, washing the blackboards in all the rooms, or washing all the windows.

The abolishishment of the student-council by the prin-
principal stirred up some degree of resentment toward the administration of the school.

Was the beginning principal in this matter wisely administering his school? Was the continuation of this kind of student government justified under the prevailing condition?

Vineyard and Poole indicate that disciplinary power should be retained by the principal and the teachers. Many student government experiments have failed simply through the punishment of pupils by pupils.  

McKown reiterates the concept of Vineyard and Poole. He says, "Whether or not the council should be allowed to handle cases of discipline is a matter on which there is considerable disagreement."^8

He states further:

However, there should be no general disagreement on the question of whether or not the council itself should handle cases of discipline. It can, and probably does in some schools, but the weakness of this arrangement is the probability that the council will become so sidetracked on this activity that it will neglect more constructive projects. If the council becomes a disciplinary body there is danger that it will be too busy to do anything else; if so, it will lose standing in the school... It is entirely possible that, because of some of its activities,

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the council may easily become considered by the school largely as a disciplinary body. For instance, the main job of some councils appears to be the organization and supervision of the corridor monitor system, and in such cases the students of the school can hardly escape the impression that the council's most important job is disciplinary in nature. In short, the school's mental picture of the council is, for all practical purposes, a real representation of this organization.9

This beginning principal believed that abolishment of the student council was justified. The solution to his problem was the re-establishment of the student council the following year on a constructive basis.

DEMOCRACY VS AUTOCRACY IN THE SCHOOL

A major problem which confronted the beginning principal during his first year's work was the apparent lack of democracy in some of the classrooms. In his mind questions were raised. First, was the beginning principal practicing democracy in his administration; second, does the teacher need to be autocratic in her control of the classroom in order to achieve the goals of democratic education; and, third, how does the principal handle the authoritarian classroom teacher?

The author discovered that he had in his school several teachers who believed in cracking the whip over the

9 *loc. cit.*
pupil's head. All too often children came to the principal's office in tears.

The rooms over which these teachers had charge were a continual source of disciplinary problems. Turmoil, apprehension, and discontent seemed to thrive.

Consultation of authorities indicate that some of the principal's questions could be answered, but answers for others were not forthcoming.

Koopman, Miel, and Misner have set up self-evaluation principles for the truly democratic administrator. These are:

(1) Does one hear "we" and "our" from students, teachers, school patrons, and administrators? Is a deep sense of possession expressed by all persons associated with a given school? The pronouns used in a school have significance.

(2) Do students and teachers have utmost confidence that certain decisions are theirs to make? No school is democratically administered if the thinking of the group is "junked" on the whim of a "superior" or if decisions are reversed when they do not please the "boss".

(3) Is there a friendly atmosphere about the school? Do teachers, students, and administrators enjoy working together? The human relationships in a school are a most important means of judging what kind of living is going on there.

(4) Are teachers and students informed regarding the total institution as people are who constantly engage in planning for that institution.

(5) Does the school have to its credit a vast-number of accomplishments which indicate the
active participation of many persons.\textsuperscript{10}

Schneideman says:

The teacher's greatest assignment is to establish the democratic pattern in her classroom. We know now that democracy cannot be taught merely out of books; it has also to be lived every day, everywhere. It is an emotion which is apparent in facial expression, tone of voice, and subconscious behavior. . . . Since future education in America will be dominated by the democratic ideal, each teacher must seek ways of impressing its practice upon the minds of her children. Its spirit must be felt in every act, every idea expressed, and every method of work and play employed in the classroom. Individual differences of opinion should be thrashed out openly so that pupils will be encouraged to analyze intolerance and narrow thinking.\textsuperscript{11}

According to Koopman, Miel, and Misner, "The truly democratic educational institution should set up a social program of education. This program should be planned and administered in a democratic manner."\textsuperscript{12}

As an aid to both teacher and administrator, in the formulation of a democratic institution, the following steps are enumerated as the experience of a superintendent who brought about democratic procedures in the school. These are the things he did:

(1) He went through the process of making up his mind that democratic administration was the best way. (2) He overcame fear early in the process. (3) He did much actual studying and planning on ways of turning functions to teachers. (4) He created a


\textsuperscript{12}Koopman and others, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 31.
desire on the part of staff members by (a) talking about the theory of democratic living and (b) by describing actual examples of democratic administration that had worked. (5) He talked to teachers individually about next year’s procedures at the time contracts were signed. (6) He gave out some reading materials to teachers. (7) He suggested that teachers collect materials in summer school and found that workshops had created a favorable psychology toward democratic administration. (8) He suggested a few experiments that might be tried out. (9) He brought in outside people to discuss issues involved. (10) He tried by various means to create an individual desire for growth on the part of teachers and students. (11) He delegated the study of the matter to a group of teachers who then recommended certain democratic practices to be followed.13

The beginning principal did practice democracy in his administration, but there was limited response to the practice. Even though authorities set up criteria for inspirational purposes, it is evident to the writer that democratic procedures are probably inculcated in the attitudes of the teacher only after a long period of associations. In the small school where personnel turnover is fairly rapid, it would seem that democratic attitudes would have to be developed in the individual before he goes out to teach.

13Ibid., pp. 31-32.
CHAPTER VI

ADMINISTRATION OF THE CUSTODIAN

This chapter deals with the school custodian. In the main, the chapter tells of the differences in the philosophy of the beginning principal and that of the custodian. Here the reader is introduced to the greatest single problem with which the beginning principal had to cope.

First of all the background of the custodian will be discussed; second, his philosophy of plant utilization. These things are pertinent to the chapter because without them, the problem did not exist.

The custodian who was employed to maintain the school plant in which the beginning principal worked was a man born and raised in the community. Due to shortages in the primary teaching field, the custodian's wife was hired to fill a vacancy which existed there. In addition, the board of trustees employed the sister of the custodian to act as clerk of the board. Besides having two members of his family active in the elementary school, he was appointed to act as a member of the county high school board of trustees.

The year before the entry of the beginning principal in this community, the unprecedented power of this custodian was felt throughout the public school. Differences of
opinion between the then employed principal and custodian brought about the release of the entire teaching staff and the principal as well.

This particular custodian believed that it was within his realm to assume administrative powers. He had no fear of being discharged by a principal.

Since his sister was clerk of the board of trustees and dispenser of warrants, he ordered janitorial supplies and equipment without the knowledge of the beginning principal.

His philosophy of plant utilization included the following: (1) the school plant was not to be used by the public; (2) public elections should be held in public buildings other than the public school; (3) the parent-teacher association should be required to hold its meetings outside the school; (4) plays, Christmas programs, and graduation exercises were not worthwhile since these things brought on extra work for the custodian; (5) Boy Scout organization, Four H Clubs, and Youth Fellowship Clubs should not be allowed to use the school plant for meeting purposes; (6) the school gymnasium should be restricted to local pupil use (a neighboring school had asked permission to use the gymnasium because none existed in the district); (7) extracurricular activities should be stopped.
In opposition, the beginning principal believed that: (1) the school plant should be open to the public at all times; (2) elections should be held in the public school if no public place is available; (3) the parent-teacher association should hold its meeting in the school; (4) plays, Christmas programs, and graduation exercises are essential to a well-balanced educational plan; (5) all children’s organizations should be allowed to use the school plant when they so desire; (6) gymnasium facilities should be extended to those pupils who lack such facilities to bring about and aid in the development of physical growth; (7) extracurricular activities aid in the social development of the child as well as the physical and need to be an essential part of the curriculum.

Lane says:

There are several common or garden varieties of custodians, and the principal needs to learn to recognize them on sight, since custodians come and go. The most exasperating type is the shiftless, ineffective person who is working merely for his pay check and who cuts corners whenever he feels sure that no one is looking. The most difficult type is the custodian who is exceedingly competent as far as the mechanics of his job are concerned, but who is crabby, scrappy, and irritable and keeps the faculty in a turmoil. The most dangerous type is the custodian who assumes the role of principal and attempts to dictate the policies of the school.¹

Lane says that the custodian and the principal should come to a clear understanding of the duties of the custodian. His work schedule should be arranged and maintained. At the very beginning it should be made clear to the custodian that he is in no way responsible for the educational philosophy of the school.\(^2\)

Kyte explains the basic principles of organization and operation regarding the custodian in this manner. He says:

(1) The principal delegates to the custodian the duties and responsibilities essential to the successful performance of his work. (2) The principal directs and supervises the custodian's work. (3) The custodian is directly responsible to the principal only.\(^3\)

Reavis, Pierce and Stullken declare:

The progressive, alert principal will not think of his school plant merely in terms of the conventional day-school utilization. He will consider it also with respect to the needs of his community. This may involve the use of the plant as a social center; as a polling place during elections; and as a meeting place for civic societies, welfare associations, and the parent-teacher association. To make the school building of greatest service in the social and civic activities of the school community, the principal should not only evaluate its space and facilities for such service, but he should also make himself familiar with the condi-

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\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 17-18.
tions under which the board of education grants permission for the use of the building by community organizations.\textsuperscript{4}

On the other hand, the custodian with whom the principal worked, contributed much to the welfare of the school. He knew how to handle children. In the school plant, on the playground or wherever assistance was needed, he was ready to lend a helping hand.

His care of the school plant itself was beyond reproach. During the summer months he refinished the school plant. Floors were sanded and sealed; walls were cleaned and repainted; broken desks were removed, repaired, and replaced; broken window lights were replaced; all of the essential elements of maintenance of the school plant were followed without deviation.

Lane has said that the custodian who tries to take over administrative duties is a dangerous man. No debate is contemplated on that score. He is right!

The plan the beginning principal adopted was the middle of the road sort of thing, a policy of "give ground and take some." The welfare of the children of the school must be considered first and last. If that welfare depends upon

some concessions being made on the part of the principal for the general benefit of all the children, then, in the opinion of the writer, the concession should be made.

This beginning principal must admit that he did not act as sole administrator of his school.
A SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In summing up this study it should be noted that an examination of the available literature shows that little has been written about the administration of small schools. The limited amount of source material indicates a need for extensive research and writing along these lines.

The opinions of authorities in chapter two make clear the tremendous importance of good public relations between the school and the community. All phases of community life must be considered, and the administrator must adapt himself to the environment about him.

The phases of this study which were incorporated in the basic problems of the administration of the teaching staff were by-and-large unsolved. It seems that the solutions presented by authorities are largely hypothetical by nature, and a great deal of research and study should be made in this area.

Authorities' solutions to problems in the administration of school business affairs take on more of the aspects of a concrete situation. The majority of problems have been treated, and it falls on the administrator to carefully follow the suggestions made by authorities in the field. In
this way he can reasonably well be assured of a successful business administration.

Many of the phases of pupil administration discussed in this study are controversial. Authorities agree on what should be done; some have set up guiding principles, but the achievement of desired responses, on the whole, has not been accomplished.

Much has been said about the school custodian. In the administration of the school plant his services are vital. If the principal and custodian can co-operate in a constructive manner for the benefit and continued success of the school as a whole, it would seem that it is the responsibility of the principal, first to determine the type of custodian that he has and then, to act accordingly.

When the basic problems of this study are lumped together into one enormous sum called administration, it would seem that unusual persistence is required on the behalf of the administrator if a normal rate of progress and growth is to be maintained in the public schools he is responsible for. The administrator must live for the school and in the school. His job is a whole time job. Any reluctance to perform the duties with which he is charged, would seem not to be in the best interest of his school.
RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

From observations made during the progress of this study, it would seem that source material for study in administration is limited. Extensive acquisition of source material in the Montana State University Library would be desirable.

It would seem, as an adjunct to this study, that the staff at Montana State University is inadequate. It was difficult to see instructors about important matters. Such a situation results in discouragement on the part of the student. It is recommended that some improvements be made along these lines.

Paramount in the observations made during the course of this study is the unfortunate practice whereby secondary certificates issued to graduates of the university permit them to administrate the elementary schools. The balance of the college curriculum is weighted heavily in the direction of the secondary. It seems to the writer that the elementary school is being neglected. It is believed that the prospective administrator should be fully prepared to officiate at either level.

It would seem that screening activity should be intensified. If, in the light of the problems studied, a
prospective candidate can not measure up to the needed qualities which include, conscientious performance of duties, pertinacity, initiative, and scholarly advancement, then perhaps, he should be excluded from the profession, and preferably before, or soon after, he enters training for it.

In view of the inadequacy of the training of the writer, perhaps the provision of a broader curriculum offering at both secondary and elementary levels of education would result in a longer period of training for the administrator. Five years might not be considered as too extensive.

If the writer had had practical experience in administrative procedures before going into the field he might have had fewer problems. If a cadet administrators' training program could be initiated at Montana State University to provide the prospective administrator with real live problems, he would, no doubt, be better prepared to meet actual situations when left to his own decisions.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDIX

LIST OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES

This is a list of necessary instructional supplies for a one hundred pupil school that should be on hand for the opening day of school. (Four teacher school)

4 soft balls
4 bats
2 outdoor balls
2 utility balls
1 football
8 boxes of blackboard chalk
4 boxes of colored chalk
4 class plan books
4 class record books
1 carton paper clips
1 carton paper fasteners
1 carton thumb tacks
1 carton rubber bands
80 erasers (blackboard)
50 penholders
50 ink wells
4 quarts of ink
24 sheets mounting board (large)
1 box carbon paper
20 pkg. white construction paper
10 pkg. red
10 pkg. dark red
10 pkg. yellow
10 pkg. green
10 pkg. light blue
10 pkg. blue
10 pkg. orange
10 pkg. brown
10 pkg. grey
10 pkg. black
2 reams penmanship paper
2 reams ditto paper
1 ream manila drawing paper
1 box pen points
4 boxes pastello crayons
50 pair of scissors
10 pounds of clay
4 boxes of scotch tape

Also have on hand an adequate supply of all textbooks and associated materials pertinent to the school.