AN OPEN INVITATION

The past several years seem to have validated the notion that current issues and problems emanate from the eastern states. Many of us believed that these problems would never surface in the Northwest States. Yet, the education scene in the State of Washington continues to change. School employee strikes, "unionism", student unrest, and levy failures are examples that there really is Great Westward Movement.

Can we forestall the problems that seem to arise in the East and creep toward us rather steadily? These and other divisive problems have an effect on our educational image. Will the public lose confidence in their schools? Will school finances both from the state and local level continue to deteriorate?

Stephen Bailey, in an eight-state study on school finance, determined that school support was directly related to the degree of unity which exists among the various "school forces". Could it be that once more that oft-quoted declaration, "United we stand, divided we fall", has or will become a reality? Could much of the financial woe be attributed to our own divisiveness?

Washington State ASCD is a neophyte organization. It creates no great waves. Yet many educators support the directions the organization has taken at the national, state and local levels. WSASCD could be described as a "healing" organization. Members tend to forget their own professional allegiances in favor of a focus on kids. Can this focus on kids serve as a catalyst to bring all of the divisive forces back together? Can we form such a common cause coalition that crosses all lines - superintendent, principals, supervisors, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents and students? Can this coalition help us regain our stature and composure? This is the challenge of mid-seventies, what shall we do about it? Can WSASCD provide the leadership to meet this challenge? If so, what shall we do about it? Send suggestions to me or any of the WSASCD Board Members.

Dick Usitalo, President
Washington State ASCD
1113 East Legion Way
Olympia, WA 98601
HELPING OUR GOALS WORK FOR US

That’s right, this article is about helping our goals work for us. I use that specific language because I’ve observed that sometimes they work against us when:

There are too many goals.
They have no priority.
There is no plan for implementation.
We overuse the phrase “After all, goals are not measurable.”

And obviously that’s not what we want. We know that goals are essential to provide basic direction for our efforts. We use such statements to avoid repetition in our work — “Having lost sight of our goal we doubled our efforts,” said one sage. We know that goals can help us to bring people together to mutual understandings so that our schools can move in a given framework.

I think, though, that there are some other perceptions which can also help us move more confidently in working with goals:

1. **VIEW GOALS AS STATEMENTS OF PERSONAL COMMITMENT.** If goals are to be helpful for others, goals must first be seen as helpful to us. Goal setting has its most significant impact when it is personalized: when we set goals for ourselves both individually and collectively and when we assess our movement toward the goals. The most helpful technique I’ve observed is where a principal works with the staff and encourages each member (including the principal himself) to set up two or three personal goals for the year. During the year the goals must be assessed periodically to determine the movement in that direction in terms of very specific indicators. Using a phrase from Madeline Hunter, it is a sort of task analysis so that we know not merely where it is we are going but also some suggestions in terms of how we will know that we are moving in that direction. But the principal sets the example in terms of the significance of the goals, how they are assessed, and why they are necessary. We live more by example than by exhortation. If you wish goals for me, first tell me what they have done for you.

2. **USE GOALS TO SHOW YOU CARE FOR OTHERS.** Usually we tend to listen when we perceive it will mean something to us. Do we wish to involve a staff in a goals development project? Why are we doing it? Why should the staff want to be involved? What difference will it make to them when it is accomplished? Who will it help? We must avoid substituting mere coercion in place of clarification if we wish to develop enthusiasm for goals and their outcomes.

3. **HELP OTHERS TO VISUALIZE LIFE WITH GOALS.** The Pacific Institute works extensively with schools and businesses on developing better self-image in persons. A key element is visualizing precisely what it is you wish to become and how you will behave after that goal has been reached. Visualization gives us the “taste” of the future. In goal-based curriculum planning, for instance, what difference will it make if we know where our programs are heading and if we know we are moving in the direction we’ve identified? Role play it, talk it up, get the feel of it.

A good part of the resistance to goal stating is that people are either unaware that goals will make a difference or they are indeed aware that goals might make a difference but they do not perceive what that difference will be. And if they do perceive what the difference will be, even then they may sense that they will not like it. In that case their concern is clearly justifiable.
If we begin to view goals as statements of personal commitment, if we sense that they offer us an opportunity to work together and help one another, and if we can all gain a sense of visualizing of what life would be with goals, it seems to me we can eliminate much of the difficulty we sometimes have in encouraging people to work with goals.

"The world steps aside
to let the man pass
who knows where he's going."

Charles Blondino, Supervisor, Language Arts Education
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

How do you evaluate the increasing number of instructional materials on the market? The Curriculum Inquiry Center at the University of California at Los Angeles has come up with a series of questions practitioners should ask in assessing program packets and resources. Although these questions might seem obvious, frequently school districts do not ask all of them, says Gordon Cawelti, executive director of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The questions include:

* Which students were the materials designed for? Is that indicated?
* Do the materials describe the role of the teacher?
* Does the program indicate how the materials can be effectively used?
* What is the value of the objectives being taught?
* Are the objectives clearly stated? What is the student expected to attain?
* Why was the content selected? Is this indicated?
* Do the suggested activities clearly relate to the objectives?
* Have the materials been field tested? With what group of students? Did the program produce the desired effect? Has the content been reviewed for accuracy?
* Are appropriate evaluation procedures or instruments included in the program? Is the evaluation appropriate, i.e., an oral test of oral skills?
* Does the price represent the full cost of the program? Are there consumable materials that must be replaced? Are the materials durable?
* Are special conditions necessary for the use of the materials? Is this indicated?
* Do the materials contain racial, ethnic or sexist bias?

"There is certainly no agreement on any one way to evaluate materials," says M. Frances Klein of the center. "But you might want to ask, if your system is not posing these questions, what criteria is it using?" People usually ask "Can we afford it?" not "Is this right for us?" says Prof. Clark Dobson of the University of South Carolina.

*from: Education U. S. A.  
April 7, 1975  
Vol. 17, No. 32*
TREMORS AND AFTERSHOCKS

One of the shocks which hit the educational field in 1975 was the study done by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia entitled, "Which School Resources Help Learning? Efficiency and Equity in Philadelphia Public Schools". Twelve selected excerpts from the study are listed below. What I would suggest is that each person reading this, sit down with the list, study each item carefully, and list the possible implications the findings might have, or should have, or could have in your school district.

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<tr>
<th>FINDINGS OF THE STUDY</th>
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<td>1. “Small classes, for example, help low achievers, but are of no special benefit to average and high achievers.”</td>
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<td>2. “High income students appear to be the biggest losers from poor attendance.”</td>
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<td>3. “Elementary students... who are below grade level, gain in classes with less than 28 students... For all elementary students... being in classes of 34 or more has a negative effect, and increasingly so as the size of the class increases.” (Their sample)</td>
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<td>4. “Senior high English classes that did not exceed 26 had the highest learning rates (for students of any ability described by the sample); low-ability students benefited the most from smaller classes.”</td>
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<td>5. “Size of School. In smaller schools increased learning at the elementary and senior levels appears to take place. Black elementary students seem particularly to benefit from being in smaller schools, and low achievers in smaller senior high schools.”</td>
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<td>6. “It seems, however, much more beneficial to be in an eighth grade that is part of an elementary school than in one that is not.”</td>
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<td>7. “High achievers seem to do best with more experienced teachers.”</td>
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8. "However, these teachers slow the learning growth of low achievers who seem to do best with new, relatively inexperience teachers."

9. "In junior high, an experienced English teacher appears to be particularly effective with high-ability students, but experience of ten or more years helps all students."

10. "The pattern of effectiveness for mathematics teachers differs somewhat. Instructors with three to nine years of experience are particularly effective, but those having more than ten years actually reduce the rate of learning mathematics."

11. "Elementary school students in the sample who test at grade level or lower perform distinctly better when they are with more high-achieving students. Students performing above their grade level are not particularly affected. Therefore, it is the low achievers mixing with high achievers who seem to benefit most."

12. "In other words, the student body appears to be better off in terms of learning the more heterogeneous the composition regarding abilities."

For a more complete understanding of the study and the excerpts, readers are directed to the February, 1975 issue of Business Review.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT**

A survey taken by the National Association of State Boards of Education in the fall of 1974 indicated that six of the top ten priority categories for consideration were in the supervision and curriculum development areas. (That's ASCD business) The six categories were: Career Education, Pre and In-Service Education, Curriculum Development, Early Childhood Education, Reading and Mathematics.

A more complete report of this survey was published in the April 14, 1975 issue of Your Public Schools, put out by the State Superintendent's Office.
THE IDEAL SIZE SCHOOL

"In essence, the question of optimal school size can only be answered by establishing a set of priorities in terms of the desired educational environment." So states the final paragraph of a study on Optimal School Size done by the Research and Evaluation Department of the Edmonton, Alberta Schools.

After commenting on the lack of definition of what constituted a large, or small school, and other problems encountered in "searching for the holy grail", the authors did come up with some fairly solid findings. In general, it boils down to what you want from the school. The writers grouped various attributes into ten categories and then indicated the number of times the categories were listed as an advantage in the literature reviewed.

Oversimplified, the report indicates the following:

Number of studies reviewed in which category was indicated as a desirable factor (advantage of) large or small size schools.

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COMPARISON CATEGORIES

*Further definitions of the category headings can be obtained from the report.

In light of all the recent discussion concerned with humanizing the schools, improving the school climate, reducing vandalism, discipline problems and drop-outs, perhaps the hints found in the Edmonton Study are worthy of note.

Optimal School Size Literature Review, Research and Evaluation Department, Edmonton Public Schools, 10010-107 A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta CANADA
MAKING IT WORK  
or  
Putting Theory Into Practice

A significant educational "first" occurred in the State of Washington during the month of August. In two successive week-long workshops—one in Selah and one at the Providence Heights Conference Center near Issaquah—Dr. Madeline Hunter and her staff, ably assisted by personnel from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, helped educators from throughout the state develop practical plans for putting learning theory into practice. Dr. Hunter commented that she had often worked with building and even district staffs, but that this was the first time that she had ever been involved in a statewide effort. She lauded the leadership provided by the State Superintendent’s Division of Curriculum and Instruction.

The workshops dealt primarily with simplifying and using in the classroom principles of learning. Participants were also given practice in recognizing application of these principles in classroom situations and in using them as a means of appraising and improving teaching.

Roberta LaCoste, Supervisor of Learning Resources in the State Office, indicated that the many people involved in planning and conducting the two workshops were impressed with the intense interest and enthusiasm demonstrated by the 500 participants. It was evidence of their deep commitment to learn and apply new and better ways to insure more efficient and permanent learning for their students.

Typical of the participants’ reactions were those expressed by members of a team from the L. P. Brown Elementary School in Olympia. Norm Josephson, principal, stated: “Washington children will be the real benefactors. Our team is motivated and committed to sharing these ideas with our staff and making this excellent model an integral part of our modus operandi.” Team member Sam Hayes, a fourth grade teacher, commented that the workshop gave him a chance to examine his own teaching methods and provided him with ideas for how to improve those areas in which he felt dissatisfied. Betty Wilson, instructional service teacher at Brown, reported: “As I have begun to implement some of the theories and techniques and have experienced success for myself and for the children, I am looking forward to sharing my enthusiasm through the plan that our team developed at the conclusion of the workshop”.

Donald Hair, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in the State Office, commented that “One of the particularly significant things about these two workshops was the involvement of people from all segments of education within the state—some 55 public and private schools including teachers, principals, curriculum directors and superintendents, college and university personnel, representatives from Educational Service Districts, representatives of professional organizations and the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. It is extremely important that all of us work together if we are to have a significant impact in improving instruction in the State of Washington. Dr. Brouillet in his opening remarks at the Providence Heights workshop indicated his strong commitment to ITIP and said that he would do everything possible in his agency to provide services to support this ongoing effort.”

In an effort to assist the participating 55 district teams in accomplishing their objectives, staff members from the Division of Curriculum and Instruction are planning one day regional follow-up workshops periodically throughout the 1975-76 school year. In addition, they are also making available related staff development films and video tapes for inservice purposes.

Without question the workshops will have a significant impact. Dr. Hair and his staff are to be commended for their outstanding leadership. As Norm Josephson said, “Washington children will be the real benefactors.”

Dr. Pat Gill  
Administrative Assistant,  
Instruction and Administration  
Olympia School District No. 111
Mr. Robert Gaudron, Assl. Supr.

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**This WASCSD membership is:**  

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