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PREVIEW

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**Developing a five-year staff development plan for the North
Platte Public School system**

Sukraw, Florence Arlene, Ed.D.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1987

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PREVIEW

DEVELOPING A FIVE-YEAR STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR THE NORTH PLATTE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

by

Florence A. Sukraw

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Interdepartmental Area of
Administration, Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor James L. Fejfar

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 1987

TITLE

Developing a Five-Year Staff Development Plan for the North

Platte Public School System

BY

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PREVIEW

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DEVELOPING A FIVE-YEAR STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR THE NORTH PLATTE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Florence A. Sukraw, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 1987

Adviser: James L. Fejfar

The purpose of this study was to describe the process and procedure used by the North Platte Public Schools, North Platte, Nebraska, to establish a five-year plan of staff development. The study included a description of the plan as well as the research and influencing factors which affected the development of that plan.

A review of the available literature on staff development indicated that, while not important in the early public schools, staff development has increasingly become an excellent vehicle for achieving change.

In order to develop a five-year plan which would meet the rapid changes that the North Platte Public Schools are undergoing, the writer involved educators, students, and community members in surveys, questionnaires and interviews. In addition, staff development directors from other school districts in Nebraska shared their ideas and staff development models with the writer.

As a result of this study, an ideal model for staff development was proposed, followed by the staff development

plan for the North Platte Public Schools. This latter plan was based on the ideal model as well as the major needs of the North Platte Public School System.

The five-year plan for the North Platte Public Schools differed from the ideal model in three areas. These are: preparation, planning, and maintenance. These changes were included because of the organization of the local school district's financial procedures, from the results of questionnaires, surveys, and interviews, and directives and expectations from the Superintendent of the North Platte Public Schools.

The goals of both plans evolved from the purposes of enriching teachers' and administrators' lives, continuously improving schools, and creating ongoing professional skill development.

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Deepest gratitude is expressed to the writer's husband, Quinten, and to her family, with special thanks to daughter Judith for her understanding, sense of humor, and continual encouragement.

F.A.S.

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PREVIEW

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Staff development, like other processes that produce change, is quite complex in nature. The ultimate goal in staff development according to Slezak is twofold: "to improve student learning achievement and to improve school learning climate."¹ The quality of staff development taking place varies from school system to school system. This case is well stated by Loucks and Zigarmi:

Writers in the field of educational change have repeatedly pointed out that change in school is a process, not an event. Yet, policy-makers, decision-makers, administrators and even staff-developers frequently behave in ways that betray this basic assumption. Those of us involved in the study and delivery of staff development still discover, in amazement, a myriad of one-day, "hit and run" workshops, lectures delivered by visiting experts to whole school systems, classroom walls torn down in July with the expectation of "open classrooms" in September and legislative mandates decreeing massive changes by a certain date.²

Since each school system is so unique, it would seem that deliberate staff development planning procedures should be developed by each to reflect its own needs and circumstances.

¹James Slezak, Odyssey to Excellence (San Francisco: Merritt Publishing Company, 1984), p. 115.

²Susan F. Loucks and Patricia Zigarmi, "Effective Staff Development," Exemplary Practice Series, Center on Evaluation, Development, Research (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa, 1985/86), p. 19.

Those procedures of planning which are used by one school system may not be adequate for another as needs and circumstances change. In his recent book, A Place Called School, John Goodlad states:

. . . that alike as schools may be in many ways, each school has an ambience (or culture) of its own and, further, that its ambience may suggest to the careful observer useful approaches to making it a better school.³

School systems concerned with developing procedures of staff development that are adequate and practical for their own unique situations should consider as many factors as possible that will make their plan successful. Many authorities agree on certain basic factors which influence staff development in most schools. However, these factors are stated in broad generalities. Each local school system should develop its own plans and procedures from these generalities and create its own style of staff development to meet its individual needs. These plans should consider such factors as: the needs of the students to be served, the background and needs of the teachers and administrators, the personnel available to plan and deliver a staff development program, and other factors that may influence the planning and developing of a staff development program.

Ben Harris has suggested that members of every school

³John I. Goodlad, A Place Called School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), p. 81.

system will have a continuing need for staff development. These needs will be changing through the years. He feels the needs will be far too many to be accommodated any one year by an individual school system's financial resources or by the amount of time or staff available. Therefore, he suggests individual school systems must prioritize their needs and then capitalize on organizing, planning, and delivering a staff development program.⁴ The explanation of the process and procedures used by individualized school systems in developing a personalized staff development program should be helpful to others who are concerned about developing their own staff development programs.

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to describe the process and procedures used by one school system to establish a five-year plan of staff development. The study includes a description of the plan and of the manner in which an individual school system considered influencing factors while in the process of developing that plan.

THE SETTING

The North Platte Public School System, North Platte,

⁴Ben M. Harris, Improving Staff Performance Through In-Service Education (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1980), p. 131.

Nebraska, has been continually in the process of delivering staff development services in varying degrees to teachers and administrators for many years.

During the 1985-86 school year the North Platte School System decided to hire a staff development trainer for the ensuing school year. The writer was employed as half-time principal of an elementary school building and half-time staff development trainer. This position has been changed for the 1987-1988 school year into a full-time position as staff development coordinator.

As a result of this change in position, the writer became very interested in planning and developing a staff development model to be implemented during the next five years (1987-1988 through 1991-1992) in the North Platte Public School System.

THE PROCEDURE

To reach a solution for the problem the following steps were taken:

1. A historical overview was presented which reviewed the major changes that took place in staff development from inception to the present time.

2. A review of concepts available from already developed staff development models was provided through a study of the literature and interviews with experts in the field of staff development.

3. Needs of the district were surveyed. Among those surveyed by interview, questionnaire, or review of scores were the students, key teachers from the North Platte Teachers' Association, staff development committee members, key lay people from the Parent-Teacher Association and the Community Input Organization, outreach supervisors, and key administrators.

4. Having completed these steps, a plan was proposed for a five-year staff development program for the North Platte Public School System.

DELIMITATIONS

The scope of this study is limited to the special needs and resources of the North Platte Public School System. The study is also limited to the staff development of teachers and administrators.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

To assist the understanding of this study the following terms were defined; others are defined in the text.

Staff Development. A change process which meets the professional needs of individual staff members.

In-Service. Any planned program of learning opportunities afforded staff members for purposes of

improving the performance of the individual. Interchangeable with staff development.

Middle School. Grades six through eight.

Staff Development Trainer. One who teaches to meet the needs of the individual being taught.

Staff Development Coordinator. One who helps plan-- as well as teach--to meet the needs of the individual teachers and administrators.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

Chapter Two contains a review of the literature which is concerned with factors affecting a staff development program at the local school level. This chapter reviews the history of staff development as well as current happenings.

Chapter Three reviews the setting of the study. It contains the history and the current situation of the North Platte Public School System relating to staff development. This chapter also contains the results of the local needs surveys and interviews.

Chapter Four first presents a theoretical model of staff development followed by the proposed model for the North Platte Public Schools. An analysis of the similarities and differences between the two models will include: design of the model, lines of authority, methodology for

implementation, budget considerations, a procedure for the involvement of personnel, and an evaluation system.

Chapter Five contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

To conclude this chapter, it is important that any staff development program be designed for the specific needs of the individual school district. Literature available on existing programs can offer a framework from which to develop a specific model.

PREVIEW

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS OF THREE NEBRASKA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Chapter One presented the idea that staff development planning procedures vary from school system to school system. This is as it should be since the planning procedures are to meet the needs and circumstances found in each individual system.

The material presented in this chapter reviews the literature as it pertained to the beginning of staff development and to the developing of planning procedures through the years as the needs of school systems have changed. Chapter Two also presents the perceptions of three Nebraska staff development directors who relate information concerning the models of staff development used during the 1986-1987 school year to meet the needs of their districts. These three directors were chosen to be interviewed because two of them represent the views of Nebraska's larger districts while the third is in a district comparable in size to North Platte.

In the beginning of the public school system in this country staff development was not considered to be important. Howey and Vaughn stated:

Staff development did not play an important role in the life of schools in the early stages of public education in this country. Until and throughout most of the nineteenth century, the relatively minimal pre-service education provided by normal schools first and later by teachers' colleges and other institutions of higher education was viewed as sufficient to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain professional staff throughout their careers. This was due in large part to the fact that technological or other advancements in knowledge were minimal and the rather narrow emphasis in the schools on the acquisition of basic skills and citizenship necessitated little change over time in teaching practice, or so it was perceived.¹

Other authors also indicated in-service was not considered to be of great importance in the early 1800's. Schiffer indicated the inception of in-service was in 1839 and at that time teachers' educational needs were easy to identify since many teachers were poorly trained and were often incompetent.² Schiffer stated:

Many had no more than a common school education and a meager knowledge of subject matter. There were few or no requirements for certification, in part, because the demand for teachers exceeded the supply.³

Therefore, when in-service as an idea was first developed, it quickly related itself to supervision. Reference is made by Barr, Burton, and Brueckner to the early 1700's during which citizens were appointed

¹National Society for the Study of Education, Staff Development, Eighty-second yearbook, Part II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 92.

²Judith Schiffer, School Renewal Through Staff Development (New York: Teachers College Press, 1980), pp. 129-30.

³Ibid., p. 130.