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The Principal’s Role in Developing and Maintaining a Good Public Relations Program

Leon Louis Abhold

Central Washington University

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THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Leon Louis Abhold
June 1959
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THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

Amanda Hebeler, CHAIRMAN, FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Ernest Muzzall

Mary Simpson
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure in collecting and analyzing data</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Terms Used</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School public relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of School Public Relations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations and social interpretations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes of School-Community Relations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Public Relations are Important Today</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principles Underlying the Public Relations Program

School public relations must be honest in intent and execution

School public relations must be intrinsic

School public relations must be continuous

School public relations must be positive in approach

School public relations should be comprehensive

School public relations should be sensitive to its publics

The ideas communicated must be simple

III. THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

Principal's Role As Community Leader

'Skill in working with groups of people

Good leadership develops leadership

Good leadership is unifying and adventurous

Good leadership is emotionally secure

Study the educational system

Study the community
### Chapter Guide for gathering information about the community
- Identify areas of ignorance
- Develop an organization for carrying through a program
- Provide for the administration and the evaluation of the program

### Principal’s Role in Improving Relations Between School and Community
- Learning the sources of help that are available
- Informing the community agencies of the needs of children
- Coordinating the activities of the organized community services
- Developing organizations to meet needs that are not served by existing agencies

### IV. Interpreting the Public Schools to the Community
- Methods Used for Interpreting the School to
  - The public
  - The speech
  - The newspapers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio and television</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide films and motion pictures</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic and pictorial materials</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Publications</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School exhibits and demonstrations</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. EVALUATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal of the Success or Failure of the Public Relations Program</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

An effective program in public relations is now generally recognized as an important factor in the administration of our schools. While there has been a growing recognition of the need for good public relations, far too few administrators have actually brought about an adequate program, and in many cases some have not even recognized the need for a carefully developed program. Today, public relations must occupy a significant place in our schools, for people living in a democratic society have a vital interest in their schools.

The success of public relations depends more upon the principal than any other person in the whole school organization, since the heart of the public relations is found in the work done in and through the individual school.

The school administrator must have a planned and organized program to establish consensus within the community toward its schools. Attitudes within the community will depend greatly upon the public relations established by the administration. Each administrator must develop an appropriate program to fit the particular community.

Numerous articles and several books have been written on the problem of carrying out an effective public relations
program. However, only a limited number of these references go into detail on the principal's role in such a program. It seems to be taken for granted that an adequate public relations program will develop by itself.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to analyze the fundamental basis of a sound public relations program; (2) to describe in practical terms how principals may develop good school-community relations; and (3) to utilize to advantage the facilities available for influencing public opinion.

Importance of the study. Public relations have frequently been stressed by educational authorities as one of the most important aims of school administration. The importance of this inter-relationship between school and community cannot be over accentuated because the continuance and success of public schools depends upon the support that communities give throughout the nation. The importance of public relations has been pointed out by Stearns:

It must be understood that no institution in a free society will long exist without full measure of public support. So, this technique for community relations, newly required, becomes, perhaps the most important quality in the good school administrator (38:5).
It is hoped that this research will furnish information to principals which will be of some practical value in developing an adequate public relations program in their school, or to improve upon those programs now in operation.

**Procedure in collecting and analyzing data.** This research is concerned primarily with secondary sources found in the library of Central Washington College of Education. After reviewing the literature on public relations the references were screened and only the pertinent information was noted. This material was then utilized in the actual writing of this paper. The research was undertaken in conjunction with a college course, The Elementary School Principal, which proved valuable in formulating this paper.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The term *school public relations* refers to those activities which bring about unison between the school and the public. This relationship should be a two-way cooperative process which results in a free flow of information between the school and the community.

Public-school relations are that phase of school administration which seeks to bring a harmonious
working relationship between the schools and the public which the schools serve. Of course, the dividing line between all other phases of school administration and the phase known as public-school relations is extremely nebulous, because every phase of the work of the schools, as well as the influence of every belief of the people of the community on the work of the schools, affects the working relationship between the schools and the community. The public relations of the schools go on whether the school officials and employees are conscious of it or not; it is inevitable and goes on at all times (32:1).

Community as used in this research is limited to the area included within the boundaries of the school district and all the residents served by a particular school system.

Community—(1) A group living in one locality or region under the same culture and having a common geographical focus for their major activities; (2) any group of people, not necessarily in spatial proximity, who share basic interests and common traditions (14:86).

Interpretation is the reflection of the school situation. It exposes the purposes, conditions, activities and needs of the school to the average citizen.

Evaluation is a systematic appraisal of the schools' public relations program. It is a means of measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire program.

Evaluation is the process of making judgments that are to be used as a basis for planning. It consists of establishing goals, collecting evidence concerning growth or lack of growth toward goals, making judgments
about the evidence, and revising procedures and goals in light of the judgments. It is a procedure for improving the product, the process, and even the goals themselves (43:292).

Leadership is a crucial quality that principals and school personnel must exert in guiding the community to develop enthusiastic attitudes towards the schools. The quality and effectiveness of the public relations program depends on the ability of school employees to play the leading role.
CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING

SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS

I. HISTORY OF SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Less than forty years ago the field of public relations in education had its beginning with the publication of Arthur B. Moehlman's book entitled Public School Relations. This promptly opened a new area of administrative activity. Before this time, sporadic efforts had been made by individuals to emphasize the importance of interpreting the schools to the public. These efforts dealt with a narrow segment of the public relations field and failed to take into account the many problems involved in this specific phase of administration (21:11).

Rosenstengel and Grieder point out the early role public relations played in school administration:

About a quarter-century ago, a new area, school public relations, made its appearance in the field of professional school administration. For many years before this there had been some reporting by administrators and school boards on various aspects of public school systems. Most of it was done by statistical tables with little or no verbal description—a practice which has not entirely disappeared. Few persons read this kind of material or were expected to read it. It was of value for the central administrative office in keeping track of past trends and for planning, and as
records for the archives. But so far as helping to interpret the objectives, achievements, and needs of the schools to the people, its value was about nil. Nor did the typical report of a generation and more ago reflect much, if any, effort to identify the educational interests and needs of the community and to relate them to the local educational program (16:563).

The depression of the early thirties demonstrated the desperate conditions that schools were in because there was much misunderstanding and ignorance by numerous American citizens about their schools. The public wanted lower taxes and demanded reductions in educational expenditures. As a result the financial situation of the public schools was in chaos. Professional schoolmen could not understand how people could misinterpret the schools. Seldom did these professional educators realize that the people were uninformed about their schools and it was merely natural for them to favor an economy program. Superintendents, boards of education and principals realized that they could no longer leave the public uninformed and still carry on a successful educational program. Administrators would have to keep the public informed at all times, not only when the schools were in need of financial assistance. Educational leaders realized that schools had to be interpreted with regard to their purposes, programs and problems. School leaders conceived the fact that American people could not be expected to support the schools which they knew little about.
Developments in the area of school-community relations were making significant changes in the early twentieth century. Terms used in identifying them have included interpretation, publicity, public relations and social interpretation, and participation (42:512).

**Interpretation.** The need for interpretation evolved because school specialists understood that having an informed public meant support for the schools. During this period of development within school districts, it was obvious that most people were not informed of the educational undertaking. People did not understand the role of the school whether pertaining to finance, curriculum, or school housing. To correct this undesirable situation, steps were taken to interpret the schools to the public.

**Publicity.** Publicity of schools' matters was not used to the best advantage when first introduced. Wahlquist explains this point: "In its extreme form, publicity may have emphasized the value of the techniques more than the facts. It may have suggested that even a poor product could be 'sold' by sufficiently clever methods" (42:513). Even today some educational publicity seems to be more interested in techniques of presenting the material to the public than in the actual data.
Public relations and social interpretations.

Public relations and social interpretation were included in the next important step in presenting the schools to the people. Educators and laymen by cooperating and working together could learn from each other as well as solve common problems. Educators and laymen working together in group processes seeking the solution to matters of common concern introduced a new era in the public relations program.

Participation. During the period when the preceding processes were developing, it was agreed that people who participated in the planning of school policy and goals, would have a greater interest in the schools. Educators believed that people who participated in the planning would have a feeling that the school program was their program. This perhaps is one of the most outstanding phases in the development of public relations.

After World War II educational needs and problems within communities were multiplied. In many cases there was a lack of housing facilities due to the fact that during the war military necessities were of higher priority; many school facilities were obsolete; there was a great upsurge of births within the United States; shortage
of teachers; reduced budgets; poor teachers' salaries; necessary clerical, administrative, and supervisory assistance was not available. These were only a few of the urgent problems that many school districts were confronting. Only through effective cooperation of educators and layman have the schools survived. Educators, through public relation programs, stimulated the public to learn more about the schools so that they could participate more intelligently in the solution of educational problems. Lay advisory committees were formed for discussion of school policies; home contract bulletins were issued; exhibit of school work and open house programs became annual events. Annual reports and special booklets were issued to tell the story of the school; and similar media and techniques were introduced to acquaint the public with schools.

Within recent years school-community relations have come to occupy a significant place in the administration of our schools. Throughout the United States there seems to be an increasing demand to improve the school-community relations. A 1948 study of the elementary school principalship gives data which is illustrative of this trend (11:88). Principals are now spending more time on school-community activities and relationships than ever before.
II. PURPOSES OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Those who actively participate in public relations need a basic understanding of the purposes and objectives of such a program so an adequate program can be carried on successfully. Without definite purposes and objectives in mind a school-community program may be very ineffective.

Some of the purposes specifically stated include the following: (1) to inform the public about the work of the schools; (2) to establish confidence in the schools; (3) to rally support for proper maintenance of the educational program; (4) to develop awareness of the importance of education in a democracy; (5) to improve the partnership concept by uniting parents and teachers in meeting the educational needs of children; (6) to integrate the home, the school and the community in improving educational opportunities for all children; (7) to evaluate the offerings of the schools in meeting the needs of the children in the community; and (8) to correct misunderstandings as to the aims and objectives of the schools.

There have been many opinions indicating the purposes of a good public relations program. Many believe that the purpose is merely to sell the schools to the
public. Others think that it is a means of informing the public. The purposes of public relations have been readily defined by many laymen and educators.

After reviewing the wide range of purposes, it seems that they can be summarized into three major statements:

1. Improve the quality of children's learning and growing.
2. Improve the quality of community living.
3. Develop understanding, enthusiasm, and support for the community's program of public education (12:424).

All of these purposes must be kept in mind when developing a public relation program.

In order to improve the quality of children's learning and growing an educational program must take into account all the environmental conditions surrounding the child. The school staff must take into consideration all conditions which prevail in the community. Such things as activities of the child outside the school, economic situation of family and community, the people and their problems within the school district, parents' attitudes toward school, social structure of community, and the educational needs. These are only a few of the things that the school staff is required to know. Many other characteristics of
a community must be known if children are to grow into educated citizens.

The administrator and his staff should become familiar with local individuals, groups and organizations, institutions, and community resources which can be utilized for the improvement of the educational program (12:425; 3:101).

Some educators are now conscious of the fact that the schools should help the people in a community solve community problems. The following statement made by the National Department of Elementary Principals indicates the school's role in improving the quality of community living:

In a democratic society the school should be a positive agent of social change. A school worthy of the support of a community owes it to that community to be a school of social action. . . . It is a service institution, devoted to improving the quality of life lived by all the people for the community (10:12-13).

The school and community must promote cooperative planning and coordination to improve community living. School personnel and community citizens must work together side by side in solving school and community problems. The proper relationship between the school and community is well stated by Elsbree and McNally:

It is to be emphasized, therefore, that unless schools do contribute significantly to the better-
ment of community living, unless they serve to raise community goals, unless they lead in exemplifying democratic leadership, fellowship and cooperative planning, unless the community considers its schools as agents of community improvement, then the schools fail of their purpose in the American Democracy. They are but empty showcases, going through the motions of a polite, innocuous, ineffective process which is contributing little to the improvement and enrichment of life, such a concept presents an exciting challenge to the principal, who influences so greatly the educational program developed in the school (12:427-428).

In order that the public may support the community's program of public education, they must be informed about educational objectives and methods. The public must be convinced that the schools are worthwhile and that they are a good investment. If understanding and enthusiasm are present within a community there is a strong probability that the public will be inclined to support school improvements and expansion. Continued community understanding of its schools will mean continual support for the schools.

How to fulfill purposes such as these is one of the problems with which this research is concerned.

III. WHY PUBLIC RELATIONS ARE IMPORTANT TODAY

Because the schools belong to the public and serve the public, the leaders responsible for the educational program are compelled to explain their goals, achievements,
and needs, and to ascertain from the schools' clientele and others how to improve their services and products. Because the success of the schools to a certain degree, depends on a public understanding and good will, an appropriate public relations program must be developed. The alternatives are loss of confidence and lack of school support within the community (16:565).

The public relation program has been accentuated greatly in recent years because of changes which have occurred in society and in the schools. The reasons for more emphasis on public relations with regard to education are emphasized in the following by Ayars:

1. The general rising cost of government, taxes, and salaries has caused people to question public expenditures.
2. Government services have expanded, entering more and more pursuits (highway system, public welfare, etc.), which are in competition with the schools for tax money, thus causing resentment against the schools.
3. The growth of population, rise of great population centers, and the advent of school attendance by "all the children of all the people" has caused education to become big and expensive business—industrialization, popularization, and consolidation. The face-to-face relationship between school personnel and the people whose children are taught can no longer exist to an extent at all comparable to that of a few years back.
4. The rapid technical, mechanical, and material advances of our country have not been matched by advances in our social customs and institutions. This retardation (or cultural lag) has caused people to resist changing the schools in line with the most advanced social theories.
5. The rise of education as a technical profession has caused some doubts, jealousies, and misunderstandings. Much professional and technical jargon is misinterpreted.

6. There are still opponents of free public education. Some individuals and groups in America still attempt to discredit the public schools. Some of this activity is cloaked in appeals to patriotism.

7. The tendency of many school districts in the past to let a small group do the work has created a situation on which there is no general public understanding. . . so necessary to successful action.

8. Educators have not developed a unified positive professionalism (5:54).

There are three important factors for developing closer school community ties. The first is the change which has and is continuing to take place in the nature of the goals and methods of our schools. Second, is the increasing importance being attached to the need for public support for schools. Third, is the expanding meaning of democracy. These reasons have a close relationship to the purposes which should be served by the school's program of public relations (12:417).

Only through a planned and well executed program of public relations can schools be expected to receive support and assistance by the public. Public relations are needed to justify the school's position in this ever changing complex world. The following explains the crises that the schools face:

In the period when the problems of the society have been growing increasingly complex and controls
have been becoming more centralized, the educational system has been experiencing its greatest growth. With tremendous changes occurring in administration, finance, aims, and methods and materials of instruction, the people have tended to have less opportunity to participate in, and to understand, the educational system and program. It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine that in many communities the schools and the people have been growing apart. It is perfectly clear that if the schools and the people are going to work together closely and with understanding and mutual respect, it is not just going to happen—but rather it will happen only to the degree that there is consciousness of the need on both sides and carefully developed plans to ensure its occurrence. In a very real sense it might, therefore, be said that the need for public relations and public participation is greater today than at any previous period (42:52).

Through public relations educators and laymen must cooperate so education in America will have its rightful place in this ever changing society.

IV. PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

From the foregoing explanation of the purposes and reasons for public relations we shall now consider some of the principles of such a program. These principles are not unique to public schools, but could be applied to almost any other enterprise. The principles of public relations as they have been stated by the American Association of School Administrators could well be used as guides in developing a school-community relations program (2:17-34).
In considering these guiding principles it must be noted that they are all interrelated and if any one is eliminated or disregarded, this will have a definite effect on the entire school-community relationship. The development of these principles in a public relations program is essential. "The soundness, consistency, and defensibility of a school public relations program are dictated by the principles underlying it" (26:151). However, the development of these principles do not in themselves guarantee that the program will be effective. Principles alone will not build successful public relations.

Before considering the development of a public relations program it should be noted that any professional educator who undertakes such a program must assure himself that the school merits the support he is asking. A profitable school-community relationship cannot be based on a poor school. The school itself is the best translator.

"School public relations must be honest in intent and execution" (2:17). Whenever material is sent out to the public it must be accurate and honestly interpreted. The very nature of every public relations program should be honesty and integrity. Both the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the school program should be taken into
account. Only through the understanding of the unfavorable conditions can improvement and adaptations be made. School administrators know that public relations can succeed only through the honest interpretations of the schools. If a program does not present all data or material as it actually exists, the public will eventually uncover the real facts and the school will lose the confidence and support of the community.

When interpreting the school to the public, administrators must take into consideration how much information is available and how the information will be organized. If information is withheld from the public, superintendents, board members, and principals may find themselves withholding information from each other. The most frequent excuse given by administrators for withholding information is that the educational process is too technical and complex for the people to understand. Educational aims and practices can be made intelligible to the public if painstaking effort is taken in expressing them clearly. Educators should be particularly adept at interpreting technical information, so that it will be popularly understood. Such interpretation is "teaching," the educator's responsibility. The theory underlying a policy of supplying complete information to the public is that school business is public business and any restriction on
information should be determined by the people. Educators cannot justify the withholding of information about the operation of public schools (26:172-73).

Accuracy and organization of all information made available to the public is the responsibility of special personnel within the school. Unorganized and inaccurate material will reduce the effectiveness of the schools. "Completely unorganized facts confuse the laymen and make him distrustful because of his inability to understand and interpret statistical data" (26:173). An honest straightforward presentation of facts will generally gain support.

In many cases school personnel offer their personal opinions which cannot be supported by factual evidence. This can do a great disservice to the school as well as to the community.

Educators should accept all available facts and information whether such material strengthens their position or weakens it. School people should be willing to listen to various opinions by people who are not directly associated with education, and consider the significance of such opinions. Many times other opinions will strengthen the school's position.

"School public relations must be intrinsic" (2:19). Everyday contacts of school employees with the public are important factors in the public relations program. All of
these contacts cannot be out of harmony with the aims and methods which are found in the classroom. Teachers and other school personnel are public relations agents outside the school as well as in the school and at all times. Public relations must be considered as part of the total educational process (1:20). The success or failure of the entire program may depend largely on the casual practices of employees of a school in everyday contacts.

By studying the procedures which are proving effective in a successful program in action, one will find that this particular program is intrinsic. That is, it is coming from within the school. Individuals as well as groups are working together to enhance a desirable school-community relationship. The program is so well planned that the entire educational program is supported by the community. The program is geared to informing the public about the work of the school to build greater understanding and support. This information must come from within the school.

"School public relations must be continuous" (2:21). In a democracy public approval and understanding are necessary if the schools are to succeed. Schools exist only because the people think they are desirable or at least the public does not pronounce them as being undesirable. Therefore, the schools must continuously sell
themselves to the public. Interpretation should not exist only when the schools are in need of financial assistance. Education needs a continuous, honest and comprehensive program existing everyday within the community (6:40-41).

Immediate and long range goals should be planned in a continuous program. The more continuous the program is the more practical it will become. One of the main objectives of the continuous relations between public and school is that the citizens of a community are continually in contact with the school situation. In this way the average citizen will have an ever increasingly understanding of the educational situation within the community.

The fact that public relations is a continuous process does not mean that there will be times when the tempo of the continuous program will be stepped up, as in the occasion of a school bond issue or tax proposal. The program may be altered to emphasize the needs of the campaign. If a continuous program is carried on throughout the year there will be very little alteration due to the fact that the public has already developed an understanding of the school situation.

One of the mistakes in public relations is the idea that effort by educators is only put forth when the schools are in a serious crisis. Frequency and regularity
must be regarded as definite parts of the public relations plan. No public relations program can be successful if it is sporadic and lacks continuity.

"School public relations must be positive in approach" (2:23). To emphasize the positive approach a carefully planned program must exist. In many cases the schools assume that because everything is quiet, everything is well. In such cases schools usually have not developed an understanding on the part of the people. These people do not participate in the school program. As a result of this situation, school executives become conscious of public relations only after an attack has been made upon some practice or plan of the school. After attacks have been made on the school, school personnel must develop defensive measures. Much time and effort of school people is given to self-defense. This results in a program which is negative and relatively weak (42:525-26).

A community which has developed an effective positive program of public relations will be able to avoid the development of unfair criticism. Such a community will meet these criticisms by increasing the vigor of its positive program. The importance of a positive program cannot be overemphasized (42:526).
"School public relations should be comprehensive" (2:25). A good program will be comprehensive and well-balanced. The school should know its community and realize that there are many phases of the educational program that need interpretation or participation. A comprehensive program should develop over a period of years which will ensure the development of understanding and support for the educational program in many areas. In developing a program it must be realized that all the people in a community cannot be reached through one media of public relations. It is necessary to develop a program which is both comprehensive in terms of the phases of education receiving consideration, and balanced in terms of the media or procedures which will reach the wide variety of people in the community. Too many educators have developed one media to a high degree and have assumed this to be a good public relations program (14:526).

A program to be comprehensive must deal with all aspects of education, not just sports activities or social events. Sports and social events should not be ignored but a better balance is needed between them and the rest of the educational program. Schools must emphasize specific services or activities such as libraries, shops,
health, transportation, cafeterias, curriculum philosophies, financial situations within the district, dividends on investments in education, comparison of costs, depreciation of purchasing power of the dollar, increased school enrollments, pupil progress, and many other similar items of interest. All the major activities and interests of the schools should be kept before the people at all times. It is a great responsibility for school districts to develop a program that has balance and is continuously informing the public regarding the conditions, needs, progress and aims of the schools.

"School public relations should be sensitive to its publics" (2:27). "In a limited sense to be aware of or sensitive to any public is to be aware of its basic drives or needs" (2:29). There are many major drives or needs in man although the major ones that school personnel should be aware of are the desire for wealth, social influence, power, artistic achievement, political eminence, family status, reform and charity, and religious convictions. The skillful public relations worker will need to satisfy these drives through the operation of his public relations program. If the education program is properly interpreted within a community, individuals may find they can satisfy
some of these needs or desires by the support of the public schools' program (2:29).

The people of a society who live within any given community are very complex in many ways. Many professional educators have tended to accept society as a simple organization. There is a wide variety of organizations representing different points of view and many individuals within these organizations have different objectives and practices. The society with which the schools deal may be classified on a variety of bases or categories, such as economic, political, religious, educational, and social. Some of these groups are easy to reach and take an interest in their schools. Other organizations and individuals have very little interest in their schools and do not want to participate in the educational program. To understand the public is a difficult and necessary aspect of a good public relations program (42:522-523).

No matter how ingenious a program of interpretation may be, it cannot be effective unless it reaches all the people within the community. The public is composed of a variety of persons all holding different views with regards to education. The schools should have an interest in all people whether they are businessmen, professional men, club women, office workers, or housewives. The
voters will include active young citizens and older retired people. All these will support or hinder the educational program. Public relations must reach all members of a community. Opposition to school programs may come from people who are misinformed.

"The ideas communicated must be simple" (1:30). Reaching many people requires the use of numerous publicity methods. It also requires simplicity, simple definitions, and summarized concepts. This information must not lead to confusion. All school policies and programs must be translated into simple and understandable expressions. Statements which are long and ponderous should be eliminated. Everything that is said or written must be directed toward an audience that includes people with varying amounts of education (6:76-77).

Simplicity and clarity are necessary qualities in a good program. When statistical data, graphs, and pictures are used they should be simple and to the point. Simplicity in presentation of facts by using graphs, tables and pictures characterizes the difference between today's reports and those of a few years ago. The reports of the past were for professional educators or school board members. Professional educators have realized that
if schools are going to be supported by the public they must be presented in a way that all people can interpret the role of the school. Simplicity and understandable expressions are needed to reach more publics. "Large publics cherish simple definitions, summarized conceptions, simple narrative, musical brevity of language, and the personified abstraction" (2:33).

Public relations activities will be honest, intrinsic, continuous, positive, comprehensive, sensitive to publics concerned, and presented in simple terms. Detours from this route will be carefully avoided until it can be demonstrated that surer ways to mutual understanding have been found (2:34).

Every word, act, and situation makes its contribution to the public relations program. In each contact with people good will must be gained so the best possible relations between the school and community will exist. By cooperating and identifying the school with the community these desirable relations may be developed and the schools will gain unfailing support for the educational program (6:90). The following contains some important words of advice:

Remember that every communication will take at least two persons' time—that of the speaker or the writer and that of the audience even though it may be only an audience of one. It isn't enough for the expression of the ideas to be what the speaker wants. . . . The audience must have what it wants too: to be informed, persuaded, moved to thought or action,
entertained, or guided. If the speaker wastes the audience's time once, he will seldom get a second chance, almost never a third (40:43).

With the objectives and principles of a good public relations program in mind, the administrator must turn his attention to devising means of making such a program function smoothly and efficiently.
CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

All personnel who are identified with the school are included in public school relations. This includes the school board, the superintendent, the principal, the assistant principals, the teachers as well as the non-teaching personnel such as custodians, cafeteria employees, bus operators and school nurses. However, the agents who exert the greatest influence are the pupils who attend the school. Only when individuals within the school have developed and put into action a planned school-community relations program is such action effective. Responsibility for individual planning rests with the principal. Community understanding is largely dependent upon the skillful leadership within the school. The principal should regard the development of school-community relations as one of his major responsibilities.

The primary emphasis in this chapter is the administrative aspects of public relations. Since this study is primarily concerned with the principal's role, no attempt will be made to include other individuals connected with the public relations program.
I. PRINCIPAL'S ROLE AS COMMUNITY LEADER

The principal of a modern school is the leader of school-community relations. The relationship between the school and the public depends on the principal, who is the coordinator of school and community efforts to solve problems common to both, and to lift school-community goals. If school administrators do their jobs well both school and community are likely to become better places in which to live. "The principal is the leader definitely responsible for initiating a program of action and for developing patterns of school-community interaction and coordination" (7:19). As a leader in the local community the school principal has definite responsibilities which he must consider.

The extent to which the community will support public education is affected by the principal. Usually, an efficient principal is found at the heart of a good school situation. A community which shows little enthusiasm towards their schools may reflect an inefficient principal.

The job of the principal is not a simple or easy one in school-community relations. However, through proper
leadership a broader understanding between the school and the community can be established.

In order that he may be a strong leader the principal must have certain qualities of leadership. (1) Good leadership is characterized by **skill in working with groups of people**. The principal's role as a leader will require him to work cooperatively in the community which he serves. Being a principal requires him to stimulate thought and open-minded study of problems within community groups and to lead group discussion in solving community problems.

Rather than feeling responsible for supplying all the answers himself, he must be aware that one important function of the principal is to provide those conditions within which the answers may be thoughtfully sought. Solutions obtained in this way may require more time, but they will also be much more meaningful and useful than if presented ready-made by the leader. The principal unused to these methods will do well to consult a good guide to discussion methods and to seek every opportunity for practice (22:22).

A principal must be able to develop a situation in which people work cooperatively. A community will grow as its members have opportunities to think, plan, and work together. The principal may fail unless he involves the community in the group work of the school (43:22-23).

(2) "Good leadership develops leadership" (22:22). Administrators should develop a democratic philosophy in
the administration of the school. With a democratic philosophy leaders within the school as well as the community will be developed. When democratic practices are used in problem solving a better school-community relationship will exist.

Administrators who operate the schools democratically must have faith in people. Democratic administration recognizes the potential of each individual (29:51).

Official leaders in schools must have a deep faith in the worth of each individual in the school and a firm belief that the potential of each individual will be developed. This faith is the key to the creation of the type of environment in which all will grow.

The faith must start with the official leader's belief in his own worth and in the worth of every individual; then he must function in such a way that others will be helped to develop a belief in their own value (43:107).

This means that teachers as well as members of a community can be trusted to make decisions concerning the welfare of the school. Recognizing leadership qualities of individuals within the community will bring about closer school-community relationships.

(3) Good leadership is unifying and adventurous. Because individuals or groups of people in the community do not agree with the present condition and policies of the school does not mean that these people should be
avoided or omitted. The principal should work with those opposing groups or individuals to bring about true consensus. The opinions of the minority must be taken into consideration. After due consideration is given, he may find justification for altering the present school program. The principal as well as the community will have to be on the alert to discover new ways and means of improving the educational methods in operation (22:23).

(4) "Good leadership is emotionally secure" (22:23). School administrators must be emotionally secure. This implies that the principal realizes that he can learn from others in the community with regard to the school. Only a secure person can share his leadership and be a democratic group leader. "Only a person who is emotionally secure can expose his judgment to democratic processes" (22:25).

These then are a few of the more important characteristics of modern educational leadership: (1) skill in group leadership; (2) ability to develop leadership in others; (3) a unifying and adventurous outlook; and (4) emotional security. Consideration must be given to how this type of leadership may be developed. It is not enough to recognize the need, there must also be a program
of action. To improve in leadership ability, the principal must seek out opportunities to work with people (22:25-26).

In serving as a community leader the principal will need to understand the structure of the community and have insight into the ways decisions are made and to find means of affecting the decision making process (1:31). The following suggestions are made by Wahlquist for understanding the community and the development of a public relations program:

1. Study the educational system.
2. Study the community.
3. Identify areas of ignorance
4. Develop an organization for carrying through a program.
5. Provide for the administration and the evaluation of the program (42:528-33).

The importance of these suggestions will be explained through further analysis.

1. **Study the educational system.** The principal should study the educational system and know the costs in relation to services provided. Studies should be made so as to compare one school with another. This study may be undertaken by school personnel and laymen working together. This should be a cooperative study which will contribute to public understanding. The local administrator should
take the role as a leader in helping committees, which are composed of professional people and laymen, in collecting data and developing conclusions in light of the data gathered. Administrators can call in consultants who will assist teachers and laymen in identifying and solving problems. Since many administrators have had little experience in dealing with committees which are composed of both laymen and teachers it may be desirable first to lead the staff in working through certain problems. The layman should be introduced to committee work as soon as possible. Laymen and staff members by working together will arrive at sound solutions to problems and strengthen the educational system (42:528-29). Committees composed of laymen will accomplish little without the professional advice and guidance of members of the school staff (39:279).

School-community cooperation is probably one of the most effective means of eliminating friction between school and community. When school members and laymen work together for common concern, a sense of oneness will develop. Many opportunities will arise in which the citizens of a community and school personnel can plan together for the improvement of education. The more opportunities
that exist for school personnel and members of a community to work together the sooner a positive public relations program will develop. School personnel and laymen working together will develop a better understanding of public education in the community. "Citizens Advisory Committees working with teachers and administrators may help to solve many problems that are common to the school and to the community" (29:279).

There are guides available which principles should be acquainted with in order to bring staff members and laymen together to study educational problems. Some of these are mentioned in the book by Wahlquist, *The Administration of Public Education* (42:529-30). There are numerous other guides and periodicals to assist administrators which are available from other sources. Administrators may use these sources to help guide and study problems confronting the school district. These guides will help laymen and school personnel work together.

2. **Study the community.** The principal and the staff should become familiar with the nature of the community: its resources and needs. Knowledge of these can contribute directly to the quality of the principal's leadership. These factors must be known to establish good school community relations (26:273; 12:431; 22:27).
If a good program is to be developed which will overcome the misunderstanding or, to state it positively, which will develop understanding on the part of both the school and the people, it is essential that detailed knowledge be secured concerning the educational level and interests of the people, their abilities to lead and to engage in group action, the values to which they subscribe, and their opinions of, and attitudes toward many matters pertaining directly and indirectly to the educational program and service. Such knowledge must be available about the many groups in the community which would be involved in basic policy formulation in education (42:530).

Effective public relations demands detailed knowledge on the part of the school administrator about the community.

The principal must understand the people and segments of the community which affect the school. This knowledge of the community is an essential part of his personal equipment. One means which principals may use to compile data about the community is through the community survey.

This community survey must be more than a compiled mass of data. It must be the type of thing which makes the educator a keen observer of the community by actual participation in many phases of the life which flows about him (38:6).

"Understanding the community provides the foundation from which the school-community program of public relations derives strength and effectiveness" (26:178). A community survey must continually interpret information for the development of the community. The purposes of the community survey are stated by Molhman and Van Zwoll:
The purposes of the community survey are to discover the areas and character of the services to be performed through the school, to provide a basis for appraisal of the school program from the point of view of its fulfillment of community needs, and to furnish the medium for informing the people of the community about the program and methods of the schools (26:179).

All the information collected in a community should be carefully studied and used in formulating a program adopted for the welfare of the children in school. The following principles apply to the planning and execution of the survey activity:

The community survey should be so organized and conducted as to maintain and promote confidence.
Essential information should be secured and used without arousing emotional antipathies.
Personal information gathered by the institution through the social survey should be held completely and permanently confidential.
The maximum value of the school survey requires that it be both inclusive and continuing.
Surveys should be so organized that primary information is secured by those agents who have constant and intimate contact with the community and who, by the nature of their responsibility, will be required to maintain it continuously (26:195-96).

Gathering, organizing, and analyzing data collected can be of great assistance to a principal. The following form taken from, Educational Administration in a Changing Community, 1959, can be used as a guide to determine what information about the community is needed by the principal.
By way of summary, the following form is suggested as a guide for gathering information about the community.

I. Community beliefs
   A. Which of the following are most important to the people of your community? (What gives a man his status?)
      __ Church attendance  __ Going far in school
      __ Leading a religious life __ Friendliness
      __ Location of residence  __ Wealth
      __ Kind of work one does __ Family background
      __ Individual worth __ Economic success
      __ Service to community __ Others
      __ Length of residence

   B. Every community has social layers. How would you describe the layers in your community?
   C. How loyal are the people to their community?
   D. How do the people react to new ideas?
   E. How are the newcomers received by the local people? How do they seem to adjust to the community?
   F. Do the people or organizations here cooperate with those of nearby communities for their mutual benefit?

II. Tradition
   A. What are the major historical developments of your community?
   B. Are the people here different from those of other places in regard to relationships or customs?
   C. What has been the role of the school board in developing and maintaining the school program? The role of the principal? the role of the teacher? the role of the superintendent?
III. Community aspirations

A. What would you consider the outstanding needs of your community, and what organizations should or could tackle them?
B. What do you like best about your community?
C. What is your biggest complaint about it? What could or should be done about it?
D. What are the most important things that should be done in improving the schools in your community?

IV. Decision making and leadership structure

A. Who are the outstanding leaders in your community?
B. Who decides the big issues in your community?
C. How is the leader's influence exerted?

V. Physical setting

A. What is the size of your community?
B. What is the general topography of your community?
C. What are the different neighborhoods in your community?
D. How is your community located with relation to nearby communities?
E. What is the nature of relationships with nearby communities?
F. Climate
   1. What is the range in temperature?
   2. What is the average rainfall?
G. Soil type
   1. Is the soil fertile?
   2. For what crops is it especially suited?
H. Resources
   Are resources of your community effectively utilized?

VI. Population characteristics

A. Kinds of people
   1. What proportion of the population is young, middle-aged, old?
   2. What is the ratio of men to women?
3. What is the divorce rate?
4. What proportion of the population is foreign born?
5. What minority groups are represented?

B. Growth of population
1. What is the relationship of birth rate to death rate?
2. What is the rate of out-migration?
   a. Where do people go?
   b. Why do they leave?
3. What is the rate of in-migration?
   a. Where do people come from?
   b. Why did they come to this community?
4. What is the population density?

C. Education of population
   What proportion completed elementary school, high school, college?

VII. Community economy

A. How many industries are there, and what is the size of each?
B. How many people are employed?
C. What number of employable people are unemployed?
D. What is the total income?
E. What is the per-capita income?
F. What is the tax rate?

VIII. Formal groupings

A. Religion
   1. How many denominations are represented?
   2. What proportion of the population belongs? Is membership increasing or decreasing?
   3. Are the churches debt free?
   4. How extensive are the church programs?
B. Education
   1. How many nurseries and kindergartens are there in the community?
   2. How do the schools of your community rank with others of the state as to:
      a. Physical equipment?
      b. Per-pupil cost?
      c. Instructional cost?
      d. Teacher load?
      e. Instructional program?
C. Social agencies
1. How many social agencies are there?
2. What services does each render?
3. How are they financed?
4. What needs are unprovided for by any existing agency?
5. How many people are on public relief?
6. How are juvenile delinquents handled?

D. Local government
1. What is the form?
2. Is the public satisfied? If not, what proposals are indicated?
3. Is there a planning board?
4. Is there a zoning program?

E. Recreation
1. What recreational opportunities are provided?
2. How are they supported?

F. Health and safety
1. What diseases are most prevalent?
2. What public-health services are available?
3. What is the ratio of physicians to population?
4. What are the provisions for sanitation and inspection?
5. What is the accident rate?
6. What are the standards for the police department as to personnel, salaries, number, etc.?

IX. Relationship of groups

A. Do organizations cooperate with each other?
B. What organizations seem to be in conflict with each other?
C. Are there too many organizations in the community?
D. Do you recall any groups or factions in the community which seem to disagree or cannot get along?
E. What groups consistently support the public schools?
F. What groups have a major interest in keeping down the tax rate? (1:152-57).
By using this form the principal can understand how little or how much he knows about the community, and also keep up with current developments within the community. With society changing so rapidly, the need for such a periodic check is necessary. "New insights into previous failures or successes may result from reviewing the information gathered by use of the form" (1:157).

3. **Identify areas of ignorance.** After studying the school and the community, school administrators can identify matters concerning the school situation in which there is little understanding or cooperation between the community and school. The principal should identify the areas of misconception and determine the public relations program accordingly. The administrator must correct misunderstanding so that favorable public sentiment will develop towards the educational program and which will enable the school system to secure the support of its citizens. It is the responsibility of school administrators to acquaint the home and the community with the real work and accomplishments, values, and needs of the school. This can be fully accomplished by means of a continuous informational program which is based on the principles outlined in Chapter II.
4. Develop an organization for carrying through a program. The school administrator must have definite plans for carrying a public relations program into action. There is no definite plan for all communities because no two communities have the same structure. In defining a program of school-community relations basic principles and guides such as those mentioned in Chapter II could be used to assist the principal in developing an adequate program. In carrying out an organized program the principal should involve laymen and representatives of groups within the community. Teachers, pupils, parents, and other citizens all should be included. Cooperation of these individuals and groups will have a definite effect on the public relations program. The strength of the program will depend upon the strength of those citizens within the community. The better the cooperation of the people, the better the school-community relations. As the people understand the school with its program, needs, and opportunities, the better the community will be able to judge their schools.

5. Provide for the administration and the evaluation of the program. The principal should plan for the evaluation of the school's public relations program. Through
the evaluation the administrator can determine if the established program is accomplishing the intended purposes. There must be a continuous appraisal of purpose, means and results.

Evaluation means a critical review of procedures and results in relation to objectives. It is essential to take stock continuously, with periodic over-all analysis, of the effects of various methods of interpretation and the degree to which contact with all segments of the public is made. In this way clues can be discovered for modification of the program's scope and improvement of methods.

There is no all inclusive technique for evaluation applicable to every situation. Systematic procedures have been developed which contribute to evaluative studies, but a local staff must use its imagination to devise others (16:600).

Methods of evaluation will be developed in Chapter V.

If these five principles are used as a guide to study the community in developing a public relations program, a well developed program should evolve.
II. PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

To assist the principal and staff to understand the community and its members it is important to participate in community organizations. Administrators and staff members should relate some of their school activities and personal interests to the community. Membership in community organizations helps improve community relations. The principal and staff members can make contacts within the community by joining such organizations as service clubs, fraternal orders, business and professional organizations, cultural groups, churches, civic organizations and other organizations in which membership is desirable and profitable in terms of better school-community relationships. The principal should join such community organizations in which he is personally interested. In this way the principal can demonstrate his ability to be a community leader. It is better for the principal to belong to only a few organizations so he can be active and contribute much to one organization rather than a little to many organizations. "A principal should not accept so many responsibilities in community groups that
that he is prevented from devoting the necessary amount of
time to his job as principal" (29:30). The importance of
the principal belonging to community organizations is
brought out in the following:

Whereas study of the community can contribute
significantly to the principal's growth, actual par-
ticipation in community affairs can yield other
returns even more valuable in some ways. Partici-
pation in community religious, welfare, fraternal,
political, and cultural groups will serve to bring
the principal close to the dynamic currents of the
community's life, and will have the effect of making
him more truly a community member in the eyes of his
neighbors and patrons. Fully as important, however,
is his opportunity to develop himself further as a
well rounded person, and to grow in his leadership
ability. By active and intelligent participation in
these groups the principal can enhance his standing
as an educator in the community, and at the same
time practice and develop his leadership and group
membership technique and skills. The principal
interested in growing in public speaking and group
discussion skills will find many opportunities in
community work. Furthermore, he will undoubtedly
also participate simply as a group member in many
activities and thereby learn better how to partici-
pate in that capacity and to appreciate more fully the
attributes of constructive group membership (22:29).

"School administrators should accept their responsi-
bilities as community leaders and should participate
actively as leaders and followers in activities involving
community welfare" (31:306).

As a community leader the principal can do much to
lead the community into a cooperative program of community
action (20:315). At no time should the principal guide community action for his personal welfare.

The principal should maintain at all times integrity, sincerity, and serious purpose in working toward acceptance as a community leader. At no time should he create the impression of merely trying to become a "success." Serious attention to gaining a status as a community leader, however, is a prerequisite to successful leadership in improvement of school-community relations. It may well be added that participation in community affairs and efforts at self-improvement likewise contribute to the development of the principal as an individual (37:316).

The principal must attempt to become a leader in some community organizations for the advancement of education in the community.

Community organizations exist in practically all American communities ready to assist the school. An alert principal will work closely with these organizations so the available help can be channeled to meet the needs of the children. The role of the principal becomes not one of maintaining good public relations alone but one of establishing a good working relationship with agencies which are organized for the purpose of helping the public (8:119).

School administrators should have an awareness of the educational or social purposes and services of all the community organizations. Any organization which through its activities contributes to the physical, mental, moral,
emotional, social, and spiritual uplift of childhood is an asset to public education. Its' interests and purposes should be studied. "There should be available in each school a continuously revised directory of all community organizations and activities (44:278).

Four factors are necessary to establish a working relationship between the school and community organization. First, the school personnel must know the services that are available in the community, including the people who have charge of the programs and how they can be reached. Second, school personnel must find ways of informing those agencies and organizations of the needs of children. Third, school personnel must assist with the coordination of the child-helping activities so that there is a minimum of duplications. Fourth, school personnel must be prepared to bring into existence more groups which will meet community needs that are not being met by the present operating agencies. These phases of work will have an important effect upon the school's public relation program (8:122). Each of these will be developed separately.

1. **Learning the sources of help that are available.** Among public and nonsectarian groups which have given
assistance to children and which principals have reported as giving valuable assistance are:

**Agencies whose sole purpose is extending help to children**
- Children's Aid Society
- Child Welfare Groups
- Juvenile Court

**Agencies which help the family**
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross
- Family Service
- State Departments of Public Assistance
- Mother's Assistance Boards

**Agencies which help the physically and mentally handicapped**
- State Bureaus of Rehabilitation
- Tuberculosis Association
- Heart Association
- National Polio Foundation
- Cancer Association
- State Clinics for Tuberculosis
- State Clinics for Venereal Disease
- Association for Crippled Children
- Mental Hygiene Association
- Foundation for the Blind

**Character building agencies**
- Boy Scouts
- Girl Scouts
- Camp Fire Girls
- Young Men's Christian Association
- Young Women's Christian Association
- 4-H Clubs

**Other organizations which frequently have projects to help children**
- American Association of University Women
- Junior League
- Needlework Guild
- American Legion
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Daughters of the American Revolution
Grange
Junior Red Cross
Medical and Dental Societies
Local Police
Men's Service Clubs
  Kiwanis
  Lions
  Optimist
  Rotary
  American Business Club
Women's Service Clubs
  Quota
  Soroptimist
  Business and Professional Women
Fraternal Organizations
  Masonic Orders
  Elks
  Eagles
  Moose (6:124-25)

A study of most any community will reveal some of these listed organizations and possibly others such as the Association for Handicapped, Future Farmers, Hi Y, Women's Auxiliary, Farm Bureau, Exchange and Altrusa. The school administrator should become familiar with the organizations in the school district so the school can receive any available assistance.

2. Informing the community agencies of the needs of children. Organizations can help children only if they know which children are in need of help. The school staff is in the best position to determine the needs of children and bring them to the attention of the proper organization. School personnel must take the initiative in presenting
organizations information about the needs of children. Both school and social agencies must work together to solve problems effectively (8:129-30).

Principals should be aware of the areas of responsibility some organizations have assumed. The following are some particular areas which children can receive help who are in need of medical and dental corrective work and whose parents are unable to pay the costs:

- Nutritional defects . . . . . . American Red Cross
- Rheumatic fever . . American Association of University Women
- Special clinic work . . Business and Professional Women's Club
- Underprivileged boys . . . . . . . . . . Kiwanis Club
- Sight . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Lion's Club
- Hearing . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Quota Club
- Cleft palate and special oral conditions . . . . . . . . . . Rotary Club

(8:130)

3. Coordinating the activities of organized community services. Because many agencies and organizations are interested in providing special services for children, duplication and overlapping are evident. The coordinating council plan has been adopted in many communities as the means to eliminate duplication and overlapping. These councils have been instituted by the school or formed by the organizations themselves. Whether the school or the organization is the motivating force behind the council
the principal should be an active member so he can relate the activities and needs of the children to the organizations. If such a council has not yet materialized the principal should take the initiative to develop such a council (8:131-34).

4. Developing organizations to meet needs that are not served by existing agencies. In some communities the principal may have to try and organize a group of people to assist the children in need. In developing such an organization it will be up to the individual school administrator to solve the problem due to the differences in communities. The principal must use every contributing force which will help to meet the child's needs.

These then are the ways in which the principal can channel community services to children's needs: First, by leading the school staff to be informed about the services that are available; second, informing the community agencies of the needs of children; third, coordinating the activities or organized community services; and fourth, developing organizations to meet the needs that are not served by existing agencies.

This chapter has shown how the principal can study the educational system, the community, and meet his
responsibility of being a leader in the community. The greatest contribution a principal can make is continually leading the community in the improvement of the entire educational program.
CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TO THE COMMUNITY

Public relations is not a panacea to solve all problems but in certain given situations it can be effective in restoring or creating good will and understanding. Since public relations acts as a buffer between the school and the community, the success of such a program depends upon how effectively the schools can communicate with the community. Methods of communicating, therefore, are basic considerations for the planning of every public relations program. Some of the agencies and resources that are available to the school administrator will be discussed briefly. These agencies are powerful influences in shaping ideas and attitudes. This chapter will analyze some of the agencies and materials that may be helpful in building or adapting a program for more desirable school-community relations.

I. METHODS USED FOR INTERPRETING THE SCHOOL TO THE PUBLIC

Some of the weaknesses in our educational system in the past and today can be traced to the lack of long-
range public relations programs. Educators have failed to
discuss the educational system freely with those people
who have the right to know their schools. Educators
should make determined efforts to build favorable public
opinion to support public education. This cannot be
achieved until the general public has been honestly
informed and interested in the needs and benefits of their
schools. This requires the use of mass media for con-
veying such information (4:161).

The effectiveness of school public relations is
determined in part by the media selected and the way
they are used. Wise selection and use of publicity
devices require, in turn, that educators see the
relationship of school and community. This implies
also that appropriate tools must be selected to
interpret each element within the entire field of school
service. However, one medium seldom will be enough to
cover the interpretive needs relating to a given
problem, or topic. Several media, aptly chosen and
developed together, usually will achieve the purpose
better than any single device (2:275).

Methods commonly and effectively used for inter-
preting education to the public are often grouped under
such main headings as personal relationships, newspapers,
radio and television, slide film and motion picture,
graphic materials, student publications, school district
publications, school district reports, messages to parents,
exhibits, and demonstrations. Other media of a more
specific type may be listed under one of these headings
(2:276; 37:20).
In school public relations every possible media must be utilized to acquaint the public with adequate, and truthful information. "No other agency must depend as much on keeping the public informed as does our schools" (36:55).

The need for communication with the public on various phases of education was emphasized in a bulletin of the U. S. Office of Education in the following statement:

Education, one of the most fundamental aspects of our society, receives relatively little attention by the layman outside of sensational occurrences which are played up by newspapers and magazines. It is recognized that factual material is, in and of itself, of little direct appeal; and, further, that information on education has to compete in the reader's interest and time with the great bulk of advertising and popular fiction prepared by those who are expert in appeasing for reading attention and time. It is believed that a matter of such fundamental concern to the American people as education should receive expert professional attention and service from the standpoint of popularization and competition with commercially published material to the end that education will occupy a larger place in the understanding of every American citizen. Those who are charged directly with the responsibility for the progress of education are not discharging their duty to the people who look to them for leadership if they do not keep the public duly informed, not only of the current status of education, but of its trends, problems, and needs (41:13).

School administrators must learn to present the schools and their needs to the man on the street, to the people who find the terminology of the professional difficult to understand and whose experience with the
schools may be so limited or completely lacking that the presentation must be entirely couched in the terminology and the experience background of the layman. Principals are entitled under most conditions to draw their own conclusions from the facts and to present them to the public in such a manner that conclusions have favorable treatment. The principal must accept the decision of the people in all matters as the proper function of the democratic process and not as an approval or rejection of his personal recommendations (38:312-13).

People learn about the schools largely through what they see, what they hear, what they experience—which involves both seeing and hearing—and what they read, which involves the visual process and their experience background. So, the visual process, the auditory process, and the psychological process of experience, growing into the understanding and the ultimate formation of judgment, are the basic equipment held by all people, which may be used in presenting the story of the schools to the public (38:312).

The following suggestions should lead towards more effective use of various public relations devices and procedures in reaching the public.

The Speech. The ability to deliver a good public speech is always an asset to the school administrator or other school employees. This does not mean that they must become professional orators. There will arise many
occasions when the principal or other school personnel are asked to speak, usually on a school topic. Service club luncheons, community gatherings, and school assemblies are some of the groups which the administrator must learn to address (38:317-18). Offering speakers to community clubs gives the schools a chance to tell about the tasks and needs of the schools. Public speaking is an avenue to the general community (17:377). The school can furnish many speakers for community occasions. There are always some members of the school system who like to speak and do it well (19:130).

School personnel should try and strengthen their speech organization and presentation. The following are a few suggestions for those who are interested in increasing their ability as a speaker.

When an invitation to give a public address is accepted, it is wise to plan at once a time schedule for its preparation.

In preparing an address, keep in mind the age and the interest of the group.

In preparation of an address, first state the main theme in a simple sentence; then expand the theme with well organized subtopics and appropriate illustration to fill up the allotted time. Never make a speech too long and never run over time limits.

Develop a native humor by studying the rules of wit and humor, but studiously avoid the retelling of a trite joke, just because someone else made you laugh by telling it.

It is usually not effective to memorize a prepared speech. Neither is the best effect produced by reading
a prepared address, and visible reference to notes should be avoided where possible.

In delivering the address remember, like a written document, the first and the last paragraphs are highly important.

Try to be rested and relaxed on the occasion of the delivery of an address. This admonition is most important but most difficult to achieve. The busy school executive has so little time to rest and to build up emotional reserve that frequently, standing before an audience, he finds himself overburdened with lack of sleep and beridden with emotional fatigue.

Be poised and always natural in the delivery of an address. This requires practice and diligent care.

Prepare for the inevitable question period. It has become a habit of the American public to ply a speaker with questions following an address (38:318-20).

The newspapers. Newspapers are a means of mass communication which enables the minds of a number of people to be reached simultaneously or, at least, within a short time span. This and other types of mass communication are effective in reference to issues when they have a sound psychological appeal to people's emotions, values, sense of justice, wit, and humor. Mass communication has been found to be weak in influencing the outcome of an issue in a setting where extensive personal contacts were feasible. A personal contact, a personal letter, and other more intimate modes of communication will get binding commitments more readily than mass communication (23:30-31).

The importance of good publicity must not be minimized, but neither should it obscure the importance of other approaches to good school public relations.
The main purposes of school publicity are (1) to educate the public, (2) to build up the school, (3) to correct misleading impressions about the school, (4) to forestall emergencies, and (5) to prevent or counteract the destructive activities of special interest groups. A very common objective, but one which loses much of its significance when publicity is regular and continuous, is (6) to "sell" particular proposals for school expansion, especially the adoption of bond issues or the authorization of increases in current funds (30:454).

When working with the press, administrators and other school personnel need to establish a relationship characterized by mutual confidence. Newsmen are professional people and should be treated as such. Most newspeople are ready and willing to cooperate when properly approached by school personnel. The administrator should respect the profession of the newsman and also provide leadership within the school system for cooperation. School people must recognize those school events which have news value. In schools many activities and events are newsworthy but fail to be publicised. Many teachers and principals have not developed skill in recognizing such events (42:546-47).

In addition to recognizing news events it is also important that school people develop skill in preparing news releases. Certain rules must be remembered in preparing such releases.
1. If the release covers a news event, it must, by all means, be delivered on time. This often means fast writing and delivery by messenger service to the city desk.

2. If it is a news release the gist of the whole story must be included in the first paragraph, if possible in the first sentence. Other rules of news writing involve terminology, the lead words in the opening and following paragraphs, and brevity coupled with conciseness.

3. Names of local people must be included wherever possible.

4. Quotes are highly desirable, and they must be checked back for accuracy.

5. It must be expected that the story may be cut to conform to the space limitations in the makeup room, and the story may be rewritten to conform to the paper's distinctive style.

6. The story may have a title, but seldom will the title appear as the headline (38:288-89).

Newspaper personnel should be encouraged to visit the school to develop an understanding of the school situation. Newswriters should have the feeling that they are always welcome in the school.

If the local newspaper editor can be induced to visit the school and spend some time in classes, he may have a better understanding of our problem and, in some cases, he may become a supporter of our modern school program. Above all, he should never be given the "brush-off" because he is in a very strategic position to do something about such treatment (39:277).

There should be a continuous flow of school news from the school to the newspaper office. Good press relations established on a long term basis, can be valuable to the public school system. The building of cooperation with the newspaper has proven to be an effective
method of dealing with untoward incidents when they occur. Cooperation can be built and maintained with a reasonable amount of effort on the part of school people and newspaper employees. However, it is often up to the school administrator to make the first move towards establishing friendly relations (15:66-68). If these steps are taken a better understanding can be developed between the press and the schools, and the newspapers will contribute more effectively toward the advancement of education.

Radio and television. The use of radio and television as means of mass appeal presents limitless possibilities for selling the values of education to millions by the indirect approach of calling attention to what the schools are doing. Television and radio extend a welcoming hand to ideas and materials with educational value. Serious and interesting programs always are in demand, because there exists in the public a continuous hunger for knowledge. Radio and television can help sell the values of education to millions of people by calling attention to what the schools are doing (6:206-07).

School administrators and other staff members should work cooperatively with specialists in the field of radio and television. Much can be learned from specialists regarding what personnel can do.
In the area of radio and television, if effective work is to be done, local school systems will need to take steps to secure essential facilities and to stimulate the development of the essential skills on the part of members of the professional staff, so that they will recognize the opportunities which exist in the school, will be able to prepare script, and will be able to develop programs to put on the air or on the screen. In some communities, schools have made great headway in this area with the help of directors of education of local radio and television stations (42:553).

**Slide films and motion pictures.** Good pictures can produce highly desirable reactions whenever pictures are shown that depict school activity. These can be most effective if properly used.

Classroom activities, if carefully posed, sports shots, pictures of shop activities, of social events, of guidance counselors at work, of attractive buildings with children about them, are typical of the natural scenes which schools may use to demonstrate their activities to the public (38:314).

**Graphic and pictorial materials.** Graphic techniques must be utilized in expressing educational concepts into meaningful terms for the layman. "The public desires a broad overview of the purposes and methods of public education presented in graphic, pictorial, translation form" (28:273). Cubberly emphasized the necessity of informing the public through graphic and pictorial material when he said:
The public only takes seriously those presentations of school needs and conditions which are based upon carefully collected and well-interpreted facts. Only by the use of such data, set forth by means of tables, colored circles, curves, black-line graphs, or other graphic representations, can the people be made acquainted with the whole work of the school, be made to realize where the schools break down, be brought to understand the necessity of certain adjustments within the school, be brought to appreciate the propriety of expending such large sums of money upon education (9:429).

Letters. Every letter, like every speech and overt act, has public relations potentialities. Next to personal contact, correspondence is the best public relations medium. Letters are personal and can generate a lot of good will if properly used. If every parent in the school district received a short note from the teacher or principal every time a child acquired a new skill or showed some improvement, the attitude of the entire community toward the schools would be improved. As it is, too often parents hear from the principal or teachers only when there is trouble to report (13:483-84).

School men should practice the art of writing and should take time to analyze and appraise the results. The writing of letters, the preparation of reports, the writing of pamphlets and brochures, notes and announcements to parents—these constitute the chief means by which the schools are presented through the written word to the community. Too frequently the busy school executive and the teacher write hastily without good organization, and without critical reading of their own writing. Each community will
have its sticklers for good English who will be critical of punctuation, spelling, split infinitives, and other deviations from traditional form. Worse than the criticism of these people, however, is the confusion created by poor style, excess verbiage, and the jargon of pedagogical terminology. School people should study carefully their own style and the effectiveness of their writing (38:315).

Every word, act, and situation makes its contribution toward the worthwhile end of informing the public.

Student Publications. Student publications usually include the school newspaper, the magazine, the yearbook, and miscellaneous publications. Of these, the school newspaper is most frequently used. School newspapers are usually found in the high school, however, they are coming into prominent use in the elementary school, especially in mimeograph or other easily duplicated form. Many of these publications may find their way into the home to be read by the parent. For creating better school-community relations through student publications, the following principles are offered by Yeager:

1. Student publications should be designed to conform to the place and function of the public school in a democracy, to inform properly concerning the school's program, and to build up a desirable student body opinion to the end that more desirable school-community relations may exist.

2. Student publications should be designed primarily by and for students, expressing all activities of the school and all points of view.
3. Commercialized material has no place in them. The use of advertising for underwriting all, or a part of the cost, is open to serious question.

4. Censorship and suppression should be replaced by wise and tactful sponsorship by the staff and student body itself.

5. The determination of types of publications and frequency of issues will depend upon size, type, needs, and traditions of school, school policies, and funds available.

6. More and more the publications should be adapted to fostering better school-community relations through the student body. Sound principles of journalism should characterize their administration (44:172-73).

In addition to the value in mirroring the school's ideals, aspirations, and accomplishments, student publications can be in the teaching of English what the laboratory is in chemistry or physics. Student publications may become one of the most effective agencies in developing and sustaining an excellent morale among the students of the school (33:581). Student publications should be established by the school administration in cooperation with the staff members assigned to supervise these publications and the student body representatives.

Reports. Citizens of a community can expect that the school administrator will report from time to time on the financial conditions of the school, and the needs of the school. No one method can be used for reporting in all communities. Each administrator must study the
particular community in order to find the most effective means of reporting. Some administrators must make use of many media, while others rely primarily upon the budget and the annual report. These reports can be attractive and interesting to the layman through the use of pictures, charts, and graphs (34:251-52).

School exhibits and demonstrations. Advance planning is required by school personnel for an effective exhibit or demonstration.

School exhibits and demonstration include: (a) in-school exhibits, such as displays of student work in cases, in the main hall; (b) out-of-school exhibits in store windows or meeting halls, which may include examples of student work as well as active participation by pupils; (c) portable exhibits, which may consist of mounted groups; (d) live demonstrations by pupils, representing various departments of the school; (e) photographic exhibits; and (f) dramatizations and pageants, for presentation on school or community programs (2:301).

The following suggestions are offered by Yeager in connection with the school exhibits in a school-community program:

1. The purposes of the school exhibit should be in harmony with the school's educational objectives. It should be meaningful and the outcomes sought should be reasonably attainable and understood by all.

2. The exhibit should be adapted to the everyday work of the school, the work so arranged as to show the progressive development of school work as a whole.
and educational growth of each individual pupil. It should show the results of projects in which groups of children have participated.

3. The exhibits should be arranged as to inspire community confidence in the school program and its activities. They should be conspicuously labeled with captions and explanatory notes in simple language.

4. A logical and coordinated arrangements of individual rooms, departments, or buildings should be made by some directing head such as the principal or committee of teachers in which individuality, cooperation, and the work of each pupil stands out clearly. Friendly competition among teachers should be wholesome. Any form of prize or banner as the "best" award should be discouraged, since certain grades or subjects may be better adapted for exhibition purposes than others.

5. Skill in arrangement and artistry in design should characterize the whole exhibit.

6. Since it would appear that better understandings are basic to school exhibitions in which parents, teachers, and community individuals and groups are brought together, every opportunity should be provided which will contribute to this end. This means that teachers and other school personnel should be conspicuous by their presence and availability (44:162).

The principal in his concern that the schools be integrated with the community finds he can use various devices and procedures in reaching the public, such as public speaking, newspapers, radio and television, graphic and pictorial materials, letters, student publications, school exhibits and demonstrations in interpreting the schools to the community. The various types of media selected by the school administrator should be those which will gain the objectives of the program of school public relations and which in their employment contribute to the advancement of education.
CHAPTER V

EVALUATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

Evaluation should be regarded as a highly important phase of the total public relations program. The public relations program of every school needs examination and redirection from time to time to adjust to educational and social changes. Administrators need to know the strength and weaknesses of the present public relations program. If weaknesses appear in the program, changes must be adopted to correct the present conditions. Evaluation should be carefully planned and undertaken by carefully selected personnel (2:251).

Evaluation of the school's public relations program in any given situation must be done with sincerity and honesty. The evaluation does not have to be severe, what is undertaken must be done as accurately as conditions permit. Public relations aspects are to be examined for the purpose of noting opportunities for possible improvements. In selecting evaluative criteria, administrators must realize that evaluators continually grow and change. Elements in the present public relations program that appear unimportant may take on a new meaning as administrators acquire new experiences and additional information in the field of public relations (25:227-28).
Individual differences in communities make it necessary to arrange special evaluative procedures that are adapted to the particular school and community. "Any program of evaluation must discover procedures for capitalizing upon desirable values which the recognition of individual differences offers" (25:228).

The evaluation of a program of public school relations must be based upon purposes. These purposes should be closely allied with the general philosophy of the school (24:298; 30:467). "If a basic philosophy emphasizes participation and cooperation in the school's internal activities, then these same things will be stressed in its public relations" (30:467).

By careful planning the principal and staff can develop a fairly comprehensive set of pertinent questions, based upon criteria or principles, which can be used for evaluating a public relations program. Evaluative questions may be stated as to be answered with a simple "yes" or "no", or they may require the appraiser to estimate the degree of success (2:264-65).

There is no all-inclusive technique for evaluation applicable to every situation. Systematic procedures have been developed which contribute to evaluative studies, but a local staff must use its imagination to devise others. The fact that some measures of effectiveness may be informal (in the sense that they are not standardized) does not detract in the least
from their usefulness; collectively, they may be fully as revealing as more formal inquiry (16:600).

The following are typical questions which may be used in making an appraisal of the success or failure of the public relations program in any given school situation:

1. Is there evidence of a well-planned program of public relations?
   Much...... Some...... Little...... None......

2. Is the program built upon the philosophy of Publicity?...... Educational interpretation?...... Cooperative enterprise, involving home-school-community relationships?......

3. How wide is the range and variety of the public relations activities?
   Extensive...... Moderate...... Very limited......

4. Is there evidence that the schools are a vital factor in contributing to improve community living?
   Abundant...... Some...... Little...... None......

Evaluative criteria can be used to measure the degree of success of the activities or processes employed in the program. Among these are communication, coordination, and interpretation. The following are suggestive of evaluative questions of this type:

1. Are the published materials written in interesting style and in language that is simple, direct, and readily comprehended?
   Always...... Usually...... Sometimes......
   Seldom......

2. Are the modern instruments of communication—the press, motion pictures, radio, television—being used to advantage?
   Excellent...... Good...... Fair...... Poor......

3. Is there definite provision for face-to-face discussions of educational policies, practices, and problems?
   Much...... Little...... None......

4. Is there provision for the coordination of all agencies serving children in the community, e.g. a community council on education?
   Excellent...... Good...... Fair...... Poor......
5. Are the various public relations activities coordinated into a comprehensive and well-balanced program?  
   Yes..... No.....

6. To what extent is information concerning the schools properly interpreted to the public, as for example, thru demonstrations of school activities, exhibits, festivals, and education week activities?  
   Marked..... Considerable..... Little..... Not at all.....

Evaluative criteria can also be applied to the effects and outcomes of the program in terms of community response. Criteria of this type should help to determine the changes in attitudes, opinions, appreciations, and understandings of home-school-community relationships. Evaluative questions such as the following would be appropriate:

1. Is there evidence of a favorable attitude toward the school program and school expenditures?  
   Very much..... Some..... Very little..... None.....

2. In general are the people as a whole working together to build a better community?  
   To a marked extent..... To some extent..... Little evidence..... Not at all.....

3. Is there evidence in the community of a strong desire to progress?  
   Very much..... Some..... Little..... None.....

4. Is a strong sense of personal and individual responsibility for the success of the school program present in the minds of the citizens generally?  
   Yes..... No.....

(2:265-66)

This is merely one approach to evaluating the public relations program of a given school.

There are other scientific as well as comprehensive studies in evaluating a school's public relations program. Check lists, rating scales, and scoring methods have been used to evaluate public relations activities. These
studies which offer suggestions and findings can assist the school administrator only as he adapts them to the local school-community situation. Many of these studies on the evaluation of the school's public relations program are cited in the 1950 Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators (2:Ch.II).

Many of the elements in evaluating the public school relations program defy measurement. Much of the success of the various activities depends upon attitudes formed within the community. Probably the most important factor in forming public opinion is the student himself. A happy, satisfied student usually reflects a good school. "Much of the interpretive action of students is inherent in the effectiveness of the total school program (24:302).

A plan for improvement is the logical outcome after an evaluation has been taken of the public relations program. "Most serious difficulties should be attacked first, with a schedule of objectives roughed out for a period of two or more years" (16:602).

A school administrator cannot ignore the evaluation of the public relations program whether expressed as favorable or unfavorable. Evaluation and corrective action will lead to a better school-community relationship.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In a democracy such as ours, special attention must be given to the cooperation of parents and patrons with the school, with particular emphasis on the public relations values of such joint participation. Since the school belongs to the people and is supported by them, the future development of the educational system is determined largely by what the public knows about the school. It is the obligation of school officials and employees to inform the public through a public relations program (33:vii).

The principal has a responsibility for formulating a public relations program. As a school administrator he must encourage the community to accept its responsibility of continued support to their school. In order to achieve this a well conceived program of public relations is necessary. Progress in public schools will depend largely upon good public relations in the community.

The public relations job of the school principal includes many phases, from directing the community survey to analyzing and eliminating trouble spots. The program is so large it is almost impossible to attain success by a one-man dictatorial method of administration. The nature
and demands of the public relations program require cooperation and participation of every available agent. This program must be considered all inclusive and each school individual must be considered a potential public relations' agent. It is the duty of the school administrator to involve all the staff, both professional and non-professional in the public relations program.

The success of the program depends largely upon the accuracy of community analysis. By understanding the community, the program of public relations derives strength and effectiveness.

It is the duty of the principal to take the initiative in interpreting the school to the public. In order to develop a good program the principal must select the media that will be most effective in meeting the needs of the school. Any one medium selected may be sufficient to cover a complete program, but usually several well chosen media will accomplish this purpose better. When selecting the media for a specific purpose, the best available should be chosen and then used to its fullest extent. He must also assume responsibility for planning and directing the entire program. He may achieve results best through directing and stimulating others while personally remaining in the background.
If this study of public relations will be of help to school administrators in promoting within the community increased understanding and appreciation of the needs, values and objectives of the school, the purpose of this research will have been accomplished.
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