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The Role of the Principal as the Adviser to the High School Student Council

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THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS THE ADVISER TO THE
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

A Research Paper

Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by

Robert J. Marum

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THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE
COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

E. E. Samuelson
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A secondary school, in this country, without a student council is indeed rare; but the fact that most schools do have such an organization doesn't necessarily mean that it is functioning properly or that it is fulfilling its primary purposes and objectives.

As an adviser, the high school principal has a most important responsibility to the student council if it is to be an effective and integral part of the entire school structure. In order for a student council to become an effective, efficient, and actively functioning organization, the principal must provide the proper leadership and guidance.

I. THE PROBLEM

State of the problem. The purpose of this study was (1) to investigate the means by which a principal can effectively counsel and guide a student council into becoming a democratic and constructive organization dedicated to active and effective student participation in school government; (2) to evaluate the various methods and techniques of leadership one must use in order to promote and encourage sound

organization, and to effect a very real laboratory in citizenship and democratic living; and (3) to gather criteria for the improvement of student council leadership.

Limitations of the problem. This study will not attempt to gather a great deal of information on student council functions, constitutions, and projects because this lies within the responsibility of individual schools. It is primarily concerned with the principal's obligation and responsibility for the fulfillment of the proper purposes and objectives of student participation in school government.

Importance of the study. It is vitally important that students be educated to live intelligently in the society which surrounds them. If they are to become familiar with the functions of the democratic way of life then they should naturally live democratically. There is a definite need for students who are well-informed in the principles of the democratic way of life, and for trained leaders as well as intelligent followers--the student council offers these opportunities. For a school to properly provide for such opportunities, it is necessary to have well-trained and effective advisers--herein lies the significance of this study.

Procedures in collecting and analyzing data. Reference material was secured from the library of Central Washington State College and from the professional library of Woodland, Washington, High School. This material was reviewed and screened and only the most important and vital information noted.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Student Council. It is a council which shares in the promotion of a well-administered school. It is comprised of elected students and a faculty adviser. It provides for student participation in school government.

Adviser. The school's faculty representative assigned as the consultant to the student council. He is responsible for guiding, counseling, and advising the organization.

School government. This term refers to the phase of the school program which involves administrative and allied responsibilities. It would include the extraclass or student activity program and usually involves the managing and directing of the co-curricular program.

Activities program. Sometimes known as the third curriculum, extra-curricular, co-curricular, or extraclass phase of the total school

program. It is a combination of all the events and activities in which students participate outside of their regular scheduled classes. It involves school activities voluntarily engaged in by students, which have the approval of and are sponsored by the faculty and which do not carry credit toward promotion or graduation.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT COUNCILS

I. ANCIENT HISTORY

The history of student participation in school government can be traced back through the centuries. Children were taught by means of the simple procedure of observation and participation. Plato, and later one of his students, Aristotle, were the first to give formal recognition to the basic philosophy of student participation in the old schools of ancient Greece--first in Plato's Academy and later in Aristotle's Lyceum. The Spartans also used student participation in their military schools (34:1).

During the Renaissance period in Europe, instances were noted in which students banded together and controlled the school, even to the extent of hiring their own teachers. In England, head boys were appointed for the purposes of developing leadership and student government (34:2).

II. AMERICAN HISTORY

One of the first instances of student participation in American institutions occurred in 1779 in the College of William and Mary. It was

here that students first elected their own representatives. Thomas Jefferson believed and put into practice, at the University of Virginia, the theory that students should be concerned in the operation of their own activities. Evanston College, in Indiana, pioneered the self-government approach in the midwestern states. The New England states were also to move in this direction and not until 1825, when the New York School adopted a monitorial system, did they begin to make progress into student participation in school government. The first plan that resembles our modern system of student government was established in the Hartford Public High School, Connecticut, in 1852. No further gains were made until 1894 when the George Junior Republic at Freeville, New York, instituted an outstanding example of student participation in school government--and this was the real beginning (34:3).

III. DEVELOPMENT

The educational pioneers of student government caused a minor revolution in the field of school administration and education. These bold new ideas met with much resistance and ridicule. Many of the experiments failed because these early proponents of self-government went to the extreme in allowing students to control the school. Much

of the success of our present programs must be attributed not only to the pioneers and their successes and failures, but also to the conscientious students who helped blaze the trail.

The present-day school has evolved from an institution which offered a restricted program serving only a few drawn from the favored segments of society. In the past, only the privileged went to school, and only for a few hours a day, to study foreign language, rhetoric, and mathematics. Now the children of all the people go to high schools and study everything from ancient language to automobile mechanics (13:20).

The development has been somewhat slow with many old traditions and prejudices to overcome, but the transition kept growing steadily. First, Puritan tradition had to be eradicated, then they relaxed the rules and penalties "yet holding aloof from any non-academic contamination" (13:23), and on into the period of easily available and encouraged extra-curricular activities and student government.

Today there are thousands of high schools that provide opportunities for pupils to participate in the management of the school as part of the democratic education provided by secondary-school administration (34:5).

By means of the development and acceptance of the student council program, schools can assist boys and girls in becoming men and women by providing vital, meaningful experiences, which will induce growth and maturity.

CHAPTER III

THE FUNCTIONS, OBJECTIVES, AND PURPOSES OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

I. FUNCTIONS

One of the primary aims of public education is to develop intelligent, well-informed, useful, and active citizens. Our schools must provide experiences in democratic living and one of the most successful means seems to be the practice of student participation in school control.

The main function of the student council is to provide learning experiences for the students. Its principal contribution to learning is the development of good citizenship. For this reason, the student council is no longer considered to be extracurricular or an adjunct to the curriculum, but an integral part of it (4:7).

In the preface to the book, The Third Curriculum, by Kirkendall and Zeran, it is stated:

We need a school life that is real and engrossing, not simply a transient experience leading bridgelike to later life. Our educational institutions are often isolated islands to which the children retreat during the day, but return to the mainland at night where the flow of life goes on. The expression which teachers often use with their pupils, "when you get out of school into life," indicates

clearly that for some of the school authorities themselves the island is totally disconnected from the mainland. The more nearly we can put the school on the mainland, the more realistic and gripping education will become. Student participation in activities concerning with vital, meaningful problems will help in creating genuine living situations in the school experience (21:1).

The organization and activities of a good student council provide the means whereby students practice in situations meaningful to them the things that good citizens do (4:7).

Students must find satisfaction of many different needs if they are to achieve academically and develop socially. Among these needs are the need of recognition, the need of belonging, the need of respect, and the need to contribute.

As another function, the student council is sometimes responsible for helping the administration organize, plan, and manage the co-curricular program.

Dr. Smith has a different viewpoint in regard to student council functions. He states, "The major function of the student council is disciplinary in nature and the remaining functions are, in descending order of frequency of mention, organization, service, special projects, and research (36:32)."

The function and structure of the student council provides an opportunity for students to recognize democratic ends and apply democratic means in achieving them. By applying democratic means,

students are able to maintain and improve their environment.

I think a concluding idea which would best describe the present-day concept of the student council's function would be "student participation in school administration."

II. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

Naturally, an organization should have definite purposes and objectives in order to justify its existence and to assure its success.

Some basic purposes and objectives offered by Cummings are:

1. To develop attitudes of, and give practice in, good citizenship.
 - a. Understanding how democracy works.
 - b. Fostering correct sentiments of law and order.
 - c. Teaching respect for authority.
 - d. Gaining practice in self-discipline.
 - e. Training for leadership and followership.
 - f. Accepting responsibility.
2. To assist in school management.
3. To provide a training ground for developing leadership.
4. To provide a forum for student expression.
5. To promote the general welfare of the school.
 - a. Improving student-student, student-faculty, and school-community relationships.
 - b. Developing and maintaining good school spirit.
 - c. Promoting scholarship.
 - d. Helping to solve school problems.
 - e. Orienting students.
 - f. Developing high ideals of personal conduct (8:13).

Extracurricular activities represent the main area of the council's responsibility. The council helps to promote, coordinate, finance, and evaluate these activities; it insures that each activity occupies its proper place; it weeds out organizations and activities that are detrimental and those which no longer contribute (24:185).

VanPool has some worthwhile ideas in regard to the purposes of a student council:

The student council provides opportunity for pupil self-expression; fosters all worthy student activities; provides a forum for the discussion of mutual problems; creates and maintains high standards of good citizenship; studies many problems and arrives at logical conclusions; helps to establish better relationships within the school; helps to develop a better sense of responsibility among students; and gives direction to school policy because the council is aware, even better than the faculty, of current trends in student attitudes and can better interpret what students think and believe (45:54).

Student participation in school control should give students a chance to practice citizenship. The student association is being used more and more as a center from which the democratic activities of the school radiate (16:86).

Smith believes the first principle for the effective student council is the proposition that:

The purpose for the student council in the high school is to help promote the school's efforts to develop competent adult citizens by enriching the learning environment through the provision of a means for youth to be competent

in the solving of problems which engage the interests and challenge the needs of adolescents (36:45).

The following three sets of objectives indicate the benefit that might be gained by the students, the school and the community. The students will derive the greatest benefit from these:

1. To train for citizenship through participation in school government.
2. To develop leadership qualities.
3. To provide a clearinghouse of student opinion.
4. To provide an opportunity to participate in school activities
5. To provide an opportunity for pupil self-expression.

The school may gain most from these:

1. To develop in the student body a high morale and a sense of pride in the school.
2. To promote better student-faculty relationships.
3. To provide a channel to reach the student body more effectively.
4. To conduct social affairs.
5. To organize school activities.
6. To conduct various campaigns.
7. To help solve school problems.

And for the community:

1. To represent the student body on various civic committees.
2. To assist in various community drives and campaigns.
3. To assist in reducing delinquency.
4. To develop good public relations (18:88).

Actually, no student council should copy a set of objectives from another council nor accept them from some authority. The council should derive its basic or general objectives out of the reasons and

purposes for which it was established in its own school. The specific objectives should arise from a careful consideration of local problems with which the council feels it can deal successfully.

The student council as a teaching device, as a learning situation, allows the school to utilize what is known about how people learn most efficiently. The student council is a means to achieve the major purpose of public schools--the improvement of the insights and skills of young citizens so that they may one day direct their own destiny as a nation in the accepted democratic pattern (26:2).

Here are some concepts which are fundamental to democratic deliberation and a good foundation or good reasons for student councils:

1. Democratic decisions can be made more wisely when some basic criteria against which to judge decisions are developed.
2. Open discussion of issues, and an attempt to present and press a point is not a subversion but a strengthening of it.
3. In making decisions, group welfare, as well as private interests, must be considered.
4. In a representative democracy, representatives must be vested with the power to deliberate and make choices.
5. The making of vital decisions is not only a privilege, but a responsibility as well.
6. A minority is not to be silenced simply because it is out-voted.

7. In a democratic program, greater strength can be developed through a diversity of opinion than would be possible through an insistence on uniformity.
8. Citizens of a democracy must accept some of the responsibility for the proper functioning of their program.
9. In a democratic situation, the only real control is self-control.
10. In order to maintain group freedom, it is necessary for a group to exercise the disciplinary influence of public opinion with its own members.
11. In a democracy, final sanction must be vested in some person or group.
12. Democratic living demands earnestness, hard work, devotion, and sacrifice.
13. Good citizenship is a learned reaction, rather than disposition induced by good will (21:30).

Objectives are essential to effective evaluation. Objectives provide a measuring stick against which the outcomes of an activity, a project, or a year's work can be compared. Evaluations should always be made in terms of both the immediate and long-range objectives of the student council.

There are a number of major points which seem to increase the value of student council activity for all concerned. Freeborn calls these features the "theory of involvement. "

First, the work of the council must be necessary and meaningful. The projects undertaken must hold

responsibility, must be a portion of total school articulation, and must serve some meaningful purpose. Second, the work of the council must encompass as much area as the principal can logically allot to it in light of the philosophy and regulations of the school. Third, the principal must have courage to allow a council project to fail after all due assistance and guidance has been offered. Fourth, relationship between the council and the principal must be based upon mutual respect and confidence. A proposal by the council must receive serious consideration by the principal. On the other hand, the council must know that the basic precept of both the principal and its own body politic are identical--the welfare of the students who attend that school (14:175).

In the student council, a student has an opportunity to participate intelligently with his peers in the activities of representative democracy, to accept responsibility as a member or officer of a group, to cooperate with others on projects of concern to him, to recognize problems around school and plan for their solution, and to look for some improvement as a result of his efforts.

The unique contributions that the student council can make lie principally in the area of developing good citizenship, social competence, and ethical character. More specifically, then, the purpose of the student council is to supplement the other phases of the school program in helping to meet the educational needs of youth toward which it can make unique and definite contributions. The objectives for the student council of each student body must be worked out jointly by students and staff in harmony with the local philosophy of education.

Once the objectives are agreed upon, all activities or projects undertaken by the student council must be conducted and evaluated in terms of their contributions toward achieving the objectives and fulfilling the basic purpose of student participation, which is to contribute directly toward meeting the educational needs of our youth (18:90).

One large area of council authority is the one in which students, faculty, administration, and other adults try cooperatively to work out solutions to school problems.

The student council should be engaged in real and meaningful work. Its purpose and function must be important and vital to the school program and it must feel that it has an eminent place in the operation of the school.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS ADVISER TO THE STUDENT COUNCIL

I. THE QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD ADVISER

Guiding and counseling a student council toward appreciable accomplishments and success is a challenge and an imposing task for an adviser. The effectiveness and success of a student council depends heavily upon this person. The demands of the position and the formidable requirements are exceeded only by the rewards of working with a dedicated and conscientious group of young people.

In many of our smaller schools, the principal is responsible for sponsoring or advising the student council. The two positions seem to compliment one another because the principal can bring to the council his training in human relations, his varied experiences in administrative tasks, his knowledge of school policy, his financial and managerial sense, his familiarity with the total school program, and his concern for improving the school in general.

Sterner lists the following criteria for student council advisers:

1. The council adviser should have a well-developed understanding of the place of the student council in the American secondary school today.
2. He should have exhibited sympathy, interest, appreciation, and enthusiasm for the student council movement.
3. He must be convinced that democratic action to meet democratically defined goals is important for high school students to learn now.
4. If possible, he should have been an active member of his student council (or a major civic organization) in high school and/or college.
5. He must display wholesome personal traits such as a sense of humor, tact, friendliness, fairness, patience, and vitality. He must be discreet and professional when discussing school personnel.
6. He should be a warm-hearted individual who is accepted by colleagues and students alike.
7. He must be self-confident enough to act on his own initiative in matters where school policy permits. Though he often represents the principal, the adviser should be venturesome. He should not feel that he needs to wait for orders from his superior.
8. He must be ready, willing, and able to work with all youth regardless of race, creed, or ethnic background.
9. He must know the school well, its strengths, weaknesses, and the sources of data as needed. Usually three or more years' service in the school is essential to attain such a level of competence.
10. He must seek what is wrong when a project fails, rather than who is wrong.
11. He must be willing to consider the welfare of the whole school paramount when decisions are being drafted.

12. He must respect the right of the minority to maintain a position contrary to that of the majority even after decisions are made.
13. He must know and understand young people, their growth and development during adolescence, their problems, and potentialities. He must have the ability to discipline pupils even in informal situations, to gain their respect rather than to threaten.
14. He must be willing to allow the students to assume a great deal of responsibility for their own affairs in the council. He must be able to aid the group to achieve its own goals, and not impose letter perfect drill on their speech, parliamentary procedure, note taking, record keeping, etc.
15. He must be willing to sacrifice some of his own time to do a good job even if there is some allowance during the school day for council business.
16. He should be able to plan systematically, and to guide students to do likewise.
17. He must be willing to extend his knowledge of student council, and many related areas, in order to keep abreast of the demands of the position.
18. He must be interested in the problems of social living and school civic affairs. Students' concerns extend into many facets of school life (39:34).

The adviser should have all the qualities of a good teacher. The way he plays his role, whether he is democratic or dictatorial, whether he dominates or neglects, and his tact and sincerity, can be most significant to the student council and the school.

The personal qualifications, characteristics and traits of the adviser will greatly affect the success of a student council. He should have an attractive personality and be able to work effectively with young people, fellow teachers, administrators, and lay people. The adviser should be enthusiastic for, and have confidence in, the group program. He should be congenial, energetic, fair-minded, dependable, honest, and have good moral standards. He should also have a sense of humor, imagination, self-confidence, and he must have faith in the judgment and responsibility of young people.

There are many ways in which a good adviser can effectively promote a successful program of student participation and one important aspect that should not be overlooked is planning. He should be able to encourage frank and open discussion of points of view even when different from his own. He should be regarded as a friendly guide, capable of understanding the problems, views, and interests of youth. His function is that of making the social ideals of democracy actualities. He is a spokesman for the students, although not one of their number; he is a member of the faculty, but not their spokesman; he is an arbitrator; he is a many faceted expert; he is an educational statesman.

The adviser's primary task is to work with and through the members of the student council to promote and develop a phase of their civic education. To realize this goal he should do the following:

Toward students:

1. Interpret the aims and objectives of the student council for members and non-members.
2. Help them increasingly to make their own decisions, identify their own problems and goals, plan projects or activities, execute their own plans, evaluate their own efforts.
3. Aid them in accepting responsibility for their own actions.
4. Welcome and listen to students' suggestions and ideas, especially on extra-curricular activities of the school.
5. Assist pupils by clarifying points at issue on council business.
6. Respect confidences of students seeking counsel on personal problems.

To aid the student council members, the adviser should:

1. Help the students define long-term goals as well as short-term ones.
2. Counsel pupils on best methods to be employed to reach defined objectives.
3. Suggest sources of information about student council, new ideas for projects and activities; answer questions frankly, fairly, and objectively.
4. Inform students of school traditions and customs.

5. Help students to weigh issues, to give consideration to all sides of a controversy; point out alternatives; aid in analyzing and simplifying complex situations.
6. Supervise and coordinate all council activities.
7. Supervise the carrying out of contractual obligations of the student council, especially those with local vendors, dance orchestra, etc. , which may involve written contracts.
8. Enforce reasonable precautions whenever injury (physical or otherwise) may result to students and others from participation in council activities.
9. Attend all meetings of student council, executive board committees, etc.
10. Follow up, after each meeting of the council and committee, to see if students are carrying out their assignments.
11. Insure that the provisions of the local constitution and by-laws are carried out in spirit as well as form.
12. Supervise nomination and election of officers and members.
13. Train elected leaders to serve well: presiding at meetings, recording minutes, keeping financial accounts, making reports (oral and written), conducting business in formal meetings, handling committee assignments.
14. Chaperon the council's social events--dances, teas, parties.
15. Supervise chartered clubs and their programs.
16. Help to raise, spend, and account for council funds.

17. Develop new leadership in minor positions.
18. Insure that rights of individual students are respected.
19. Inspire students to go on, even when failure appears pressing.
20. Encourage students to thank all who help them in their activities.
21. Assist groups to develop an esprit de corps.
22. Help pupils to achieve success in school work.
23. Inform students of educational sentiment of the parents and community leaders.
24. Aid pupils to publicize their activities before parents and other citizens.

With respect to his professional associates, the council adviser should:

1. Be the chief advocate of the student council movement in his school.
2. Interpret the council's aims to the faculty.
3. Keep the faculty adequately informed of new developments and continuing projects in the council program.
4. Represent faculty opinion to the students when they are deliberating council affairs.
5. Enlist the interest and support of all faculty members for council activities.
6. Foresee possible conflicts, inconveniences, and disturbances--and try to resolve them before serious dangers result.

7. Respect colleague's wishes to teach pupils in their classes; unreasonable requests by students to leave classes for council business should not be honored.
8. Aid colleagues in planning major school events.
9. Assist colleagues who are associated with him in council work.
10. Aid chaperones to carry out their duties at council affairs.
11. Help club advisers to carry out policies of their club's charter from the council.
12. Supervise expenditure of funds provided to other organizations by the council.
13. Encourage teachers to suggest ways in which the council can improve the school.

Lastly, but by no means of least importance, the council adviser has some responsibilities to himself as a person and as a professional worker. He should:

1. Remain loyal to the ideals of democratic process to achieve democratic ends.
2. Demonstrate a real interest in student council, its ideals, worth, and program--in the school and elsewhere.
3. Allow the students themselves to do the work, even if he thinks he could do it faster or better himself.
4. Reflect on the challenging state of adult society, especially when inexperienced youth blunder with their affairs.

5. Realize that some of his "best" ideas will not be accepted by the students; this should not be interpreted as a personal rebuff.
6. Weigh his own words and actions in order not to offend others needlessly.
7. Learn to disagree tactfully with students, peers, and superiors on council affairs in order that his effectiveness as a council adviser not be curtailed.
8. Participate in the activities of interscholastic associations of student councils.
9. Find adequate time to renew his own energies for the demanding assignment of council adviser (39:6, 7, 8).

With an efficient, well-organized and functioning student council, eager to support and assist him, a principal need not fear a crisis or an emergency.

II. COUNCIL-ADVISER COOPERATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students must never be told that they are running the school; they must never be told that the student council is a form of self-government. Students must be informed that a student council is their opportunity to share, to participate in the management of the school, but that they are not in charge and it was never intended that they should be in complete charge and take over the legal and moral responsibility of the school principal (45:21).

A principal is concerned about the amount of cooperation he may expect from the council and conversely, the same concern would be felt by the student council toward the principal.

Here is a fine example of criteria for obtaining cooperation between student councils and the school principal:

1. The student council should know the philosophy of the principal and the board of education as to the type of school environment which is desired.
2. Have a well-defined budget of authority for all students in all matters in which responsibility is involved.
3. Operate according to a written constitution and set of procedures.
4. Provide adequate interaction which causes students to have recognition, and teachers to use the student council.
5. Make it easy for student leaders to confer on student problems with the school principal.
6. Provide time in the school day for student leaders to lead and to communicate with the student body.

The school administrator should be prepared to recognize that:

1. All student leadership will not succeed.
2. Student leaders acting on their own continue to require adult counsel and support.
3. Changes are inevitable, and the level of achievement is proportional to the calibre of leadership and length of time provided for the job.

4. To provide responsibility will not generate efficient management, but forms a climate of realistic opportunities to learn the meaning of responsibility. One must decide the purpose of the school (14:71).

Unless there is cooperation between the student council and the principal, the student council can never become an effective and positive force in the evolution of an outstanding school. Unless administrators have been fortunate enough to have acquired a genuine understanding of and respect for the sincerity, the integrity, and the idealism of these youngsters, they cannot hope to realize the amazing and awesome benefits which cooperative school administration can bring to them.

To develop and promote better cooperation between the student council and principal it must be realized that each has certain responsibilities to the other. The student council (1) should work within the framework and philosophy of the school; (2) it should understand its powers and limitations; (3) it should believe strongly in representation and in the value of student opinion; (4) it should understand that everyone benefits from a smooth organization; and (5) it should recognize that final responsibility inevitably falls upon the principal of the school. The principal's responsibilities are (1) that he should provide a time and a place for meetings; (2) he should be willing to offer advice to the council; (3) he should be a sympathetic sponsor; (4) he should help to sell the student council movement to faculty, students, and the

community; and (5) he should appreciate the value of working through the council, even though this may appear to be the slow way of doing somethings. This relationship can become a plan of action if we use some simple techniques such as (1) council can work with the principal in the preparation of agendas for meetings; (2) the principal can be sent copies of agendas so that he is aware of what is to be discussed; (3) the principal should attend all meetings and executive committee sessions; (4) the president and the principal should have one conference each week; (5) copies of the minutes should reach the principal's desk; and (6) all projects should be widely publicized in school and in the community, since publicity for the council is also publicity for the school (35:208).

The principal can utilize the student council to help administer the school but if the student council is to make a contribution, the principal must be careful of his definition of "utilize". The council must not be exploited as a means to an end. It needs to be considered as a unit that can assist and aid the principal in the same sense as the counseling staff, teachers, and others who aid him. All will work together to achieve the goals they have set up for their school. Here are areas of utilization available to a principal:

1. The use of the council for the promotion of an esprit de corps within the school community.

2. The council is a device to learn student opinion.
3. The council, being a representative group, is an organization that may have early exposure to new administrative ideas. Similarly, it is an organization that can assist in the interpretation of administrative practices to the student body.
4. Finally, it is a device to assist the principal and the faculty in a reassessment of the number and scope of the extra-curricular activities (22:181).

The principal is responsible for the success of the student council and to the extent of the cooperation of that group in the high school.

The student can best cooperate when the principal has indicated that he has confidence in and a working knowledge of the student council program and its related activities in the high school. A warm and sincere attitude toward accepting student projects, social life, scholarship programs, athletic, and out-of-class activity programs, as well as athletic activity on the part of the principal has a great influence on the teaching staff, thereby promoting effective council activity with a staff that is attempting to understand, to enrich, and to develop a good learning situation in the form of a sound student council (35:209).

III. EFFECTIVE ADVISORY AND EVALUATIVE METHODS

Advisory methods. A letter to student council members from their principal, Mr. William A. Zimmerman, of the Shenendehowa

Central School, Elnora, New York, is presented as an illustration of an effective tool for promoting a successful student council program:

To all members of the Student Council:

Your fellow students have elected you to one of the most important student offices in this school. By your actions and by the actions of the student council, the faith of your fellow students in you will be justified.

What is the Student Council? What does membership in the council mean to you? To me, the letters in the words Student Council stand for:

Service--The student council is primarily a service organization. Your most important function is to serve your fellow students.

Tact--In working with and for your fellow students, you must always be tactful. No council decision or action should intentionally offend or disturb.

Unlimited Possibilities--For a good, hard working student council, the possibilities for constructive contributions to the well-being of the entire school are almost unlimited.

Democracy--Your meetings are democratic. Each person should feel absolutely free to express his own opinion. Each member should feel that he is an accepted member of the group.

Experience--The experience you gain on the student council should prove extremely valuable to you in the future.

Nobility of Purpose--The actions of the student council should be characterized by noble purposes.

Thoroughness--Any project or job done by the student council must be thorough and complete.

Cooperation--Student council members should cooperate with each other, with the student body, and with the faculty.

Others--You can best serve yourselves by serving others. It is the welfare of others that you should constantly bear in mind.

Unbiased judgment--The decisions of the council should be characterized by fairness and unbiased judgment.

Nucleus--Just as the nucleus controls the activities of a living cell, the student council functions as the nucleus of the entire student body.

Character--Your fellow students chose you as their representative because of the quality of your character.

Initiative--Student council members should be capable of independent and intelligent action.

Leadership--You, as a student council member, have been recognized as one of the leaders of your class. Fellow students have confidence in you.

With sincere best wishes for an active and successful year (47:75).

It is quite proper for the principal to delegate certain powers to the student council--and a council has no power unless he does delegate this power. Because a student council may not do just anything it pleases, it should keep the principal properly informed of all of its activities. It must remember that the student council cannot commit the school, its facilities, or personnel without approval of adults such as the council sponsor and the principal. School administrators are

interested in encouraging student participation in the management of school affairs, especially extracurricular activities, not self-government (40:48).

On some matters the principal may have to seek approval from his superiors in order to allow the council to carry out a certain project. The role of the principal need not be thought of entirely in the negative. Whatever the policy, he should try to interpret it in a consistent pattern, to allow the council to experiment within reason, and to provide a fruitful mental and emotional climate for the council and its activities (40:48).

The student council adviser must exemplify the quality of selflessness instead of bossing others around. He must be well informed yet not answer all the questions of students. He must be alert and on his toes yet not dominate the show. He must be willing to give much of his leisure time to council activities. He must be a participating member of the group yet see his suggestions bypassed upon occasion. He must be able to take it as well as dish it out. Sometimes the best work of the sponsor is done behind the scenes in committees, meetings, etc., where his contribution gains little public attention.

The principal holds the key to successful student participation in school government. His methods and techniques of leadership will

determine the outcome. He must remember that nothing can destroy the effectiveness of a council so much as over or under control. To avoid conflict and confusion he should remember that cooperation and understanding are of the utmost importance.

With effective guidance and counseling and with a cooperative and understanding faculty, the student council can make an unlimited contribution to the welfare of the school, to improving the quality of education, and to living the principles of the democratic way of life.

Evaluative methods. Here is a rating scale that might possibly be used by the adviser and the council to effectively assess their standards of operation:

Philosophy

1. The spirit of democracy both political and social is exemplified in the work of the council and in its manner of elections.
2. The faculty and students have a clear understanding of the council's role in the life of the school.
3. The prestige of the council is high; it is respected by the whole school.
4. The members of the council are conscious of the serious nature of their responsibilities.
5. No administrative or student group is inclined or is permitted to bypass the council in any matters clearly within its budget of responsibility.

6. The student council understands the areas, problems, and questions for which it
 - a. has ultimate decisive power,
 - b. has limited authority,
 - c. has a consultive and advisory role only,
 - d. has no right even to discuss.
7. The council and faculty and student body are convinced that democracy can be learned in part by direct practice.
8. It is understood by all that mistakes will be made.
9. A conscious desire and the necessary effort to improve the value of the council permeates the thinking of the members and the faculty.

Operation and Structure

1. The entire school is represented.
2. The council is not inefficient because of too many members.
3. The council is affiliated with an area, a state, and the national association.
4. The council has a regular time and place of meeting.
5. The council works under a constitution.
6. The council works through committees and special boards to focus responsibility.
7. The council is not burdened with detailed administrative and managerial chores.
8. The council's main responsibilities are in the area of policy, planning, and evaluating.
9. Consultation is habitual on important questions before action is taken.

10. The delegation function is clearly defined and thoughtfully performed.
11. The council is not burdened with disciplinary problems.
12. Responsibilities are increased gradually.
13. Provisions are made for students and faculty to appear before the council (13:331).

With an alert and dynamic adviser, a student council can become a functional and positive force in promoting democratic ideals and in promoting programs which will constructively affect student life and welfare.

CHAPTER V

RECAPITULATION: THE DESIRABLE PROGRAM

In order for the student council program to become truly successful, the faculty, the administration and the students must understand and accept the philosophy of democratic participation. This participation should be developed as a result of a definite need and planned to fit the demands of the school and community situation in which it is operating.

The principal, as adviser to the student council, has a varied role to play in the school government program. At times it may seem to be a rather imposing and overwhelming responsibility but with good judgment, faith in our young people, courage, and understanding, it can become a satisfying and rewarding experience.

If the student council adviser can judiciously administer worthwhile and meaningful activities that are educationally and realistically conceived and carefully evaluated, then he will surely have a successful student participation program.

The principal must remember that the student council is not just an extension of, or an assistant manager for, the administration-- primarily, it should reflect the needs and interests of the students. He

should also keep in mind that in a democracy a feeling of security should be engendered by a permissive atmosphere to think, act, and speak with mutual respect for the feelings, rights, and abilities of others.

A principal is not a free agent. He is responsible to his immediate superiors, to the citizens of the school district, and to the laws of the state and nation. He must realize that students are unaware of these responsibilities, that they will not always understand why he must often act with considerable discretion. There may be times when he will have to exercise his veto power, and he should explain why in detail to clarify the issue and to prevent any conflict. The principal's veto power should be like a fire extinguisher--ready to use but with hopes you won't have to use it. When students are busily engaged in working for the good of the school under inspiring leadership they do not worry about the principal's right to veto. There is no need to fear that the students will lose interest in the democratic form of control even though they know that final control rests with the principal because when tact and understanding are used, the students will not demand all or nothing.

In some instances the principal may have to get approval from the superintendent or even the school directors in order to allow the council to carry out a proposal or a new project.

A principal must remember that there are many educational advantages inherent in a well-organized, well-planned, program of student government. These advantages can only be attained when the principal, the faculty, and the students share in coordinating all the educational agencies of the school--when all their efforts are directed toward the development of the democratically oriented student. The country needs young people who know the meaning of responsibility, citizenship, leadership, social obligations, and democracy--who know the meaning because they have been given the opportunity to practice democratic living while in high school.

The schools must assume the responsibility of allowing the students to enter into all the rights and privileges of the way of life that democracy implies. Only in this way will our young people achieve strength of character, an unselfish devotion to the common good, and an excellence of citizenship that will continue to improve our society.

Student participation in school control is a method of training in the practical arts of citizenship. The school maintains such a variety of activities that more and more it resembles the life in a community.

The influence of the family is declining, therefore, the schools must assume the responsibility of giving wise direction to the broader social experiences of the students.

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The only way to learn good citizenship is to practice it in a genuinely democratic atmosphere. What a person does as an adult will be determined, in large part, by what he did as a young person.

In the school, the student council exercises a predominating influence on all the students. It can mobilize the school to facilitate smooth-working relationships between the faculty and the student body and to promote a comprehensive and varied program of social activities in the interests of the entire student population. In the student council, students will encounter a range and variety of social problems that will give them the training they need in the practical arts of citizenship.

The student council should assess its goals periodically to see if they can increase their services to the school; to see if the activity program needs re-evaluating; to possibly assist with the orientation and guidance program; and maybe to assist their fellow students in some new way, such as, organizing a committee to help students who are having difficulty or falling behind in their subjects.

The organizational atmosphere that exists in the student council can be influenced by the principal. The members should feel free to discuss controversial topics and to experiment with new ideas. He should encourage them to discover new ways, means, and methods of improving the quality of their education and of upgrading the school program.

The adviser should not be an authoritarian or a tyrant and should never take the attitude of a censor or act as presiding officer. The adviser is there because he understands the ends of good government, because his judgment of human behavior is tempered with maturity, because he knows the type of organization and social machinery that can best accomplish worth-while purposes, and because he understands youth and can effectively cooperate with them to reach the goals of democratic living.

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