

**AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISING
PRINCIPALS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN WINNIPEG**

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**by
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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS ON AN EVALUATION OF THE
ROLE OF THE SUPERVISING PRINCIPALS IN THE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF WINNIPEG

Purpose

Because the concept of the duties and responsibilities of the principal has changed considerably in the past two decades, and because the lay and professional people in Winnipeg who finance or are responsible for education and educational institutions take cognizance of the modern views in their administration, an investigation was directed towards an assessment of (1) the prevalence in the elementary schools in Winnipeg of modern ideas and practices affecting the role of the principal, (2) the degree of acceptance of these ideas and practices, and (3) specific evidence of their incorporation into the administrative pattern of the schools.

The purpose was to determine the position of the supervising elementary principals of Winnipeg with respect to the standards recommended by recognized authorities in educational administration.

Method

A review of the current literature relating to the duties and responsibilities of school principals was made to develop a preliminary statement of the ideals set forth by professional writers. On the basis of their definitions and recommendations, data was sought out and collected to permit an evaluation of the Winnipeg principals. The study was limited to the leadership, supervisory, and administrative behaviour and practices of supervising principals of elementary schools.

Findings

The comparison between the ideals that were established and the Winnipeg practices that were discovered yielded two types of conclusion. There were areas in which the Winnipeg principalship showed marked achievement and growth and areas where improvement was necessary if future development was to be unhindered.

In the first category, the following merited special mention:

1. An assessment of the personal traits, the academic and professional preparation, and the success in practical work situations indicated that Winnipeg

principals are now well involved in the roles of educational coordinators, consultants, and staff leaders envisaged as desirable by the theorists in elementary school administration.

2. Winnipeg principals have accepted supervision as a major responsibility, acknowledging their obligation to perform this duty and showing familiarity with the most respected methods of implementing a supervisory programme. There is ample evidence to indicate that they are fully aware of, and deeply committed to, their responsibility for the quality and the improvement of the instructional programmes of their schools.

3. The organizational skills and the management and personal qualities observable in Winnipeg schools indicate that great progress has been achieved in developing administrative capacities in the principals. As a group, they are adjusting well to the newer concepts, displaying an eagerness to explore all the avenues leading to better organization and instruction.

Among the areas of the principalship needing improvement the conditions affecting leadership, supervisory, and administrative competencies are closely inter-related.

1. As truly progressive leaders, Winnipeg principals suffer from a lack of adequate professional preparation. At least half of the group in the sample had neither practical experience nor post-graduate study credits in any area of elementary school education prior to their appointment as principals, and forty per cent were still without such professional training. Part of the responsibility for this appears to lie with the University, part with the administrative officers of the School Board, and part with the principals themselves. There is no planned programme offered by the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba which permits post-graduate specialization in the elementary principalship as a career position; the promotion practices of Winnipeg do not make experience or pre-training in elementary school work mandatory for principalship appointments; and many elementary principals fail to regard themselves as, or attempt to become, professional leaders in elementary education.

2. The supervisory situation, too, suffers from a lack of training and background. Although the philosophy held by the principals encompasses the responsibility for supervision, the performance of the duties in this area are not generally supported by adequate knowledge or by skill in handling the mechanics of the procedures.

3. The data on the administrative efficiency of the principals indicated that practice is also far behind known theory. Outdated concepts of pupil and teacher organization, lack of skill in office management procedures, and improper utilization of time are common deficiencies. Here, again, the need for an organized programme of training that encompasses all the facets of the elementary principalship appeared to be the handicap.

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CHAPTER I

THE PLAN OF THE STUDY

I. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the past two decades, the professional concept of the principal has changed from that of the senior or head-teacher in the school to that of the key person in the educational system. During the same period, the responsibilities and duties that have been allocated to the principal have increased greatly. Where formerly, he was viewed as disciplinary captain of the school staff, he is now expected to be a highly trained professional advisor to his co-workers, and a skilled executive in personnel management.

It was considered a matter of importance to ascertain the position of Winnipeg elementary principals with respect to this change of view, to determine the quality of their work, and to identify the trends discernible.

Specifically, the investigation was directed toward an assessment of: (1) the prevalence in the elementary schools in Winnipeg of modern ideas and practices affecting the role of the principal, (2) the degree of acceptance of these ideas and practices, and (3) specific evidence of their incorporation into the administrative pattern. This was based on a preliminary statement of the ideals accepted by professional authorities.