

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE COMPETENCIES DESIRED FOR VICE-PRINCIPALS
IN MANITOBA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

by

DENNIS DAVID PELISEK

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ABSTRACT

In order to develop the study one primary and one secondary problem were investigated. The primary problem considered in the study was the identification of the competencies desired for vice-principals in Manitoba junior high schools as reported by a sample of Manitoba junior high school vice-principals, principals, and superintendents. A secondary problem considered in the study was the resolution of whether there were significant differences in perception within the sample population with regard to the areas of competence determined as being desirable for vice-principals in Manitoba junior high schools in terms of the respondent background variables: position, age, level of education attained, years of administrative experience, and a career v. non-career view of the junior high school vice-principalship.

The review of the related literature and research, which examined research and professional literature dealing with vice-principalships in American junior high and secondary schools since limited information was available concerning vice-principalships in Canadian junior high schools, provided the rationale for the study as well as an adequate background on the vice-principal's reported and recommended duties, responsibilities, and areas of involvement from which representative competencies were constructed for the survey instrument. The mail survey questionnaire employed to obtain the data for the study resulted in a total usable response of 85.2 per cent.

The analysis of the data included (1) principal factor analysis to determine the common competencies desired for vice-principals in Manitoba junior high schools, (2) a descriptive analysis of the distribution of responses to the competency statements that had loaded significantly ($\pm .45$ or higher) within a factor, (3) identification of the ten highest and ten lowest mean-ranked competency statements, and (4) one-way classification analysis of variance to test the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference between the means of the subgroups of the respondent background variable under analysis.

In regard to the primary problem considered in the study the results of the analysis of the data revealed (1) that fifty-one competency statements clustered within seven factors entitled Instructional Processes, Intra-Personal/Interpersonal, General School Administration, Communicative Processes, Personnel Management, Administration for Instruction, and Administration of Division Policy, (2) that a majority of the respondents agree vice-principals in Manitoba junior high schools should have complete proficiency in seven and considerable proficiency in thirty-seven competencies, and (3) that item 14: "The vice-principal recognizes honesty as a necessary quality of leadership and is consistently honest in personal and professional matters" was the highest mean-ranked competency statement.

In regard to the secondary problem considered in the study the results of the analysis of the data revealed that in general few significant differences (.05 level) existed between the subgroups of the respondent background variables and the areas of

competence determined as being desirable for vice-principals in Manitoba junior high schools.

In general, it was concluded that the seven factor solution of fifty-one competency statements provided a meaningful definition of competence which reflected an idealized position of professional and administrative status. Essentially, the vice-principal's role was perceived as that of an educational leader, proficient in intra-personal and interpersonal values and skills, whose primary area of concern was in the instructional functions of the school.

Lastly, recommendations were offered to (1) utilize the findings of the study and (2) expand the study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

I. BACKGROUND: THE VICE-PRINCIPALSHIP

The emergence and growth of the position of assistant or vice-principal has been viewed as a response to the demands that have been placed on the principalship as a result of the increasing complexity of school management. There is general agreement that the position's continuing usefulness lies in providing professional administrative assistance to the principal in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities. This section, in serving as an introduction to the study, reviews the factors believed to be responsible for the emergence and growth of the vice-principalship.

Both Jarrett and Hurley reported that with the growth in size of secondary schools had come the necessity of providing the principal with professional assistance.¹ Gruhn and Douglass stated: "... the rapid developments in junior high school and middle school education in recent years have increased the need for a competent staff of administrative assistants to the principal."² In particular,

¹Richard W. Jarrett, "The Activities of the Assistant Principal in Secondary Schools," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 42 (September 1958):28; Leo Hurley, "Educational Leader or Hatchet Man," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 49 (January 1965):12.

²William T. Gruhn and Harl R. Douglass, The Modern Junior High School, 3d ed. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1971), p. 356.

¹
Cantley mentioned increasing enrollments, larger facilities, new educational materials, curriculum development, public relations, and social services as the factors that had created the need for additional administrative personnel within schools.

²
Bradford believed that the lack of administrative assistants tended to place too much personal responsibility on the principal. According to Davis and Moore, the employment of properly qualified assistant principals would "... help solve the problem of providing adequate professional leadership and supervision while not neglecting the administration of the school."³ Michaels agreed: "It's 'raison d'etre' was to free the principal from overwhelming duties so that he could provide leadership for the entire school program."⁴ Lowery stated: "The very fact that the position of the vice-principal exists, indicates that the principal should delegate part of his responsibilities to the vice-principal."⁵ Howard and Stoumbis were even more explicit in stressing: "A good principal learns to delegate responsibility,

¹Bruce A. Cantley, "The Role of the Assistant Principal in California Junior High Schools" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1972; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 17457, 1972), p. 1.

²James L. Bradford, "Administrative Organization of Selected Junior High Schools" (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1964), p. 92.

³E. Dale Davis and John Moore, "The Assistant Principal in the Junior High School," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 49 (January 1965):2.

⁴Melvin L. Michaels, "The Role of the Assistant Principal," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 49 (January 1965):8.

⁵Richard E. Lowery, "Where's the duty line between principal and vice-principal?" School Progress 36 (February 1967):26.

authority, and work."¹

In this regard, Holland warned: "... without adequate assistance the principal will, in spite of himself, neglect some phase of his school."² And Hurley noted: "The secondary principal's responsibilities are so all embracing and so time consuming he should welcome the opportunity to involve his assistant ..."³

Coppedge believed that the position was of most value when it identified with the duties of the principal. Rankin, however, claimed: "The principal needs more than an assistant, he needs someone with the philosophical and educational decision-making concepts similar to his to act for him."⁴ Finally, Childress stressed: "The assistant principal must be recognized as a member of the administrative team and as an individual who has certain competencies which will strengthen the school and its program."⁵

¹Alvin W. Howard and George C. Stoumbis, The Junior High and Middle School: Issues and Practices (Scranton: Intext Educational Publishers, 1970), p. 74.

²Bertram H. Holland, "The Principal's Administrative Team," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 52 (November 1968):56.

³Hurley, "Educational Leader or Hatchet Man," p. 14.

⁴Floyd L. Coppedge, "New Image of the Assistant Principal," The Clearing House 42 (January 1968):284.

⁵Donald L. Rankin, "A Unified Approach to Administration," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 57 (October 1973):73.

⁶Jack R. Childress, "The Challenge of the Assistant Principalship," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 57 (October 1973):6.

This section, in serving as an introduction to the study, has reviewed the factors believed to be responsible for the emergence and growth of the vice-principalship. The next section provides the rationale of the study.

II. RATIONALE OF STUDY

The purpose of this section is to present the rationale of an investigation into the junior high school vice-principalship and a definition of competence for the position.

Rationale of the Area of Investigation

In support of the study the review of the related literature and research revealed:

1. Limited research on the vice-principalship
2. Recommendations for continued research to better define the position
3. Support for the general nature of the study

Limited Research on the Vice-Principalship

Despite the basic purpose and outlined usefulness of the vice-principalship as documented in section I, the review of the related literature and research for the study revealed the existence of limited research and professional literature concerning vice-principalships in Canadian junior and senior high schools. Similar findings have also been reported with regard to vice-principalships in American junior and senior high schools.

Austin and Brown, after their review of the literature on the assistant principalship, reported that the assistant principal "... has been a forgotten stepchild so far as administrative study and research are concerned."¹ Kindsvatter and Tosi also reported: "... the assistant principal is quite decidedly the forgotten man in education literature; he is seldom the topic of the professional writers' concern."² Davenport stated: "The role of the assistant principal has never been studied in great detail."³ In like manner, Robertson wrote: "Very little information can be found in professional literature dealing specifically with the duties and responsibilities of assistant principals in junior high schools."⁴

⁵ Brooks believed that the lack of attention towards the vice-principalship was particularly significant when continued review and clarification of a position were procedures recognized as being basic to sound administrative practice. Accordingly, it was not

¹David B. Austin and Harry L. Brown, Jr., Report of the Assistant Principalship, Volume 3: The Study of the Secondary-School Principalship (Washington: National Association of Secondary-School Principals, /1970/; Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 053 449, 1971), p. 9.

²Richard Kindsvatter and Donald J. Tosi, "Assistant Principal: A Job in Limbo," The Clearing House 45 (April 1971):457.

³Gregory M. Davenport, "The Perceived Roles and Job Satisfaction of the Assistant Principal in Two Selected Michigan School Districts" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1973; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 3605, 1974), p. 1.

⁴Benjamin R. Robertson, "The Duties and Responsibilities of the Junior High School Assistant Principal in Pennsylvania" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburg, 1969; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 19676, 1969), p. 1.

⁵James D. Brooks, "The Assistant Principalship in Public Secondary Schools in Texas" (Ed.D. dissertation, Baylor University, 1970; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 23998, 1970), p. 7.

1

unexpected that after Bagdonas reported that little research had been accomplished concerning the junior high school vice-principal Davis and Moore concluded that his role had developed in many instances "... on the basis of expedience rather than sound principles of organizational and personnel administration."

2

In view of the apparent limited research on the vice-principalship, it is doubtful that the position has achieved its potentiality in providing assistance to the principal. Moreover, a reaction can be identified in the related literature and research in support of a clearer definition of the position.

Recommendations for Continued Research to Better Define the Position

Sorensen, Woznick, Goddard, Roberts and Hawkes each reported the need for continued study in order to better define the position and determine the emerging role of the assistant principal.

3

¹Albert A. Bagdonas, "The Duties and Responsibilities of the Des Moines Junior High School Vice-Principals" (Master's field report, Drake University, 1960), p. 14.

²Davis and Moore, "The Assistant Principal in the Junior High School," p. 1.

³Lincoln B. Sorensen, "Duties and Functions of the Assistant Principal in Secondary Schools of Selected School Districts in the State of Utah" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960), p. 65; Gregory Woznick, "The Duties and Responsibilities of Vice-Principals in Selected California Schools" (Master's thesis, Fresno State College, 1961), p. 1; Garrett B. Goddard, "The Assistant Principal - Understudy or Partner in Professional Leadership," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals 46 (September 1962):31; John B. Roberts, "A Role Definition of Secondary School Assistant Principals in Washington County, Virginia" (Master's thesis, East Tennessee State University, 1966), p. 56; Hawkes, "The Vice-Principal," p. 9.