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The selection of a principal requires (1) a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the superintendent and others concerned in the selection process, (2) an objective and adequate view of the contemporary principal's role and the kind of person qualified to fill that role, (3) specific selection criteria, and (4) a careful development of all phases of the search process. Twenty-six recommendations are made for the selection of principals, and 14 selection factors with related measuring devices are listed. (JK)

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PREFACE

Public education is changing at an almost bewildering pace. Its greater complexity demands greater resources, both human and material, to achieve the dynamic goals. But resources represent potential, only. Proximity of resources to each other does not automatically ensure that something desirable will happen. Every school district requires the kind of administrative leaders who, like catalysts in chemical reactions, can bridge the gap between the teachers and such resources as better texts, educational television, and computerized instruction to the end that a more productive instructional program is achieved.

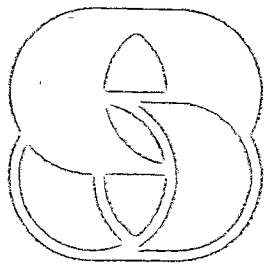
The effective school principal can be a type of catalyst who can stimulate more dynamic educational programs in school attendance centers. It is difficult to overestimate the contributions of the principal to the improvement of education. The selection of people for this important administrative leadership position is clearly one of the most important decisions confronting a superintendent of schools.

Superintendents today are called upon

to make this choice with greater frequency than ever before. It is a decision which can be based either on clearly defined procedures or on approaches based on hoary traditions and old wives' tales.

The AASA Committee on the Selection of School Principals offers a series of significant recommendations which hopefully points to objective approaches to the challenge of selecting the right principal for the right school. Some promising directions are outlined to facilitate the important task of identifying, selecting, and assigning school principals. In time of ferment, it becomes more important than ever that each attendance center be manned by a principal capable of guiding instructional efforts to maximize the learning capabilities of each pupil. THE RIGHT PRINCIPAL FOR THE RIGHT SCHOOL is indeed a significant and timely publication worthy of the attention of all school superintendents. AASA acknowledges its debt to and the contributions of the AASA Committee on the Selection of School Principals.

Forrest E. Conner
Executive Secretary



FOCAL POINTS

The superintendent is responsible for the selection of school principals within the policy framework determined by the school board.

The superintendent discharges this important function by tapping the resources of the system's administrative and instructional staff and by employing special consultants.

THE RIGHT PRINCIPAL FOR THE RIGHT SCHOOL: IDENTIFICATION, SELECTION, AND ASSIGNMENT

Who's Responsible?

"As the principal, so the school" suggests that administrative leadership has an impact on students, teachers, and lay citizens within the school community served. What a principal does or fails to do is felt in homes as well as in classrooms and corridors of a school. He influences the quality of instruction, relationships between people, acceptance of or resistance to change, morale, and efficency of general operations. It should come as no surprise that selection for a leadership position of this magnitude is a matter of major concern for all school systems. A principal can make a difference where it counts, for he practices his art at an important focal point, namely, the school building.

The problems and issues of identification, selection, and assignment are examined herein not from an individual principal's perspective but from the broader vantage point of a chief school administrator. Attendance center administration is a significant aspect of a system of education, but no principalship is an island. It is better conceived as a coordination point where administrative, instructional, and other educational services converge in the hope of making teaching and learning "just a little bit better."

Fixing Responsibility

It is declared unequivocally that responsibility for selection and assignment of principals rests in the superintendency. There are several reasons for fixing the selection function at this point in the administrative organization rather than with the board of education. To begin with, it is in agreement with the well-established principle that the board's prime concern should be formulation of policies to guide identification, selection, and assignment rather than execution. The complexity of education and the development of administrative teams to cope with it suggest a second reason. As in other large and complex organizations, the chief school executive depends on those in subordinate posts to fulfill operational objectives. This should not obscure the fact that the superintendent is held accountable for the quality of the administrative team effort. Therefore, authority to recommend all appointments to the professional administrative team, which includes principals, is consistent with the demands

made upon the chief administrator.

Who Else Is Involved?

Pinpointing prime responsibility should not imply that no one else is concerned or involved. The board of education has a stake, and its selection policies will have considerable influence on what type of person can be appointed principal. The school board *elects* principals to office on the basis of recommendations from the chief school executive.

Superintendents, professional societies, and accrediting agencies may advise school boards on the most defensible policies for fulfilling obligations defined under either state law or state department of education regulations. But it is ultimately the board's responsibility to enunciate policy within the legal parameters established by the state. The superintendent, in recommending his candidate, is under obligation to justify his actions within the general framework created by the board if and when requested to do so.

Involvement of the Professional Staff

The superintendent decides who shall participate in the selection process and to what degree. He may decide to discharge his duty without consultation, but this is highly unlikely. In very large systems responsibility may be delegated to an associate superintendent in charge of personnel, of elementary education, or of secondary education. There may or may not be an advisory group.

The function of any committee participating in selection is to advise the chief administrative officer. A principal selection committee within a school system is an advisory body only, even though its official title fails to specify this. It may include any combination of persons presently serving as principals, assistant superintendents, or supervisors. It could involve representatives of teachers in the district as a whole or from a given building wherein the administrative vacancy exists. Individuals from outside the district such as university professors may be used as consultants to the selection committee or to the superintendent. The needs of the district and the ingenuity of the chief administrator will determine what combination of persons will serve best in any given situation.

A variety of committees are possible. One could focus on the development of selection criteria. It should be broadly representative of the personnel in the district so that all relevant segments of the staff may have an opportunity to contribute to the formulation of appropriate standards for selection. Another committee, less representative in composition but more specialized in function, may be established to implement procedures used to identify, screen, interview, and evaluate candidates. Members on this committee should be chosen in terms of their qualifications to make expert judgments concerning the relative merits of various candidates.

The Personnel Office

Teachers, principals, and other administrators have full-time positions within the system. Details of formulating and mailing letters and notices of vacancies, of receiving and filing applications, of gathering credentials, of administering tests, and of answering procedural questions should be executed by central-office personnel officials. The larger the school district the greater the likelihood that there will be a formally constituted personnel office. It represents the operational arm of the superintendent, of his designated representative, and of committees assigned some responsibility for principal selection. To be effective, each personnel office must be allocated sufficient professional personnel and secretarial assistants to handle the volume of correspondence, record keeping, and other clerical details encountered in principal identification, selection, and assignment.

Recommendations

It is recommended by the AASA Committee on Selection of Principals—

- That every board establish policies to guide the superintendent in the selection of principals.
- That the school board declare unequivocally that it shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to select persons for recommendation to appointment as principal.
- That the school board, as a matter of policy, elect only those persons recommended by the superintendent of schools for a principalship. The board has a right to reject any and all such persons and call

for new names, but not to substitute other names without the recommendation of the superintendent.

- That the superintendent execute his professional responsibility for the selection of principals with the consultation of professional administrators and/or instructional staff members. All committees should be recognized as advisory bodies only.
- That representation on the committee which defines and develops criteria to be used in principal selection be broadly representative of the entire system and include presently employed principals, other school administrators, and teachers. It may also include university professors serving as consultants. The exact combination should be determined by the superintendent as the best to meet the unique needs of his particular school system.
- That the committee to define criteria be separate and distinct from other committees or groups concerned with implementation of selection procedures. The committee concerned with development of selection criteria should convene periodically to review the validity and effectiveness of existing standards.
- That members of the committee concerned with actual screening and evaluation of candidates for the principalship possess the experience, preparation, and insights necessary to discharge such responsibilities in an effective manner. This committee should have access to consultants and other special resource persons from within or outside the district.
- That no person in the school system, other than the superintendent, be given permanent membership on any committee for the development of criteria or procedures for the identification, screening, and selection of principals. A term of office of three to five years should be the maximum, and no person should be appointed to more than one term of service.
- That the personnel office in each school system be the central repository for all applications, credentials, written notices, and files of applicants for principals. This agency should also be responsible for administering whatever instruments of evaluation may be used in the selection process.

The principalship is a cluster of functions which are best realized through the efforts of many rather than only one person.

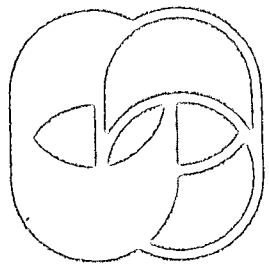
The expectations of the principal and responsibilities to be given primary emphasis vary with the times and the referent group.

The typical principal of today is a man experienced as a teacher, in his late forties, married, and the holder of at least a master's degree.

There are forces within and outside of educational systems which continue to modify the principalship.

Principalships vary from one-man assignments to headships of large, complex organizations in which the principal is largely a stimulator, organizer, and coordinator.

FOCAL POINTS



A better conceptualization of the principalship consistent with present demands maximizes the chances of selecting the right person. The task was simpler a hundred years ago when communities were less heterogeneous, school curriculums less comprehensive, educational services less well developed, teacher groups less insistent on broad participation in decision making, and the nation's demands upon schools less exacting.

The principalship changes with no less rapidity than the environment in which the school is located. A school district significantly different today, for whatever reason, from what it was 10 years ago will find demands on the principalship considerably altered as well. Pressures from sensitive and vocal minority groups, militant teacher organizations, and federal and state governmental agencies are remolding this administrative position. This implies that the type of experience, professional preparation, intellectual ability, value patterns, philosophical outlook, and other qualities which were thought to be related to effective performance in past periods may not be appropriate measures of present challenges. Assumptions that were valid previously may no longer hold true today.

What Are We Looking For?

Images of the Principal

The principal never did stand still for very long. Through the ages the principal has been symbolized by such varied images as "Mr. Chips," the headmaster, the administrative mechanic, the change agent, and the leader.

Mr. Chips touched every pupil in the small school system and watched each of them, through his lifetime, grow and develop. He was never harsh but always understanding when disciplinary action was necessary. A kindly father image is more likely to be realized in the simple rather than complicated, small rather than large, and unhurried rather than hectic school situation. Every principal yearns for opportunities to sit down for extended periods with each student as Mr. Chips did. The practical problem of coming to know intimately every one of a thousand or more pupils, up to five hundred different ones appearing each fall, shatters a lovely illusion.

The *headmaster* supposedly knew more about every subject offered and could teach it in a better

and more dramatic fashion than any other instructor in the school. The possibilities of attaining this were great when the curriculum was a simple fare, teachers were less well prepared, and instructional supervision was the most demanding function assigned to the principal. The headmaster concept became a romantic and unfulfilled dream when the comprehensive school evolved and instructional specialists emerged. The information revolution clinched the physical and intellectual impossibility of any one person's knowing more than anyone else about everything taught in a school.

The *administrative mechanic* was the product of another era earlier in history. He was an outgrowth of urbanization, when large-city school systems emerged as complex and ofttimes frustrating organizations. There were mountains of reports and statistics about pupils, teachers, funds, and so on, to be gathered, processed, and sent on to a central office. The mechanic was primarily a control agent who spared superintendent and teachers from being submerged by details but lost his leadership potential in the process. He worked 75 hours a week and wore the harried look of an extremely busy, no-time-for-nonsense person. Unfortunately, some continue to perform as if the mountain of reports, paper shuffling, or attention to *administrivia* were prime functions. No one will admit it, of course, for a "mechanic" enjoys little professional status among the more discerning who perceive him as being preoccupied with the wrong things.

Of late, considerable emphasis has been placed upon the principal as a *change agent* because of the notion that the essential task of administration is to cope with innovation. The principal is one of the administrative agents through which change enters the school and, in turn, must live with the environment set in turbulent motion. As an instrument for innovation, the principal contributes his part to the dynamic development of education in a social institution and prevents deterioration through stagnation. The change agent must do more than "introduce" new ideas, in the sense that he merely urges others to adopt new modes. Innovations in instructional or administrative activities require translation into operational terms. This means the principal helps in the search for different ways of

serving learners, patterns new relationships within the community, or develops unique approaches for dealing with state and federal agencies. For an innovation to attain operational effectiveness, specialized personnel may have to be employed, existing staff members retrained, materials and supplies required, facilities modified or new ones constructed, budgets prepared, and appropriate financial controls designed. In other words, the principal as a change agent not only senses the potential for improvement that resides within a concept, technique, or approach and exhorts others to accept it, but has the ability to translate each into a program of action to minimize disruptive influences and to maximize smooth transfer to higher levels. An administrator by nature is a doer and never rests at the talking stage.

The role of the principal as a *leader* continues to gain prominence. It has been a recurring theme in the literature for almost 50 years. Some equate the change agent with the leader. Others interpret leadership as a collection of inspired traits in a person occupying a position in a hierarchy or making contributions to the direction or activities of groups. It is conceived as a dynamic catalyst capable of moving organizations and people in a desired direction.

Some Additional Postures

The principal's position can be defined in other terms as well. He may be seen as an instructional leader; as a guidance person; as a pupil control agent or disciplinarian; as a group dynamics expert who can work with a variety of teacher cliques within a building; as an expert organizer of the school schedule and school activities; as a diplomat who can work smoothly with irate parents; as a chief of the building custodians who knows how to keep a building spic-and-span; as a businessman who keeps his budgets, accounts, and supplies in order; as an office manager who prepares accurate records on time; as a mediator of various forces within the community; or as an effective worker with the PTA and other school groups. The list is almost inexhaustible, as is the assumed energy of a principal. This may explain why some consider a good principal a modern miracle—and miracles are hard to come by in a secular society.

The principal communicates with many referent groups, each group having its expectations for his behavior. The following are illustrations of some points of view, with not everyone in a referent group being of the same opinion. Students view the principal as a person who cultivates and understands their point of view. Teachers feel they have a right to expect the principal to support them, although *support* is not always clearly defined. Supervisors who visit buildings evaluate a principal in terms of the curriculum and instructional demands of the post. To some assistant superintendents the best principal may be the one who causes the least trouble, keeps everyone happy, and always turns in his reports on time. To parents and PTA members, the principal is the charmer who is always enthusiastic and prompt at all PTA meetings. Finally, some building custodians know that a good principal is one who makes kids pick up paper thrown on the floor. Because there are so many referent groups with differing expectations, it is not surprising that the same administrator behavior yields a variety of incongruent interpretations.

No Principalship Is an Island

It was implied earlier that no principalship is an island—that as important as any given building may be, it is part of a larger whole. Pupils come to the school from the administrative jurisdiction of another principal or directly from homes, and they leave it for other schools, for universities, or for the world of work. One attendance center is intimately interrelated to others; it is not a feudal domain or independent "principality." Nonetheless, there is a uniqueness about each of the many parts that make up the pattern.

It would be unrealistic today to assume that one man can be all things to all people and perform all functions with dispatch. A more realistic appraisal would view the principalship as a constellation of administrative positions rather than as one job to be performed by one man. This has been recognized for some time in larger secondary schools. There are within large high schools part-time or full-time professional helpers to the principal known as deans, attendance officers, counselors, and assistant or vice-principals. The principal of the small elemen-

tary school, on the other hand, looks to the central-office staff within the district or the intermediate unit outside the district for similar services. The executive who directs and coordinates a team of professional administrative or functional specialists, located within or outside the building, is quite different from the loner who believes that anyone who wants something done right must do it himself.

This implies that selection need not proceed on the assumption that in order to be a principal a person must be a highly skilled counselor, or an expert in every subject, or a man with business acumen. It is better to make available to the principal the specialized resources necessary for effective attendance center administrative and supervisory operations. This implies that the talents of the executive in coordinating an administrative team toward achievement of goals become a prime requisite instead. Of no less importance is the attitude that specialists within the district are helpers and not the principal's competitors.

Profiles of Principals

Elementary and secondary principals are by far the largest group of professional school officials with administrative and supervisory functions, and their numbers keep increasing. In 1938 there were about 15,000 secondary school principals; there are approximately 30,000 today. In 1935 there were approximately 21,000 elementary school principals; there are at least twice that number today.

Years ago assistant principals were something of a rarity in elementary schools and small high schools. Recent data show that there are almost 86,000 principals and assistant principals in operating public school systems today.

The *NEA Research Bulletin* of October 1964 reported that only 1.5 percent of all elementary principals and 5.1 percent of all secondary school principals are employed in systems enrolling fewer than 300 pupils. About three-fourths of the principals in systems with enrollments of 3,000 or more serve elementary schools. On the other hand, elementary principals make up only 56 percent of all such administrators in systems with less than 3,000 but more than 300 enrollment and two-thirds of the group for systems of all sizes. Combination ele-

mentary-secondary principals are more common in smaller systems, but constitute 7.4 percent of all principals. Junior high, junior-senior high, and senior high principals make up the remaining almost 25 percent.

Estimates of demand for elementary and secondary school principals were prepared in 1966 by the University Council for Educational Administration. This source estimated annual demand for elementary school principals for the years 1967 and 1968 at 2,400, and for secondary principals, 1,600. A total of at least 4,000 principals will be needed each year to replace persons retiring, dying, or departing from the profession or to keep up with the increase in numbers of attendance units. By 1976 the annual replacement rate for all principals should reach 5,000. These conservative estimates emphasize the importance of principal selection from a strictly quantitative viewpoint. Some of the very large and rapidly changing cities may find it necessary to appoint 100 or more principals and assistant principals each year, whereas smaller communities may experience change in the principalship only once every several years. It is clear that in any case there is a growing number of principalships to be filled each year.

As stated previously, all but a small percentage of elementary and secondary principals are employed in systems enrolling 300 or more pupils. Recent composite data on these principals show that almost 83 percent have earned at least a master's degree, 77 percent are men, the average age is 47 (7 years above the average age for teachers), 85.4 percent are married with 5.5 percent widowed or divorced and 9.1 percent single, and 79 percent do no teaching. The average principal supervises 25 instructional personnel in a school with an average enrollment of 631 pupils. There are variations between large and small systems. Ninety-six percent of principals in large systems do not teach. About 42 percent of those in systems with less than 3,000 but more than 300 enrolled do teach some time, and almost 15 percent carry full-time teaching loads.

Although two-thirds of the teachers are women, more than three-fourths of the principals are men. Several reasons are offered to explain why men predominate in this administrative post. One is that

37.1 percent of the men, but only 18.5 percent of the women, have at least a master's degree. An earned graduate degree is generally necessary to receive consideration for a principalship. Thus, 40 of the 50 states demand a master's degree or the equivalent as a minimum requirement for certification as an elementary principal. On the other hand, it is said that fewer women are entering administrator preparation programs simply because they do not consider they have much chance to be appointed principal. There is evidence that women applicants for administrative positions are fewer today than they were a decade ago. The woman is also more likely to leave the profession to get married, raise a family, and then return sometime in her thirties to teach again.

Profiles of elementary and secondary principals reveal that personal and professional characteristics of persons occupying such positions do change. In 1938, according to a study by the Office of Education, 57.5 percent of all the elementary principals in cities were teaching principals. The remaining were full-time or supervising principals, and 7 percent of these assumed responsibilities for more than one school. Only about 4 percent of the elementary schools at that time provided assistant principals. Teaching principals were found in smaller schools with seven or eight teachers, whereas supervising principals were typically in schools with at least eighteen teachers. By 1958, 82 percent of the elementary principals in cities were supervising principals with no teaching responsibilities, and only 18 percent were teaching principals. Part of the increase could be ascribed to a change in definition. In 1938 and earlier, a supervising principal was defined as one with 75 percent or more of his time free from regular teaching duties. In 1958 this was modified to 50 percent or more of the time free of teaching.

The typical elementary principal today has a master's degree, whereas in 1928 more than 50 percent of the supervising and 80 percent of the teaching elementary principals had no academic degree. Significantly, according to the latest study, 78 percent of all men elementary principals have earned master's degrees, as have 60 percent of all women principals.

The median age of the elementary principal is 43

years for a man, 52 years for a woman, and 47.7 years for both types. Total experience in the classroom is 10.6 years, and as principal, 8.7 years. Over the years there has not been any significant change in experience characteristics of supervising principals. The typical principal is a little older than his predecessor of 40 or 50 years ago, and the principal in the larger system is older than his counterpart in a smaller one.

In the beginning, all schoolmasters were men, but a shift occurred so that by 1938, as the U.S. Office of Education study reported, 67 percent of all elementary principals were women. The percentage of men and women in the principalship varies with the time and population sample of the several reported studies. Thus, a 1928 report by the Department of Elementary School Principals showed only 55 percent of the elementary principals to be women. By 1948, the proportion of men and women in the principalship shifted to 59 percent and 41 percent, respectively. The switch to men continued, so that by 1958 they occupied 62 percent of the supervising principalships. Women were more successful in gaining appointment to teaching principalships. When both types—supervising and teaching principals—are considered, 59 percent of the elementary principals are found to be men and 41 percent women.

High school principals project a different profile. The most recent study completed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals showed that 89 percent of the senior high school principals are men, are married, and tend to have small-town backgrounds and working class origins. Ninety percent have earned master's degrees and report at least eight years of teaching experience prior to the assumption of the principalship. The median age is about 44 years, and for those in urban schools, 47 years. The typical high school principal today likewise is a little older than his counterpart of some 40 years ago. A 1923 study reported a median age of 33.4 years; a 1947 study, 43.3 years. In 1923 the highest degree generally earned by a high school principal was a bachelor's degree. Almost three-fourths had master's degrees in 1947; 90 percent have master's degrees at present.

The Emerging Principalship

The term *principal* is a general one, and the challenges facing the person occupying this position in one situation may not be the same as in another. Talents, preparation, and experience that lead to success in the elementary principalship may or may not spell the same degree of success at junior or senior high school levels. Maturity level of pupils, nature of the teaching staff, type of neighborhood, and complexity of programs may make a difference in the type of person required. Attendance centers with similar grade levels may call for different qualities. A successful principal in a senior high school where the majority of youths are college bound, come from homes of high socioeconomic status, and are not prone to drop out, may experience adjustment problems when transferred to another high school serving a disadvantaged area where nationality and racial backgrounds are unfamiliar or where students are dropout prone. Defining the situation in which the principal works is of no less importance than knowing the characteristics of the person considered for the post.

There are forces within and outside of educational systems which continue to modify the principalship. As teacher groups assume different postures, the relationship between the principal and teachers changes. Professional negotiation, to illustrate, will influence principal-teacher relationships. Increasing emphasis upon schools as an agency to ameliorate social injustices is a force outside the school system which is bound to generate significant changes in the manner in which a principal fulfills his leadership role. Federal involvement in sponsoring curriculum changes has an impact at the classroom level and influences the manner in which a principal executes administrative and supervisory functions. Pressures in the most difficult schools take their toll of principals. Few persons can tolerate threats to personal safety and continual school crises for more than a few years. Excellent physical and mental health for the principal are more important today than ever and should not be assumed to last forever in the face of a high degree of unrelenting stress.

Recommendations

The AASA Committee on the Selection of School Principals recommends—

■ That each district recognize that the principalship is a cluster of functions which are best realized through the efforts of many administrators and supervisors rather than only one person.

■ That each school district conceptualize the school principalship to meet present-day demands. What a school district expects of a principal should be incorporated in its written policies so that individuals can be selected in terms of well-defined specifications.

■ That the uniqueness of each of the school attendance centers be recognized and defined with clarity. Expectations of the principalship vary with the times and referent group and help to define demands in a given attendance center.

■ That continued and excessive stress and strain take their toll on a person working in an extremely difficult principalship. Periodic health examinations may be useful in determining when it is advisable to move a person from a principalship that is affecting his physical or emotional stability.

■ That future needs for principals be anticipated through careful study of turnover and retirement patterns of principals as well as the potential increase in the number of attendance units within the school district.

FOCAL POINTS

Selection of a principal requires consideration of two sets of variables: (1) personal (How well do the aspirant's personal characteristics meet the criteria in general?) and (2) situational (What are the specific demands of the position that might make a difference?).

Personal variables such as age, sex, marital status, intelligence, health, personality, and value patterns are considered in the selection process, but existing research on the appropriate use of these factors tends to be ignored.

The issue of how much prior experience is necessary to become a principal remains unresolved, but unusually long periods are not recommended.

Criteria and Selection

Few disagree on the desirability of a high degree of selectivity in the appointment of principals. The nub of the issue is: what standards shall prevail in the search for the most promising among the large number of persons who each year express an interest in becoming school administrators? The many and complex roles demanded in the principalship, described in a previous section, outline the leadership challenge. Ascertaining what personal characteristics are most likely to satisfy leadership demands of the principalship is one of the most important and perhaps most difficult problems facing the superintendent.

Superintendents are in a unique position to describe and influence the environment that surrounds the principalship. They have considerable knowledge on the types of problems or demands in each situation to which an administrative aspirant may be assigned. To illustrate, the basic problem in one school in the central core area of a great city could be poor student morale, high delinquency rate, or more dropouts than the average. "Blocked communication" between home and school may compound such difficulties. In any case, the superintendent should be able to define the priority problem, or cluster of challenges, in each attendance center in the district.

The criterion problem has at least two sides—variables which define the situation and criteria which describe the general contours of persons to be considered for selection.

Selection can be viewed as a process with at least two major phases. The first concentrates on the more readily identified and measured characteristics of a person such as age, preparation, experiences, and qualification for an administrator's certificate. It can be called initial screening. Those who satisfy its standards become members of the school district's resource pool. Candidates in the administrator resource pool may be ranked to indicate order in which each receives further consideration.

The second phase probes other and often more difficult to assess characteristics of persons in the resource pool. Usually it takes more time and a variety of techniques and instruments to gain the necessary measures. The best qualified are then matched with leadership demands in a specific prin-

cipalship. This is the culminating phase of the selection process.

Selection and Success

Underlying the selection process is the assumption that there are personal and situational variables which can guide a school district's efforts to determine those most likely to succeed. To select is, therefore, to predict. It is assumed that those chosen on the basis of the defined criteria are more likely to exhibit effective administrator performance than those rejected.

Success is a relative term. Its attainment may be influenced as much by being in the right place at the right time as by possessing many of the desired personal or professional factors. In other words, success of a candidate is dependent, to a degree at least, on the skill of the superintendent in assigning him to a particular principalship as well as on the ability to measure precisely a host of personal and professional attributes.

The first task confronting a school superintendent or a committee is to determine criteria of success in the principalship in general terms for the system as a whole and in terms of specific administrative behavior for a given attendance center. Success may be measured by what happens to the morale of a school's instructional staff, by the quality and promptness of the principal's reports, by the amount of change stimulated in a school, by what the PTA leadership thinks of the principal, by the poise shown when an emergency hits the school, by how well students are counseled by the principal, or by how efficiently supplies and facilities are cared for. Each of these, along with other factors, may be weighted and then all of them combined to produce an overall "success index" for a school district. The purpose is not to produce a rating scale for principal evaluation, although this possibility is not precluded, but to fix in mind the expectations of the particular principalship. Part of this was implied in the previous section, couched in the phrase *conceptualization of the principalship*. One is more likely to find something if he knows what he is looking for.

There are several factors which can be considered in attempts to define the administrative situa-

tion. The location of the school within the district; degree of homogeneity (or heterogeneity) of ethnic, religious, or social groups within the attendance area; aspiration level, socioeconomic backgrounds and behavioral norms of students; and the profile of the teaching staff provide clues as to the nature of the administrative challenges likely to be found in a given situation.

Personal and Professional Factors

What to look for in the person applying for a principalship may be defined in terms of traits or in terms of performance. Measuring traits appears to be more popular than assessing potentiality for performing tasks associated with administration.

The trait approach is not without its detractors. Correlations between various personal trait measures and subsequent success judgments have been low, according to many researchers. The reasons for this are not hard to find. Definitions of success vary in precision. Defining traits in operational terms to facilitate objective measurement is not as simple as some imagine. Distinguishing cause and effect relationship from a mere association between a trait, or configuration of traits, and effective administrative behavior represents yet another problem. Nevertheless, for all its shortcomings, the prediction of behavior or success on the basis of traits never dies. It may fade away for short periods, only to return in a new disguise.

Personal factors are usually included among selection criteria, because many believe in their relevance or because data on these factors are easily obtained. A sample of criteria based on personal characteristics follows:

- The principal should be young, which may be defined further as no older than 30, 35, or even 45 years of age.
- The principal should be intelligent. There may be further specification that the person be of "above average" or "superior" intelligence, but seldom is a minimum IQ score or range specified.
- The principal should be in excellent physical and mental health.

Certain assumptions are implied when personal factors serve as standards to discriminate among

aspirants. What relationship the criteria have to effective administrative behavior continues to be debated. The criteria may be stated in inflexible terms such as "no one over 40 shall be considered" or "all principals must be men." This doesn't give much maneuvering room nor permit exceptions when warranted in unusual situations within the school or community. What research exists on validity of the use of such criteria appears to be ignored.

A few school districts set upper limits on age (such as 45, 55, or 60) of applicants for administrative posts. Written policy may be tempered by informal understandings that a person at or near the upper age will be passed over in favor of a younger person with qualifications similar in other respects. Somewhere past the age of 40 or 45 a person becomes "too old" for consideration. There is some evidence to suggest that, on the average, those appointed to the principalship at the age of 45 years or older may not perform as well as leaders as those appointed at a younger age.

The principalship is a man's world, by and large. This is a reversal of conditions in the elementary school earlier in this century. Does this mean that sex should be an important standard of reference in principal selection? Many studies report the same conclusion: All other things being equal, men principals are *not* superior to women principals by any measure of administrative effectiveness. In spite of objective evidence which points to the contrary, myths persist that "men refuse to work for women principals" and "women prefer to work for men principals," and therefore, that "men make better principals" or "no woman should be appointed to an elementary principalship if a man is available." Women elementary principals threaten to become a vanishing breed. If this does occur, an important source of administrative leadership talent will fail to be utilized.

Most principals are married. There are no data to suggest that marital status has anything to do with success in the principalship.

Intelligence does seem to be related to subsequent success, particularly when it is coupled with a high level of academic achievement in college. Intelligence appears to be a relatively valid standard

upon which to base decisions related to principal selection, although there are enough brilliant failures to make the use of additional considerations imperative.

Personality is difficult to measure and to describe in meaningful terms. Extreme personality aberrations may be detected more readily than the less obvious ones. A psychiatrist requires many sessions to comprehend the inner workings of a human personality under a variety of conditions, and even longer to change them. It is questionable whether the less reliable group personality measures can provide information of sufficient validity to consider in the selection process.

Experience, particularly educational experience, preparation, and a variety of acquired skills make up another group of factors which can be called *professional*. Profiles of principals suggest that requiring considerable teaching experience prior to appointment is not unusual. A recent national study, however, reported that neither type nor length of previous teaching experience had a fixed relation to what was called "executive professional leadership" behavior among principals. The precise weight to attach to length and quality of teaching experience when sizing up a candidate for a principalship is a moot point. Excellence in classroom teaching is no guarantee of quality performance in administration, although poor teachers unable even to control pupils within the classroom are not likely prospects. About 40 years ago the late Charles H. Judd remarked, "I yield to no one in respect for skillful teaching, but I am quite certain that long and successful experience as a teacher not infrequently constitutes a real disqualification for the principalship." Judd's reaction was against extended periods of teaching as an indicator of readiness for the principalship. It does not imply the contrary, that no experience is more closely associated with success.

Few would not agree that some experience as a classroom teacher is desirable. The issue is: What should be the minimum demanded for what kind of person in what type of situation? Is two years' teaching experience enough? Or must there be three or four or more? Some studies show that growth as a professional person in the classroom tends to level off and reach a plateau after approximately

five years. To demand more than five years of experience may be unwarranted, as the law of diminishing returns may have set in earlier. But how much less than five years is justified remains to be proved.

Forty states require attainment of a master's degree, or its equivalent in hours beyond the bachelor's, for certification as an elementary principal; and 43 states require the same for the secondary school principalship. Accrediting agencies demand at least a master's degree earned in school administration. The quality of graduate study, not simply numbers of courses in educational administration, may determine how much preparation influences performance.

Other factors related to human relations skills, leadership ability, and insight into community power structures suggest other useful criteria. There is some evidence to indicate that a high order of interpersonal skills, a motivation to serve, and a willingness to commit off-duty time to one's work are related to a high level of executive professional leadership behavior. The present social ferment suggests that being a member of a particular minority group may work for the applicant in some situations and to his disadvantage in others. Most professional educators prefer selection on the basis of competency and object to discrimination or special consideration in appointment on the basis of race, religion, or nationality background.

The search for meaningful criteria related to effective performance as a principal has been going on for a long time. It continues, as does the search for predictive measures and for procedures most likely to facilitate the selection of the right principal for the right school.

Recommendations

The AASA Committee on Selection of Principals recommends—

- That all school systems establish criteria and state them, preferably in performance terms.
- That situational factors likely to influence effective administrative behavior be described for the system as a whole and more specifically for each attendance center.
- That the research available on personal and pro-

fessional factors be utilized in selection.

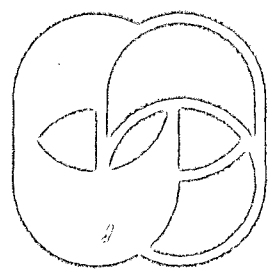
- That no person be excluded from consideration as principal on the basis of sex alone.
- That unusually long periods of teaching experience not be required.
- That a year of graduate study, or its equivalent, at a duly accredited institution of higher learning be the absolute minimum for consideration for selection as a principal, with post-master's work in school administration, particularly a doctorate, being given a high order of preference.
- That no person be excluded from nor be given special consideration in recruitment and selection because of race, religion, socioeconomic status, nationality background, or political influence.

It is the discovery of quality, not of quantity, that plagues school officials searching for the best person for the principalship.

The biographical information blank, transcript, letters of recommendation, rating scales, tests, and interviews are instruments employed to provide information essential to the selection decision.

The selection decision may mean placement on an eligibility list pending further consideration when and if a vacancy occurs, or an assignment to an administrative internship or assistant principal-ship, as well as appointment to the principalship.

Retation of principals is debated more than it is practiced.



FOCAL POINTS

The criterion determination problem — that of defining the standards of reference for sizing up candidates—remains a perplexing one, but no less so than the search process, which includes recruitment, identification, selection procedures, selection instruments, and assignment. The talent pool for the principalship recalls the dilemma confronting the Ancient Mariner when he observed: "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink." There seldom is a shortage of individuals applying for administrative positions. In many school districts there are more teachers holding administrative credentials than administrative positions available. It is the discovering of quality, not of quantity, that plagues school officials searching for the best. The best often may be difficult to isolate in a sea of mediocrity.

Recruitment

Whether to confine the search for principals to those presently in the school system in some capacity or to cast the net beyond district boundaries is an issue. Larger systems, in particular, tend to promote from within and seldom appoint a person from outside to start as a principal. Smaller schools tend to do the opposite. Rigidity in either approach is worthy of reexamination during this time of keen competition for administrative talent.

Recruitment is more often than not limited to an announcement that a vacancy exists or that examinations will be held to determine eligibility for promotion to an administrative position. Waiting for candidates to present themselves rather than searching for likely prospects is the most common practice. Whether the traditional approach will yield a large enough output of quality administrators is now being seriously questioned.

Each system may have its group of "principal makers," people who have the ear of the superintendent or contacts with the selection committees and those individuals whose recommendations carry weight. "Principal makers" may be other principals, other administrators, certain teachers, or even influential lay persons. Such people somehow gain the confidence of selection officials and thus play an important role in identification and recruitment.

Recruitment avenues are often confined by local

policies, state certification requirements, professional contacts, and predispositions of those involved in selection. A change in local policies may be necessary if recruitment is to go beyond school district borders. Certification standards for administrators differ from state to state and may limit the search to a given state, particularly where high certification standards prevail. Canvassing for prospects outside the system starts with university placement agencies recognized for selective admission and recommendation of candidates preparing for administration. As long as teaching experience is required as part of the principal's credential, new principals are selected, by and large, from among those presently serving in a classroom somewhere.

Selection Devices

Recruitment from outside the district or seeking applicants from within comes early in the total selection process. Selection devices become operative once a pool of interested persons has been identified. The challenge is to separate the outstanding from the ordinary or incompetent by using predetermined criteria as guidelines. There is the further task of translating criteria into an action program. Instruments must be fashioned or procured that are capable of giving readings on how closely the candidate's predicted behavior will be consistent with the criteria. These readings are interpreted according to some value system which should be influenced by the particular situation where the vacancy occurs.

The primary purpose of selection devices or instruments is to yield information on predictor variables pertinent to a decision as to who shall be chosen principal. This obvious fact may be overlooked, and when it is, the selection process degenerates into an empty ritual. Designing instruments consistent with this simple objective is easier said than done. The kind of information sought influences the device employed. Thus, facts about the candidate's age or teaching experience can be gathered in an application blank; about types of college courses, from a transcript of college credits; and about his intelligence, from a test of mental maturity. Insights into his knowledge of administration may be derived from recommendations from

professors, transcripts of graduate work, or tests; into his "personality," reactions to stress, and teaching ability, from personal or telephone conversations with former supervisors, principals, or professors. Measures of some characteristics can be obtained from more than one device.

Biographical Information

The biographical information blank, which may or may not be part of an application blank, provides data which reveal some of the more obvious characteristics of the candidate. It might contain the usual data: candidate's name, address, age, family background, health background, education background, military experience, and professional experience. Verification of data supplied is seldom required, although an affidavit to certify teaching experience and a photo-copy of a college transcript to verify college work completed may be requested.

The design of the biographical data blank in machine usable form would permit rapid identification of individuals with special characteristics. The advantages of electronic data processing, particularly for large systems, have been overlooked generally. Most blanks are developed on the assumption that they will be manually scanned only, rather than machine treated.

Problems are compounded when the biographical data sheet or application blank becomes an essay test as well. Candidates are sometimes asked to state their philosophy of education in two paragraphs or less; their favorite pastime and why it gives them such satisfactions; why they are interested in becoming a principal; or the kinds of students they like best. It can become a "brag sheet" as well if the candidates are asked for a description of "what they do best." There is good argument for keeping the application blank a report of objective facts and placing all subjective questions in another instrument, if they are used at all. Assessment of essay-type information with anything that resembles objectivity or reliability is almost impossible.

The Transcript

The transcript of graduate and undergraduate credits earned sheds some light on the academic history and achievement of a prospective school

principal. It takes an experienced interpreter, however, to comprehend the endless variety of course numbers and titles offered at universities that pride themselves on individuality and independence. Confusion is compounded where there are frequent changes in numbers and titles.

Assuming victory over transcript semantics, there remains the task of assessing what constitutes a well-educated person and judging the quality of instruction in a course taken and the meaning of the grades ascribed thereto. Judgments on the quality of the institution of higher learning and the ability of professors are made, intuitively or otherwise, when estimates are made of the candidate's academic background. Some school districts prefer scores made on a variety of achievement tests over grades registered in college or university transcripts. They consider test scores better indicators of competence for the principalship, although the research does not produce a high degree of confidence in either source of information.

The transcript is, of course, useful to certify educational data, which are included in any biographical information sheet. It can reveal whether the candidate has tended to avoid certain subjects and to emphasize others. The responsibility for comparing and interpreting transcripts of candidates from different universities or candidates involved in different programs in the same institution should be assigned to a person with a knowledge of higher education and experience in assessing data recorded in transcripts.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation obtained separately or bound collectively into what are known as the "placement credentials" or "papers" of the candidate constitute another source of information on factors related to the principalship. Those who have analyzed such devices agree that written credentials or letters of recommendation have some value in identifying the least likely candidates but do little to aid discrimination among the good, better, and best. It is the unusual person who gears the letter of recommendation to a specific responsibility, gathers voluminous and carefully corroborated data on the person recommended, and spends considerable time

in preparing a recommendation in behalf of someone vaguely familiar. The latest horoscope for the candidate might be as valid and as reliable as letters of recommendation or credentials.

Assuming the significance and validity of judgments contained in a letter of recommendation is extremely hazardous unless the writer's value patterns and his propensity to exaggerate or underestimate are known beforehand. Comments by strangers cannot be interpreted with confidence. The date on the letter of recommendation is often overlooked. Many changes can take place which would render earlier judgments invalid.

The ritual persists nonetheless, and no superintendent of a school system would act without letters of recommendation. Among the more immortal and famous last words are, "And he had such a fine collection of letters of recommendation." The position of principal is sufficiently important to warrant making a few telephone calls to corroborate opinions or to seek elaboration upon, or interpretations of, judgments rendered in a letter of recommendation.

Superintendents need authoritative and valid information about a candidate for a prudent decision on who shall be assigned to a principalship. University professors and others have a responsibility to provide accurate and appropriate data on persons recommended. The superintendent must communicate to university personnel involved in administrator preparation the kinds of information most helpful in principal selection and placement.

Rating Scales

Rating scales vary considerably in design and usefulness. They should force the observer rendering an evaluative judgment to focus on key points or concepts. Rating scales should make possible more objective appraisals of an individual's performance of some task. In contrast to anecdotal reporting of administrator or teacher behavior, the rating scale should direct attention to specific categories within the total performance with scores assigned to each. However, most ratings are about as valid as letters of recommendation from unknown admirers. When used by a person lacking adequate comprehension of what is rated, whether teaching or previous administrative performance, or compe-

tence to interpret or record what is observed, the rating scale loses much of its validity and reliability. Information on the validity of the items within the scale, periods of observation, and competence of the observer are imperative for valid interpretations of rating scale data and scores.

Tests

Tests, it appears, are gaining in popularity as measures of certain variables considered essential in selection. Perhaps the desire to be scientific and the compulsion to be objective are partially responsible for this. Many kinds of tests are available. Some are "homemade"; others are commercial productions. Some are "objective" tests which are easily scored; others are subjective, or essay, tests which must be evaluated in a less objective manner. Validity and reliability do not come naturally. Tests have proved themselves as valid and reliable measures of such factors as intelligence, but even here the desire for a "culture-free" instrument demonstrates that limitations prevail.

Paper-and-pencil tests of the candidate's knowledge of supervisory or administrative concepts may be substituted for performance ratings of the person serving as an assistant principal or teacher or engaged in graduate course work in supervision and administration. Specific items (facts or concepts) to be included in such tests are subject to debate. Thus, some standardized tests of administrative or supervisory concepts fail to reflect new approaches and insights into school administration or the particular viewpoint in a school system. Analysis of what the test items actually measure is most important to facilitate interpretations of test scores in the selection process.

Not all tests are based on the same norms, and some have several norms. Thus, the same test, e.g., the Miller Analogies Test, may have one set of norms for graduate students in education and different sets for graduate students in other fields. Cutoff scores are related to norms established for a given group and will influence interpretation or value judgments about a particular candidate's test score.

Tests may be used appropriately to portray accurately a personal or professional variable related to

a meaningful criterion. A test may be a poor measure if put to a use never intended by the test maker. Thus, an achievement test is not designed to measure intelligence. Tests are more sophisticated than many selection devices, but their values depend on the relevance of the instrument chosen to the criterion. If used indiscriminately or administered without appropriate directions, conditions, or precautions, they can be a waste of time and money and create an illusion of objectivity.

Universities are in a unique position to serve as administration centers for most tests used in principal selection. Special talents within universities can ensure proper test administration, objective results, and appropriate interpretation of scores. Cooperative testing arrangements between school districts interested in the use of tests in principal selection and universities in the state deserve to be encouraged.

Tests and special inventories can be used to measure mental ability, communication skills, professional knowledge, personality, values and attitudes, interests, and general knowledge. Paper-and-pencil tests of personality, values, attitudes, and interests are extremely difficult to interpret and have little value in the selection of school personnel. Situation-type tests are intriguing, but scores gained on such tests are even more of a problem to interpret. Many test publishers offer a variety of instruments, with several forms of some. A major task for school officials is to decide which tests are best suited to serve the unique concerns of the district.

What weight and interpretation shall be attached to scores in determining the final evaluation of the person considered for a principalship? A high score on one test or a battery of tests should not be considered a guarantee of high-quality performance as an administrator. Some test-wise individuals perform far better on paper-and-pencil tests than they do on the job. Administration is action oriented. The ability to implement what is known and to exercise good judgment counts more than mere potential or accumulation of knowledge.

The Interview

The interview is traditionally the climax to the selection process. Its many shortcomings have been

publicized by a variety of writers who imply that the interview may be more of a ritual than a meaningful selection activity. Time allocated, objectives, nature of information to be gathered, and skill of the interviewer determine to a large degree how much can be gained from it. Research suggests that the interview tends to be grossly overrated.

Short interviews yield little more than first impressions, and first impressions are notorious for inaccuracies. It is not unusual for the same person, interviewed by several individuals, to receive a wide range of scores accompanied by conflicting interpretations of his fitness for the position.

Vague and confusing questions submitted by an interviewer are impossible to answer on the spur of the moment. One of the popular myths is that the interviewer with one "secret question" can reveal the true worth of a person. Another is that you can get to know a candidate simply by "visiting" with him for 15 to 30 minutes. There is no one potent question nor unplanned visit that can yield all that one needs to know about a person. One writer contended that the interview was the "hoariest and sorriest of rituals encumbering the selection process."

Evidence to support the contention that each school system can do much to improve upon this device is overwhelming. It remains, however, one of the few personal contacts with the applicant, and few people recommend its abandonment. The chances of enhancing the value of the interview as a selection device are much greater where its likely contributions and limitations are known beforehand. Development of clear-cut and meaningful questions presented orally to the candidate and the organization of training sessions to help interviewers sharpen skills deserve consideration in each school district. Interviewing is not a task to be performed by the unskilled or uninformed.

Meaningful outcomes are possible through interview techniques. The interview can be used to corroborate previously obtained information. It does reveal the appearance and poise of the individual in the interview situation as well as his ability to articulate his thoughts and to use the English language acceptably. The interview can be a two-way street whereby information on expectations of the principalship and the nature of the school system are

transmitted to the candidate. The interview falls short, however, when too much is expected from it.

The End Result

Criteria, coupled with instruments which measure the predictor variables, yield information important to decisions about who is to be selected. What happens when all the pertinent data for a decision have been gathered? An applicant may be admitted to an administrative internship, to a place high on an "eligibility" list, to an appointment as an assistant principal, or to the principalship of a particular school.

Participation in an administrative internship program may be the first in a series of steps culminating in an administrative appointment. The internship serves the dual purpose of providing the applicant additional professional preparation for the principalship and providing the administrator greater opportunity to observe the applicant in a learning or practice situation.

Placement on the eligibility list, which is found in most large systems, is another possible initial outcome of the selection process. Lack of seniority or low position on the list may inhibit the best newcomers from gaining early appointments.

Appointment as assistant principal is required in some larger systems before consideration for the principalship. In some cases, assistant principals are promoted to the principalship on a seniority basis. Seniority is not recommended as the best basis for promotion to a principalship. The assistant principalship in this sense becomes more of a training ground than a source of specialized professional assistance to the principal.

It becomes obvious that not all of those appointed to the so-called second-level leadership positions may be promoted to the principalship. Since there are fewer of these positions than there are of assistant or vice-principalships, the number of opportunities for promotion are restricted. Also, if the assistant or vice-principalship is conceived as a preparational period and an extension of the selection process, time may establish that the candidate is not well fitted for promotion to the principalship.

Most candidates appointed to second-level administrative posts aspire to promotion to the princi-

palship. It becomes important, therefore, to counsel and advise candidates during this preparational period as to the probability of promotion or retention in the second-level position. The length of time of this preparational period varies from system to system. Needless to say, candidates who do not demonstrate qualities of performance justifying promotion within a period of two to five years should be carefully counseled so that they may be helped to accept the fact that the assistant or vice-principalship is likely to be terminal rather than preparational.

Assignment and Rotation

Assignment to a principalship is the ultimate goal, whether made from an eligibility list, an assistant principalship, or a current selection effort. If it is done purely on the basis of the outcome of a series of applications, papers filed, interviews, and tests, the matching of a person to a specific position may still be based on guesswork. As stated previously, there are few persons who can do well in any situation. In most cases the search is for the individual with special qualities to fit the unusual demands of a particular attendance center.

Rotation of principals is a specialized approach to assignment. Rotation is the practice of moving principals from one school to another without regard to size or additional pay. It is periodic reassignment with or without vacancies. Rotation should not be confused with moving principals from smaller to larger schools. This practice may be questioned if a higher salary goes along with the move to a larger school; small schools deserve leadership as good as any found in large centers.

Rotation is predicated on the hope of introducing change and a new vitality to each school involved. It may have value if done with the purpose of achieving a better match between the person and the administrative situation. The desirability of rotation of principals remains a moot point to be debated rather than a common practice.

Factors used in principal selection and some related measuring devices are summarized in Table 1. Not all devices are of equal value. More than one device can be utilized to gain insights, of varying degrees of validity, into a single factor. The advantages and limitations of each vehicle should be

examined before it is employed in the selection process. The dangers inherent in some of the listed measuring devices were described in previous portions of this section. This is a summary of available approaches and should not be construed as a blanket recommendation for any or all.

Recommendations

It is recommended by the AASA Committee on the Selection of Principals—

- That formal identification and recruitment procedures for school principals be developed in every school system.
- That flexible rather than rigid policies of promoting from within or searching outside the school system be adopted in all systems.
- That systematic and carefully designed procedures be designed to facilitate identification and selection of the best candidates.
- That contributions and limitations of various selection devices be analyzed to guard against overemphasis on any one test, interview, or other selection device.
- That assignment of principals be made in accordance with characteristics likely to contribute to success in a given situation.

TABLE 1
FACTORS USED IN PRINCIPAL SELECTION AND SOME RELATED MEASURING DEVICES

Factors Used in Selection	*Devices Used in Measurement*
1. Age, experience, family history	Biographical information blank, interview
2. Breadth of general knowledge	Achievement tests, transcript, ratings by competent observers, interview, letters of recommendation
3. Breadth of specialized knowledge of education	Achievement tests, transcript, ratings by competent observers, interview, letters of recommendation
4. Command of the English language and ability to articulate thoughts	Tests, interview, ratings by competent observers
5. Dependability, drive	Ratings by competent observers
6. Emotional stability and other characteristics of personality	Test, rating by competent observers, letters of recommendation, interview
7. Human relations skills	Ratings by or conversation with competent observers, letters of recommendation, interview
8. Interests	Interview
9. Likely administrative behavior or creativity	Situational performance tests, interview, letters of recommendation
10. Mental ability or intelligence	Intelligence tests
11. Moral fitness	Ratings by or conversation with competent observers, letters of recommendation
12. Scholarship	Transcript, letters of recommendation
13. Value patterns	Tests of value, ratings by or conversation with competent observers, interview
14. Physical fitness or health	Health examination

A Summary of the Search for New Directions

The importance of the principalship and the growing demands for top-quality administrative leadership make the talent search a continuing effort requiring diligence. A never-ending quest for individuals with potential for success in the principalship is pursued through informal as well as formal channels.

Criteria employed should be geared to present demands upon the principalship and redefined periodically to reflect changes in education in general and in the principalship in particular. All school systems should reexamine demands placed upon the principalship. Myths continue to be mistaken for fact, in spite of evidence which refutes completely or partially the significance of certain factors considered central to the selection of principals. Among these is the notion that the sex of a person has something to do with leadership capabilities or high levels of administrative performance in the principalship. Nonetheless, the erroneous notion persists that men make the best principals and that women, therefore, should not be employed in such positions. It is assumed that the longer one teaches, the more likely it is that he will serve as an administrator of distinction. There is belief in many quarters that just any kind of professional education at any type of institution will make for success in the principalship. All of these are unsupported notions. Although it is known that they are invalid, the problem of finding criteria that are valid remains a perplexing one, and development in new directions is

stymied pending breakthroughs in research.

Selection procedures and devices are means to an end. One of the never-ending battles in the talent search is to make certain that time-honored techniques do not become empty rituals. A large body of opinion clearly indicates that the interview, the rating scale, and the letter of recommendation, when used indiscriminately, are of questionable validity and reliability.

Schools will continue to depend upon the interview and, therefore, should consider the creation of orientation and work sessions to equip interviewers with the skills and understandings necessary to make the interview a meaningful experience in the selection process. Each administrator must be realistic about what can and cannot be obtained in interview sessions.

It is evident that electronic data-processing techniques hold promise of speeding the talent search. Rapid identification of persons with desired characteristics is possible through these techniques.

Improvement in selection methods includes a probing behind letters of recommendation by telephone calls or personal contacts. Certainly, when a position as important as a principalship is concerned, the extra time needed to call the knowledgeable person or to see him personally is well spent.

Person-position matching is being discussed more and gives signs of being an identifiable trend. It implies detailed information, not only about the individual, but about the position as well.

Unexpected turnover in a school system, particularly a large one that is expanding rapidly, calls for the maintenance of a ready reserve of administrative talent. The use of the school district internship for potential administrators is one approach to developing a ready reserve. Often it is achieved with the cooperation of an institution of higher learning. As stated previously, the internship can serve many functions. It presents opportunities to know more about the candidate. It gives the candidate an opportunity to know more about the system. Lastly, it provides the potential administrator with decision-making experiences. It should not be confused with more course work or sessions to which old-time administrators come to brag about achievements. The administrative internship holds considerable potential even though some systems may have the expensive and frustrating experience of preparing a pool only to have the best prospects lured to other school systems. This may be a temporary danger. As more systems create administrative internships, there could be exchanges rather than piracy.

The conceptualization of the assistant principalship remains rather hazy. The number of assistant principals required, as well as their functions, is not always clearly defined. In some cases the assistant principalship is a training ground for future principals. This appears to be more feasible when there is approximately a one-to-one relationship between the number of assistant principals and of principals.

If there are two or three times as many assistant principals as there are principals, a potential source of frustration will exist if all appointed to the post see themselves as future principals. Of no less significance is the way the position is viewed in the total administrative hierarchy. If the assistant is there to perform a special service, it may be better conceived as a career post than as a temporary assignment pending entry into the principalship. It may be reasonable to assume that not everyone serving as assistant principal has the interest, ability, and experience to become a principal. Thus, it is possible that a counseling specialist, a data-processing specialist, or a curriculum specialist may derive greater satisfaction from continuing such services than from a principalship. A specialized assistant principalship is not necessarily the best training ground for a principal. The assistant principal is not likely to be a general "junior executive," particularly in larger systems.

There is a wide gap between existing practices in the selection of principals and desirable professional standards. Most practices have grown with little direction or significant change in outlook. We have tarried too long in the improvement of selection processes, hoping that persistence in the ritual will somehow result in the appointment of quality individuals. This is not likely to happen.