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Primary considerations for a positive school personnel policy are outlined in eight sections, as follows: (1) Faculty and staff recruitment and selection; (2) job analysis and classification; (3) personnel assignment and evaluation; (4) policy development; (5) welfare benefits, including leaves, fringe benefits, continuing contracts, working conditions, and merit pay; (6) orientation and professional development; (7) communications within the school staff; and (8) recommended sources for use in policy development. The source list comprises a bibliography of 38 items published between 1950 and 1968. (JK)

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Guidelines  
for  
School Personnel Policies

Compiled by  
Study Commission on Personnel Policies

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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The Study Commission on Personnel Policies came into being the fall of 1967. The members of the Commission did a most commendable job of compiling the information for inclusion in this publication by late spring of 1968. George Alexander did a yeoman job in putting together the work of several individuals into a similar format. Dr. Stuart Chilton, in addition to serving as a consultant, assisted by editing the document and compiling the handy list of related publications. It was my task to do the final editing with a few deletions to avoid duplication, some rewriting, and adding some information where it was deemed appropriate.

All of the individuals who contributed to these guidelines are to be commended for a job well done.

Lynn Turner, Director

## FOREWARD

It is the hope of the Study Commission on Personnel Policies that these guidelines will be of some usefulness in the development or revision of personnel policies. No claim is made for these recommendations to be applicable in every district on any particular point. The Commission has attempted to present general guidelines based on present accepted practices and on research done by the commission.

At no period in the history of American schools has the development of personnel policies been so critically important. If this publication serves to improve education in East Texas through more pleasant and harmonious working relationships among school boards, administrators, and teachers, the commission's efforts will have been well spent.

It should be noted that the Council office maintains a rather extensive file of various publications--policy manuals, handbooks, newsletters, etc.--from many school systems that might prove highly useful when developing or updating similar publications. These are available for loan as well as several publications in the loan library related to personnel policies.

## I. FACULTY AND STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

When one considers the process of recruitment, he is faced with two important tasks: (1) selecting personnel for employment within a given district, and (2) recruiting prospective teachers into the teaching profession. In this paper only the first duty of the personnel director will be considered.

It is the duty of the superintendent or the personnel director to obtain a staff that will fit the goals, program, and over-all needs that are authorized by the local board. In order for any recruitment program to be successful, the board must have already developed policies that will render the positions to be filled attractive to the most qualified applicants. This includes an adequate salary that is at least as high as surrounding districts. Even though economic gain is of prime importance, one must realize that this is not the only concern of teachers. If this were true, the teacher shortage would be more acute than is presently the case. It is extremely important to have developed board policies that will assure teachers that pleasant working conditions exist in the position that is to be filled.

It is often helpful to develop a recruitment brochure that describes the school system and the community, lists cultural and recreational opportunities, catalogs churches, fraternal, and civic organizations, indicates climate, shopping facilities, available housing and costs, and other pertinent information, usually including at least some data on salary.

The administrator may improve recruitment procedures by: developing an appropriate application form; devising an interview format that secures needed information in a systematic way; involving supervisors, principals, and department heads in the selection process where practicable; and devising a checklist of the most important characteristics to be sought in candidates.

A bachelor's degree as a minimum with a strong major in the teaching field should be given priority in an applicant's qualifications. Good, solid experience in a recognized superior school district is a desirable qualifying point, but superior applicants who have just graduated or will graduate prior to actual employment should also be given careful consideration. Superior student teaching experience should be considered in lieu of actual teaching experience.



## II. JOB ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION

In order that the superintendent or personnel director may fill the existing vacancies, it is desirable that the board, with the cooperation of the faculty, develop job descriptions for each position. The job description should contain at least some of the information that follows:

1. Name and location of school and school system.
2. Position to be filled.
3. Salary range.
4. When work begins.
5. Character of the work (grade or subjects, number of classes, extra-curricular responsibilities, number of pupils, results expected).
6. Examples of work to be performed.
7. Academic and professional qualifications (certificate required, education, professional training, and desired experience).
8. General cultural background.
9. Personal and social qualifications (health, age, sex, marital status, and personality or special skills) needed for working with particular pupils and parents.
10. The individual's position in the school's organization and his function in relation to attaining the school's objectives.

The process of recruitment is extremely important, for a school system can be no better than its teachers. Administrators can well afford to take the time needed to develop suitable job descriptions and to organize workable recruitment procedures.

It is important for the job description to be flexible enough to provide for reasonable discretion in the process of selection.



### III. PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT AND EVALUATION

The successful assignment of personnel in the public schools is one of the key jobs to be fulfilled by the school administration. No other single factor plays an equal role in determining the quality of a school program as much as does the school staff itself. The basic preparation of a person should be considered in making an assignment decision. How can a person whose preparatory training was inadequate be expected to do a quality performance in an assignment? The prospective teacher does not become trained for a position just because the position is open. Sometimes an applicant would try to convey this impression to you. If a school district has an adequate job description for each position, this approach is easily avoided. The job description will define the basic preparation required for the position.

When considering personnel assignment, the professional interest of the applicant should be given adequate attention. Many times a person will have the required preparation to fulfill the requirements for more than one position, but will lack the professional interest to do a quality performance in all areas of basic preparation. A person will be happier and do a much better job if assigned in the area of main professional interest. Administrators whose responsibility is the successful staffing of the public schools should never lose sight of the criteria which produce quality school staffs.

The philosophy of a school and the activities included in the program of a school will determine what educational preparation and other experience the entire school faculty should possess. When an administrator

is making an assignment, he should keep in mind the nature and needs of the entire faculty. The assignment of an individual to a faculty should be made on the basis of the contribution that person will make. Sometimes the concern about filling a position just to complete the staff causes one to overlook the ideas mentioned above.

Schools have two types of staff needs--immediate and long-range. When assigning personnel, both these needs should be considered. For example, a school has an opening for a sixth grade teacher. The principal of the school will reach retirement age within the next three years. A sixth grade teacher in another school within the system is interested in advancing to a principalship soon. In the school to which this teacher is now assigned, no possibility for advancement to the principalship seems to exist, because of the age and successful performance of the present principal. The sixth grade teacher could be assigned to meet the immediate needs for a teacher. This same teacher would be getting acquainted with the new school and acquiring valuable information and adequate preparation for meeting the long-range need for a new principal. Another instance in which this would be true would be in considering new programs to be inaugurated in a particular school.

Everyone, whether teacher or school staff, desires personal recognition. Many times an administrator can honor the expressed personal interest or requests of a teacher with little effort. Whenever this can be done, it should be considered. If the request has merit and can be granted, the result will be a teacher giving a much better teaching performance.

Total strength of a school faculty should command attention when teaching assignments are being made. Continuous review of the school

program, with awareness of the immediate and long-range program, is important in keeping a well-balanced faculty. In this instance, well-balanced refers to age, leadership qualities, experience, special training, etc.

The nature of the neighborhood in which a school is located should bear heavily upon guiding the assignment of personnel to a school. The background experiences of a person is an important factor to be considered. The socio-economic pattern in the neighborhood will determine the type of school program needed. It is imperative that the assignment of professional personnel to a school be based upon placing personnel in the school who show promise of making a distinct contribution to the education of the children in the neighborhood. Not only will the educational achievement of children be affected by the assignment of personnel to neighborhood schools, but the morale of the people being assigned will be affected also. A great degree of compatibility between teacher and the neighborhood in which he works is needed.

Each state has certification standards for certifying teachers to perform certain professional assignments. The certification requirements vary from state to state. Therefore, the person responsible for making personnel assignments must be careful in assuring himself that a person certified to teach in another state will also meet certification standards in his state. Unless a person has proper certification, it is illegal to disburse state funds to him.

Accreditation standards which are prepared by the different accrediting agencies must be considered when making personnel assignments. These standards are not uniform from state to state. The person responsible for

making personnel assignments should be careful to see that accreditation requirements are not violated.

Reasonable opportunities for success and promotion should be considered in making personnel assignments. The beginning assignment is important to an individual, but the long-range opportunities are often key factors in determining the contentment and job satisfaction a person receives from employment. Nothing promotes enthusiasm in an individual for doing a good job as does successful performance of duty. Failure in a job leaves wounds which are hard to heal and even if healed, the scars are tender and ugly.

Insofar as possible, beginning teachers should not be overburdened with preparations, students, or extra duties. The initial year of teaching is frequently difficult and trying even in the best of circumstances.

#### IV. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Teachers are affected by all school policies involving personnel assignments and evaluation. Because these policies are the basic statements from which guidelines, rules and regulations are formulated, the teachers deserve to be involved and have a voice in formulating these policies. Too many times boards of education and school administrators neglect to involve the teaching staff. Resulting from this practice is a negative attitude on the part of teachers toward supporting these policies.

To avoid the development of a negative attitude on the part of teachers, all policies concerning them should be called to their attention and their opinions should be heard before a policy is finally adopted. Support for all policies are needed from the teaching staff if the policies are to be successful.

There are many ways to involve the teaching staff in policy development. One procedure for involving the teaching staff in policy decisions is outlined below:

1. General teaching staff meeting to give an overview of needs.
2. Get the faculty of each school in the school system to elect a representative or representatives to a study committee.
3. The study committee composed of teacher representatives, supervisors, board members, administrative personnel and outside consultants will organize to collect data, study it, and formulate basic policies to be considered. These will then be taken by representatives of each group and discussed with their particular group. Recommendations for revisions will be brought from each group by the

representative for consideration by the entire study committee. This process is followed until the study committee reaches a policy statement to be recommended to the entire board of education for study and action.

4. The board takes action on the policy. If it is changed by the board, these changes should be communicated to all concerned.
5. Guidelines for implementation of the policy are then developed by the administration.
6. Guidelines are reviewed by the different faculties and interested groups.
7. Revisions are suggested and acted upon.
8. Guidelines to direct the implementation of the policy are adopted by the board of education.

Teachers can be involved in developing policies pertaining to personnel assignment and evaluation in many other ways. Each local situation will dictate the best procedure to be used.



## V. WELFARE BENEFITS

Faculty and staff participation on formulating and implementing all phases of the welfare program should be encouraged. Most East Texas Schools need to "upgrade" their leave policies. The majority are far behind the big city, Gulf Coast, and West Texas school districts in these benefits.

1. Better controls over sick leave could provide more benefits to be allowed.
2. Professional leaves for in-service, professional growth etc. should be broadened in most of our districts.
3. Reimbursement for professional growth should be given more study and perhaps wide-spread use in East Texas districts. This should improve instructional programs.
4. Social security is not as attractive for retirement purposes to younger teachers and staff, but increases the district's power to secure and hold more mature personnel. However, survivor benefits of social security are often considered to be quite important by younger heads of families.

### SALARIES:

1. Salaries should be the highest possible within the ability of the individual district to provide.
2. Since a successful program depends upon the personnel involved in that program, and salaries are a key factor in making it possible to secure the best qualified personnel, salaries should be given high priority.

3. Beginning salaries should be increased to encourage personnel of superior ability to enter the teaching profession.
4. Increments should be sufficient to help offset the costs of beginning teachers (college costs, transportation, growing families, rent, etc.)
5. Maximums should be of sufficient extent to encourage the best personnel to remain in your employment. The N.E.A. recommends a ratio of 1 to 2 between entry and top salaries.
6. The superintendent or the personnel director and the principal should work with each member of the faculty on a planned professional improvement program. This should include both formal and informal in-service activities at the district level, as well as on-campus work. Increments should be provided for various levels of attainment in this growth program.

#### LEAVES:

1. Illness - The trend at present in East Texas is to start with 5 to 10 days leave and accumulate from 15 to 36 days. Each year, any leave used is subtracted, and you begin anew with the accumulated days. The greater number of days shown in this study were found, with few exceptions, only at the larger school systems. In other areas of the state, the trend seems to have been to establish a set number of days (such as 30 days) beginning with the first year of employment and begin anew with this amount each year. In other words, no accumulation of days, but with an adequate number to begin with.

2. Leaves for Personal Reasons - Most East Texas schools studied deduct substitute pay for personal leave up to 5 days and full pay above this. A few districts and most other leading school districts in the state give varying number of days with pay for various reasons such as leave for personal business, civic work, family and personal illness above the sick leave allotment, etc.
3. Maternity Leaves - Most districts give maternity leave beginning four to five months prior to birth of the child and extending to twelve months after the leave. Few guarantee placement except as positions become available. Most require prior notice in the spring of intent to return in September. No school district gave this type of leave with pay. Most allow retention of leave and tenure benefits if the teacher returns within the twelve month period.
4. Professional Leave - A few East Texas schools give unlimited professional leave for attendance at approved conferences, workshops, etc. Most of these also provide full substitute pay. A number of schools studied give leave with deductions for the amount of substitute pay. A few apparently give no professional leave!
5. Sabbatical Leave - No district was found in our region that had a sabbatical leave policy applicable to all employees. A handful of districts provide leave with pay for certain administrators with special approval.

Guidelines for administering the leave program are as follows:

1. The entire faculty, as well as auxiliary employees, should be involved

in determining the scope of the school's leave program for best results and fewer misuses.

2. Sick leave should be treated as a way of improving instruction, not as a generous gesture of a school district.
3. Features should be introduced or added to this program only as they are agreed upon and are acceptable to the personnel involved. One unpopular provision can sour the whole plan.
4. Participation of "beneficiaries" in formulating the plan will also assist in acceptance and assure better benefits to all involved.
5. All provisions of the program should be clearly and completely stated. Misunderstandings create most problems in this area.
6. Sick leave should be clearly distinguished from other types of leave, and leaves with pay or part-time pay for reasons other than illness should be clearly and separately defined.
7. Proper procedures for reporting absences, maintaining records and calling substitutes should be set down in detail and should be clearly understood by all concerned.

#### FRINGE BENEFITS:

The sub-committee found very few districts having different types of benefits. The exceptions were social security and reimbursement for professional growth in a few districts.

The wise administrator will constantly be aware of staff and faculty welfare. Even though very little research has been done on the public school level, there is general agreement among leading school administrators that faculty cooperation is closely tied to the interest shown by the board and chief school administrator in the welfare of the faculty.

It has been agreed by the committee that the following areas are essential to the welfare of the individual teacher:

Continuing Contract: Under the law at the time of this writing, adoption of the state continuing contract law is a local option. The continuing contract law lists procedures to be followed in the dismissal of a teacher for specified causes. It also contains provisions to discourage teachers from taking other positions in late summer.

A good continuing contract law often contributes to a feeling of security and well-being on the part of teachers. It can serve to protect administrators from pressure to dismiss teachers without just cause.

Working Conditions: Unfortunately, teachers are sometimes unaware of the working conditions in a given system when they accept employment in a new system. They usually become aware of their duties when the school year begins. In too many instances, this includes a lack of knowledge of the requirements for the position. This is due largely to the fact that very few schools have job descriptions written for each position on the school staff, and even fewer have written contracts which explain what is expected of the individual staff member. According to leading educators, the contract should contain a description of the instructional obligations, the non-teaching duties, hours of work expected, payment procedures, tenure, and dismissal policies of the district.

In all fairness, it must be stated that the larger districts tended to have policy handbooks which give the employee some semblance of what is required of him, but it would seem that staff and faculty should be well informed in the following areas:

1. Class load--number of periods
2. Extra-curricular activities



3. Provisions for leave of absences
4. Leaves for personal business
5. Maternity leaves
6. Leaves for convention attendance
7. Problem children
8. Clerical work
9. Committee assignments
10. Academic freedom
11. Free periods

The above list is not necessarily complete, but it should serve as a guide to enable school administrators to inform prospective teachers of working conditions before employment.

Merit Pay: At present, there is a growing demand to cease paying school personnel on the basis of training and experience. This has been caused, to some degree, by the teacher shortage in certain disciplines. However, it should be noted that strong opposition has been heard from the teacher's organizations. Their complaint is that thus far no workable plan has been devised that will measure teacher efficiency effectively. This is not to say that it cannot be done. If one questions teachers, he will find that teachers do not feel that they all should be paid the same if their training and years of experience are equal. However, when a merit plan is proposed for an individual school, they become apprehensive due to the evaluative procedures that are proposed. It is odd that the teacher feels that he can measure the performance of students, yet he feels that his performance as a teacher cannot be accurately measured.



There are too many plans for merit pay to consider in a paper of this length, but some procedures for measuring teacher effectiveness regardless of the plan used are:

1. Rating of teachers by school administrators
2. Evaluation by supervisors
3. Evaluation by colleagues
4. Evaluation of teachers by special committees
5. Evaluation of teachers by outside professional experts
6. Evaluation of teachers on the basis of concrete evidence of the character of instruction
7. Evaluation of teachers on the basis of cumulative personnel information
8. Teacher evaluation based on pupil changes
9. Evaluation of teachers by means of questionnaires and examinations

The above methods of evaluation would not fit all systems, nor should it be assumed that all of those listed should be used in an evaluative program, but they should be used only as a guide to determine a policy for evaluating the performance of the individual.

It should also be stated that any plan that involves the welfare of the faculty should be planned with full participation of the faculty, as should be the case in all phases of policy development. The evaluative system should be clearly defined so as to be understood by all concerned.

## VI. ORIENTATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Orientation:

The practice of having the faculty report for a work session on school matters a week or so before school opens has grown in popularity during recent years. Placing the work sessions just prior to the opening of school has a big advantage in terms of getting teachers when they are fresh and ready to focus their thinking on broad educational problems.

A teacher who is new to a school or new to teaching sometimes finds that the picture is not clear to him. Unless there are definite plans to orient teachers beyond the routine procedures, a school may placidly assume that every teacher knows all the school traditions what everyone else is doing, and what is expected of him--particularly in day-to-day routine matters.

Even among experienced teachers a lack of communications can bring about lack of understanding as to the role played by others and the extent and the nature of the program which they are expected to handle.

In the pre-school conferences, one session should be set aside for the orientation of new teachers. In addition to welcoming new teachers and acquainting them with the school building and desirable at the time of employment, the school should furnish personnel handbooks, codes of ethics, board policies, the school day schedule and calendar, textbook and library practices, and payroll procedures to the new teacher. Community tours may be scheduled to visit banks, churches, newspapers, and other community institutions. A social event such as a dinner meeting or picnic helps acquaint the members of the faculty and to some extent overcome the "first-day" jitters that sometime plague new teachers. Teacher organizations or a school committee might assist with locating housing as well as providing information

on shopping and medical facilities.

A good opening week does not make a successful school year, but it helps. If the opening days are well organized, materials are on hand, and classwork is started promptly, a desirable pattern is formed for the year ahead. The "buddy" system has been found useful in that the new teacher has an experienced knowledgeable peer to call upon for assistance.

### Professional Development:

#### 1. Workshops

- a. Teachers become more involved in workshops than in formal meetings.
- b. Workshops are practical because they deal with actual teacher problems.
- c. Workshops usually include teacher-made materials.
- d. Teachers are in contact with others who do the same type of work.
- e. Workshops are of special value in dealing with immediate needs.

#### 2. In-service education

- a. In-service education programs should be practical, based on a definite need.
- b. Programs should be varied in order to promote interest and to provide for all of staff.
- c. The program must be well organized with specific delegation of responsibility in order to be successful.

#### 3. Conferences

- a. Teachers may be given security by conferences.
- b. Problems may be avoided or solved through conferences.
- c. Teachers should feel free to ask for conferences.
- d. Administrators should give full attention to teachers who ask for help even though the problem seems minor to him.
- e. Informality in conferences promotes friendly relationships.

f. Individual conferences are useful in promoting staff improvement.

#### 4. Faculty meetings

a. Faculty meetings should be held only when there is a definite program.

b. Meetings should be well organized and should be adjourned when business is finished. Minutes should be kept.

c. Faculty should be permitted to suggest topics that need to be discussed.

d. Meetings should be as informal as possible to accomplish purpose.

e. 100% attendance and promptness should be required (as tactfully as possible).

f. An agenda should be prepared and distributed in advance of the meeting.

g. Compromise on time--meetings should be held on school time part of the time, and on teachers' time also.

#### 5. Departmental meetings

a. If the school is organized with persons heading each department, this person should preside.

b. Teacher participation should be encouraged, but no teacher should monopolize the discussion.

c. There should be a sufficient number of meetings to coordinate the work of the entire department.

d. Cooperation should be strengthened through these meetings.

#### 6. Curriculum study

a. The curriculum should be constantly evaluated in an effort to improve.

b. Innovations should be tried, but changes should be carefully planned and evaluated.

c. Teachers should be well-informed in regard to curriculum--new teachers should be oriented.

d. Teachers should be advised of any changes and should participate in discussions regarding major changes.

e. An earnest and tactful effort should be made to influence teachers in favor of helpful curriculum changes.

- f. Teachers should be given plenty of guidance and encouragement.

#### 7. Area Study Councils

- a. Area study councils, if properly organized, are of great value, especially to persons new to the area or in new positions.
- b. Study councils divide research work among people who have similar problems.
- c. Sharing ideas promotes progress.
- d. Association with others doing the same type of work is stimulating.

#### 8. Interschool observation

- a. Visiting others who are doing similar work is beneficial.
- b. Caution should be taken in arranging interschool visitations in order that the visitor may observe good work which inspires him to renew his own efforts.
- c. Some form of conference or report should follow the observation to insure maximum benefits.

#### 9. Cooperative study of special problems

- a. Cooperation should be encouraged in all problem solving.
- b. If they cannot be solved, problems are more easily borne when shared.
- c. A sense of unity is developed by involving all concerned in a study of special problems.
- d. Care should be taken in deciding which problems can be shared by a large group and which should be studied by a small group or by the administration only.

#### 10. Extension courses

- a. This is one way to encourage teachers to continue college work.
- b. This is usually a satisfactory way to provide in-service education.
- c. Courses should be carefully chosen to meet needs of teachers.



## VII. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Effort should be directed toward developing a two-way communication system to keep administrators and teachers informed of school matters of interest to them and to encourage the flow of ideas and information from the classroom to the central office. Numerous techniques can be employed to improve communications, but basic to them all is the desire to keep lines of communication open - a willingness to inform and to be informed on the part of the administration and faculty.

Faculty newsletters are an inexpensive means to publish news of curricular developments, faculty accomplishments, and other newsworthy items. They may serve as a forum to air district-wide problems, discuss policy, or inform of procedures.

Other means of communicating with the faculty are mentioned earlier, including faculty meetings, conferences, committees, councils. It is important to plan for an upward flow of information as well as the more typical downward flow.

The most comprehensive publication attempting to communicate information in a school system is usually the school board policy manual. A copy of the written board policies should be made available to each teacher. As discussed earlier, provision should be made for broad involvement in policy-making.

Handbooks are often devised for students, teachers, and principals to enable each individual to know what is expected of him in his role and to provide helpful information. Pertinent policy statements are usually included.



One means of communication that can be overworked or sometimes abused is the inter-com system. Announcements should ordinarily be restricted to specified times in the day. The unexpected sound of the intercom can be quite disruptive to students and teacher alike. Only items of general interest should be channelled to all classrooms.

Perhaps the most talked-about area of communications recently has been the development of professional communications agreements between teacher organizations and school ~~books~~<sup>boards</sup>. In a democratically-administered school system, such an agreement is often merely the formalizing of existing practices. At the time of writing, almost half the nation's teachers were working under the terms of some type of written, contractual agreement with their school board. Since a proposed professional communications agreement, cooperatively developed by the Texas Association of School Administrators, the Texas Association of School Boards, and the Texas State Teachers Association has been given wide distribution, no attempt will be made to offer suggestions for inclusion in such agreements. However, it is to be emphasized that the trend seems to definitely be for development of some type of written agreement. If an agreement is to be developed, it is best to do so while board-teacher-administrator relationships are cordial.

In all of the guidelines presented in this publication, it is hoped that they can be viewed as a means to an end - better education for every child in the schools of East Texas.

## RECOMMENDED SOURCES

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