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ABSTRACT

This monograph provides some suggestions for school administrators -- principals, assistant principals, superintendents, and their management teams -- to enable them to understand their own attitudes and behaviors regarding their use of time, recognize the practices which most effectively use time well, incorporate sound principles of time management into the administrative strategies and philosophies of their organizations, and provide a personal philosophy for managing their own responsibilities in the best interest of time. (Author/DN)

TIME:

A Valuable Resource for the School Administrator

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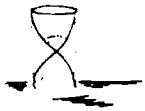
TIME: A Resource for the School Administrator

by GILBERT R. WELDY



National Association of Secondary School Principals
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THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
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Foreword

Time—the great saboteur—that undoer of solid plans and good intentions. It is the one tool given to every educational administrator in equal measure. If federal grants were available in this commodity, how much extra time would you apply for?

Rather than ask fanciful questions, however, we had better deal in the reality of our time limitation and learn to control and manage our use of it. No matter how time-efficient we think we are, we can all become more productive through using time, our most elusive resource, more wisely.

Along this line, Gilbert Weldy offers some valuable advice in this monograph. Full of practical suggestions, this booklet on time focuses on analyzing present usage, establishing priorities, budgeting, delegating, and concentrating on every imaginable facet of school administration.

We feel that Dr. Weldy, principal of Niles North High School in Skokie, Ill., has come up with some solid ideas for making our professional lives more productive by using time as our tool instead of letting it use us.

Another principal familiar with the inexorable march of time is Theodore Beranis of Lincoln School in Elmhurst, Ill. He portrays the lighter side through panels drawn expressly for this monograph.

Owen B. Kiernan
NASSP *Executive Secretary*

Introduction

"Time is what we want most, but what alas! We use worst."

WILLIAM PENN

School Administrators, like most managers and executives, seldom have enough time.

Time is an absolute. It is absolutely dependable. No one has found a way to create it, suspend it, prolong it, delay it, accelerate it, or store it. Time is the one resource that we all have in exactly equal measure—24 hours a day, 60 minutes an hour, 60 seconds a minute. We speak figuratively when we say we save, spend, or waste time.

Thomas Carlyle put it poetically: "The great mystery of time, were there no other, the illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called time, rolling, rushing on, swift, silent, like an all-embracing tide."

Time and tide do not wait for school administrators. School administrators, if they are to master their jobs and fulfill their responsibilities, must learn to control and to manage their use of time.

Time lost is never regained. The time for school administrators to face this challenge is now. Time is a *resource* to be used productively. Good use of time requires self understanding, personal commitment, discipline, planning, and organization of all of the elements of the administrative function.

In business and industry, a common slogan is "Time is money." Industry has recognized time as a valuable

resource. It can't be stockpiled; we all spend it at precisely the same rate and in equal amounts. So it is not a matter of whether to spend time or not, the time *will* pass. The question is *how* we will spend our time.

Secondary school principals acknowledged the dilemma of time in NASSP's study of the senior high school principalship.[1] Principals reported that the major problems and roadblocks of the principalship were related to the difficulty of controlling time. Eighty-six percent of the responding principals said "Lack of time" was their greatest roadblock. Eighty-seven percent said "Time taken up by administrative detail" (at the expense of matters considered more important) was also a major roadblock.

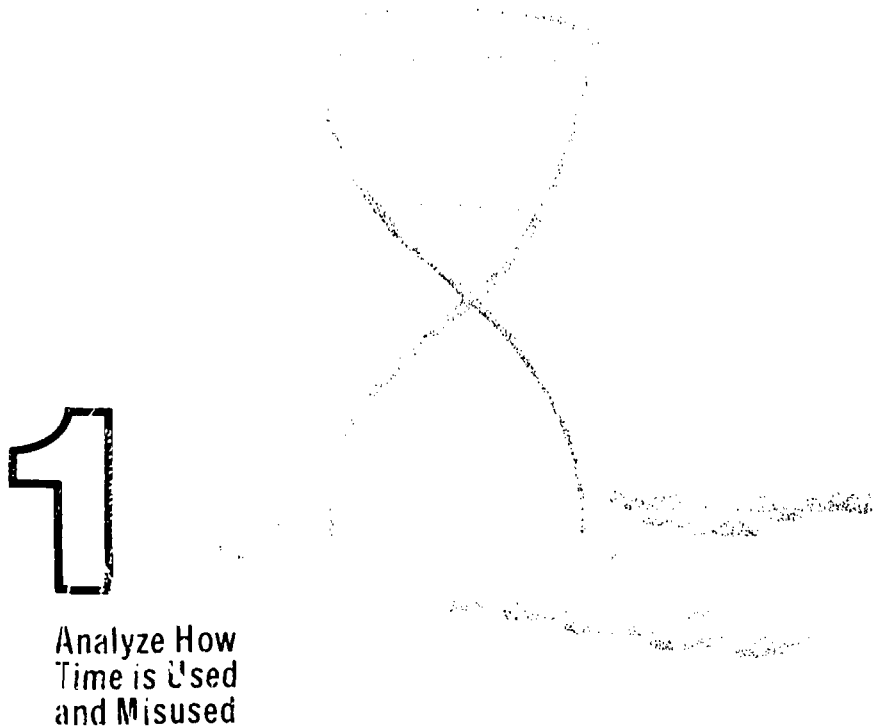
A high school principal beset with this problem sought help by attending an institute on the management of time. As the only educator among 36 managers from business and industry, he found his problems were the same as everyone's: little control of time, others imposing on their time, excessive time spent in meetings, interruptions, and time spent in paper work and reports.

The purpose of this monograph is to provide some suggestions for school administrators—principals, their assistants, superintendents, and their management teams—to enable them to:

- understand their own attitudes and behavior regarding their use of time,
- recognize the practices which most effectively use time well,
- incorporate sound principles of time management into the administrative strategies and philosophies of their organizations, and
- provide a personal philosophy for managing their own responsibilities in the best interest of time.

G. Weldy

[1] *The Senior High School Principalship*, NASSP, 1965, p. 85.



1

Analyze How Time is Used and Misused

Leaders in business and industry have been much more concerned about their use of time than have educational administrators. Business and industry realize that "time is money." An entire engineering science has developed around time and motion studies, particularly in production work.

One of the earliest studies of how secondary school principals used time had 324 participants log their time for one week under 15 major types of administrative duties.

Heading the list was "organization, administration, and improvement of instruction," taking up 26.56% of

the principals' time. "Administrative routine" took 14.24%; "organization, administration, and improvement of the guidance program," 13.83%; "community relations," 9.53%; "organization and administration of the school staff," 8.53%; "administration of the school plant," 5.69%; "board of education and administrative responsibilities," 5.33%.

"Business administration," "professional duties," "teaching," "planning the school year," "personal business," "transportation," "relations with higher institutions," and "personal improvement" took the remaining 16%.

Another study[1] compared how principals actually used time to how the principals and "authorities" believed time *should* be spent. The study showed that principals spent more time in "office routine," on the "activity program," and in "teaching" than the principals and authorities believed they should. They were spending much less time on "supervision of teachers and improvement of instruction" and on "pupil personnel" than the authorities believed they should. Time spent on other types of administrative duties were closer to the opinions of the principals and authorities surveyed.

A more recent survey of how principals use time was part of NASSP's *Senior High School Principalship*[2]. Administrative planning alone and/or with subordinate administrators was found to be the single most time-consuming activity. This was followed by meetings with students on matters other than discipline, work with individual teachers regarding their teaching proficiency, meetings with teachers on matters of curriculum or instruction, and correspondence.

Principals of small schools reported spending much time in classroom teaching, supervising extracurricular

[1] Harold V. McAbee, "Time for the Job," *NASSP Bulletin*, March, 1958, p. 41.

[2] *The Senior High School Principalship*, NASSP, 1965, pp. 80-84.

activities, and meeting with students on disciplinary matters.

Also important is to learn how educators believe they misuse their time. A group of suburban high school administrators, asked what they considered to be their greatest "time wasters," most frequently mentioned "too many meetings." Twenty-nine of the 40 administrators also complained that meetings are too long, they don't begin on time, they are unnecessary, they are aimless and directionless, or they never reach closure.

Furthermore, the administrators were critical of meetings that are scheduled at poor times of the day, that do not involve the "power" people, that are unstructured and ill-planned, that do not have pre-announced agendas, and that really don't involve them.

Although many administrators deplored the time required in meetings, they acknowledged that much of their work was necessarily conducted in meetings, particularly since those surveyed worked in large, complex school districts.

Second most aggravating as a time waster was "responding to requests for information." Internal requests were considered necessary and justifiable; but external requests like those for government reports, for graduate student questionnaires, and for information from other schools were resented. The inquiries, they felt, were often useless and contained incomprehensible directions. The requests asked for data that would be impossible to interpret. The research involved far more time than the sender estimated. Even so, the administrators indicated that they usually tried to respond.

Another time waster of high incidence was "uncontrollable interruptions," a seemingly inescapable fact of administrative life in schools. Many administrators are so beset by interruptions that they feel they can't do any of their real "work." Apparently, school administrators cannot remain with any task for a continuous period without receiving telephone calls, drop-in visitors,

emergencies, and interrupting staff members and colleagues.

A time waster of increasingly significant proportions requires administrators to use time in conflict resolution. In many cases, there is no resolution at hand, and the administrator can only allow the aggrieved persons to air their problems. Particularly, principals and superintendents must listen to upset, sometimes irrational persons who have found no satisfaction at lower levels. Their rhetoric and emotions increase at each step up the ladder. By the time they reach the superintendent, their complaint is full-blown, reinforced by the succession of refusals or rebuffs. A superintendent can do little more than hear the person out. He probably is too far from the source of the problem to offer a realistic solution. But the listening takes time, and his response even more.

The practice in most school districts of providing elaborate appeals procedures for students with complaints and teachers with grievances adds to the time burden of administrators. They are invariably a step somewhere in the appeals process.

Administrators also cited as a serious time waster the "good fellow" visiting that so easily captures much valuable time. Fellow administrators drop by or call. Teachers stop by when they see the administrator in his office. Students "catch" administrators and pass the time of day. The talk is small: the ball game, the team, the weather, the vacation, the news. Administrators are generally sociable and can allow too much time to be used in unproductive conversation.

A time waster that many identified but that some might not consider wasteful could be described as "over-involvement of too many people." In some of our complex, bureaucratic school districts, administrators can spend an inordinate amount of time conferring, checking, researching, and advising. The process becomes more important than the project or the decision.

If a decision will affect students, they must be involved if we are to have participatory democracy. Channels for decision making and the flow charts that define them become a time-consuming maze. Mackenzie in *The Time Trap*[1] called this phenomenon the "paralysis of analysis."

More time wasters identified by administrators include:

- checking on tasks that have been delegated,
- losing time when people needed are unavailable,
- sorting junk mail, screening advertisements and unsolicited material,
- signing, assigning, authorizing, ordering, approving, routing, endorsing, responding, "memo-ing,"
- misplacing priorities, spending time on unimportant matters, neglecting the important,
- changing and confusing procedures require time. This is a typical time waster when a new boss comes on the scene and needs re-clarification and re-defining of everyone's role. Time is wasted as faculty and staff adjust to new roles and new ways.

Other time wasters among administrators are:

- working without clear purposes and goals,
- confusing, unclear job descriptions,
- assuming responsibility without authority,
- using clerical service poorly,
- postponing decisions,
- failing to delegate wisely,
- using inefficient office routines and filing systems,
- reading unselectively and unnecessarily,
- intervening unnecessarily in crisis or conflict,
- bypassing the "chain of command,"
- communicating poorly,
- deciding or acting on incomplete or inadequate information,
- over-commiting to outside activities.

[1] R. Alec Mackenzie, *The Time Trap*, Amocom, A Division of American Management Association, 1972

These time users are not all equally wasteful. Every administrator recognizes his own pitfalls. Some he will avoid; others he will lessen, control, or accept.

One of the first steps in learning how to use time effectively is to determine how time is already being spent. A "task list" or "time log" must be kept, showing how every minute of the day has been occupied. Preferably, such a list should be compiled for several days. This is not a simple task. The record must be made within minutes of an activity or communication, or it will be lost. There is no way that an administrator can recall and reconstruct his conversations, his conferences, his phone calls, and his personal dealings after several hours.

If a secretary could be assigned to "shadow" the administrator throughout the entire day, it would simplify the record-keeping for the administrator; but the secretary may not be able to follow him everywhere, and even while with him may not be able to perceive the true nature of his activities. Some activities may require privacy. The administrator can keep such a record if it is easily available to jot down notes from which he can later reconstruct his day.

The time log can be kept on lined paper having space on the left to record the time each activity begins and space on the right to describe the *who* and *what* of each event. Recording the time of each activity is more accurate than using five or 15 minute segments, since the administrator's work is seldom defined in such neat time intervals.

The format would look something like this after it is completed for a busy day:

7:50 a.m.	Arrived at school
7:50 a.m	Spoke to registrar about getting names of graduates to local papers
7:51 a.m.	Spoke to secretary about a meeting room for school government

	Called director of physical welfare about commencement rehearsal using the gym
7:55 a.m.	Checked calendar for the day, reviewing NCA visiting committee prospects
8:00 a.m.	*School opens*
8:05 a.m.	Spoke to secretary about returning long distance call
8:10 a.m.	Called director of student services about pay for summer counseling, about homeroom program that may not show
8:15 a.m.	Conferred with dean, secretary, and assistant principal about a student appeals board hearing
8:17 a.m.	Conferred with assistant principal about problems in homeroom yesterday, about his daughter's graduation
8:20 a.m.	Spoke to director for social studies about his trip to Washington for State Department briefing conference for educators
8:22 a.m.	Spoke with director of science and math about his advisory committees
8:30 a.m.	Desk work—read mail
8:38 a.m.	Took call from neighboring principal in district about coach who assaulted student
8:48 a.m.	Joined director of student services in interview for special education teacher
9:00 a.m.	Spoke with director for social studies about needing NCA visitors for social studies, art, and learning materials
9:10 a.m.	Conferred with director of physical welfare about incident involving the coach's assault on student
9:15 a.m.	Saw student chairman for homecoming and introduced her to the adviser we appointed
9:20 a.m.	Cancelled the homeroom program
9:25 a.m.	Dropped in and greeted conference athletic directors meeting in our office conference room
9:27 a.m.	Visited with a teacher about a student appeals case

9:30 a.m.	Took call from superintendent about our rationale for dropping low enrollment classes, discussed the coach incident
9:40 a.m.	Spoke with assistant principal about the coach incident -- learned that a student has been accosted in our parking lot -- police were here
9:50 a.m.	Took call from an English teacher on leave about her assignment for next year
9:55 a.m.	Called personnel director about the teacher's assignment.
10:06 a.m.	Called superintendent to inform him about the girl who had been accosted and about the coach
10:12 a.m.	Spoke with assistant principal about courses dropped because of low enrollment
10:15 a.m.	Called teacher on leave to tell her what I had learned about her assignment
10:20 a.m.	Called personnel director to report what teacher on leave wanted
10:22 a.m.	Had coffee at my desk--with *mail*
10:35 a.m.	Took call from superintendent who wanted date on coach incident
10:40 a.m.	Spoke with registrar about letter of attendance for an exchange student
10:45 a.m.	Spoke with head custodian about gym setup for commencement
10:57 a.m.	Greeted girl who had been accosted, mother, and police
11:00 a.m.	Call from AVE director about P.A. music tape that had been tampered with
11:03 a.m.	Went to gym to check setup for commencement
11:20 a.m.	Called my office from faculty dining room to see if I was needed
11:20 a.m.	Had lunch
11:55 a.m.	Walked to football field to check outdoor setup for commencement

12:15 p.m.	Talked with head custodian about man who had been in girls' locker room a couple of months ago
12:20 p.m.	Talked with teacher in faculty lunch room who had seen man
12:25 p.m.	(Back in office) Called police about possible tie-up between man in locker room and man who accosted girl
12:35 p.m.	Talked with assistant principal about a legal opinion from county superintendent on open campus and about excusing freshmen after exams
12:40 p.m.	Returned long-distance call to former administrator who wanted information on program budgeting
12:52 p.m.	Worked at desk
12:58 p.m.	Took call from police about incident involving girl
1:00 p.m.	Took call from director for social studies
1:01 p.m.	Talked with Spanish teacher who had heard students were trying to drop an honors class she was recently assigned to teach
1:05 p.m.	Director for social studies showed me material from an institute.
1:15 p.m.	Called director for foreign language
1:16 p.m.	Returned call to a neighboring school counselor
1:17 p.m.	Chief maintenance man came in—agreed to install speakers in the courtyard, tie into hall speakers for music
1:22 p.m.	Brought secretary in with grievance file; studied file
1:30 p.m.	Went to school government meeting
2:15 p.m.	Visited with two visiting grads
2:16 p.m.	Studied budget with director for English to charge recognition assembly programs
2:30 p.m.	Listened to tampered tape with assistant principal
2:35 p.m.	Call from parent who wanted drug information

2:38 p.m.	Worked at desk: studied student survey for NCA evaluation
2:45 p.m.	Listened to tape with dean, assistant principal, and teacher who is in charge of P.A.
2:50 p m	Discussed problems in yesterday's homeroom with dean
3:07 p.m.	Stopped in counselors' meeting to inquire about students dropping honors Spanish; discussed gradepoint average system and honors point and class rank.
3:08 p.m.	*School dismisses*
3:25 p.m.	Talked on phone with senior class adviser about rehearsal and cap and gown distribution
3:35 p.m.	Called head custodian about commencement platform decorations
3:40 p.m.	Spoke with director of student services about counselor reaction to summer pay scale
3:45 p.m.	Looked in on meeting new football coach was holding with players
3:50 p.m.	Went to athletic director's office discussing coach incident
4:00 p.m.	Returned to own office
4:05 p.m.	Called senior class administrator about flowers for commencement
4:06 p.m.	Worked at desk, listened to tape
4:12 p.m.	Cleaned up desk
4:15 p.m.	Left school

An analysis of this task list, which omits all the short conversations with secretaries and others, shows that of the eight hours and 25 minutes the administrator was at school, he spent:

- 77 minutes (15.25%) in scheduled meetings and appointments
- 51 minutes (10.1%) in unclassified events (lunch, social, non-productive activities)
- 223 minutes (44.15%) in productive, on-going tasks

- *154* minutes (30.5%) with interruptions or unforeseen events

Some administrators are astonished to discover how little time they actually spend on significant matters. Some find only 15 percent of their time spent on truly important things, 20 percent on tasks that appeared necessary but not important, and 65 percent on inconsequential things. An administrator's task list will show how much time is used productively and how much is captured by unforeseen events and by others who demand his time.

An analysis of the task list may disclose some very disheartening aspects of administrative life, but it must be the starting place for forming new habits and reordering priorities for the use of the working time. It will also provide some unrecognized and unacknowledged attitudes toward time. Some administrators like the image of being terribly busy—whether they are or not. People keep reminding them of this impression by beginning interviews or conferences with comments like: "I know how busy you are," "I apologize for taking your time," or "Do you have just a minute for me?"

The administrator may contribute to this "busy-person syndrome" and use it to escape tasks and responsibilities that should be his. A desk stacked high with "work" helps give that impression. He may actually enjoy being ultra-busy or at least giving that impression. An attitude may develop that engulfs the administrator in every trivial, inconsequential event, leaving him no time for the truly significant tasks.

Administrators can easily get buried under the barrage of demands on their time, actually relish the busy activity, and rationalize that this condition leaves them no time for the kind of educational leadership they should be providing in their schools.

Further analysis of the task list may betray other defects in the administrator's attitude toward time. One of

the great thiefs of time is procrastination, a great temptation for any administrator. A procrastinator is always looking for an excuse to avoid an unpleasant task. He may become quite "interruption-prone," and actually invite diversions such as visitors, paper work, phone calls, socializing, and office trivia. All the while, the administrator gives the appearance of being extremely busy, using his time to the fullest.

The first step in learning to use time advantageously, therefore, is to analyze how time is being used or misused and to identify any harmful attitudes or behavior about time.

2

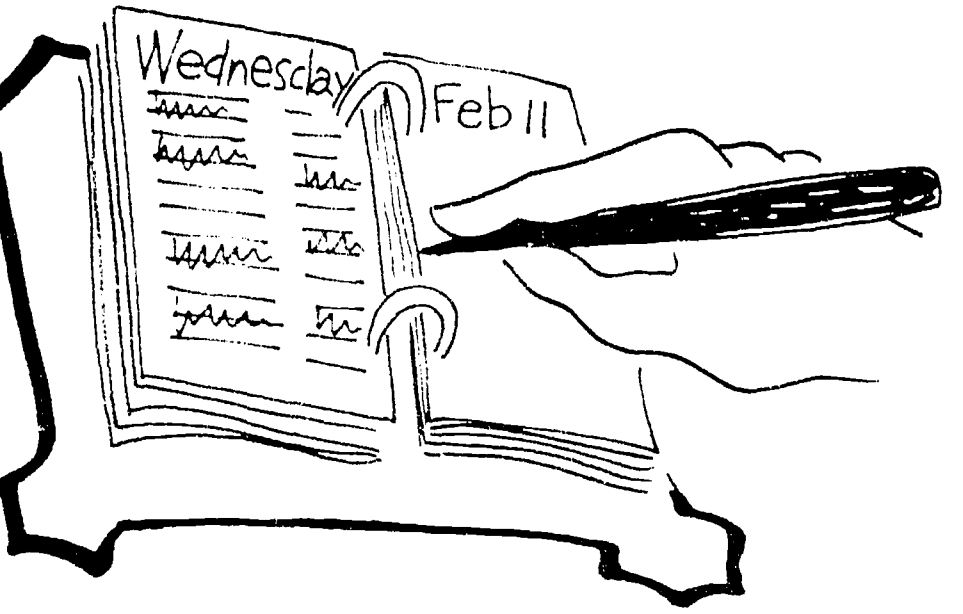
Establish Priorities

After the task list phase, the school administrator should be able to analyze his use of time and begin to make decisions about what is unavoidable, what is critical, and what is inconsequential. He may find that some demands on his time can easily be controlled.

The task list not only can give the administrator a better over-all understanding of how his time is used, but also can lead him to establish priorities. At the end of each day, he can review his unfinished tasks, list them, and plan time for their accomplishment. There should be daily lists that include both short- and long-term tasks. Having such a daily list of priorities saves time.

Work is already organized. No time is lost in confusion and indecision at the beginning of the day. There is no standing over a cluttered desk full of memos, notes, and messages. The alternative to making such an "agenda" is to use time for the very first thing that happens to "come up," and that usually doesn't take very long in the days of most administrators.

A list of tasks showing which are important ensures that they will be accomplished. The list also ensures that they will not be overlooked or forgotten even though other demands may shove them aside temporarily. Writing such lists supports the memory and saves energy.



3 Budget Time by Appointing a Time

Most administrators are torn between a policy of being accessible and a policy of working by appointments. Neither extreme is workable. If having an "open door" is a fetish for an administrator, he will seldom find time uninterrupted for any task. On the other hand, one who operates only by appointments will hear many complaints about how busy he is and how it is impossible to see him.

Using the task list, the administrator should be able to establish a workable balance between being immediately available and keeping appointments. The time log presented earlier indicates that attempting to schedule

more than half of a day with appointments would be difficult. This balance will assuredly vary from day to day depending on the demands of certain major, seasonal tasks. Working out this balance will permit administrators to have certain specified times when anyone can drop in for a chat. This "open door" philosophy can be included in a rather complete scheduling of all available time.

The amount of time that an administrator reserves for appointments will be related to the importance of his position, its place in the hierarchy, and the value of his time. For example, a superintendent would probably expect to have fewer "drop in" guests in his central office away from the school buildings than would a principal. A larger share of the superintendent's time could therefore be scheduled and reserved with meetings and appointments. He will, of course, have to be available for calls from his administrative staff and for visits from his immediate subordinates, but most of his contacts will be with persons who respect his time.

Building administrators are more likely to be in daily contact with the schools' constituents (students and parents) and are not able to close out their time with meetings and appointments. Every administrator has to determine this ratio according to his own circumstances. A building administrator who schedules over half of his time is sure to have the calls, the call backs, the notes, the questions-needing-answers, and the "must" reading, all piling up on his desk by the end of each day. In terms of saving time, however, there are decided advantages to working on a rather firm, full schedule of appointments:

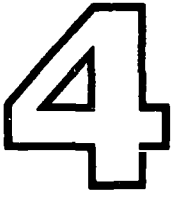
1. Setting a time for a conference, interviews, or meeting saves everyone's time and assures that all participants will be available at the same time.
2. Setting a time is a courtesy to those who may be making a special effort to see the administrator, coming in from

outside the school or even from out of the community. Few administrators are sitting in their offices waiting for those who might chance by. Dropping in without an appointment virtually guarantees a wait, and also disrupts the time plan of the administrator. Administrators should not tell constituents or staff members to "drop by" for a conference.

3. Setting a time in the daily schedule assures that tasks that must be done will be done.
4. Setting a time allows the administrator to limit the time. When the appointment is made, determine how much time will be needed. If participants agree that 15 minutes is the time to be devoted to a conference or interview, they will not linger or socialize needlessly.
5. The administrator should authorize his secretary to make appointments and help keep his schedule. She should know how much of the time can be scheduled with appointments, how long each appointment requires, and how much and in what arrangement time should be left open. She can courteously ask any caller how much time he would estimate would be needed and help the caller agree to a specified time by knowing the nature of the business and the importance the administrator would give it. A principal's secretary should know that if it's the superintendent who wants to discuss the annual evaluation of teachers, she should know to reserve half the day. If it's a representative of a rock band trying to book his "artists," plan for five minutes.
6. The administrator's secretary should know his schedule and understand his "style" for planning and scheduling his day. She should know, for example, that if he's scheduled to observe a teacher, he will want a half hour immediately afterward to record his observations or dictate his evaluation report. She must know whom he should see and how long will be needed.
7. The secretary should help the administrator keep on schedule. This can be done most easily and inconspicuously over the telephone intercom by calling to remind the administrator of his next appointment. By his audible response, the visitor will know that the interview must end. Responses such as: "We'll be finished in a

minute," "We're just winding up here," "Mr. Smith is just leaving," or "I'll see him in just a minute. Have him wait please," all furnish adequate hints.

Work should be planned and a time appointed to do it. Appointments should be kept. The plan should be worked, not slavishly, but strategically with full attention to how time is being used.



Delegate with Discretion

Managing or administering certainly involves delegating, and the administrator with too little time to perform all his duties must delegate some of them to subordinates.

Delegating tasks to others should not be haphazard or dependent upon how busy the administrator is at a given moment or upon his mood. The suggestions here not only involve time-saving principles but also carry some of the thinking in management theory on delegation of responsibility.

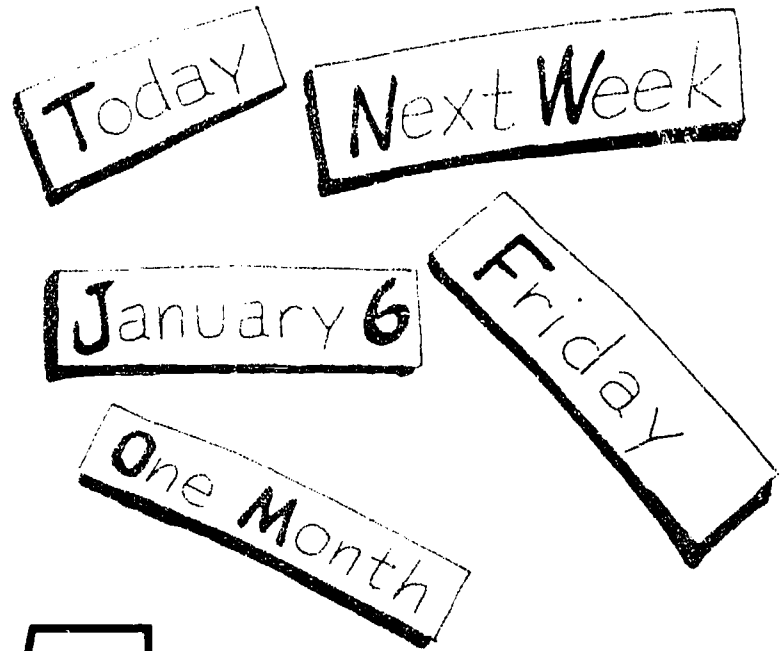
1. When time is limited, the administrator should do only those tasks that he *must* do, delegating those that he only *wants* to do.
2. The administrator should delegate those tasks that require skills he has already mastered. He should do what is new, challenging, and stimulating. The administrator should work at the "growing edge" of his job.

3. The administrator should do tasks that lie in his area of strength, where he is most competent. He should delegate what another can do better. Most administrators cannot claim expertise or facility in every aspect of their role. Spreading parts of the total task to others saves the administrator's time, and uses his supporting manpower effectively.
4. The administrator should delegate what he frankly does not like to do or is not interested in—even at the risk of being accused of handing out all the "dirty work." In the interest of time, the administrator should do those tasks that he enjoys, relishes, and can do with dispatch and with satisfaction.
5. Tasks that are stable should be delegated. Retain activities which are concerned with change. Standard operating procedures should be delegated and forgotten. The administrator should control change.
6. The chief time-saving principle involved in delegation of responsibility is, of course, that the administrator cannot possibly perform every aspect of his total responsibility, and this is precisely why he has assistants and secretaries.

Too many administrators fail to delegate responsibilities because it takes time to delegate—to explain, to instruct, to organize a task, and to motivate an associate to take it over. This reluctance to delegate is wasteful of the administrator's time. Taking time to delegate to another is time well invested for the administrator's long-term effectiveness.

One of the principal values of delegation is expressed well by Mackenzie: ". . . the extension of results from what a person can do to what he can control. Successful delegation doubles, triples, and raises even more the output of one man as soon as he begins to achieve his results through the multiplied efforts of others."[1]

[1] R. Alec Mackenzie, *The Time Trap*, Amocon, A Division of American Management Association, 1972, p. 136.

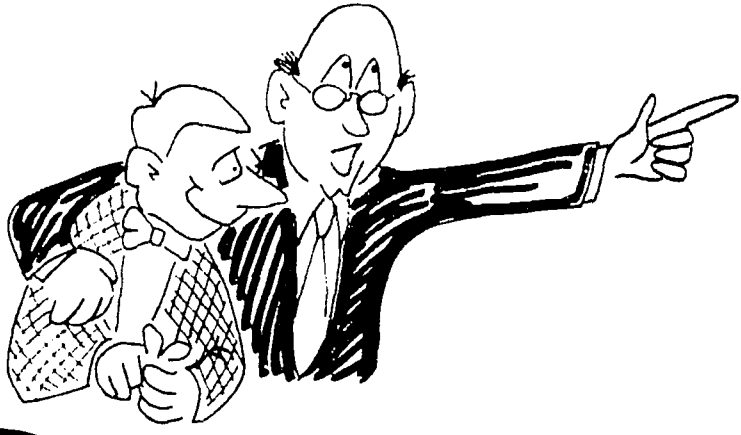


5 Set a Deadline

Most people work better under the pressure of a deadline. Much of the work of the administrator does is regulated by deadlines: calendars, schedules, special events, due dates. These deadlines motivate administrators to use time well and to put more energy into a task. If there is no actual deadline, one should be devised. Any task worth doing is worth completing. Even an artificial deadline provides an incentive, a spur to get the job done. If the deadline is met, a reward should be waiting. If a report is due, and it is done at school, the

administrator can go home early, go play golf, take a vacation, leave his "homework" at his office. Every administrator can devise his own incentives for meeting work deadlines.

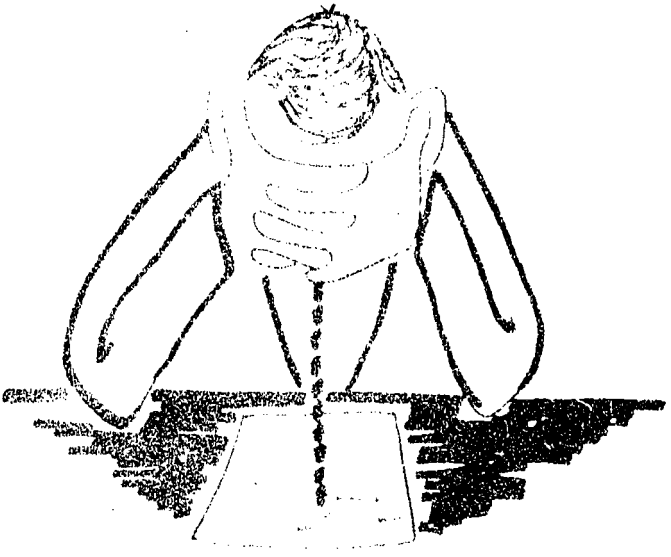
Deadlines should be announced—as publicly as they warrant. If it is a private or individual task, even telling a secretary will provide the incentive to complete it on time. The more people who know of a deadline or a due date, the more unlikely the administrator will drag his feet or procrastinate. When the administrator invites others to watch his progress, he is more likely to make headway.



6 Develop Enthusiasm

Attitude toward a task is a critical factor in how time is used. Any distasteful, difficult, or disagreeable task will be delayed and neglected. The administrator should try to develop enthusiasm for himself and for his team by talking about the importance of a task, about the critical character of the need, for the desirability of the expected results. For example, an administrator may have to generate enthusiasm and determination among his colleagues to approach tasks such as collecting unpaid student fees, assigning teachers to supervision duty, or notifying parents of student misbehavior.

A task tackled with determination and enthusiasm will be accomplished sooner than one that is dreaded and delayed.



7

Concentrate Totally

The regimen of the school administrator requires the constant shifting of his attention from one problem to another. Such shifts frequently come quite suddenly and unexpectedly.

The task list presented earlier shows this phenomenon. In the first 15 minutes of the work day, the administrator's attention had to be given to 12 different subjects, none which could be pursued or completed, most of them unrelated to the others. An administrator cannot give his full attention to one issue for a sustained period without having several other more impelling ones thrust before his attention. He is expected to clear his mind of one pressing problem and give total atten-

tion to another whether he is ready or whether he is inclined to or not.

This single factor probably accounts for more fatigue, frustration, inefficiency, and poor use of time than any other fact of a school administrator's life.

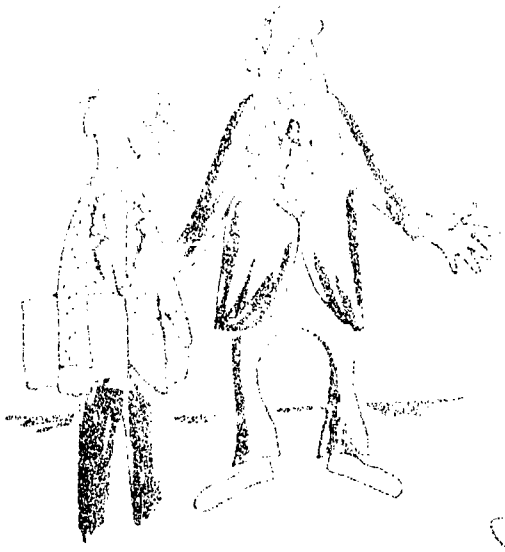
Learning to pay undivided attention to a task without interruption or encroachments requires some singular effort. An individual can give thought to one task at a time, but how many of us try to review notes on our desk, or even listen to a visitor when we are engaged in telephone conversation? How many of us try to go through papers, write notes, or just "wool gather" during conferences and meetings? How often do we sit with "important," "busy" people who fiddle with papers, doodle, read other material, or just stare glassy-eyed, preoccupied and inattentive, while we are trying to conduct a conference? This same preoccupied person will be the very one who later has very fuzzy recall of the meeting, will be very inaccurate in his perceptions of understandings reached, or may deny that he ever heard about the matter. The fact is that he probably didn't "hear" what happened even though he was present—but not listening.

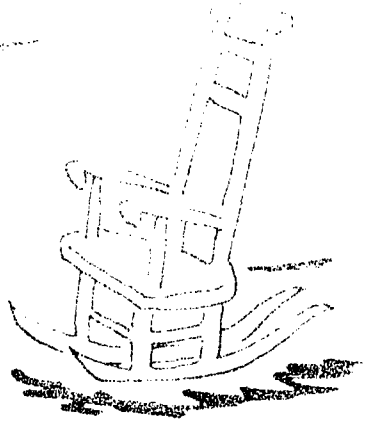
One of the best bits of advice came from a PTA president who objected to a principal's fooling with papers, reading notes, or signing checks or letters while in conference with someone. He accurately described the impression that the principal gave—someone who is not paying attention, who doesn't consider the business at hand important, and who probably can't remember it very well sometime later.

What does this all have to do with using time? Concentrating totally on a task means more efficiency, more singleness of purpose, more interest, more productivity—and less time. Concentrating totally means better application of one's experience and knowledge, less chance of later repetition or embarrass-

ment over not remembering, more direct and meaningful communication.

Finishing an important task in one concentrated session saves time, because you need not re-orient yourself to the facts and pick up lost threads as you would at the second session.





8

Be Courteous

Reserving time for someone by setting an appointment is a time saver as well as a courtesy. The administrator will save his time by calling ahead for appointments to assure the availability of someone with whom he needs to confer. This practice saves that long walk to the other end of the building or up those three flights of stairs. Courtesy is involved because frequently staff members of colleagues will feel compelled to turn from their present company or set aside whatever they are doing to give time to the administrator, whom most everyone recognizes as a busy man whose time must be respected. The administrator cannot, without impairing

relationships, just barge in anywhere or anytime and expect everyone else to give time away to him. In the interests of his own time, he should make that contact or set the appointment so that he can spare himself a wasteful wait or the frustration of not finding the person he is seeking.

Some practices administrators follow in the mistaken notion that they are saving their own time may actually be wasteful of their own and other's time as well as being discourteous. Having a secretary place all of his telephone calls is one such practice that may be counter-productive and discourteous. While the administrator waits for his call to go through, he can do little else. He should certainly be on hand when his party comes on the line. What guarantees that he won't have another interruption while waiting for his call and actually end up making the party he called wait?

This procedure can become ludicrous with secretaries setting up the call for their important bosses and the bosses talking with both secretaries before they get to talk to each other. A much better practice is for the secretary to find the number and have the administrator make the call. One exception, in the interests of the administrator's time, would be the placing of a long distance, person-to-person call.

Having a secretary answer and screen calls, if done courteously and judiciously, can also save time which might be taken by callers who really don't require the administrator's help or time. Many parents and constituents still know only that every school has a principal and will always ask for him. They have no idea which assistant does what, what a counselor does, who provides special services—so they ask for the principal. The secretary must protect the principal's time and refer calls to the proper person, while at the same time showing utmost courtesy. The principal is capable of answering most of the inquiries that come to his office, but in the interest of time, he shouldn't. There are other staff

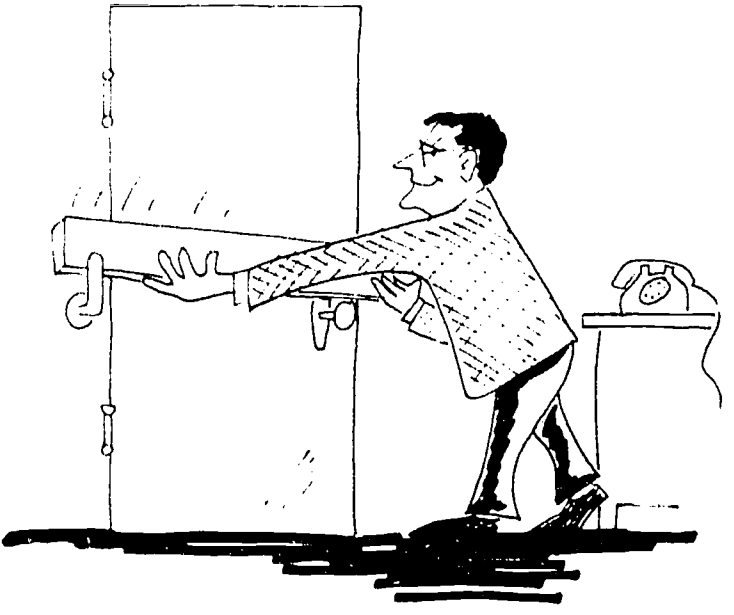
members who can give a more complete, more direct, and more correct response.

A well-trained secretary will know which callers should be given access to the administrator and which should be referred. Callers should not get the impression of a run-around or a brush-off and they must not feel that the administrator is unapproachable or inaccessible. Callers must be treated with helpful courtesy.

Courtesy also plays an important part in terminating calls and interviews, particularly when the caller has finished his business and does not appear to be ready to leave. In addition to the clever help of the secretary, described in Chapter 4, the administrator can protect his own time by dropping courteous verbal clues that will effectively close tedious interviews: "Does that take care of our business?" "Is there anything else we should discuss?" "I'm sorry, but I'm keeping someone waiting."

Other cues can help shorten or terminate interviews. When the conference concludes, stand up and move toward the door. A good way to keep a call brief is not to sit down at all. If the administrator settles behind his desk, and the caller finds a chair, the interview will certainly take longer than may be necessary.

Being well prepared for conferences and interviews is also a courtesy and a time saver. When an appointment is set up between superintendent and principal, or principal and an assistant, it is a great time saver to have reminder notes of subjects to be taken up. Subjects can be "saved" for a day or two, so that one administrator is not bothering the other several times a day with what really turn out to be interruptions. A short, compact conference in person or on the telephone can usually cover five or six subjects, saving time for both parties.



9 Control "Other Imposed" Time

"Control" very likely is not the proper approach to "other imposed" time for the administrator. He may have many days when he controls none of his time. *All* of his time is demanded by others. Salesmen walk in. Teachers come with crises. Parents call. Unexpected visitors drop by. Someone wants a meeting. Students are in trouble and require attention. Entire days can be usurped in this way. It's a fact of life that the school administrator must accept.

Much of what has been said already bears on the problem of "other imposed" time. Telephone screening, setting appointments, following schedules, and having time limits on conferences all help control time. Few administrators can control their time so well that creative or concentrated work can be pursued for more than a half hour during the school day without interruption. This indicates that certain kinds of concentrated or creative work should not be attempted in the midst of a busy school day. If an administrator is in his office, he usually has to be accessible. He cannot always graciously refuse communications or deny admission to someone because he's working on a speech, responding to a grievance, reading his mail, or engaged in some solitary task. Perhaps there is a time and a place for all work. An administrator may not even want to attempt a task which requires prolonged concentration until an evening or a weekend.

Administrators can develop techniques for cutting unexpected and unwanted visits short. A simple and effective tactic is to meet the guest at the door and conduct the visit with him there. The administrator, by moving around his desk and greeting the visitor in front of the desk, and by remaining standing, will signal the visitor that his time is limited and the visit will be shorter. If a visitor is not asked to sit, remove his coat, and if the administrator does not sit, the visit will more likely be brief.

The administrator who does not want to be interrupted will close his door. An open door is an invitation to enter, or to stand at the portal waiting for recognition. Even if the administrator is obviously in deep concentration at his desk, an open door usually says he's available. If he looks up at the passer-by, he's interrupted. An "open door policy" can permit more intrusions than any practice known.

10

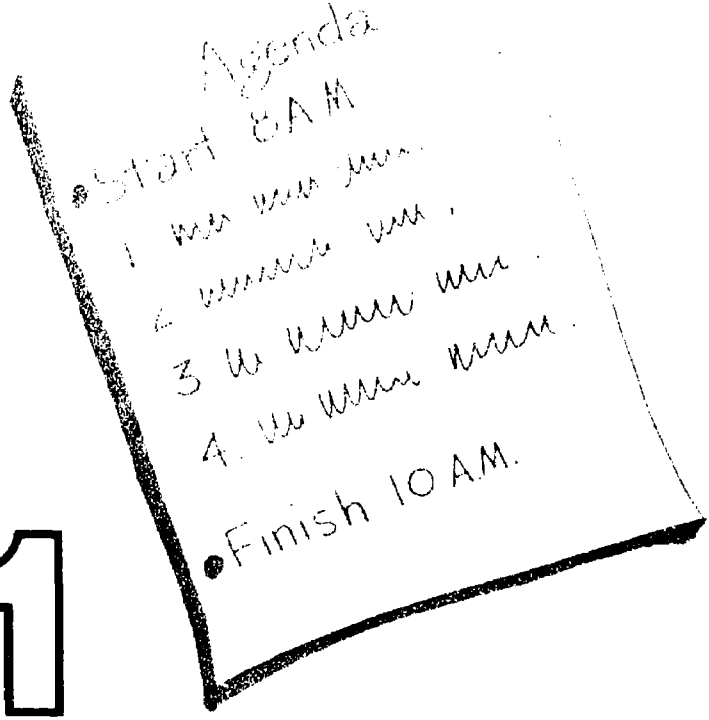
Recognize and Respond to Fatique

Fatigue impairs efficiency, dulls alertness, saps energy, weakens concentration, and decreases productivity. Virtually all the principles of good time management are invalidated when the administrator is too fatigued to function. Fatigue, in addition, breeds impatience, irritability, and hostility.

When administrators work with groups, they must recognize and acknowledge that there is a limit to human energy and that holding tired people to a task be-

yond their level of endurance is counterproductive. Even in individual conferences a break may be refreshing. The administrator, if he is controlling the meeting or conference, should be watchful and sensitive for signs of his own fatigue and of the others. Meetings should not be marathon endurance sessions, prolonged to the point of diminished returns.

Groups should not expect to use time well while they are driving themselves without rest or sleep, food, physical exercise, or diversion. Mental and physical well-being aids efficiency, creativity, and certainly more efficient use of time.



11

Save Time in Meetings

Little relationship exists between the importance of a meeting and its length. Realistically, most of the business of principals or superintendents is conducted in meetings. They are necessary to bring key people together, to ensure right involvement, to garner a decision that will bind those who participate. There is not too much hope that the number of meetings that administrators have can be reduced, but certainly there is much time to be saved in the effective conduct of meetings, in the leadership strategies, and in the concepts of group

processes within meetings. The administrator who is frequently the leader or a key participant in meetings in his school should have the skills and should provide an example in conducting a fruitful meeting. The responsibility of time rests squarely with the meeting leader.

These suggestions should make the administrator's meetings efficient, productive, decisive—and shorter.

1. The most effective meetings last no longer than one and a half hours. At least, they should not continue beyond that limit without a break. Longer meetings fall off badly in productivity. As the clock goes around, decisions become more difficult, dissension creeps in, and emotions take over. If the business is not completed in a reasonable time, another meeting should be called.
2. Meetings should have both a starting time and an *ending* time. The limits should be known in advance so that everyone will be concentrating on making good use of the time. Participants who are busy people will appreciate the courtesy of knowing that a meeting will start and end on the announced schedule. No one appreciates or tolerates interminable, open-ended meetings.
3. An agenda should be prepared so that all participants know the work to be completed and can aim toward the same objective. If the agenda is crowded and there is danger of having the group spend too much time on certain items, a time limit can be set on each subject to ensure that time will be available for all of the business.

   Don't hesitate to allocate the time that agenda subjects deserve. This will usually be the chairman's prerogative, who should understand the importance of the subjects. A timekeeper can be appointed to keep the meeting on schedule. One PTA president boasts that he bases his board meeting agendas on five minute "mods." A board member has been known to use an egg timer to keep others on schedule. When someone's five minutes is up, the timer buzzes, signaling to everyone that the meeting must move along. Everyone has accepted the system and no one is handicapped or penalized.

4. The agenda should be followed unless the group agrees to set it aside for items more pressing. No individual should be permitted to usurp the meeting time for matters that he alone may deem are more important than the announced agenda subjects.
5. Keep participants to a minimum. Require attendance by only those directly involved or whose input is needed. Others with only a peripheral interest may keep informed through meeting minutes. In many cases, participants can be scheduled into the meeting only for the time a matter requiring their attention is under consideration. A tight, timed agenda makes this practice fairly simple.
6. The time called for the meeting should be convenient for all who are needed. Finding a meeting time for five or six busy school administrators may take more time than the meeting. Remember, though, that time can be squandered and whole deliberations repeated by not having essential members present.
7. A chairman is needed in most meetings. Some groups, in the mistaken notion that functioning without a chairman encourages openness and frankness in discussion, spend valuable time in aimless, wasteful meandering. A good chairman is needed to direct the meeting, to move it along, to discourage digression, to bring issues to resolution, to start and end the meeting *on time.* The larger the group, the more important and necessary is the chairman.
8. Before anyone calls a meeting, he should ask, "Is a meeting the only way that this purpose can be accomplished?" Consider the cost of the administrative and staff time that is consumed in meeting. If the salaries of a group of top-level administrators were calculated, the cost of some of our meetings would be staggering. The meeting should deal with matters that need to be discussed, with viewpoints that need to be exchanged, with alternatives that need to be weighed. In the interests of time and costs, consider a memorandum, a questionnaire, a conference telephone call, before calling a meeting.
9. All meeting participants should give full attention to the

business at hand. Inattentiveness and distracting side conversations infringe on the rights of all. They dilute the concentrated effort needed for a productive meeting.

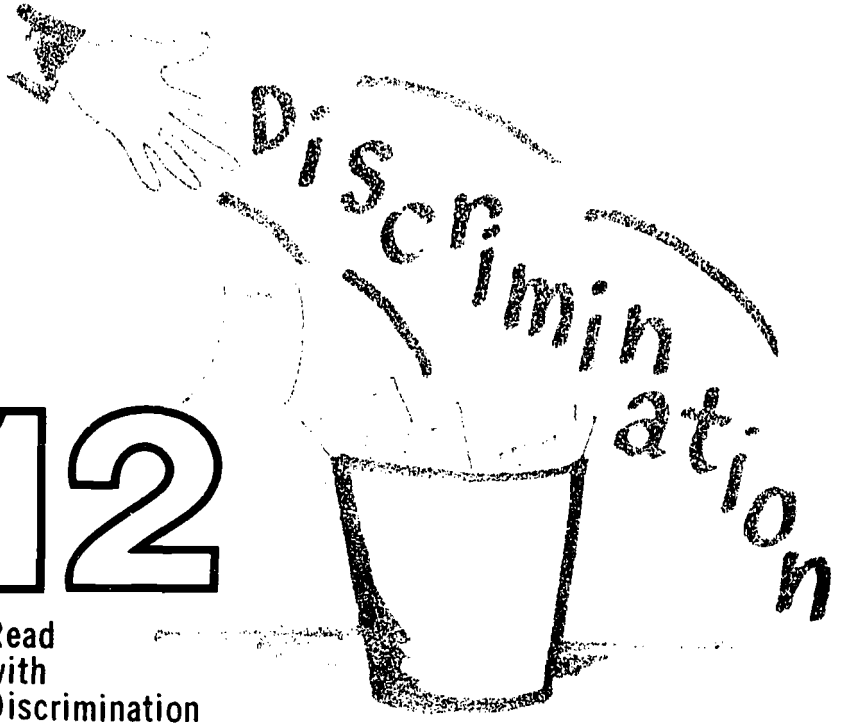
10. Those who are to make presentations or reports in meetings should be well prepared beforehand with well-organized thoughts and careful language. Speakers should stay on the subject and use words sparingly. Brevity requires more careful planning than lengthy extemporizing.
11. Careful records of all meetings should be kept. They should normally be written up, duplicated, and distributed within 24 to 48 hours. Administrators who are participating and concentrating on the business of the meeting should not be expected to take minutes. This may suggest a secretary who can be trained to record the substance of a meeting. Some might argue that in most administrative meetings, each participant should be expected to keep his own notes, that they will have more meaning than someone else's. On the contrary, the record of the meeting should be made by one person, so that all participants will have the same record of what was accomplished in the meeting.

    Good meeting records also furnish information to those who did not participate but were affected by decisions, and provide the basis for follow-up on unfinished business.

The busy administrator can't possibly attend every meeting in which he may have an interest. He should let the meeting chairman know when he can be present so that agenda items which concern him can be scheduled. A principal or superintendent frequently achieves his purpose by just "dropping in" on a meeting or "making the rounds" of several meetings in progress. Even if his attendance is unscheduled, he is making himself available for questions or advice, and he is showing interest. The administrator's role in meetings may require little more than such an appearance. Such drop-in appearances are better than no appearance at

all, where the administrator finds himself invited to several meetings all scheduled concurrently.

An alternative for the administrator with conflicting meetings is to send a representative. Be sure the representative lets the group know that he is there for that purpose and that he will report to the absent administrator about the meeting. This role is made more legitimate if the administrator can have the foresight to send along a personal greeting or message to the meeting.



12

Read with Discrimination

By the end of the school year, most school administrators have a "reading stack" three feet high. The flood of printed material that comes to the administrator is staggering. The reading stack can be a nagging reminder that there is much to be read. Add to this burden, the more recent advent of cassettes and filmstrips that are designed to keep administrators abreast, and they could easily use half their time just consuming such material.

There is no way that the administrator can read or listen to everything that he receives. The real problem is not getting everything read, but deciding what to read.

Some considerations that would help make this decision of "To read or not to read" include:

- Who is the author? What are his special qualifications, or what experience has he had that makes his writing worthy of your reading time?
- How long is the article or book? Is its value to you sufficient to spend the hour or hours to read it? Is it well written, easy to read? Read the book jacket, the introduction, the table of contents to make this determination.
- Consider reading a review. Some "popular" books like *Crisis in the Classroom* are reviewed so extensively that one can easily get the gist of the author's message by reading several good reviews.
- Is the material something that appears to be interesting? Read, of course, those materials that immediately pertain to what you are working on. An issue of the *NASSP Bulletin* on grade point averages and rank-in-class has more relevancy and urgency for reading if a principal happens to be immediately involved in that issue.

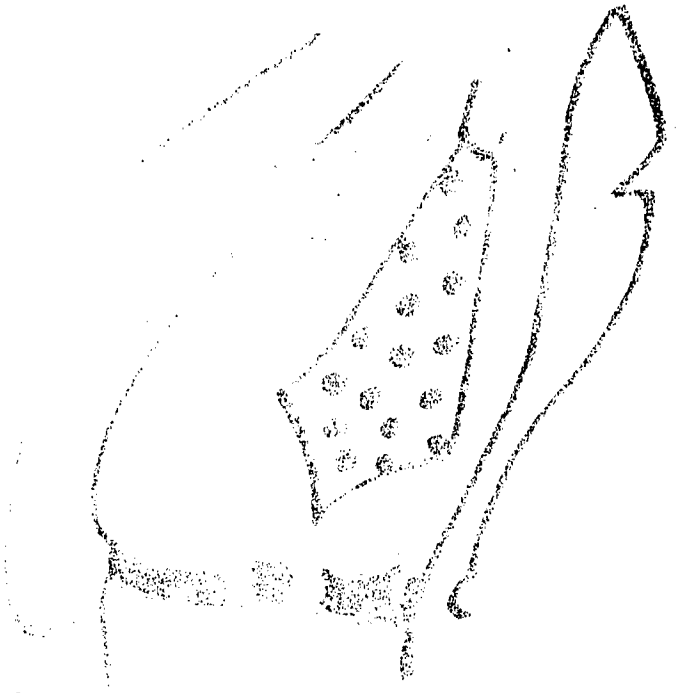
Recognition that some materials are more important to read than others and that only a small portion of what an administrator receives is "must" reading is the first step. Following is a description of typical reading matter for an administrator placed in a priority reading order, from *must* reading through *should* and *maybe*.

- Internal school district communications that require immediate action or a prompt answer. Included would certainly be memos and requests from an immediate superior.
- Reports and minutes of meetings and deliberations and actions that the administrator is directly involved in or that directly affect his responsibilities.
- New school board policies, master contract interpretations, grievance hearing reports, teacher evaluations.
- Reports and minutes of meetings, deliberations and actions that the administrator is not directly involved in but which are in his area of responsibility.

- Bulletins and memoranda from state education offices, local service districts, activities associations, accrediting associations, particularly those which call for action or a response.
- Other reports and communications which affect the administrator indirectly but which he should have knowledge of. Example: minutes of an administrative team meeting in a sister school.
- Professional articles that have immediate pertinence to the administrator's current activity.
- Letters, requests, questionnaires from fellow administrators and graduate students requesting information or conducting studies.
- General professional books and articles which have an effect on education broadly.
- Books and articles that promise to have a long-term effect on education.
- Maybe there will still be time for some recreational reading which administrators deserve to have time for also.

Knowing what to read and not to read is still not quite enough. Knowing how to read the variety of material that comes his way is an important time consideration for the administrator as well. Some materials deserve very careful, analytical, intense reading. Examples would be the school code, board policy, board-union contract, grievance interpretations. Such reading should consume as much time as needed for clear understanding and retention.

Some materials that require no action or response should be read carefully for understanding but do not need study and analysis. Other materials can be read selectively in parts—possibly only lead paragraphs or main headings, with careful reading only of the most pertinent parts. Still others deserve only a cursory skimming, only enough to alert the administrator to main ideas or selected facts which he needs. Finally, some material needs only a quick scanning to determine whether it should be read and who should do so.



13

Help Your Memory

Administrators usually feel that they will always remember matters of importance. How often though does the administrator set out on an important errand only to be confronted or interrupted by several more urgent crises, all of which require attention and action. First of all, they need to be recalled. The administrator who tries to remember all the myriad details of his assignment may

just find quite a few aren't there when he should have them. On his way to school he may be reviewing his tasks for the day and feel quite secure that he has everything in mind, but between his car and his office he may have several new subjects or emergencies come to his attention so that his neat memorization of his day's routine is reduced to a vague, disorganized jumble.

Most administrators, besieged with many details, need a crutch, a method to remind them of messages, errands, decisions, and projects that must be attended to. The simplest crutch is a note on which the reminders are written for easy reference. An urgent message or request jotted down on a note can be referred to later without taxing the overburdened memory.

How often have you been disturbed by the vague but persistent feeling that there was *something* you were to do, but your recollection was too fuzzy to bring it into focus. You waste time and spend energy trying to bring it to mind. A note on a card may save this frustration and some time.

Keep notes of meetings and conferences, particularly of proceedings that will require later response or action. Record your impressions in interviews or conferences while they are fresh. Keep a note card in your pocket, by your telephone or your desk, maybe even by your bed.

Such notes can then become the basis for organizing work, for scheduling, for setting priorities, for delegating tasks to others. As tasks are completed, the note can be destroyed or the item crossed off. There is satisfaction in taking all the day's notes and reminders and reviewing them at the end of the day, throwing most away, and possibly re-recording a few that remain. Of course, having a pocketful of reminder notes is not very useful for the administrator if he forgets to take them out of his pocket.

14 Use Clerical Services Judiciously

Most administrators quickly acknowledge that a good secretary is vital to their success. Likewise, a poor secretary can handicap an administrator beyond redemption.

A good secretary saves an administrator's time, not only by doing clerical work which he delegates, but by being his ever-present time guardian, his reminder of things to do, his appointment maker, his interceptor of interruptors, his buffer and protector.

The administrator and secretary must be a harmonious pair—a fortuitous union. She must know his style, his preferences. He must know her skills, her speed, her

temperament. Knowing what the administrator wants is one of the most critical of a secretary's responsibilities.

The administrator, in turn, should know how to use clerical help efficiently in the best interests of his, and his secretary's, time. Some administrators use secretaries to massage their own self-importance with procedures that are time wasteful.

Short notes and memos can be handwritten by the administrator in much less time than he can summon a secretary or put a belt in the dictaphone. This assumes that the administrator has legible handwriting and that he is not sending something that requires the formality of typing. The secretary can make photo-copies of handwritten notes if necessary. A handwritten note has the added advantage of being more personal and direct and less forbidding.

Giving dictation to a secretary has some very important elements which concern time. Dictation taken by shorthand consumes more time, especially for the secretary. Her time is taken both for the dictation and for the transcription. With mechanical equipment, her time is taken only in transcription. In either case, the administrator's time is taken for dictation only.

Time for dictation becomes a factor for the administrator when he is ready to dictate and his secretary is not available. Mechanical equipment is always ready. No time is wasted. If the administrator needs time to ponder his words, or wants to review his dictation, mechanical equipment will wait, and the secretary's time is not taken. Every minute that an administrator dictates into a mechanical device is a minute saved for the secretary. Furthermore, a U. S. Navy study found that a secretary could transcribe from a machine 33 percent faster than from longhand or shorthand.

Could there still be administrators who write their communications in longhand for typing by their secretaries? This practice can't be justified in the interest of time when we recognize the slow pace of handwriting

(20-30 words per minute) compared with the speed of the spoken word (150 words per minute).

Earlier, the use of clerical time to place telephone calls was discussed. Using a secretary to place local, or even internal telephone calls is frequently wasteful of the secretary's time, inconsiderate of the party being called, and wasteful of the administrator's time.

Giving some minor tasks to a secretary or subordinate may actually be wasteful of the administrator's time. He may be able to do them himself in less time than it might take to outline and explain the tasks to another. Aside from protecting time, there may be, of course, other reasons for assigning such minor tasks, particularly if they are intended to be permanently delegated to a subordinate.

Office arrangements have a significant effect on use of time. Traffic patterns and flow of work should be carefully analyzed. How far from the secretary's desk are the files? How far from the mail boxes? How far is the reception area from the receptionist? Where is the duplicating equipment—in relationship to the supplies?

Where does the administrator's secretary work in relationship to his office? Can she see his office door? Can she see him if his door is open? Can she control traffic to his door or into his office? Is there convenient inter-communication? Are work stations situated to be free from distractions? Is it well understood who receives visitors, who answers calls?

The arrangement of the administrator's office itself will affect his use of time. Particularly if he needs to control entrance to his office, he will want his secretary stationed by his door.

If he wants an "open door" but does not want to be distracted by every passerby, he should position his desk facing away from the door. When a visitor appears in an office door, or in going by catches the attention of the occupant (the administrator), the situation invariably becomes an interruption and an unnecessary invasion of

time. Of course, the administrator can *shut* his door when he does not welcome interruptions.

The office arrangement which considers the administrator's time will provide quick access to his secretary, convenient telephone and dictating equipment, adequate storage for files which are currently in use, bulletin boards for quick reference to schedules, calendars, maps, and charts, and shelves for storage of references and books needed by the administrator.

A system of desk organization is helpful. Some administrators do not like to have more than one project visible at any time on a desk. All others are filed or stored until ready for attention. Piles of papers can be very distracting and tend to divert attention from the work at hand. A cluttered desk often betrays a cluttered mind.

A disorganized pile of paper on a desk can be a serious time waster. A pile containing current work—letters to be answered, material to be read, memos to be forwarded, paper to be filed, notes requiring attention, miscellany to be discarded—steal unbelievable amounts of time. Needing an item in the pile means riffling through it perhaps several times until the item is found. This senseless ritual may have to be repeated 20 times in the course of a single day.

A desk organizer can help. Using a bound folder with leaves and tabs or using file folders will do. Mark them: "Urgent," "Dictate," "To Do," "Review," "File," "For Faculty Bulletin," "For the Team," "Discard." All the paper pile disappears, and material can be found when needed. Visitors may be impressed by your pile of unfinished work, but they will be absolutely awed by your clean desk.

A well understood, logical filing system is essential to protect time. Many systems are available; all should ensure that material filed can be readily retrieved when needed. What a time waster when files which everyone knows are there can't be found! The administrator and

secretary must know the system and be aware of each other's practices. An administrator may want a file drawer in his own desk to keep current material. He may keep a file folder at his desk while he is working on a project. Generally, however, there should be one main office file where at least one secretary can retrieve material in a moment.

A Chicago business research institute surveyed 3,000 executives and found that the typical ones spent two to three hours a day reading and answering mail. That adds up to three or four months a year! A good secretary will know what her boss needs to read from the volumes of mail and memos that inundate a school administrator's office. He should not have to read every piece to decide whether he should read it or not. The secretary *should* be able to decide in most cases what attention is required by the administrator.

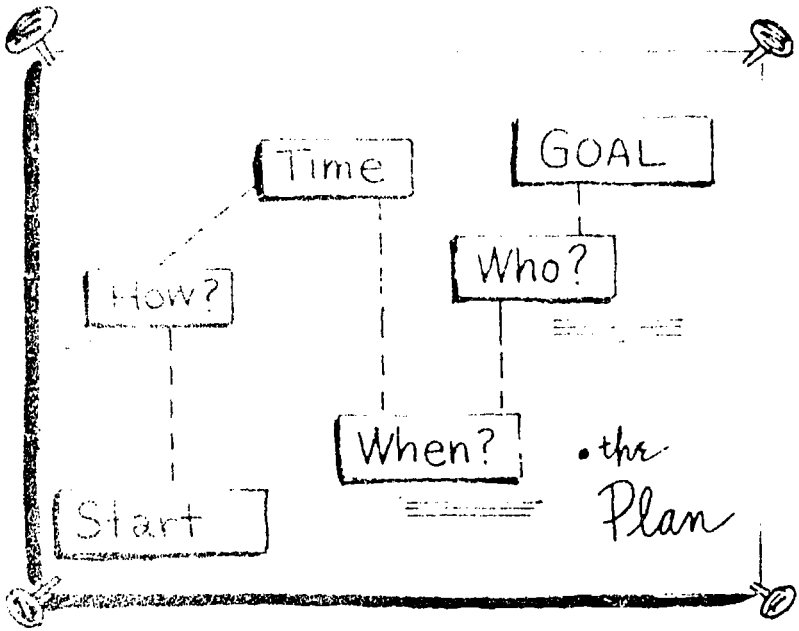
First, she should open all mail that is not marked "personal." Mail addressed to the "principal" or "superintendent" can frequently be handled by someone else in the school. The sender expects the administrator to direct it. The secretary should be authorized to forward such pieces directly to someone who can use it or respond to it. Another category of mail would be material that the secretary recognizes will be handled by someone else, but which the administrator may want to see. She might mark it to be forwarded but place it in the administrator's mail just in case he may want to peruse it.

Then, of course, there is the mail which the secretary knows will require the administrator's attention. This mail should all be organized by the secretary with that calling for the most immediate attention placed on top where the administrator will be most apt to see it. A well-trained secretary who knows her boss's needs can save him much valuable time by systematic screening and sorting of each day's mail.

Handling telephone messages has some pitfalls for

both secretary and administrator. Urgent telephone messages should not be placed in the "in basket" with the mail where the administrator may not find it for several days. Urgent calls should be placed on the administrator's desk in a clearly visible place.

Conferring with the secretary and giving her assignments takes time. That time is essential if she is to be able to proceed with the administrator's work. How often an administrator arrives at his office to find three calls to answer and two visitors waiting, with appointments beginning in half an hour. Meanwhile, his secretary sits filing her nails until mid-afternoon when he gets around to her. A well-organized, time-conscious administrator will save time for his secretary. Preferably, this time will be early in the day allowing the secretary to use her time well too.



15 Plan Work to Save Time

Someone once asked a principal what he did in the school, and he responded with: "I just come over here every day and wait; something always comes up." There are administrators who seldom get beyond "what comes up." Their time is consumed by emergencies and routine tasks. They seldom have time to think about what they might be or should be doing with their time.

Work without direction or purpose cannot be very productive or satisfying. The Roman philosopher Seneca said, "When a man does not know what harbor he is heading for, no wind is the right one." Without a pur-

pose and a plan an administrator can do little more than "keep the store," going from day to day handling "what comes up."

Some of the better systems of management by objectives should help give administrative efforts more purpose and direction. Working toward specific goals will call for good time management and the development of a plan of action. Such planning takes time. A principal and his assistants who spend several days of their time developing a plan for meeting their year's objectives will most assuredly spend time more wisely than they would without a plan. Their plan will not just involve activities, dates, and deadlines, but will also contain commitment, which virtually guarantees motivation for the achievement of objectives—and a good use of time.

Planning is important for each day's and each week's activities. A few minutes thinking about what needs to be done, what is most important to be done, and who should do it will formulate a plan that will save everyone's time.

Crawford Greenwalt, former president of Du Pont, observed that "every moment spent in planning saves three of four in execution."[1]

Peter Drucker, one of the nation's experts in management, endorses planning for an intelligent allocation of time. He said, "Managers who know how to use time will achieve results by planning. They are willing to think before they act. They spend a great deal of time on thinking through the areas in which objectives should be set, a great deal more on thinking through systematically what to do with recurrent problems."[2]

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[1] Quoted in R. R. Alec Mackenzie, *The Time Trap*. American Management Association, 1972, p. 41.

[2] Peter F. Drucker, *The Practice of Management* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), p. 347.

16 Use Time to Improve Skill

Time is related to output. If an administrator sharpens his personal skills, he should be more productive and, therefore, have more time. His skills include communicating, organizing, evaluating, decision making, directing, supervising, and planning. If an administrator can, through reading, study, practice, observing others, attending workshops, or returning to school, refine his administrative skills, he is using time to save time in the long run. An administrator should not apologize for using part of his work day to study, to reflect, to analyze his own performance and how he might improve his efficiency to become more productive.

The administrator who continues to develop his own personal resources will have enough time to do what he must do, and have some time for what he wants to do.

17

Conclusion

The challenge of managing time is not one of manipulating the passage of time. Time *will* pass—certainly and relentlessly. Managing time and having its use as a valuable resource depend upon ourselves. The best use of time requires the highest form of self-discipline and control of the elements of our administrative role. Time is in fact limited. We each must develop the inner resources to make the best use of our measure of time.

If we are successful in disciplining ourselves and conditioning those around us, we may actually "save" some time.

We may well ask, "what are we saving all this time for?"

Why not use some of this valuable resource for:

- Reviewing your philosophy of administration.
- Studying systematically an "innovation" in your school.
- Writing some notes of appreciation to people whose contribution to your school you value.
- Working out the plans for a "great idea" for your school.
- Conferring with some teachers about some of your ideas for improving programs—and listening to their ideas.
- Thinking of ways to evaluate the success of your school's student activity program.
- Developing means of helping someone else do his job better.
- Talking with students about what they like about your school.
- Inviting some parents in for coffee to hear their concerns.
- Visiting some classes—just to show interest and be better informed.
- Planning a campaign to improve "school spirit" and pride.
- Helping some teachers on writing their course objectives.
- Attending some student activities you haven't seen before—a chess match, a girls volleyball game, a forensic meet.
- Developing your administrative objectives for the year.
- Reading some of the good articles and books which are affecting direction of education.
- Getting out of the office and "into the school."
- Visiting a school where something exciting is happening.
- Writing the article you've always said you were going to.
- Going out to lunch with some parents, teachers, or colleagues.
- Renewing a friendship.
- Calling someone you respect for advice.
- Enjoying being an administrator with all of the opportunities for service and leadership.