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ABSTRACT

The third of three booklets deals with the roles of women and men in educational administration. Recent data indicate that there is a notable underrepresentation of women in educational administration and they earn less. Guidelines to implement affirmative action include establishing a task force or a committee to study equal employment opportunity problems and develop a plan of action, and a districtwide analysis of all areas of employment. Superintendents are advised to develop and implement a vigorous program of affirmative steps in the following employment areas: recruitment, selection, promotion, upward mobility, training, wage and salary structure, benefits and conditions of employment, and support programs and services. (Author/MLF)

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**Sex Equality**  
**in**  
**Educational Administration**  
**Volume VII**

**AASA Executive Handbook Series**

American Association of School Administrators  
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*This report from the AASA Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education is the third in a series of three Executive Handbooks designed to be helpful to you and your colleagues as you move toward this goal. This third booklet deals with the roles of women and men in educational administration, the first with educational materials, and the second with organizational procedures in the school which tend to channel girls and boys into different programs.*

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# FOREWORD

The American Association of School Administrators has long sought the full development of the human resources of the nation and equal educational opportunities for all. Its primary policy document, *The Platform*, states:

"A. As citizens of the United States of America, we believe —

"7. That the strength of the nation and the welfare of humanity will depend upon the conservation and intelligent development of human and natural resources."

and . . . "C. In order that these principles may be realized, we as school administrators propose to work for —

"8. The elimination of barriers that prevent full access to equal educational opportunities for all children and the provision of educational leadership in eliminating discrimination against any segment of our society."

The AASA Executive Committee believes in the AASA platform and must implement programs to achieve the goals it sets forth. Consequently, from the ~~strong~~ policy positions above, the Committee has led the organization to act affirmatively to seek more equity for women and girls in education.

This Executive Handbook is the third of three publications issued on the topic. They are designed to:

- Intensify in the administrator an awareness of the problem.
- Describe some current practices that frustrate the full development of human resources and deny equal educational opportunity.
- Identify remedies to correct the condition.
- Suggest administrative action appropriate to eradication of the condition.

American education must be in the forefront of the endeavor to develop all human talent, wherever it is to be found. To fail to do so threatens our very survival. This handbook is part of a serious effort to deal with a deep-seated condition so bound by tradition that to most of us it seems natural.

Salmon's first law is "A problem's no problem unless it's your problem." Our effort here is to make you aware that the problem is *yours* and *you* are uniquely situated to help eradicate it. Let's get it done!

*Paul B. Salmon*  
*Executive Director*  
*AASA*

# INTRODUCTION

Over a hundred years ago, Stendhal, the French writer noted for his psychological insights, prophesied that granting women complete equality would be the surest sign of civilization and would double the intellectual power of the human race. Certainly today, women's rights and their rightful roles in society are popular subjects — whether addressed disparagingly in cartoons, jokingly in subtle put-downs, or seriously in political and social circles — and the struggle for equality of opportunity will more likely intensify than go away. Women's role in society is evolving and changing with the times. And education, too, is re-examining its role as an agent of needed change and of the society which it serves.

Furthermore, at a time when American education is beset with almost overwhelming problems and its very ability to perform is being seriously questioned by respected scholars, it can ill afford not to tap the energies and talents of women. Women are *needed* in administrative positions. Their abilities are needed along with those of their male counterparts. Their points of view are needed in grappling with problems related to sex bias and inequality of opportunity. And they need to be represented in administrative ranks more in proportion to their numbers than they have been in the recent past.

The U.S. Congress and the highest courts in the land have recognized past discrimination. They have ruled that equality of opportunity may not be denied anyone because of race, religion, color, national origin, or sex.

Now every thoughtful school superintendent responsible for administering a school district will want to seek legal advice on state, local, and federal laws and move boldly forward to eliminate discrimination in recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, layoff, discharge, disciplinary action, wages, and all terms, conditions or benefits of employment.

# Background

Though the overwhelming majority of people in education are women, there is a notable underrepresentation of women in educational administration and they earn less. Recent data indicate that:

- Less than 1 percent of the superintendents of schools and less than 6 percent of the deputy, associate and assistant superintendents are women.<sup>1</sup>
- Less than 2 percent of the senior high school principals are women.<sup>2</sup>
- Only 2 percent of the professors of educational administration are women.<sup>3</sup>
- The average salary for women administrators is \$5,000 less than for men.<sup>4</sup>
- Merely 20 percent of the members of state boards of education are women.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, when set in historical perspective, the data are even more gloomy:

- The number of women principals declined from 55 percent in 1928<sup>6</sup> to 13.5 percent in 1973.<sup>7</sup>
- The percentage of women school superintendents (in local operating and intermediate districts combined) dropped from approximately 9 percent in 1950<sup>8</sup> to little over 1 percent in 1972,<sup>9</sup> and there is no reason to believe that this trend has not continued.

There are many reasons why so few administrators are women. A recent study identified seven:

- Reorganization of school districts and the elimination of county school officers.



- Elimination of the Dean of Girls position.
- Increased salary levels, attracting more men into teaching.
- Entry of veterans into education after World War II and Korea.
- Decline in job market due to declining enrollments and economic considerations.
- Vogue of the executive image prevalent in the 1950's and 60's.
- Myths of male superiority.<sup>10</sup>

Traditional patterns in society, coupled with existing myths and attitudes, have combined to create an atmosphere in which few women aspire to top positions or are encouraged toward them. According to a member of the AASA Executive Committee:

Traditionally, schools, like other employers, have associated staff levels and positions with sex. As a result, women in school staffs are concentrated at the low levels and in certain types of work: elementary teachers, librarians, teachers' aides, teachers of typing, stenography, English, and education, for example. Few women break into the administrative ranks.

In addition to being illegal, these kinds of employment patterns are harmful not only to the employees in question, but also to students. Students take their cues from the environment. The absence of men in early childhood programs, for example, may suggest that child-rearing is an inappropriate concern for men. Moreover, sex-biased staffing may suggest that levels of responsibility and achievement should properly be associated with sex; that women are not equal to certain kinds of jobs, particularly leadership roles. For a young woman looking to the future, the message may be all too clear: Don't aspire too high. For all students, the educationally important opportunity to interact with members of both sexes at and within all levels may be lost.<sup>11</sup>

Attitudes and myths often influence decision making when a female applicant is being considered for a position of responsibility. Some conscious or unconscious feelings (myths) and the facts might include:

- **“Man is the breadwinner and woman the housekeeper.”**

It is important to realize that 42 percent of the women workers in the United States are not married,<sup>12</sup> and that more than 50 percent of the women who work do so because of economic need. They are single, widowed, divorced or their husbands earn less than \$7,000.<sup>13</sup>

- **“Training for women is costly and wasted because women don’t work as long as men.”**

Work life expectancy charts show that men average 43 years in the work force and women 25 years, but single women average 45 years.<sup>14</sup>

- **“Women shouldn’t compete for men’s jobs.”**

Research shows that most job requirements are less related to differences in sex than differences between people.<sup>15</sup>

- **“Men don’t like to work for women.”**

Surveys indicate that both men and women who complain about working for women supervisors have never done so. A recent review of studies about women administrators found them to have a “propensity toward democratic leadership, thoroughness of approach to problem solving, and bent toward instructional leadership, as well as . . . general effectiveness of . . . performance as rated by both teachers and superiors.”<sup>16</sup>

## **Administrative Leadership**

The chief executive officer of the public school system — the superintendent of schools — whether state or local, elected or appointed, is legally responsible for implementation of equal opportunity. As educational leader in the district, the superintendent is responsible for initiating the development and implementation of

equal opportunity programs. As the catalytic agent and source of inspiration to the staff, the superintendent's dedication, direction and assurance is needed to move such programs forward. This publication is directed to superintendents of schools and steps to be taken to implement affirmative action.

There are many preliminary steps the superintendent can take that will set the stage, maintain an atmosphere of equality, and reflect personal commitment. Such commitment can be demonstrated through some of the following actions:

- Re-examine the school district's philosophy of education. Be sure that every student and employee is guaranteed freedom from sex discrimination in all matters associated with and affecting the district.
- Review all district written and audiovisual materials. Free them of sexist language and implications. Do not overlook newsletters, memos to students and parents, and student and faculty handbooks.
- Eliminate sex stereotyping from all educational materials. (See AASA Executive Handbook Series #4, *Sex Equality in Educational Materials*.)
- Insure equal opportunities for all students. (See AASA Executive Handbook Series #5, *Sex Equality in School*.)
- Present a picture to the public of both women and men in leadership roles. The visual image of the school system to constituents is of prime importance. Whether representing the schools in local, state and national meetings, or on radio or television, let students, parents and the community as a whole know that women hold positions of leadership in the school system and make important decisions in its administration.
- Reflect equality of opportunity in your own dealings and attitudes toward staff and students. (See AASA Executive Handbook Series #5, *Sex Equality in School*, pp. 18-20.)

# Advantages of Voluntary Affirmative Action

Equal employment opportunity is not only fair, it is the law. It is mandated by federal, state and local legislation, Presidential executive orders and definitive court decisions. As school districts move forward to eliminate discrimination in employment, responsible educational leaders will seek not only legal advice on all pertinent laws, but personal knowledge about the legal requirements for equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs. It simply makes good business sense to identify and revise discriminatory employment practices before the district is faced with a time consuming investigation, the possibility of costly litigation, back pay awards or court-imposed goals, timetables and changes in employment practices.

Although this publication calls attention to only two federal laws which have major implications for employment in public school systems, you will want to become acquainted with others (state and local, as well as federal) which have bearing on the district's employment system.<sup>17</sup>

*Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972* prohibits sex discrimination in education programs or activities which receive federal financial assistance. The law will be enforced by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW), Office for Civil Rights.

*Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972) prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, in any term, condition or privilege of employment. As amended, Title VII covers all employers of 15 or more persons, all educational institutions, public and private, state and local governments, labor unions; and joint labor management committees for apprenticeship and training. This law is enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission which receives and investigates job discrimination complaints.

Affirmative action programming can help avoid expensive legal

judgments and business disruptions. It benefits the school system by establishing a result-oriented program for making better use of the vast reservoir of untapped human resources and skills. It benefits women by aiding them to move into positions for which they may be qualified or qualifiable and from which they have been excluded in the past.

## Basic First Steps

Where there have been no previous attempts to establish positive efforts or an affirmative action program, some school districts may find it advantageous to establish a task force or a committee to study equal employment opportunity problems and develop a plan of action.

The superintendent will want to issue to all school employees and the community at large a written equal employment policy statement and affirmative action commitment. This should include an assurance of personal commitment as well as a declaration of equal employment opportunity as a district-wide goal.

An administrative officer (preferably a qualified woman from a line position) should be appointed and given responsibility for developing, implementing and overseeing a program of affirmative action. The superintendent's support should be evidenced all along the way. General guidelines are set forth on the following pages. Help in developing an affirmative action plan can be obtained from a number of sources. Federal agencies which administer equal employment opportunity programs can be contacted:

- DHEW's Office of Education is developing technical assistance materials that will be available to educational agencies and institutions, and staff members in its Office for Civil Rights are available for consultation.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has personnel in seven regional offices as well as in their headquarters offices in Washington, D.C., whose responsibilities include assisting employers in developing affirmative action plans and programs. In addition, a two-volume guidebook for employers, *Affirmative Action and Equal Employment*, is available from the Office of Voluntary Programs, EEOC, 2401 E Street,

N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506, or the regional office serving your area.

Other sources you may wish to tap are state departments of education, state and local human rights agencies, consultants serving on a fee basis, professional organizations, seminars and workshops developed by state and national associations, universities and colleges of education, community and women's groups.

Communication is perhaps the key to success in any program. It is vitally important that every employee be fully aware of and completely understand whatever plan is adopted for use by the district. As soon as the policy and plan are developed, they should be disseminated widely and periodic evaluations made once they are implemented.

## Self Analysis

The superintendent of schools, as educational leader, holds prime responsibility for assessing the system's policies to eliminate discriminatory employment practices and to insure equal opportunity for women. Whether or not a school system *intends* to discriminate is of little legal significance. The courts have ruled that it is the *consequences* of employment practices, *not the intent*, which determine violation of the law. Thus, any employment practice or policy, however neutral in intent, and however fairly and impartially administered, which has a disparate (unequal) effect on women and minorities, or which perpetuates the effect of *prior* discriminatory practices, in most instances constitutes unlawful discrimination.

A major step toward the development of a plan to establish sex equality in educational administration is a district-wide analysis of all areas of employment — custodial, clerical, professional, para-professional, line and staff positions. In conducting this study:

- Analyze present employment by sex, race, position and salary. A needs assessment and realistic goals could be the outcome of such a study. Job titles and job descriptions can be scrutinized along with opportunities for promotion and career development.

- Identify those areas where women are concentrated and where they are underutilized; determine the extent of underutilization.

## Instituting Change

Positive steps require removal of discriminatory barriers and institution of aggressive measures to bring about equal opportunity. School boards and their chief executive officers must develop and implement personnel policies and procedures which insure equality of opportunity and fairness.

After reviewing the entire employment process, step by step, to pinpoint specific causes of underutilization and critically examining all employment practices and procedures to identify those which serve as barriers to women:

- Establish measurable goals and reasonable timetables for achieving them. Some actions (such as assuring that salaries and benefits are the same for all employees who perform substantially similar work) may be taken immediately, while others (such as moving a proportional number of women into administrative positions) will require long-range goals and timetables.
- Establish a review system to monitor, report and evaluate progress of the plan periodically. If results are not satisfactory, determine the reasons and make necessary changes.
- Develop and implement a vigorous program of positive (affirmative) steps in the following employment areas:

### Recruitment

- Train personnel staff to use objective, job-related criteria and to contribute to equal opportunity efforts. This includes those who recruit, interview, select, hire, place, and take other personnel actions. Utilize women and minorities as recruiters, interviewers, referral sources.

- Advertise widely to all school employees any opening that is available. Too often in the past complaints about inequality of opportunity have been based upon lack of knowledge of available openings or a feeling of "big-boy," secret recruitment.
- Develop a list of names of potential candidates for either promotion or leadership from within your own system.
- Seek out and encourage women who otherwise might not consider themselves as potential candidates to apply for available positions.
- By every action, memo or other means make sure everybody knows that all available positions are open *equally* to all capable people.
- If recruiting outside your district, contact such organizations as the American Association of University Women (AAUW), National Council of Administrative Women in Education (NCAWE), National Organization for Women (NOW), and minority employment agencies. *The Women's Rights Almanac*<sup>18</sup> includes a state-by-state list of organizations which might be helpful as a starting point.
- Use periodicals and newsletters that are generally circulated to women and minority groups, such as the *Affirmative Action Register*, University Council for Educational Administration's Computerized Research and Placement Service (CORPS), and the *Educational Forum* of Kappa Delta Pi.

### Selection

- Review and evaluate every step of the selection process to assure that job requirements, hiring standards and methods of selection and placement do not discriminate against women.
- Be sure that all selection procedures (including paper-and-pencil tests, personal histories, biographical information, background requirements, specific educational or work experience



requirements, interviews, application forms and interviewer rating systems) are job-related and do not screen out women.

- Develop job descriptions and hiring standards that reflect major job functions and do not require higher qualifications.
- Include female representation on selection committees.
- When interviewing female applicants, limit questions to those which relate to capacity for job performance. Avoid asking questions about the care and feeding of children and husband, how the husband will react to possible travel, or how long she plans to work before starting a family.
- Avoid common employment discriminatory practices on job applications and in interviews such as questions regarding marital status, income of spouse, requests for photos, information on charge accounts, and car or home ownership.
- Remove titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. and Dr. from application and other forms.
- Provide space on application forms for relevant committee or volunteer work.
- Consider flex-time scheduling for the benefit of both men and women. Many times simple, amicable arrangements can provide for continued services of talented individuals who otherwise might not be available.

### **Promotion**

- Review promotional procedures, especially lock-step situations.
- Post and otherwise publicize all promotional opportunities and encourage employees to apply for them, especially women who in the past have not had access to administrative jobs.
- Make clear to *all* employees that women are eligible for promotion to any job on the basis of individual qualifications.

- Identify women who are qualified for upward mobility.
- Develop a performance appraisal program for the evaluation of employee work performance which is based on objective measurable factors and which eliminates the subjective elements that may be limiting opportunities for women.

### **Upward Mobility**

Positive action must be taken to overcome former patterns of inequality, many of which simply reflect tradition. Women have not usually aspired to educational administrative positions, and often when they have, they were discouraged in such aspirations. Schools of education should encourage more women to enter the field and school systems should actively recruit women from their own ranks to move into administrative positions.

- Examine procedures for promotion, transfer and training and make sure that candidate selection is based upon fair assessment of the employee's ability and work record.
- Seek out capable women and assign them administrative tasks. This will result in more visibility as well as the acquisition of practical experience necessary to move into more responsible positions.
- Provide special training on prospective career paths for women and encourage participation. They are often unsure of themselves and of how to start the upward climb. Some have never even thought of administrative careers.
- Recommend women for inservice programs for school administration and for internship programs. (Do not assume that a woman who is married and/or has children would not be interested.)

### **Training**

- Insure equal opportunity for women as well as men to attend leadership training workshops. Encourage workshop planners

to include as leaders and speakers people who are both knowledgeable of and committed to the concepts of equal opportunities for women.

- Include in local inservice training programs discussion of the affirmative action program and of the administration's commitment to equal opportunity for women. Training sessions should include detailed provisions and requirements of the plan, individual responsibilities, periodic progress reports and specific helps to meet the problems that arise.

### **Wage and Salary Structure**

- Guarantee equal pay for equal or substantially similar work performed by men and women.
- Compare job descriptions and actual job duties, length of service, and other factors affecting pay rates for jobs of equal skill, effort and responsibility.
- Examine procedures for assignment of and pay for extra duties, opportunities for overtime, raises and bonuses.

### **Benefits and Conditions of Employment**

Benefits and conditions of employment include life, medical, hospital and accident insurance, retirement benefits, pension plans; sick and vacation leave, maternity and paternity leave, and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

- Investigate possible discrepancies and make sure contributions to and benefits from retirement, pension and insurance plans are equal. This includes equal retirement age.
- Equalize sick leave policies.
- Examine written and unwritten policies and practices concerning pregnancy and maternity. Such matters as the start and duration of leave, accrual of seniority, reinstatement, payment

or extension of leave should apply to pregnant employees on the same basis as to other employees physically unable to work. The time when a pregnant women should cease or return to work must be determined on an individual basis.

- Consider leave for male employees who are new fathers.

### **Support Programs and Services**

- Require any contractor or supplier with whom the school district deals to be an equal opportunity employer.
- Present to the public, through whatever media, an image of both women and men in leadership roles and working together as a team.
- Publicize legal rights of individuals.
- Encourage women to join professional organizations and informal, previously all-male groups in the school system.
- Combine staff lounges.
- Deal with female employees the same as you deal with male employees — as equals.
- Look into the possibility of providing day-care centers for children of all (not just female) employees. Studies have shown this provision results in lower absenteeism and turnover. Other benefits are improved staff relations and the training and experience gained by both male and female students who elect to work in the center during school hours. You may wish to include the children of students in any day-care arrangement. The additional benefits from keeping female students in school to complete their education after pregnancy is also worth considering.
- Develop awareness and sensitivity workshops, especially for those who have supervisory and management responsibilities. Well developed training can provide positive responses to poten

tial hostility, misunderstandings, misconceptions and resentment, as well as communicate the commitment of the school administration to equal opportunity. This type of training may be helpful in sensitizing school leadership to the kinds of employment barriers and attitudinal stereotypes which often hinder equal opportunity.

- A step-by-step grievance procedure for appeals by employees should be instituted and time frames established for dealing with alleged discrimination. Every opportunity should be provided for inhouse, amicable settlement of disagreements.

# Conclusion

Denying women partnership in educational administration is unfair, illegal and wasteful. It is to rely on only half the talents available to it, to portray to its students a picture of unequal human worth and to perpetuate outdated and outmoded sex stereotypes. Indeed, it is a reflection on the educational community, and its dedication to individual growth and development, to overlook or to fail to act on such an obvious injustice.

Great opportunities now exist for the chief school administrator to move ahead with a positive program to employ, more fully develop and better utilize the talents of each employee, taking into full account each individual's talents, aspirations and rights to equal employment opportunities.

The potential for leadership is there, waiting. For too long it has been ignored and wasted. The determined, effective action of the superintendent in moving ahead promptly to prepare the seedbed of equality will make the difference between stagnation and the realization of equal employment opportunities for *all* individuals. It is up to the schools now to correct past discriminatory practices and to reap the benefits of combined human resources.

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