

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 733

EA 008 286

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TITLE Case Study: Staff Development in Orange County, Florida Schools.
PUB DATE 22 Feb 76
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Association of School Administrators (108th, Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 20-23, 1976)
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies (Education); Change Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; *Management Development; *Organizational Change; *Organizational Development; *School Superintendents; *Staff Improvement
IDENTIFIERS Florida (Orange County); *Orange County, Florida Public Schools

ABSTRACT

Rather than a direct report on staff development programs, the speaker presents a case study of a district's experiences in organization change that were planned to improve the ways in which the school system fulfills its basic mission and goals. The change plan emphasized staff development at the administrative level as a means of decreasing the focus in the district that were opposed to change. The plan included retreats, workshops, attendance at conferences, and meetings with national authorities, but emphasized the reorganization of the district to reduce the effects of provincialism and to develop a solid management team relationship at the higher levels of management. The school board was left out of the management team. Eventually the district was reorganized into two distinct divisions--instruction and support services. One major provision of the reorganization was the establishment and staffing of a department to facilitate long-range planning and staff development. The rationale of the reorganization was to arrange the school system's management team so as to focus more directly on the clients of the system--the students. (Author/IRT)

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CASE STUDY: STAFF DEVELOPMENT
IN ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA SCHOOLS

L. Linton Deck, Jr.

Superintendent

Orange County Public Schools

Presented at AASA 1976 Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 22, 1976

(N.B. The text presented below are the remarks of Superintendent Deck. This presentation was accompanied by slide presentations which are too voluminous to send for ERIC Clearinghouse dissemination. The subject matter of each slide presentation is indicated at the appropriate place in the narrative. In addition, Dr. Larry L. Zenke and Director of Staff Development and Planning Stephen Jamba made oral presentations which were not formalized into the narrative texts. The location of their remarks in the presentation is also noted below.)

1 All of us who are a part of the Orange County, Florida School System appreciate
2 the opportunity provided by the American Association of School Administrators to
3 share some of our experiences with you this afternoon.

4

5 To set the stage for our presentation we would like to take a moment to remind
6 all of us in the room of the real reason we undertake the kinds of work we are going
7 to describe today.

8 [SLIDES: "For the Sake of the Children"]

9 Any case study needs to set a context for the events to be described. Our
10 context is Orlando and Orange County, Florida which are of course, somewhat
11 unique as is any specific locality.

12 Among the factors unique to the Orange County Public School System are the
13 obvious ones of size, (in terms of enrollment), public policy in regard to state,
14 funding (in which the Florida Education Finance Plan is almost unique in the
15 country), and the location of the school system in a bustling, growing community
16 favored with an exceptionally inviting climate. Two of the less obvious unusual
17 factors include (1) that we will review the experience of a school system with a

18 new superintendent who was the first organizational outsider ever appointed to,
19 the position, and (2) a public policy base in state law for staff development
20 expenditures. In Florida, state statutes require that \$5.00 per student be
21 expended in each school system each year for staff development activities.
22 This public policy is an exceptionally enlightened requirement. Not the least
23 among the positive factors noted in this requirement is that staff development
24 funds, are, by law, "protected" from the process of collective bargaining since
25 those monies may not be used for salaries or employee benefits.

26 Other unusual factors in the Orange County experience may be identified
27 in the eyes and ears of the beholder as we move through our presentation. The
28 presentation spans the experience in our school system over a period of
29 approximately three years. As a matter of fact, it was three years ago today,
30 here in Atlantic City, that I was approached by a consultant seeking candidates
31 for the superintendency in Orange County, Florida. That conversation led to
32 the case study which we are presenting today.

33 We believe that the Orange County Public School System today is becoming
34 a cohesive, well-managed social system designed to provide the best possible

35 education -- within the resources available -- for the students of the Orange
36 County community. This has not been an accident, but rather a carefully planned
37 priority of the management team responsible for facilitating the work necessary
38 to fulfill the educational goals of the system.

39 We have been asked to present a case study which reports on the staff
40 development programs in the Orange County Public Schools. More properly,
41 we will review a series of experiences in organizational change planned to
42 improve the ways in which the school system fulfills its basic mission and goals.

43 In a very clear sense this is a case study of putting sound theory into
44 practice by using organization development as an approach for improving
45 organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

46 Kurt Lewin (1951) long ago theorized that change in a social system must
47 involve a multitude of factors which encompass the entire system. In order
48 to illustrate the process of change, Lewin developed the concept of "force-
49 field analysis." The picture now on the screen shows this process in physical
50 terms. The arrows represent the vectors, or forces, applied to a body in a state
51 of equilibrium. In mathematical terms, the length of the vector is equivalent

52 to the strength of the vector. If the algebraic sum of the vectors is equal, the
53 body will not move. If the strength of the vectors increases (on either side)
54 the balance point will change until the sum of the vectors is equal again. There
55 are two ways of doing this. One approach is to INCREASE one set of vectors;
56 the other is to DECREASE the other set of vectors.

57 The same concept can, as a model, be applied to social systems. We
58 cannot, of course, as in physics, directly and accurately MEASURE the strength
59 of the sets of vectors. Nevertheless, the system will reach a new balance point.
60 However, as Lewin points out, INCREASING one set of vectors without decreasing
61 the other set of vectors will increase the tension and degree of conflict in the
62 organization. Reducing the other set of vectors may reduce the amount of tension.
63 Since increasing the vectors above a certain level may well result in higher
64 tension, greater emotionality, aggression, and lower constructiveness, it is clear
65 that DECREASING the forces against change is preferable to applying greater
66 pressure.

67 In our work in Orange County, Florida we have applied this concept, and
68 we have used staff development as the basic strategy for DECREASING the

69 forces against change.

70 Lewin's theoretical constructs built on the idea of force-fields to describe
71 change as a three-step procedure.

72 The first of the three steps is UNFREEZING which might be accomplished by
73 introducing new information or information which shows discrepancies, a decrease
74 in the strength of current values, attitudes, and behaviors resulting from new
75 experiences or information disconfirming the perception of the organization, the
76 individual, or other subsystems within the organization.

77 The second step is MOVING. That is, the organization or one of its
78 subsystems is moved to a new level. This step usually involves the development
79 of new values, behaviors, or attitudes through internalization, identification,
80 or change in structure. The third step is the change process, REFREEZING,
81 involves stabilizing the change at the new "quasi-stationary equilibrium" through
82 the use of supporting mechanisms, e.g., changes in organizational structure,
83 changes in organizational culture, changes in group norms, or modification of
84 organizational policy structure.

85 Our work in Orange County during the past three years has applied this

86 theory in our efforts to improve the school system. Lewin's theory points out, too,
that the unfreezing process involves very different problems in different situations.
87 Chris Argyris (1971) expanded on Lewin's ideas, and he
claims that strong resistance to change comes very often from the managers in
88 the social system -- perhaps even more than other individuals. Argyris points out
89 that many individuals are so "systematically blind" to their own behavior that
90 they are culturally programmed" to behave in ways that considerably reduce
91 the probability of change. Their desire to maintain the "status quo" cannot be
92 significantly affected by increasing the pressure for change. A more effective
93 approach is to ~~reduce the amount and degree of the resistance to change.~~ (Once
94 again, in Orange County we have tried to use staff development programs and
95 activities to reduce resistance to change and improvement.)

96 Now let's pause a moment to review in some detail the context of our
97 work - the Orange County Public School System:

98 [SLIDES ON COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL SYSTEM]

99 During the Spring of 1973 the School Board of Orange County invited me to be
100 a candidate for the Superintendency, and in the weeks of activity which eventually
101 culminated in agreement for me to move from a Georgia Superintendency to
102 Orlando, I attempted, with members of the staff, a broad analysis of the needs,

103 strengths, weaknesses, and general potential of the community and school system.

104 From briefings, observations, and meetings with person in the community

105 and in the school system, it was determined that nearly all the departments of

106 the school system had been functioning relatively separate and independent of

107 each other for several years. Most of the needed services were being delivered,

108 but often in a less than systematic manner. State-imposed requirements were being

109 met, but often more as ends in themselves than as methods to achieve an end.

110 The School Board, seven very distinct personalities, has been torn, for

111 at least three years, by a variety of controversies such as sex education,

112 desegregation, and the forced resignation of the former Superintendent -- a

113 sign of worse crises to follow.

114 A minority of dedicated School Board members had a solid grasp of their

115 role as policy-makers, but others on the Board evidenced an attitude of expecting

116 to be involved on a nearly daily basis with the operation of the school system

117 and its many schools.

118 It was obvious that some rearrangements were needed -- some desperately,

119 others could take time. Immediately, we began a reorganization of systemwide.

120 management as the basic intervention for improving the school system.

121 The efforts to improve the school system since have been sometimes

122 difficult, often rewarding, invariably time-consuming, and even a bit bloody at

123 times, but eminently worthwhile (in my opinion). We have consolidated and

124 streamlined departments, increased and improved services, added schools,

125 gained and lost personnel, and maintained about the same student population.

126 Undergirding all of these efforts has been the planning, design and implementation

127 of a renewal subsystem for the purpose of staff development.

128 We have held retreats, sponsored workshops, attended national conferences,

129 and conferred with national authorities in management and education -- all parts

130 of a basic plan evolved from a combination of sources and aimed at the peculiar

131 needs of Orange County and its school system.

132 Part of the reorganization, accomplished in July and August 1973 was designed

133 to reduce the effects of the provincialism in the school system by

134 importing some organizational cosmopolitans. Through some dismissals and

135 resignations, we were able to shift several persons and to import two

136 key persons -- one, a new Deputy Superintendent for Instruction; and two,

137 an Assistant Superintendent for a newly-created Department of Student Services.

138 In September, 1973, we got the school year successfully underway --

139 including the implementation of a Federal Court order which eliminated the

140 last vestiges of the dual school system. I was then struck with an immediate

141 personal crisis - the need for heart surgery - which took me out of action

142 for nearly six weeks. However, this forced "vacation" proved to have a

143 number of positive elements. I was forced to STOP, to take time to reflect.

144 And as I reflected on all I had learned over a period of about three and a half

145 months of association with the Orange County Public Schools, I came down

146 to a basic objective which has pervaded everything we have tried to do since.

147 This objective was to attempt to utilize organizational development to develop

148 a solid management team relationship with some group in the school system.

149 A cohesive team with a high degree of mutual trust would, I believe, provide

150 a base of power from which to operate in attempts to improve the school system's

151 delivery of education services.

152 A deliberate risk was run by eliminating the School Board from the team

153 development because there seemed to be difficulties there which dramatically

154 manifested themselves later. The principals were eliminated from primary
155 consideration since they were functioning with reasonable adequacy and relative
156 autonomy. We opted for a small group of system-wide administrators and
157 created what we call the Cabinet -- a top-level decision making group com-
158 posed of the Superintendent, the then three Deputy Superintendents, and the
159 Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

160 This group quickly developed a high degree of mutual trust and became a
161 cohesive, functional unit, and a dynamic force within the school system.

162 Because of several years the school system had been relatively isolated from
163 the rest of the world, in part by design of previous Superintendents, we continued
164 to import organizational cosmopolitans, but only enough to make a good mix
165 between them and the local educators already invested in and dedicated to the
166 Orange County Public Schools.

167 Through the efforts of the cabinet, and through some of the cosmopolitans,
168 the school system began to shake loose some of its provincial and parochial
169 ideas and attitudes. The basic strategy for this was based on staff development
170 activities.

171 We began to expand the perspective of some of the locals by sending
172 teams -- never individuals -- to national conferences, seminars, and leadership
173 workshops, presented by the National Academy of School Executives, the
174 National Association of Secondary School Principals, and National Association
175 of Elementary Principals, the American Management Association, and the
176 National School Public Relations Association.

177 We used these activities to explore means for improving the education of
178 students. We began researching and planning a quinquennial schedule for the
179 secondary schools. We planned and organized expansion of individualized
180 instruction in the elementary schools. We explored and implemented ways to get
181 the community involved in the educational process. And, we established the
182 necessary policy base for improved management by undertaking the writing of a
183 truly comprehensive policy manual for the school system. The School Board
184 and staff worked for months on the codification of a comprehensive set of policies
185 that have continually proved their worth in the day-to-day operation of the schools
186 and various departments. Policies were reviewed and approved by the School
187 Board after being written by a variety of people directly involved in the specific

188 topics. The utilization of the policy manual has had the desired effect of
189 enhancing the autonomous leadership of middle management while simultaneously
190 evoking a sense of system and cohesion throughout the entire organization.

191 Through all these expanding activities, certain members of the School
192 Board began apparently to feel threatened by the Superintendent's cabinet and
193 by the direction in which the school system seemed to be moving. Program
194 recommendations sometimes took two and three Board meetings to be adopted
195 and some never got approved. Proposed personnel assignments were attacked
196 for no apparent reason, and innuendos flew at nearly every encounter between
197 the staff and these particular members of the School Board. In spite of these
198 developments, however, the cabinet's influence was expanded as it stretched to
199 the Superintendent's total staff, composed of the cabinet, the Associate and
200 Assistant Superintendents, and a small cadre of specialists attached directly
201 to the Superintendent's office.

202 Through two needs assessment retreats in August, 1974 -- one for all the
203 principals and one for the systemwide mid-managers -- the cabinet and staff
204 were able to begin the process of establishing a team management concept

205 throughout the entire system. Valuable information was secured at these conferences
206 from which programatic improvements were designed and on the basis of which
207 staff development activities were planned.

208 These two-day retreats, funded with staff development money, and held
209 at a resort hotel on the Gulf coast, were unprecedented in the school system's
210 history. This was more than just asking principals and other administrators to
211 a resort hotel for a pleasant stay (although it was pleasant) and asking them what
212 was wrong with the school system. Within weeks after their return and the open-
213 ing of another school year, these mid-managers were able to see evidence (in
214 terms of programs, projects and changed organizational practice) that their
215 suggestions were being implemented within the limitations of time, money,
216 personnel and energy. The team concept of management was beginning to
217 touch these principals and mid-managers to help them feel a part of the total
218 school system.

219 But, before you begin to think we were recreating Camelot let me illustrate
220 how very badly threatened a majority of the School Board felt. A majority of the
221 School Board, without warning in a Board meeting one evening, asked the

222 Superintendent and the entire cabinet to resign. Upon our individual and
223 collective refusal, certain members of the School Board began a series of
224 extra-legal efforts to fire the Superintendent. All this was done in the glare
225 of public attention provided by television coverage of all School Board
226 meetings, and apparently the community came to feel that the entire top
227 management cadre of the school system could not be as rotten as the Board
228 majority claimed. The public outcry against their actions was overwhelming.
229 An election intervened and all three of the Board members running for reelection
230 were defeated...thus providing a new majority of policy makers and bringing an
231 era of comparative rationality and calm to the school system.

232 Prior to and during this time, it became apparent that more wide-ranging
233 reorganization was needed. The resignation of the Deputy Superintendent during the
234 hassle with the School Board provided opportunity for basic reorganization of the
235 school system into two distinct divisions - Instruction and Support Services.
236 Formal arrangements were restructured, services and departments were stream-
237 lined, and forty percent of the principals were transferred, (not without pro-
238 test) to allow for better utilization of talent, experience and personal motivation.

239 (I wish to stress that these transfers were unanimously endorsed by cabinet
240 members being recommended for the School Board).

241 One of the major provisions of this reorganization was to establish and staff
242 a department to facilitate long-range planning and staff development. The
243 director of that department, Dr. Steve Jamba, will provide additional details
244 in a few moments.

245 The rationale for this major reorganization was simply to arrange the school
246 system's management team so as to focus more directly on the clients of the
247 school system: the students. This new organization could not be an end in
248 itself, but had to be designed as a flexible, ongoing means by which could be
249 accomplished the basic mission of the school system: i.e., To improve
250 instructional programs for students.

251 The students are the focus of our entire organization. The Division of
252 Instruction, then, is the heart of the organizational chart for that division most
253 directly affects what happens to students day by day by overseeing the design and
254 implementation of instructional improvement.

255 The Division of Support Services has the responsibility of facilitating what

256 happens in the schools through business services, transportation, facilities
257 services, food services, personnel services, institutional research, and data
258 processing services.

259 The cadre of specialists linked directly to the Superintendent's office
260 includes the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, three ombudsmen
261 who work primarily with principals and parents under the direction of the
262 Administrative Assistant, a Public Information Officer, and a Specialist in
263 Administrative Services, who provides services for School Board members
264 and maintains all School Board records. Additionally, the law firm which
265 serves as attorneys to the School Board works directly with the Superintendent,
266 although any cabinet officer has immediate access to the attorneys.

267 Care was taken to stress that this restructuring of the Administrative team
268 was an effort at formal organization which should be considered dynamic, not
269 static. I quote from the statement of rationale published with the organizational
270 charts adopted by the School Board to implement the new arrangements:

271 "This entire organizational arrangement should be viewed
272 from the perspective of an ongoing development of the Orange County
Public Schools as an organization. Organization development rests

273 on three basic propositions: the first is an evolutionary hypothesis
274 that an organizational form most appropriate to the fulfilling of the
275 mission assigned an institution must occur even in ways which
276 include the rebuilding and/or revitalization of organizations; the
277 second is that the most viable way to improve organizations is
278 to change the systems or arrangements within which people work
279 and live, so that beliefs, values, and accepted forms of inter-
280 action and relating are improved; thirdly, a greater awareness must
281 be generated by the people in the organization of the collective
282 responsibility they have for the fulfillment of the basic mission of
283 the organization."

284 As we have gone through another school year and more than halfway into
285 a third, minor and major changes in organizational arrangements have been
286 made and will continue to be made as we find from experience better ways to
287 facilitate the delivery of educational services.

288 As an example, we recently shifted a personnel administrator out of the
289 personnel department, and made him a full-time labor negotiator directly assigned

290 to the office of the Superintendent directly. This was done to make an obvious
291 difference between services of the personnel department and the stresses of the
292 bargaining process.

293 The major changes were made in the school system to break people out
294 of molds, to shake up their ideas, and to help them adapt to the needs of the
295 1970s. You remember I mentioned that teams of people were attending seminars
296 and conferences on various topics and issues.. As the teams returned from those
297 meetings we evaluated the resources we had witnessed and assessed their value for
298 our system. We began importing them into our system to work with all our
299 management people.

300 Let me add paranthetically how disappointing it is that some of our more
301 traditional resources that should be of help to us -- the universities and
302 departments of educational administration -- in many cases just didn't have a
303 contemporary grasp of school system needs.

304 One example of our practice of testing experiences with small teams and
305 then importing them for our own benefit was in our preparation for collective
306 bargaining. In December, 1973 a team of Board and Cabinet members attended

307 a NASE seminar on collective bargaining. It proved so useful that we imported
308 the NASE faculty to Orlando for two weekend sessions with all our principals,
309 selected systemwide managers, and all School Board members.

310 The NASE team hit our people with some real shockers. They told them
311 that the paternalism some of them were practicing with teachers was going out
312 the window.

313 They also shook loose more of the parochialism held onto by some of the
314 principals by telling them in authoritative ways that "problems you will face
315 under collective bargaining are the same as those facing principals in Michigan,
316 Illinois, California, and New York." This was some more unfreezing and it
317 in some cases was painful. These experiences did, however, give us excellent
318 preparation for administering the collective bargaining law passed by the Florida
319 Legislature in 1974.

320 Following the success of this seminar, we began in earnest to consider ways
321 to establish a definite management system within our school system. We tested
322 other national resources such as the American Management Association and found
323 them useful. We imported them for the benefit of the entire system. As we worked
through these experiences we

324 began to work towards the development of a management by objectives format for
325 our schools. We chose to begin by the development of a performance based
326 evaluation system for all management personnel. Again, using a sound
327 theoretical base, we invited an interventionist in the person of Dr. George
328 Redfern to work as consultant with 18 representative managers from throughout
329 the school system. This team worked with Dr. Redfern over a period of months
330 during 1974 and early 1975 to design an evaluation system which we have dubbed
331 "Evaluation by Objectives (EBO)". The system is tailored directly to the needs
332 of our school system. It is the product of the work of our own people with Dr.
333 Redfern serving as a change agent who evoked from the group the outline and details
334 of the evaluation system. With this work completed, we felt we were
335 ready for a significant next step in the development of a management by objectives
336 program in the school system. [SLIDES ON EVALUATION SYSTEM]

337 We brought a NASE team in again, and this time we had all the administrators
338 (assistant principals, principals, everybody) in the entire school system in
339 one conference on management by objectives. We hit everyone with the same
340 information at the same time so that common understandings could serve as the

341 basis of the management system. This NASE seminar also utilized a practice
342 we feel is very helpful in that we held the seminar not in the school system, but in
343 the facilities of the Orlando Naval Training Center (including the Officer's Mess for
344 meals and attitude adjustment hours). We have used a variety of community facilities
345 in similar fashion to gain the dual benefit of a "halo effect" for the site and
346 facilities, along with wider community knowledge of the work and efforts
347 ongoing in the school system.

348 Prior to the NASE MBO seminar, we had already held a successful three-day
349 session on improvement of managerial performance conducted by an American
350 Management Association team for the Superintendent's staff. This later proved
351 valuable in that these people provided real leadership in involving the entire
352 management cadre in the same types of experiences.

353 Following the NASE experience, in mid-summer 1975 we held another retreat --
354 this time with all principals, assistant principals, mid-managers, and the
355 Superintendent's staff. For three days and two nights we met at Innisbrook
356 Conference Center at Tarpon Springs, Florida to work out the problems of management
357 and evaluation by objectives for ourselves with our own internal resources.

358 We have come to realize that any development of this kind is going to take
359 time -- perhaps four or five years even to be fully and effectively operational.
360 Part of the learning has been the realization by some of our people that all these
361 activities were NOT leading up to an arbitrary announcement by the Superintendent.
362 "This is the precise system we will follow. Here are the specific goals for each
363 school and department."

364 Due in large measure to the organizational "folklore" based on past
365 experiences, some of our people have continued to expect such arbitrary
366 announcements and actions. This is changing -- slowly with a few, more quickly
367 with the majority, and most importantly, it is true and real movement toward
368 improvement in the organization. We are convinced that in order for all of these
369 people to be firmly committed to the success of the system they need to be the
370 architects of their own plans. They must be the ones to develop the system --
371 within commonly agreed upon guidelines -- for their own school or department.
372 There must be a personal investment and commitment to the effort by each
373 individual.

374 And, so that the principals will know that top management is clearly committed

375 to the management by objectives thrust, we are incorporating it at the top first.

376 They are seeing us struggle and succeed at this project before they completely

377 implement it themselves.

378 We have been refining objectives and goals and working toward their fulfillment

379 since last summer's planning retreat. By now everyone at the top level of management

380 is committed to a set of relatively clear objectives, and it's heartening to see how

381 the process has taken hold. Our mid-management team members are finding that their

382 judgments are valued and that they are trusted to make their own decisions based

383 on policy guidelines, and the lessons learned in seminars and group experiences.

384 We are beginning to shape our school system into a manageable, cohesive

385 unit to move together towards our basic goals, instructional improvement, more effective

386 achievement on the part of students, and cost effectiveness. We're trying to do

387 it with some strategies that are made possible by a management team. We have

388 tried to base our efforts on sound theory, and we believe we are beginning to see the

389 fruits of our labor.

390 [Oral Presentations by Drs. Zenke and Jamba]

391 (Slides illustrating Staff Development Master Plan for Teachers in Orange County)