

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 241 465

SP 023 695

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TITLE A Proposal to Establish Demonstration Schools and the Identification, Training and Utilization of Master/Mentor and Master Teacher: A Joint School District and University of Louisville Project.
INSTITUTION Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Ky.; Louisville Univ., Ky.
PUB DATE 2 Feb 84
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (36th, San Antonio, TX, February 1-4, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Ladders; *Demonstration Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Criteria; Inservice Teacher Education; *Master Teachers; Mentors; *Professional Recognition; Program Development; Program Implementation; *Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Demonstration Schools; Kentucky

ABSTRACT

Addressing professional and popular concern about identifying and adequately rewarding excellent teachers, the authors describe a proposal for selecting master/mentor teachers and utilizing them in demonstration schools. There are six specific elements that should make any master teacher proposal realistic and educationally and economically defensible: (1) initial planning; (2) indepth preparation and training; (3) documentation of skills as a basis for ultimate selection; (4) significant school district support; (5) major inservice focus; and (6) constant evaluation. A proposal which includes those characteristics is aimed at improving the quality of teaching as well as rewarding excellence in teaching beyond what currently exists. The Kentucky plan, like those in North Carolina and Tennessee, includes a career ladder. However, it differs from other plans in that it also incorporates the notion of demonstration schools and classrooms, staffed by master teachers who take major responsibility for the inservice education of other teachers in the school district. In this description of the proposal, discussion centers on the major elements of the plan--demonstration schools; and a career ladder involving master/mentor, master teacher, and master teacher candidate roles; internships; criteria for selection; and continued evaluation. Included with the proposal are 45 criteria for master and master/mentor teacher selection; 2 figures depicting program progression; and a table of 14 roles and functions of master and master/mentor teachers. (JMK)

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ED241465

A Proposal to Establish Demonstration Schools
and the Identification, Training and Utilization
of Master/Mentor and Master Teacher:

A Joint School District and University of Louisville Project

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Paper presented at the AACTE Annual Meeting
at San Antonio, Texas, February 2, 1984

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In recent months, much has been written in both the popular press and in professional journals about proposals to enhance the quality of education through identifying and differentially rewarding master teachers (Bloom, 1982; Southern Regional Education Board, 1982; Stedman, 1983; Parish, 1983; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Most of the writers have stressed the need to make teaching more rewarding so that the occupation can both attract and hold a higher number of outstanding teachers.

Proposals that include differential salaries for teachers lead directly to discussions of the benefits and disadvantages of providing merit pay for teachers. Such concerns are not new. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, discussion concerning merit pay for teachers was quite prevalent, and at that time, such plans were rejected by both the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association (Wertsch, 1983). One major difference between the earlier discussions and the present thrust appears to be that the concept of "master teacher". Another difference is the fact that various merit plans being proposed today have become politically important at the very highest state and national levels, with non-educators attracting national attention and taking the lead in this area. Whereas in the 1950's, the discussion of merit plans was held primarily within the education profession and seemed to be strictly a local concern.

Part of the genesis for rediscovering merit plans today is embedded in the fact that the expectations for schooling are changing as we move economically, socially, and even culturally into

an information-based society. The emerging economic system relies more on intellectual development and higher order thinking skills for workers than did the old economic system. State and national leaders have seen a direct relationship between schooling and the emerging changes in the economic order. State leaders in particular, who want to position their states in the new order, are leading the thrust toward educational change by proposing additional funding for merit pay plans.

A major issue in the earlier merit plans was concern about objective identification of effective teachers. Teachers and other educators were very concerned that those identified as meritorious might not in reality be the most effective teachers. Many feared that other, more personal and less objective criteria would be used to determine merit. Several current proposals have recognized the importance of this concern and have addressed it in a variety of ways. For example, plans in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina involve an elaborate training program designed to develop skills for differential roles open to career classroom teachers (ASCD, 1983). In Tennessee, the master teacher plan calls for a career ladder that involves differential salaries for those teachers identified as professional, senior or master by a state rather than a local committee (Alexander, 1983). These proposals, combined with the research on effective teaching (Rosenshine and Furst, 1971; Feinman, 1981, Gage, 1977; Medley, 1977, 1978; Kapel and Kapel, 1982) and on effective schools (Brookover, 1977, 1979; Brookover et al., 1982; Lezotte, 1980; Miller, 1982; Benningfield &

Walker, 1980), hold promise that we now have more capability to objectively identify, develop, and reward master teachers.

A major issue that the education profession must deal with in the 1980's is how not to make the same mistakes that were made in the proposals of the 1950's; that is, master teachers must not become identified by a pay differential only. There needs to be commitment on the part of school districts that:

1. the identification of master teachers is objective, accurate, and defensible;
2. master teachers are not isolated from other teachers;
3. the skills of master teachers be utilized by other teachers through inservice;
4. the master teacher designation continue to reflect maintenance of effectiveness; and
5. master teachers become instructional leaders within their schools, working with other teachers in modeling effective teaching strategies and high professional ethics.

These characteristics emerged from a year-long discussion among university and school system educators which explored a wide range of concerns related to the identification and development of master teachers. The proposal outlined below describes a plan aimed at improving the quality of teaching as well as rewarding excellence in teaching beyond what currently exists. The plan, like those in North Carolina and Tennessee, includes a career ladder. However, it differs from other plans in that it also incorporates the notion of demonstration schools and classrooms, staffed by master teachers who



would take major responsibilities for the inservice education of other teachers in the school district. In the sections that follow, discussion centers on the major elements of the plan, including demonstration schools, a career ladder involving master/mentor, master teacher, and master teacher candidate roles, internships, criteria for selection, and continued evaluation.

Demonstration Schools and Master/Mentor Teachers

In order to provide initial as well as continual training for master teachers, school districts, particularly large urban districts, should develop demonstration schools, staffed by a number of outstanding teachers. The major foci of such schools should be development, inservice, and generalizability to the entire school district. Educators and other interested parties should be able to observe the very best of instruction and curriculum in these schools

The schools would not be laboratory schools, nor would the student population be recruited according to some specialized criteria. Rather, the demonstration schools should be as close to "regular" schools as possible with the same basic educational mission. The schools would, however, have additional training functions.

The faculty of the demonstration schools would include a number of outstanding teachers, designated as master/mentor teachers (identified in this proposal as MM teachers). These teachers would have regular classroom assignments and would function as mentors to other teachers. Like a surgeon who has perfected a technique in the operating room, teachers assigned to a mentor would learn new

teaching techniques and curricular approaches from the mentor. In addition, the master/mentor teachers would provide inservice programs to teachers in other schools.

The master/mentor teachers must be selected on the basis that each has demonstrated his or her expertise as an effective teacher in the classroom. Such a teacher should also be competent in demonstrating his or her expertise to other teachers. These teachers should also demonstrate leadership ability, the ability to work with other teachers, and be committed to and show potential for engaging in educational research. Other teachers assigned to the schools to work with and learn from the master/mentor teachers on a temporary basis would be expected to emulate the master/mentor teachers and modify their teaching in their own schools based on what was learned under the mentor.

Such a demonstration school could also be utilized by schools of education. Colleges and universities could work closely with the master/mentor teachers in the development of the demonstration schools and in supporting the continuation of the high level of productivity that would be represented in such schools. In addition, the forging of close relationships between higher education and the demonstration schools would have significant inservice and research potential for both organizations.¹

¹ University/school district team teaching, faculty exchanges, teaching method courses in the schools (e.g. demonstrating the teaching of children's literature to actual children in a regular classroom setting), basic, applied and action research, etc. are possible outcomes of a close and strong higher education/school district relationship.

Industry and business leaders could be tied very closely into the development of demonstration schools through funding and service on advisory boards. In addition, such relationships would illustrate that the educational structure has a commitment to working closely with other elements of the society as society moves into an information-based economic and social system.

A major participant in the demonstration schools would be the Master Teacher Candidate. It is through these schools that the Master Teacher Candidates (designated in this paper as MTC) would not only "hone" their skills to higher levels, but that such teachers could develop even newer or unique skills. After completing their training, meeting rigorous criteria for selection, and undergoing extensive observations, the master teacher candidate may be given (earned) Master Teacher status.

The Master/Mentor teachers are the creme de la creme of the Master Teachers who exist in a school district. Master/Mentor teachers would not only have teaching obligations to the school that they are assigned to on a permanent basis, but they would also have an extensive inservice district-wide obligation. The Master Teachers, on the other hand, have a more limited and targeted inservice obligation. The Master Teacher has a leadership role within a specific school building. Each Master Teacher will work closely with other teachers within his or her school building, and with the school building principal, as an educational leader and model for excellence in teaching. For the above reasons, we are suggesting that a Master/Mentor teacher and a Master Teacher receive

additional compensation - - with the Master/Mentor teacher receiving more money than the Master Teacher because of additional obligations. The two positions provide a career ladder for the classroom teacher. That is, good teachers may wish to develop their skills to the point that they could earn the title of either Master/Mentor or Master teacher. This could provide long-range career goals for teachers and, possibly, if the salaries and statuses are significantly different (which we strongly recommend) from the salary schedule of non-designated teachers, it would then make teaching more attractive to the gifted and talented young people who are electing not to go into teaching. We are suggesting that the Master/Mentor teacher earn at least a salary competitive to engineers in the American society. The establishment of demonstration schools and the creation of the two new teacher classifications (Master/Mentor, Master) should provide rewarding environments and career opportunities for highly skilled and qualified individuals who wish to remain in teaching and in the classroom.

Master Teachers and Master Teacher Candidates

We posit that the Master Teacher designation be earned through the demonstration of high levels of teaching skills and teacher effectiveness. We are proposing that before a person can be called a Master Teacher, the individual must first be classified as a Master Teacher Candidate, and after a period of time (an internship of approximately sixteen weeks), the candidate earns the designation: Master Teacher. During the internship, the Master

Teacher Candidate would spend time at a demonstration school (ranging from a few days to twelve [12] weeks) based on his or her needs in a particular area(s). The amount of time the Master Teacher Candidate spends at the demonstration school, or for that matter during the internship, is a function of the skills the teacher possesses at the time that he/she has been so identified. Figure 1 illustrates the flow from initial Master Teacher Candidate designation to actual Master Teacher status. Note that the Master Teacher Candidate is constantly being observed and supervised closely by Master/Mentor teachers, as well as educational leaders in the school district, school building, and from the university.

Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here

Figure 2 illustrates the overall relationship between the demonstration school and the various schools that assign Master Teacher Candidates during the internship. The authors are suggesting that the home school principal, in consultation with staff, identifies perspective Master Teachers. It should be noted that we are also suggesting that a verifiable system of continuous growth and evaluation based on performance in the classroom will be required for not only the Master Teachers but also for the Master/Mentor teachers. Continual growth and evaluation will be required in order for individuals in both groups to retain their

classification. This is consistent with other professions that require on-going inservicing, as well as periodic reaffirmation of skills. In many other professions, the market place is the source for the confirmation of skills. Unfortunately, or fortunately, schools are in a different situation. In most cases, parents have little option in placing their children in a particular school (private schools notwithstanding). Therefore, evaluation on a continual basis is necessary to ensure the integrity of the program.

One other point should be noted. Participants and observers in the demonstration schools need not necessarily be restricted only to Master Teacher Candidates. All teachers should be given the opportunity to spend time in the demonstration schools observing Master/Mentor teachers. Master teacher candidates assigned to the demonstration schools could form teaching teams with their Master/Mentor teachers. Therefore, students attending demonstration schools would have Master/Mentors as their assigned teachers, and in addition, they would benefit from teaching teams. Thus, it is quite possible that demonstration schools would ultimately function as magnets, not based on unique curricula, but rather based on the fact that these schools provide the finest of instruction and learning available anywhere. Such a teaching/learning environment would attract students back into schools (and communities) that would not necessarily be attractive under present conditions.

Insert Table 1 about here

A list of 45 different criteria by which a Master/Mentor and peers Master Teacher Candidate is to be identified is found in Table 1. This list includes skills in cognitive and affective skills areas. The items on the list are not placed in priority order. Rather, these should be used to illustrate the fact that Master/Mentor and Master Teacher Candidates are clearly unique individuals who possess skills far and above those of average, or even competent, teachers. For both the Master/Mentors and Master Teachers will have obligations not only in the classroom to their students, but also inservice and leadership obligations beyond what is normally found in classrooms. Most of the criteria are measureable. However, we recognize that some may be more subjective in their structure. There will be a need to set criteria levels for each of the items found on the list in order for the Master/Mentor and Master Teacher Candidates to know what are acceptable levels of attainment. For example, commitment to education - - this could be demonstrated through attendance and participation at national, state and local professional conferences, participation outside of the school in education-related activities, participation on a voluntary basis in inservice education, obtaining advanced degrees, relating and functioning at a high professional level with peers, contributing to professional journals, etc.

The role and function of the Master/Mentor and Master Teacher can be seen in Table 2. It is evident that there is a high degree of similarity between the Master/Mentor and Master Teacher in terms of expectation. However, it is the scope of the role that each plays that is different. Again, the Master/Mentor teacher has a

district-wide function whereas the Master Teacher has a building-wide function. Regardless, the Master/Mentor and Master Teacher must demonstrate excellence in classroom teaching.

Insert Table 2 about here

In order to develop an integrated approach to the implementation of the proposal, the authors are suggesting a three-step approach. Step 1 is Planning; Step 2 is for partial implementation; and Step 3 is for full implementation. In Step 1, the authors are suggesting the formation of several planning committees made up of administrators, classroom teachers, professional teacher organization representatives, and university professors. These various planning committees would have specific functions such as: (1) developing programs for the inservice needs of Master/Mentor teachers (instructional; skill development in working with Master Teachers); (2) identifying and selecting demonstration schools; (3) curriculum development; (4) meeting organizational, management, and administrative changes that would occur within each school that had been designated a demonstration school; (5) supporting staff changes and requirements (within the demonstration school, within the schools where Master Teachers are assigned); (6) developing inservice delivery systems (within each demonstration school); (7) developing inservice delivery systems that are district-wide; (8)

the development of selection criteria for Master/Mentor and Master Teacher Candidates (see suggested Criteria for Selection, Table 1); (9) forming a special administration committee to provide inservice support for administrators of sending schools; (10) evaluation (all phases of the program will be continuously evaluated by internal and external evaluators); (11) establishing a Master Teacher Academy (similar to the administrator academies that are found in many large school districts in the United States).

In addition to the above thrusts of the various planning committees in Step 1, we are suggesting that a Conference of Master Teachers (possibly national in scope) be designed and held. The conference would serve as a resource to share ideas, new and old methodologies, and current research on classroom instruction that have been found to be effective in the classroom. We are suggesting that this conference be held annually in order to update the skills of Master/Mentor and Master Teacher. Also, we are suggesting that a network be developed throughout the United States of those teachers so designated as Master Teachers. This network would function to disseminate current and unique curricular programs, methodologies, and activities.

Much of Step 1 planning will be implemented in Step 2. Master/Mentor teachers will undergo training during this period. Also in Step 2, there will be the identification of Master Teacher Candidates and their assignment to demonstration schools for inservice education. Again, it should be noted that the Master Teacher Candidates are not the only teachers who might be assigned

to the demonstration schools. It would be hoped that all teachers would be interested in spending some time in demonstration schools.

Step 3 would be the phase where the Master Teacher Candidate would then return to the home school to complete his/her internship and then begin functioning as a Master Teacher, as described in the previous sections of this paper. It is in Step 3 that there would be a high level of generalizability to the school district (see Figure 2). The authors envision that within four years, a school district could move from Step 1 through Step 3. Of course, the speed in which this proposal is to be implemented would be a function of the committee of the school district to the plan, and the amount of funds available to implement such a plan. In addition, it should be noted that the number of teachers involved will also be restricted as a result of the commitment that the school district has in developing Master/Mentor and Master Teacher positions.

There are six specific elements that should make any master teacher proposal realistic and educationally and economically defensible. They are: initial planning; in-depth preparation and training; documentation of skills as the basis for ultimate selection; significant school district support; major inservice focus; and constant evaluations. These are the hallmarks of this proposal too.

The proposed plan that the authors are espousing is based on several specific constructs. They are (1) the school district is willing to commit itself to identifying teachers who have

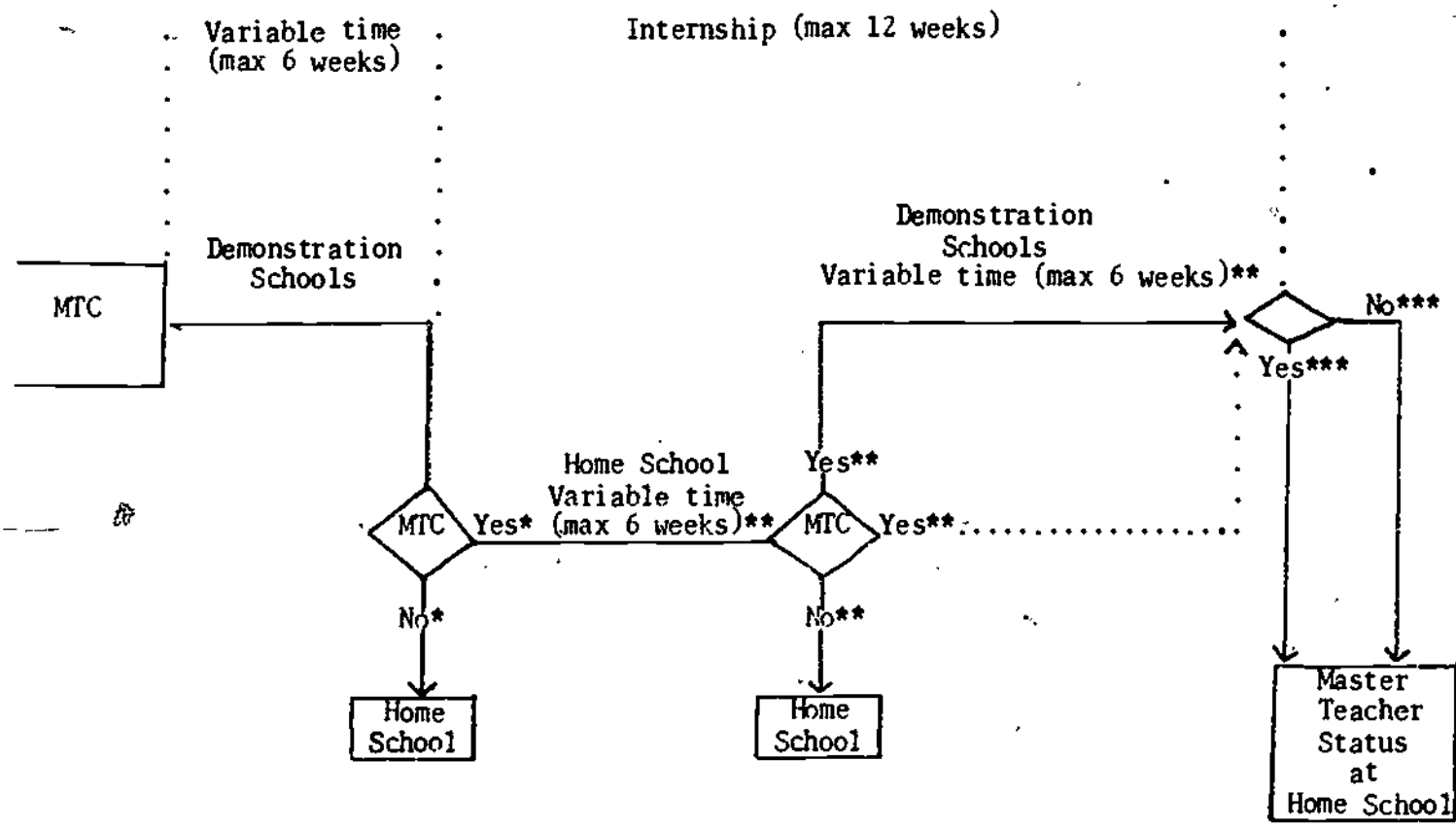
demonstrated excellence in the classrooms, and that these teachers will become educational leaders within the school districts and/or within individual buildings; (2) that all teachers will be going through continual evaluation and continual inservicing - - this includes those who have been designated as Master/Mentors or Master Teachers; (3) the two designations are not just salary categories or classifications. Rather, the Master Teacher and Master/Mentor teachers have very specific functions beyond the classrooms. However, the main thrust of both the Master/Mentor and Master Teacher is still the classroom. Their world is still centered around children; (4) the proposal clearly provides a career ladder for teachers to remain in the classroom and to feel productive, to be recognized, and to be rewarded; (5) this proposal is only as strong as the school district's willingness to commit time and resources to constantly evaluate the program (as well as participants), in terms of direct and specific educational productivity; and (6) productivity is to be translated into effective teachers and effective schools that prepare children to live productive and happy lives in a changing and complex economic and social system.

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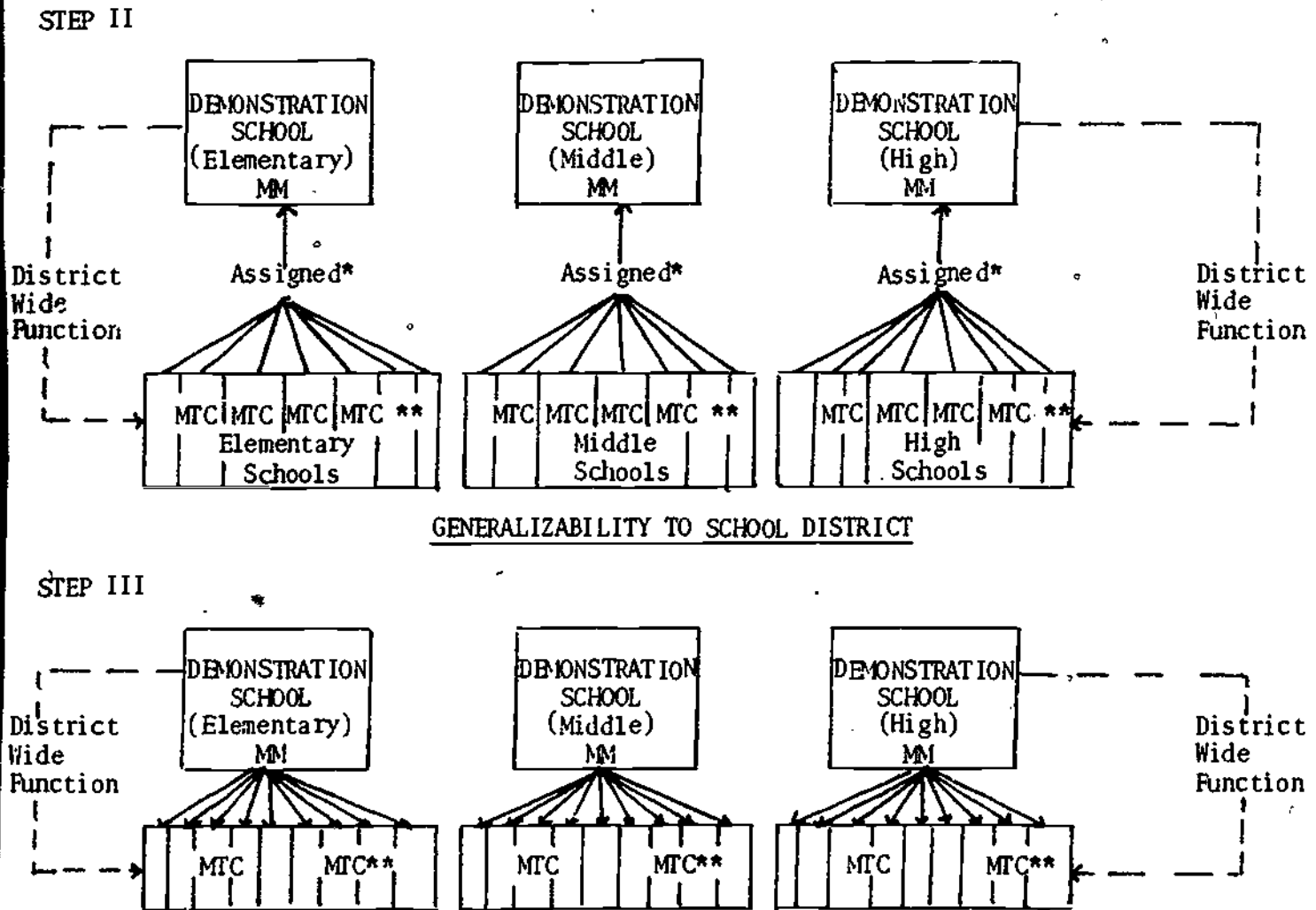
*Group to Make Decisions for Internships:
 Principal of Demonstration School
 Principal of Home School
 M/M Teacher(s)
 University Professor

**Principal of Demonstration School
 Principal of Home School
 M/M Teacher(s), and
 University Professor
 will observe and work with MTC
 in Home School

***Group to Make Decisions on Master Teacher Status:
 Principal of Demonstration Schools
 Principal of Home School
 M/M Teacher(s)
 University Professor

Figure 1

Figure 2: Training of Master Teachers and Others



A verifiable system of continuous growth and evaluation based on performance in the classroom will be required for each MM and MT on a periodic basis in order for them to maintain their designation.

*Home School Principal in consultation with staff will identify prospective Master Teachers. Those identified in consultation with Principal will be assigned to Demonstration Schools for varying lengths of time to work on areas of need. If a M/M teacher in a particular subject area is not available in one of the Demonstration Schools, M/M teachers in other schools will be identified and Master Teacher Candidates assigned to them as required.

*Master Teacher Candidates

Table 1
MM, MTC and Master Teachers

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

1. Demonstrated skills in the classroom
2. Commitment to the classroom
3. Commitment to Education
4. Commitment to children
5. Commitment to in-service education
6. Commitment to professional and personal growth
7. Demonstrated ability for instructional leadership (classroom)
8. Ability to communicate with peers (other classroom teachers)
9. Willingness (ability) to be involved in in-service education under a variety of environments and conditions
10. Able to develop and utilize a variety of support systems
11. Flexible
12. High problem-solving ability
13. Be able to anticipate
14. High content knowledge
15. Be able to analyze
16. High verbal skills (articulate)
17. Able to handle complex situations
18. Able to develop sundry options and alternatives
19. Ability to make appropriate choices among a variety of alternative and options
20. Knowledgeable about changes in methodologies, knows how to use them appropriately (e.g., micro-computers, mastery teaching) in classroom
21. High knowledges of learning theories, Educational Psychology, and knows children
22. Willingness to be involved actively in applied and action research in the classroom and school

23. Willingness to travel (appropriate for M teachers)
24. Demonstrated willingness to exert effort and energy beyond the typical school day
25. Highly creative
26. Independent thinker
27. Process oriented
28. Knowledgeable about the factors effecting education (classroom, non-classroom factors, e.g., political, social, economic, community issues, etc.)
29. Demonstrated use of a variety of teaching techniques in the classroom
30. Knows current literature in his/her field of interests (Elementary Ed., Math Ed., Social Studies Ed., etc.) as well as the broad areas (e.g., effective schools and effective teacher literature)
31. Can use individual and groups (small, large) teaching techniques in the classroom
32. Can be original
33. Is "bright"
34. Can support and re-inforce others
35. Able to develop support systems for teachers
36. Brings out the best in others
37. Has high leadership ability, but can be a part of a group (highly skilled in group dynamics)
38. Is professionally, personally, and psychologically secure with themselves and their abilities
39. Can give objective criticism
40. Can take criticism
41. Willingness to change ideas, ideals, etc., when professionally appropriate
42. Must have a Master's Degree and CEU/PSD/Rank I Credits
43. Have a continuing education plan and has implemented part (or all)
44. Well read professionally and non-professionally
45. Has a history of high student achievement in classes taught

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Table 2

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF MM AND MASTER TEACHERS

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS	TEACHER CATEGORY	
	MM*	MT
1. Demonstration of excellence in classroom teaching	District Wide	Local School
2. In-service instruction (individual, school district-wide)	District Wide	Local School
3. Curriculum development (school building level, district-wide)	District Wide	Local School
4. Development of new teaching techniques and methodologies	District Wide	Local School
5. Active disseminator of excellence in teaching	District Wide	Local School
6. Participate in applied and action research	District Wide	(not required)
7. Function as teacher role models for teachers	District Wide	Local School
8. Function as teacher role models for administrators	District Wide	Local School
9. Provide instructional leadership in assigned school(s)	District Wide	Local School
10. Provide feedback on effective (as well as ineffective) programs	District Wide	Local School
11. Participate in "think-tank" activities on a building level; systems level	District Wide	Local School
12. Function in a Master Teacher team to solve instructional problems in individual settings (e.g., classroom, school) - would work with regular teachers in a joint effort in problem solving	District Wide	Local School
13. Translate theory and research into practice (work closely with University)	District Wide	Local School
14. Work closely with school building principal(s)	District Wide	Local School

*MM teachers have district-wide and building level obligations