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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined the effects of a management/leadership program on school district work culture are presented in this paper. The Pasco County (Florida) school district under study was involved in school restructuring, part of which included participation in a management training program, Managing Productive Programs (MPP). MPP viewed program supervisors as resource managers rather than as traditional resource providers. Two pilot training groups with a total of 50 participants were composed primarily of central office supervisors and directors. The 2-year case study involved observation, interviews with 25 pilot group participants, document analysis, and the administration of two surveys--one to the 25 interviewees and one to 85 teachers and school administrators. Findings indicate that supervisors spent equal amounts of their time working with school agendas and program implementation, department/program-specific development projects, and districtwide initiatives. Virtually all the supervisory activities were tools accounted for in MPP training. A conclusion is that the supervisory transition from "helping" to "leading" behaviors has the potential to facilitate successful school change. Three tables are included. (Contains 16 references.) (LMI)

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AN EMPIRICAL VALIDATION OF A MANAGEMENT CONSTRUCT FOR DISTRICT LEVEL SUPERVISORS

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AN EMPIRICAL VALIDATION OF A MANAGEMENT CONSTRUCT FOR DISTRICT LEVEL SUPERVISORS

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With the rise of school-based decision making and management, and with accountability for student outcomes now clearly located at the school site, new questions are being raised about the function of and necessity for central office supervisors. Some districts are eliminating or reducing central services during these tight budget times, while others are managing to maintain district-level jobs even though they may be difficult to define and hence to justify. How best can district leaders think about central office supervisors now that more is expected of schools, with fewer resources available? And how can supervisors enlarge their role, moving from a helping function to a major leadership role in transforming schools and school districts?

Objectives

The purpose of the study was to determine how supervisors currently manage programs in a district that has been transforming its decision making structures and its work culture to reflect a collaborative ideology; one that is based on partnerships at all levels of supervision and instruction. The study, using the Managing Productive Programs (MPP) construct as its research foundation (Snyder and Giella, 1988), sought to identify ways in which supervisors: 1) work with the schools' agendas; 2) work within and between departments; and 3) facilitate the district's work culture with other district roles groups.

Theoretical Framework

Traditionally, researchers have identified that the central office supervisor suffers from a "backstage" supporting role (Pajak, 1989). Central office supervisors may be the least well understood and most frequently overlooked of

professional roles existing in schools today Wimpleberg (1987). Pajak (1989) notes that both teachers and administrators have been neglected by this existing supervisory support system due to lack of understanding about the role.

In search of clarity about the varying functions of supervisors, an ASCD task force concluded from its research efforts that role definitions for central office supervisors, directors, consultants and counselors are idiosyncratic and non-comparable (Blumberg, 1984). Apparently no job commonalty was found to exist across school districts for supervisors, except for job vagueness and ambiguity since job expectations was seen to be unique to the challenges found in each district. The task force concluded that the role of supervisor was essentially non-researchable. Recently, however, Pajak and Glickman (1989) found from their research that district level supervisors perform critical functions for enhancing teaching and learning system-wide. Until now the roles and functions of central office supervisors have been cloudy at best, and in the absence of clarification, such roles often disappear.

In the past several years two separate research and development efforts have provided fresh perspectives on the vital and changing functions of supervision: (1) Pajak's national study on supervisory proficiencies at all levels of district and school hierarchy (1989), and (2) Snyder and Giella's pilot management training program for central office supervisors and directors (1988) with Fitzgerald's follow-up research study (1991). Both efforts provide important clues as well as conceptual models for understanding essential dimensions of supervision across and within varying role groups and school districts. Now, in times of school district transition, new understandings about supervisory functions will enable those in district leadership roles to design more vital roles for supervisors in district restructuring efforts.

The Pajak project for ASCD sought to determine the common job elements of supervisors as found within various role groups and across many school districts throughout the United States. A combination of literature reviews and national surveys of supervisors at all levels (school-based department heads, team leaders and principals; and central office consultants, supervisors, directors and assistant superintendents) led Pajak and his associates to conclude that 12 central proficiencies are common to all successful supervisors across role groups. The following proficiency areas were identified from their research and are listed in order of their valued importance: community relations, staff development, planning and change, communication, curriculum, instructional program, service to teachers, observation and conferencing, problem solving and decision making, research and program evaluation, motivating and organizing, and personal development.

The second effort, which is the focus of this paper, was targeted at central office supervisors and directors in the Pasco County School District in west central Florida. Believing that the current literatures on supervision fail to describe what now is required of supervisors across central office departments, Assistant Superintendent Giella pressed for a management orientation to supervisors' jobs. As a result of considerable job analysis and a sense of urgency for what schools need to assist in their development, Giella solicited assistance from Snyder (Competency Training for Managing Productive Schools 1988), and together they translated a model of school organization and management, along with a companion training system, into a model/training system designed specifically for those who manage district level programs and services (rather than organizations). The function of supervisors and directors shifts, in this system, from the more traditional being-a-resource/helper orientation to that of leadership in managing resources to meet client needs. The new role definition resulted in a

26 day management training program, called Managing Productive Programs (MPP), and is designed to reflect the changing realities of managing multiple client, interest and support groups.

As of 1992, two pilot groups have completed the training, and have been working with schools, within and among departments, and across the district in bold new ways that are influencing performance programs and services at all levels of the school district. Fitzgerald conducted a comprehensive case study (1991) to examine more closely the current and emerging performance patterns of instructional supervisors and directors in three district office departments. His findings shed light on the ways in which supervisors now are working to stimulate development at all levels of the district. It is our intent in this report to stimulate continued research and development concerning the vital leadership role that central office supervisors and directors play in school accountability and district restructuring contexts.

A Management Orientation

Why Management?

The shift to a management orientation for supervisors seems in keeping with evolving district approaches to total quality management and to human resource development. Many districts today are shifting from inspection and compliance orientations, to enhancing innovations that solve problems and meet student needs for all populations. As a reflection on the changing times, we noticed that many supervisors are becoming increasingly proactive about future directions, while developing numerous pilot programs and new leadership talent.

Organizations throughout society, in addition to schools and districts, are sensing the power of a systems approach to development; they are shifting from a well oiled "machine" image of schools to that of a living, growing and dynamic

system (Snyder and Anderson 1986). The concepts of interdependence and interrelatedness of functions and services tends to stimulate greater energy exchange for producing new and different performance outcomes. Hence, total quality management, a hot topic in management circles throughout society today, builds on an interdependent system of energy for responding more quickly and effectively to client group needs (Garvin 1988). Emerging values for enhancing responsiveness to "client group" leads naturally to common goal orientations (rather than fragmentation), to structures for working together within, across and outside units (rather than isolation of role groups and units), and to building work cultures of pride, success and celebration (rather than repression, neglect and even failure).

To reinvent the schooling process, schools and districts are likely to focus more intently on common goals that relate to specific student outcomes, with all role groups and organizational units playing key interdependent functions. A district culture of hope and optimism is likely to replace compliance patterns as personnel from all role groups work together to invent new futures. By controlling for shared goal orientations, and empowering groups to link with resources across districts, new capacities for transforming the success patterns of students will naturally evolve.

Within this context of inventing new schooling structures, programs and services, and within dynamic systems of interdependency, central office supervisors and directors can play a major leadership and development function. Moving from a "helping" to a "managing development" orientation for supervisors may reflect a natural response to the increasing complexities of schooling.

Managing Central Office Programs and Services

Johnson and Johnson (1987) argue that supervisors need to become the managers of the support system, rather than the support system itself. In Pasco

County the new job dimensions for central office supervisors, identified in the MPP construct are designed to develop greater leadership capacities and more of a proactive orientation. Four central functions of the management model include: 1) program/department goal setting and planning, 2) staff development and training, 3) program or services development, and 4) program/department assessment. Ten job dimensions are identified within the four functions, each being viewed as interdependent with all others:

Planning

1. District and department goal setting
2. Work organization
3. Performance planning

Staff Development

4. Staff development design and training
5. Clinical supervision design and training
6. Work group and leader development

Program Development

7. Designing and managing an instructional program
8. Resource development and management

Assessment

9. Quality control
10. Assessing achievement

The MPP management model is based on a systems approach to organizational development (the school district), and is derived from over 400 research studies found in the literatures of business and industry, the social and behavioral sciences, and schooling. The training design effort was guided by the management concepts of cooperative goal setting, planning and work interdependence; developing knowledge, skills and programs; and assessing

productivity and outcomes. In a sense, what supervisors are managing, in this new view, is a collaborative work culture based on common visions and goals, with ten dimensions of work activity. Each of the four basic functions is directed toward enhancing human performance, resources, group performance and program outcomes, so that programs and services will become increasingly responsive to client group needs (schools, classrooms, student, parents, and other service departments).

MPP training included 27 days of professional enhancement through workshops that were designed around a competency development model that includes six dimensions: readiness activity, concepts, demonstration, practice, feedback and transfer (Snyder 1988). Each of the ten job competencies in the model were the focus of workshops, which were from one to seven days in duration. Each competency addressed a specific knowledge base, process tools and systems design components. The intended outcome of training was to develop high performing district leaders who involve others and who also work together to reshape and refine school programs and services.

Three objectives guided MPP training development efforts in Pasco County for supervisors and directors: 1) to enhance differing school improvement and restructuring agendas, 2) to enhance instructional program or service responsiveness to client needs (working within and across departments), and 3) to enhance accomplishment of the school district's agenda (leading and working on task forces across the district). The two pilot training groups included almost all central office supervisors and directors (N = 50): viz: those working in curriculum, special education, finance, media, personnel, data processing, and research and evaluation.

Informal Observations

Following training we noticed that supervisors were beginning to work differently within and across departments, in new configurations of collaborative work. In addition, many supervisors, even crossing department lines, were forming networks of teachers and principals to develop new programs and services, and were training teachers to serve as school-based trainers. We sensed that not only did a management orientation provide clarity about tasks and functions in development efforts, but new collaborative patterns began to emerge that facilitated growth with school agendas, work within and across departments, and district-wide development efforts. Central office supervisors appeared to be more proactive about addressing challenges and working with a variety of teachers, principals, and other supervisors and directors to tackle a wide variety of problems.

Networks of teacher leaders began to emerge as resources for district program design efforts. District-wide task forces learned together as they tackled outdated programs and structures, and raised new issues and challenges. New energy was emerging throughout the district as different role groups became involved in turning programs and practices seemingly upside down. We began to sense that a management orientation to the job of supervisor was unleashing new forms of leadership talent that exceeded job descriptions. Fresh cooperative perspectives began to emerge about facilitating the development of projects through others, as well as managing routine programs.

With fresh concepts and skills to help them manage new programs and pilots across the district, it seemed that over time program and services managers seemed better able to work with varying school agendas, to enhance district wide restructuring efforts, and to stimulate program and services productivity. We sensed that a management orientation might enable other

districts as well, to make productive use of supervisors as leaders in district restructuring activities. When supervisors can facilitate shared goal setting, control for outcomes, and empower groups to link with resources across schools, districts and regions, restructuring efforts have a greater chance of influencing the performance of many role groups who are accountable for student success.

Perceiving that a more proactive posture was needed by supervisors, along with a management orientation to development and the skills needed to manage collaborative activity, a case study was launched to learn through more systematic inquiry what work patterns were emerging in the lives of those instructional supervisors and directors who have been trained for managing development efforts.

Documented Supervisory Work Patterns

Case Study Design and Data Gathering

A two year case study was launched by Fitzgerald (1991) to examine effects of a management and leadership orientation on the work culture of the Pasco County School District, focusing on the work of two departments of instructional supervisors and directors (n = 17). The case method was chosen for this study because it afforded the best way to gather descriptive information about the work culture of district level supervisors and directors. The field of supervision has a relatively small research base; and, except for Pajak's ASCD study (1989), there has emerged no clear picture of the role and function of central office supervisors. Following a training intervention (27 days of MPP training), the researcher (who participated in the complete training program) sought to identify emerging supervisory practices at the district-wide, department and school levels.

The study focused primarily on 17 instructional supervisors (n = 13) and directors (n = 4) of curriculum and instruction from three instructional departments

(Basic Education; Exceptional Student Education; and Vocational, Adult and Community Education). Additional supervisors (4) and directors (4) from non-instructional departments were interviewed and surveyed.

A series of 25 controlled interviews with supervisors and directors using a "Critical Incident" format (Byam, 1977; Boyatzis, 1982) provided key ethnographic data. The study was triangulated further, using: 1) a document investigation to provide data from district permanent records (memoranda and calander/journals); 2) Participant Observations of the three instructional departments to render information from meetings and job shadowing; and 3) two surveys: the District Work Culture Profile (DWCP) (Snyder, Giella and Banerji, 1990), a self reporting diagnostic tool that was developed from MPP materials to assess management practices at the district and within department levels; and, the School Perception Questionnaire (SPQ) (Fitzgerald, 1991) that was designed to gather information about supervisory patterns from teachers and school administrators (n=85).

An observation tally form was designed based on the ten MPP competencies to gather frequency data from all data sets. Over 3200 pieces of data were collected, analyzed and integrated. Using the inductive "Constant Comparative" method in conjunction with a PC Write word processor, the researcher was able to classify and re-classify, by reading and re-reading the data from the transcribed case record. Initial classification was coded by MPP competency. After each of six readings, new categories emerged. These were incorporated into a refined case record, and data were allocated to these new categories after each reading.

Data Integration

The tally forms were used to categorize data samples and also to learn how closely the observed and reported practices linked with the MPP

management construct. The data sets were eventually analyzed in terms of supervisory efforts that related to school agendas, to department programs and to district wide efforts that went beyond the job parameters. The summaries of the data sets are reported below.

Work with Schools. An integration of all data sets led to the following job/time allocations in supervisory work with schools. (Note: "Monitoring" and "evaluation" were merged in all summaries reported here due to the difficulty in coding each separately.) As outlined below, the major areas of supervisory attention are given to "resource management" and "instructional program management". "Staff development activity also was high. The dimensions of "goal setting" and "performance planning" were not observed in work activity in schools. Supervisory "coaching" activity only occurred 3.6 percent, all of which was support for school-based peer coaching practices.

1.	Resource management	29%
2.	Program management	27%
3.	Staff development	18%
4.	Monitoring and evaluation	9%
5.	Work group development/Problem Solving	7%
6.	Coaching/clinical supervision	3.6%
7.	Work organization	2%
8.	Goal setting	
9.	Performance planning	_____
		100%

Work Within and Between Departments. Supervisory work within their own department and programs was highlighted by "resource management" and "work group development/problem solving". "Program monitoring and

evaluation" also were high job dimensions. "Staff development" and "performance planning" were observed least often within departments.

1.	Resource management	21%
2.	Work group development/Problem Solving	19%
3.	Monitoring and evaluation	14%
4.	Goal setting	10%
5.	Program management	9.5%
6.	Coaching/clinical supervision	5%
7.	Work organization	4%
8.	Staff development	3.3%
9.	Performance planning	3.2%
		<hr/>
		100%

Work between departments revealed similar priorities, with the dimensions of "resource management" and "work group development/problem solving" being observed most often. "Program management" was also high between departments as supervisors sought to link their programs together in bold new ways. "Work organization", "performance planning" and "coaching" were not observed or reported in between-department activity.

1.	Resource management	44%
2.	Work group development/problem solving	19%
3.	Program management	18%
4.	Staff development	7%
5.	Monitoring and evaluation	5%
6.	Work organization	

7.	Performance planning	
8.	Coaching	_____
		100%

Work with District-wide Efforts. "Resource management" and "work group development/problem solving" also surfaced as the dominant job dimensions for supervisors and directors in their work on district-wide projects. "Staff development" efforts were also high, focusing on district priorities. "Performance planning" and "coaching" activities were not observed in district-wide activities.

1.	Resource management	23%
2.	Work group development	22%
3.	Staff development	16%
4.	Program management	15%
5.	Work organization	13%
6.	Monitoring and evaluation	3.3%
7.	Goal setting	3.2%
8.	Performance planning	
9.	Coaching/Clinical supervision	_____
		100%

The major overall conclusion from 3239 instances of supervisor behavior is that the ten work dimensions of the MPP model describe in relative terms the work of supervisors and directors who function in a district in transition. There were no outliers from our observations; the MPP management construct appeared to be a complete structure for documenting and analyzing the actual work of supervisors and directors of instruction. Listed below are the job dimensions in order of percentage allocation from all three spheres of this study (school, department, district).

1.	Resource management	26%
2.	Program management	18%
3.	Work group development/problem solving	16%
4.	Staff development	14%
5.	Monitoring and evaluation	9%
6.	Work organization	6%
7.	Goal setting	5%
8.	Performance planning	2%
9.	Coaching/clinical supervision	2%

		100%

Discussion

"Resource management" surfaced as the major job dimension for supervisors and directors as they facilitate and manage the development, implementation and assessment of programs. Observed and reported human resources include teachers, administrators, community groups, other supervisors and departments, university professors, and community agencies. Supervisors seem to involve people from many role groups in committees and task forces to design new programs and systems, training others to work together collaboratively in a group context to implement new programs. Once development efforts are launched, supervisors seem to devote their energies to linking others with multiple kinds of human and material resources, constantly developing the leadership talents of others (mostly teachers).

One major finding from this case study was that approximately one third of available supervisory time was spent working in each of three spheres: (1) with schools (responding to their needs): 31.9%; (2) within and between department

programs/services (developing and managing program specific networks and partnerships: 37.3%; and 3) the district (working on broad issues through task forces/projects): 30.6%. That these three would be almost balanced work spheres was only a hypothetical concept prior to this study. These patterns raise new questions about job expectations for district level supervisors, and appropriate expectations of their performance. The potential scope of leadership influence indeed surpasses the boundaries of specific district programs and services.

A second major finding was that all 10 job dimensions of the MPP construct were observed in varying degrees. Some dimensions were performed more often with schools, and some surfaced within and across departments, while others were observed more often in district-wide activity. It should be noted that there were no outliers: all areas of job performance appeared to fall within the MPP parameters. Hence, the management dimensions seem to be accurate as do the descriptions of supervisors and directors who work in a school district in transition.

Variations of Work Within Spheres

Within the school sphere, supervisors seem to manage the implementation of programs or services mostly through networks. Informal coaching exists to some extent, mostly to enhance peer coaching efforts concerning new program implementation. Facilitating collaborative problem solving in groups appears to be emerging as a major focus of supervisory work in schools, with the intent to develop school ownership and empowerment of both the challenges and decisions. Staff development is occurring more often now as teachers train other teachers in new techniques and processes, and serve as extensions of supervisory units in the central office. And, monitoring and evaluation are beginning to take on more of a developmental function than in the past.

Within the department sphere, resource networks are organized and managed around new program development efforts and pilot programs, with supervisors and directors playing a leadership function. Collaborative goal setting within ad hoc groups drives development activity, where new knowledge and skill bases are developed for the new tasks. Planning, quality control and evaluation, at the department level, all focus on the design of new programs and pilots and their effects, rather than on program implementation.

Within the district sphere, supervisors often manage a wide variety of human resources: specialist, principals, social service agencies, federal and state funding agencies, private industry, and supervisors and directors from other districts. Program management efforts focus on district-wide initiatives, such as integrated curriculum, continuous progress, and graduation enhancement. Groups are the structures for work, with participants tending to represent schools and district departments. Staff development efforts tend to be initiated by all supervisory groups (not merely the Staff Development Department), and focus on the new knowledge and skills that groups need to perform district-wide tasks, and invent new programs or policies.

In a district where teacher peer coaching is thriving, it is probably not too surprising that the formal "coaching" competency was the least observed dimension among central office supervisors. This raises a question concerning the practical realities of expecting central office supervisors to serve as individual classroom coaches. Their role appears to be more often that of "trainer of coaches", and "coach of coaches" for program implementation efforts.

Stages of District Development

A series of cultural categories emerged from the interview data. The researcher was able to postulate stages of district level transition based on the

observations of the central office supervisors and directors. These categories were seen as stages or levels through which the case school district passed as it developed new capacities to invent new programs, structures and services:

Level 1: Supervisors as a Resource Level (based on appropriate field specific expertise);

Level 2: New Cultural Awareness ("What else can we do for our students, teachers and schools?"), a readiness stage for new information;

Level 3 Common Cultural Language (a collective definition of terms, meanings and processes), in use across the district in schools and departments;

Level 4: Common Structures and Processes (e.g., ad hoc task forces using a wide variety of knowledge bases, planning and decision making tools);

Level 5 Cultural Style (increasing degrees of informality with new systems to foster interdependence and control for outcomes), and developed through a natural means of influence.

Level 6: Resource Management Level (dynamic networks managed by "Specialized Generalists");

Level 7: Leadership Level (providing direction for development through networks and partnerships).

Conclusions

From our experiences over four years of pilot training and studying the emerging central office supervisory behaviors through the case study reported here, it would appear that some job clarity for district level supervisors of instruction is well within reach. By changing the orientation of district leaders from supervisor to manager, and from being the resource to being a resource manager, it appears that talent can be unleashed to facilitate and control for developmental efforts in district restructuring activity: total quality management.

In the Pasco County project, it was learned that central office supervisors devote one third of their energy equally in working with: (1) school agendas and program implementation; (2) department/program specific development projects; and (3) for district-wide initiatives. The major thrust of work is managing resources, which is operationalized differently in all three spheres of work. Coaching of individual teachers is the least utilized of all ten job competencies for district supervisors.

As a curriculum leader, the central office supervisor and director appear to be the roles most naturally poised for cooperative leadership within all three district spheres of influence (school, department, district). With their energies divided nearly equally among the three spheres, supervisors represent the potential for an informal flow of information and other human and material resources between teachers and central office, among departments, to the collective well being of the whole district. District level curriculum and instruction supervisors appear to be critical to the overall efficiency of development in the three levels of operation. The profile of the district supervisors and directors appears to one based on resource management, problem solving and training embedded in the task of program leadership and management.

Educational Importance

This study provides an extensive data base for understanding why supervisors remain on payrolls, despite budget cuts, and how they might be selected and managed in the future to enhance district-wide restructuring and development efforts. We perceive this report to be a breakthrough in unlocking the dynamic that central office supervisors have had, and can continue to have, in district transformation.

Central office supervisors and directors have been essentially unrecognized in the educational supervision literatures. The role has lacked a clear, comprehensive definition, which has limited strategies for collecting data about district level supervisory performance and effects. The profile provided by this study presents a promising perspective about the necessary functions of supervision.

The Managing Productive Programs (MPP) model provided a useful construct for designing data collection and analysis tools. The researcher found that virtually all of the supervisory activities observed were accounted for using the tools constructed with regard to the MPP competencies and sub-dimensions. In a somewhat surprising sense, this case study provided an initial empirical validation of the Managing Productive Programs construct for district supervisors and directors.

Perhaps a management orientation to supervisory work will empower those who presently possess little role authority to influence the direction and quality of a multitude of development efforts. The supervisory transition from "helping" to "leading" behaviors has enormous potential for moving school districts forward and enabling individual schools to become increasingly successful. Perhaps new job descriptions can be developed for district-based selection purposes, new training programs to enhance their performance, new degree programs with substance, and new appraisal systems that measure outcomes of managed enterprises. And, this study may stimulate continued research on the management orientation to district level supervisory work. Given this new twist, the least-understood role-group within school districts might well prove to be a vital human resource for the reinvention of American schooling.

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