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The Superintendent's Role in Public Relations

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THE SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE
IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Charles E. Evans
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THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE
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J. Russell Peters
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Most superintendents now realize that an effective program in public relations is important. No public school system can endure and have an adequate program unless a large part of the public supports it. The success of a public relations program primarily depends upon the superintendent. Through his guidance and leadership the program presents the school's story to the general public.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study is to (1) recognize the merit of a public relations program, (2) investigate the role of the superintendent in the program, and (3) analyze some of the techniques involved in supporting such a program.

Importance of the study. As already indicated, the success of a school district's educational program depends largely upon communication between the school and community. The public should be informed of the changing procedures in education in order to understand the educational needs of the schools.

No public institution can succeed indefinitely unless a large portion of the population supports it.

School administrators now realize that to receive support from the community, the people must be informed, have confidence in the educational program, and develop an awareness of the importance of education in a democracy. The superintendent's responsibility is to direct a program to fulfill these demands.

Procedure in collecting and analyzing data. This research used primarily those secondary sources found in the library of Central Washington State College. After reviewing the literature on public relations, references were screened and pertinent information noted. This material was then used in the actual writing of this paper. Personnel Relations in Public Education, the college course for which this paper was written, proved valuable.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Public relations. This refers to the factual interpretation of the school's philosophy to a concerned community so as to gain the good will and confidence of that community.

Community. As used in this paper, this term is limited to the boundaries of any particular school district and the people within this boundary who make up the political structure.

Leadership. This is an individual's ability to exercise guidance which stimulates and mobilizes the interests, talents and efforts of a group toward a common goal.

Power structure. This refers to the few people who by virtue of ownership and social status exercise much direct and indirect control over community policy.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

It would be impossible in this limited study to consider all the devices used in a good public relations program. This research paper, therefore, will attempt to show only the superintendent's role in and the significance of the public relations program in a community.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

I. CONCEPT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

The term public relations may be broken down in the following way: Public relates to or affects the people as an organized community. Relations relates to the act of communicating information. Broadly speaking, public relations is the understanding and co-operation secured through communicational channels used to inform the public.

In terms of public-school relations, the program is adult education in the broadest sense (12:143). The term is well defined by Horn: "public relations is factual interpretation of your institution to a concerned citizenry in a manner to gain and maintain such public regard as your institution rightly deserves" (21:216). This definition is further explained and broken down for closer examination (21:216-17):

PUBLIC RELATIONS IS FACTUAL INTERPRETATION	---and thus has nothing to do with duping the public
OF YOUR INSTITUTION	---which means anything in it from mice to men
TO A CONCERNED CITIZENRY	---which means every member of the community whether in the school or out of it

IN A MANNER TO GAIN AND
 MAINTAIN SUCH PUBLIC REGARD
 AS YOUR INSTITUTION
 RIGHTLY DESERVES

---which means simply
 that public relations will
 ask your public for the
 full measure of the regard
 you have a right to expect
 for an institution doing
 the job you are doing in
 the manner you see doing
 it now--that and nothing
 more.

Some authorities feel that the function of public relations involves more than telling people certain facts about schools. Harrel implies that public relations as a social science:

(1) informs administrators and school personnel what the public thinks of education; (2) helps school leaders determine what they must do to gain the support and good will of others; (3) plans ways and means of getting that support; (4) shows the changes in the climate of public opinion; and (5) carries on activities designed to win and hold co-operation and support (20:5-6).

In carrying out these suggestions, many other functions, concepts, and techniques are involved. The following illustrates an urgent need for public relations with the objectives of "(1) informing the public of work contemplated or being done; (2) establishing confidence; (3) rallying support, and (4) correcting misunderstandings" (9:44-45).

A good public-school relations program supplies up-to-date and accurate information--verbal, written, demonstrated, or shown--that is of interest and significance to the public (9:44). "The need for informing the general

public in regard to school practices and results would seem likely to be with us indefinitely" (22:126).

A program of public-school relations "is necessary at all times. It is necessary when the goose hangs high as well as when it hangs low" (25:5). The following statement illustrates why the public relations wheel should be in perpetual motion:

Too often schools start getting into public information activities just before they face a bond election or just before they are to make a controversial change in curriculum. More effective is the public information program which is year-round and which has a continuing positive position year after year. Then, when the problems arise which every school inevitably meets now and then, the citizens are already prepared to look at the situation with favorable impression of the school well established in their minds (15:10-12).

Hence, the function of a public-school relations program is a partnership between the school and the home, a partnership of equals, founded on mutual respect, shared awareness, faith in the democratic process, and a desire to work together for the continuous improvement of the community. The program should be honest, factual, and continuous in reporting activities in terms that are readily understood by most persons.

II. PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

The quality of a school program depends largely upon public understanding. The school system draws its

major strengths or weakness from the community it serves. The kind of schooling children receive within a community depends upon (1) the extent to which people are willing and able to pay for education and (2) the concept in the minds of citizens of what a good school program is.

Here is one of the seven recommendations made in the Summary Statement of the 1956 White House Conference on Education:

We recommend that every possible step be taken to encourage the interest and activity of all citizens in school affairs. Citizen advisory groups, organizations of parents and teachers, education conferences, and all other means at the disposal of the people of a democracy should be utilized to keep the schools in close contact with the people. In the final analysis, it is only the public which can create good schools and nurture them. In the long run, schools must do what the public wants, and if no strong public will is made known, schools falter. Public interest in education is aroused only by knowledge of problems and intentions, and can continue only if the public can play an active role in school affairs" (23:17).

This summary emphasizes the importance of having the public informed. This responsibility falls on the local superintendent of schools and the school board. The superintendent must keep the public informed by releasing school financial information regularly. The schools must demonstrate that wise management and sound business practice are being observed. "The public will generally pay for what they deem worthwhile" (8:234).

The people must be sold on the benefits of education

before they can be sold on the cost involved (20:77). Therefore, the goal in the public relations program is to create public understanding and gain financial support sufficient to provide high quality education for children (23:29).

III. COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS

The philosophy of our schools depends on the attitudes and opinions of the people who make up the community. Most communities are composed of people from different social, economic, and educational background. Therefore, many concepts are derived from differing social levels.

Public schools have been most backward in attempting to measure public opinion. Past history reveals little evidence that any attempt was made to sample the public's feelings to find out their wants and desires in education (17:292).

There are definite values in obtaining community opinions. It aids the superintendent by keeping him informed on public feelings toward the school system. Should the community become seriously disturbed about any particular matter, the superintendent has advance warning. Aware of the problem, he can discuss the situation through various media, in the hope of coming to a solution. With the knowledge of the community and the results of communi-

cating with it, the administrator can plan for action (17:292).

Education can achieve little without a favorable public opinion. This can generally be accomplished with a combination of the following: (1) improving upon and strengthening present public opinion, (2) guiding the people away from a laissez-faire opinion toward an active one, and (3) by changing unfavorable attitudes into ones that support the philosophies of sound education (9:42).

An active public relations program is one of the best insurance policies a school district can have. It has been found that communities with poor attitudes toward education as a rule have inadequate schools.

Many years before our current concern with both public relations experts and psychological techniques of the hidden persuaders, editor Charles D. Worner wrote (in 1871): "Public opinion is stronger than the legislature and nearly as strong as the Ten Commandments." Abraham Lincoln made this comment about the public and the importance of their feelings:

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail, without it nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions (25:5).

The responsibility of molding public sentiment falls upon the superintendent of schools, and the most efficient

tool in this job is an informative public relations program. However, the success or failure of any program will depend upon the communication between school and community. In chapter four the writer will discuss some of the proven techniques of keeping the community informed.

CHAPTER III

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The relationship between the schools and the public depends primarily on the superintendent, who is the coordinator of public relations policies. As a leader in the local community the superintendent has definite responsibilities which he must consider.

The extent to which the community will support public education is affected by the superintendent. Usually an efficient administrator is found at the heart of a good school situation. A community which expresses signs of apathy towards its schools may reflect an inefficient superintendent and a non-existent public relations program.

I. LEADERSHIP

As in all phases of school administration, the leadership of the superintendent in public relations is very important. The success or failure of the public relations program is, to a degree, dependent upon his attitude and his interest in promoting the program. The superintendent cannot exercise a leading role unless he possesses firm convictions and strives to acquire a thorough concept of the total program. A public relations program does not appear by itself, although some superintendents seem to think so. The administrator must exert

much effort in leadership and guidance if the program is to succeed (16:578-79).

"Leadership is power over problems, not over the group; and in the final analysis it is the power of the group itself" (12:142). In keeping with this concept there has been in recent years a notable increase in the quality of leadership among educators.

"Leadership has always been a basic aspect of the communication structure of any social order" (23:250). Its function becomes constantly more important and more complex. Many situations will arise during the school year, and the superintendent must meet each challenge with a different approach. Therefore, the school administrator has a need to be a student of human behavior.

Gross has indicated the purpose and functions of educational leadership in the area of school public relations:

. . . educational leadership means the ability to influence a community and a school staff to raise its educational sights. It means the ability to get the professional staff and the community to work together in developing an educational philosophy and a set of educational goals that will provide a firm basis for developing school policies and programs. It means the ability to work effectively with the staff to accomplish these objectives. And it implies the ability to convince the community and its key opinion leaders of the need to provide sufficient financial support for the schools. It also requires enough self-confidence on the part of the superintendent so that he will be willing to discuss frankly with the community the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the schools (18:144).

Often in the stream of facts and ideas from school

to community there are two elements which school leadership should provide. "(1) what the people want to know or learn about their schools, (2) what they ought to know whether they want to or not . . ." (16:510). Of the two, the first is probably more adequately managed than the second.

Community understanding is largely dependent upon the wise leadership within the school. The superintendent should regard the development of leadership in public-school relations as one of his major responsibilities.

II. SCHOOL BOARD RELATIONS

Since the school board's primary duty is to determine school policy, it is its duty to establish the public relations policy. Usually this policy, like all other policies, would be recommended by the superintendent of schools and his co-workers. The superintendent's role in developing a friendly and workable atmosphere is essential.

Mutual respect and confidence aid board members and the superintendent in fulfilling their related responsibilities. Good will, natural willingness to understand the implications of facts, realization of and efforts to understand differences of viewpoint, along with reasonable amounts of patience are the components to co-operative leadership (23:338). The ideal relationship is one of co-operation and mutual understanding. The board and the administrator should

become a smooth working team.

An effective leader should have an understanding of the skills involved in working with people. Some techniques in human-relations are mentioned by Griffiths:

As the superintendent works with the board over a period of years, the board comes to realize his strengths. It realizes that he has ability in certain areas and can be trusted to accept more and more responsibility. He develops power and authority quite separate from that which the board has granted him. Thus, when a situation arises and the board knows that the superintendent is competent to handle the issue without its interference, it is inclined to let him do so. This attitude carries over into other affairs in which the board has authority, and the superintendent finds that the board expects direct statements from him on these matters. His professional authority is recognized as equal to their legal authority and they can then act together as equals (17:334).

One of the most important responsibilities of the superintendent is to keep the board informed and up-to-date on school conditions, school needs and projected plans for the future. This is an essential task which the superintendent cannot neglect; if he neglects it, the plans and school policies which the board adopts are not likely to be the best ones, and the interests of the schools will suffer. The importance of a well informed board is stressed by the THE AMERICAN SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, Thirteenth Yearbook:

School board membership is a front-line post in the work of bringing understanding between the schools and the citizens in the community. The board members, well informed and enthusiastic about the schools, becomes an ambassador of good will for public education to an

extent rarely appreciated by most board members and superintendents (3:130).

For best results in the public relations program, the superintendent and school board should work closely together. Policies in the program should be drawn up in joint effort by the two parties. Participation by the board will serve as a tying link to make the members feel part of the program; thus each member will take a more active part in the program operations.

III. STAFF MORALE

Developing and maintaining high teacher morale is one of the best insurance policies in a public relations program. The teacher's role in public relations should not be taken lightly. A wise administrator will stay informed and strive to improve this phase of administration.

The morale of teachers contributes an important part to the public relations program. Morale is the way an individual feels, acts, or believes. The kind of attitudes, feelings, actions, or beliefs determines whether there is good or poor morale.

The superintendent should make provisions for developing personnel morale. "If an individual teacher is to have good morale, he must have a feeling of belonging to, or being a part of the total school organization" (16:232).

The public notices the morale of a school district. From casual observation, parents can sense a situation in which school-community relations are sound. Students notice staff morale and often carry this information home and discuss it with the parents. People are proud to be members of a school system they believe is good and is becoming better (11:302).

High morale is a sign of effective leadership. Past studies indicate that people who are enthusiastic about their work will produce and communicate more good will and approval to the public. Morale has two educational communication implications. "First, it improves school services and makes them more worthy of public respect. Second, teachers communicate their satisfaction and approval to pupils, parents, and others" (23:261).

The sharing in policy formulating with the school staff strengthens personnel morale. Sharing reflects the security, confidence, and faith in principals, teachers, and non-certificated employees. Sharing also tends to create closer common bonds between the administration and the staff.

A good administrator will permit the teachers to take part in drawing up the instructional program. Co-operation and teamwork will improve the education of boys and girls. This will also build good morale and leadership,

both prerequisite to a good instructional program (16:233). Therefore, the superintendent should give close attention to the morale factor in the over-all plan in public relations.

IV. POWER STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITY

Find a successful school district with good public-school relations and chances are the superintendent has the power structure on the side of education and all in favor of the school. This is a major responsibility the administrator has in his role of public relations.

In most communities a large portion of the information in the form of messages passes through channels from person-to-person and media-to-person by groups of people who make up a force called the power structure.

The term "power structure" has perhaps been more precisely expressed by McCloskey when he said:

This is a social-economic hierarchy in which a few people by virtue of ownership and social status exercise much direct and indirect control on the transmission of messages and the context in which they are interpreted (23:78).

In carrying out this duty of recruiting the support of the power structure, the superintendent must first locate the people. The characteristics of the holders of power will vary from community to community. But McCloskey reports that sociological research indicates they are most likely to be members of the following three groups:

1. Owners of the larger industrial, commercial, or agricultural enterprises--especially second-or third-generation people who have inherited ownership prestige, and social status.
2. Self-employed, prosperous lawyers, doctors, and publishers. Among this group too, membership in "old families" adds to prestige and influence.
3. Those who by powers of persuasion have attained positions of authority--notably politicians and labor leaders (23:82).

The school administrator is usually not among the power structure in the community. However, it is interesting to note that Cambell, Corbally and Ramseye report that the superintendent may be a member of this group under the following conditions:

Only where the school administrator is a longtime resident of the community, relatively well paid, and affiliated with the "right" organization does he appear to be a power figure (10:130).

The power structure affects the opinions and attitudes of the community in several ways. (1) The people of a typical community give more than ordinary attention and consideration to opinions from business men, political leaders, and social leaders. These leaders are looked up to and respected because they have considerable amounts of direct power over the people. (2) The desire for social and emotional security causes most people to seek association with those who are among the power structure. Thus the opinions held by the power structure become those of the followers (23:78-79).

The American Association of School Administrators Yearbook for 1963, has stated the relationship of the superintendent with the power structure in the following words:

The various elements of the power structure should not be played off one against another, nor should timidity, fearfulness, or pettiness of mind cause any one of them to be feared, catered to, or avoided. All must be confidently and forthrightly asked to share a responsibility which is, after all, their own. Where administration is successful in achieving such unity in action, a rich, well-balanced, and vigorously developing educational program becomes a reality. Public education is too complex, too expensive, and far too important to have leadership potential needlessly expended in petty bickering or exhausted in unnecessary strife between opposing elements. Public education is so all-important that the task of leadership in operation and support should be carried forward by all in an orderly and a responsible manner (1:14-15).

Closer observation of the power structure reveals that organizations commonly serve a two-way communication function. They provide channels through which leaders at the top communicate opinions and decisions to a community. We have also noted that the schools should seek out this power for understanding and co-operation so they can contribute to public understanding and support of schools.

CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO THE COMMUNITY

The superintendent is responsible for organizing and maintaining public understanding through public relations media. Since attitudes and opinions evolve slowly and modern communication is complex, poorly planned communication may be misdirected and thus contribute to public misunderstanding. Methods of communication, therefore, are basic considerations for planning a public relations program. In public relations every possible effort should be used to acquaint the public with adequate and truthful information. The schools should keep the public informed of their activities. This chapter will analyze some of the methods and media for establishing school-community relations.

I. COMMUNICATION MEDIA FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

The effectiveness of public relations is determined in part by the media selected and the way it is used. Wise selection and use of publicity devices require that educators see the relationship between school and community.

Methods commonly used for interpreting education to the public are often grouped under such main headings as personal contact, newspapers, radio and televisions, school publications, school activities, exhibits, and demonstrations.

Stearns states the following about interpreting education:

People learn about the schools largely through what they see, what they hear, what they experience--which involves both seeing and hearing--and what they read, which involves the visual process and their experience background. So, the visual process, the auditory process, and the psychological process of experience, growing into the understanding and the ultimate formation of judgment, are the basic equipment held by all people, which may be used in presenting the story of the schools to the public (27:312).

The following are effective public relations devices and procedures. However, the writer has made no attempt to cover all the various communicational media used in public relations. Only the more commonly used methods are discussed.

Newsletters. The newsletter keeps in continuous contact with the home. Through such means it is possible to reach, directly or indirectly, practically every person in the community.

The regularity of such publications induces people to depend on them for current educational information. Their frequency helps sustain public consideration of school accomplishments [sic] and problems. Their news format provides freedom to personalize messages and relate them to current interests (23:500).

Newsletters make friends, too. Next to actual contact, correspondence is the best public-relations medium. Letters are personal, they make an indelible impression and represent an excellent means of selling the true character of the schools (9:88).

Good newsletters usually have these features: (1) they command attention in the first sentence, (2) are short, to the point, and key words are underlined, and (3) should

answer the questions: what, when, where, and why.

Speeches. Every act, word, or situation makes its contributions toward the worthwhile end of informing the public (9:90). The ability to deliver a good public speech is an asset to the school administrator. Many occasions will arise when the superintendent or other school personnel is asked to speak. Those who realize the importance of education and want others to know will welcome the chance to speak at luncheons, community gatherings, and school assemblies. Face-to-face relations is the most common and effective method of public relations.

School personnel should strengthen their speech organization and presentation. The following suggestions will increase speaking ability.

A speech is partly what is said; it is also how it is said. Success in speaking depends on (1) knowledge, (2) self-confidence, and (3) skill. Teachers really should have a wealth of clear positive information. There remains only the preparation necessary to translate this knowlege into language people understand (9:188).

Newspapers. The newspaper is one of the most powerful builders of public opinion today. In the community where there are dilapidated streets, ramshackle businesses, and inadequate school buildings, the chances are that the community lacks a progressive newspaper (8:237).

Newlon, superintendent of the Denver schools,

emphasizes strongly the importance of the daily and weekly press in relation to education. He wrote:

The press performs an indispensable function in modern life. Newspapers and their readers are intensely interested in schools. It should be remembered always that school publicity should pertain not only to budgets and financial problems, buildings and bond issues, but also of far greater importance, to the daily work and the problems of the schools. If courses of study are being revised, if important meetings are being held for the study of educational problems, such events are of interest to the public. Then there are all the important happenings in the schools that involve the accomplishments of boys and girls (8:239).

To assure adequate press coverage the superintendent should become acquainted with the newspaper editors and reporters. By cultivating a friendly attitude he is almost certain to receive fair treatment for the schools (8:239).

In addition to recognizing news events it is also important that school people develop skill in preparing news releases. Certain rules must be remembered in preparing such releases.

1. If the release covers a news event, it must, by all means, be delivered on time. This often means fast writing and delivery by messenger service to the city desk.
2. If it is a news release the gist of the whole story must be included in the first paragraph, if possible in the first sentence. Other rules of news writing involve terminology, the lead words in the opening and following paragraphs, and brevity coupled with conciseness.
3. Names of local people must be included wherever possible.
4. Quotes are highly desirable, and they must be

checked back for accuracy.

5. It must be expected that the story may be cut to conform to the space limitations in the makeup room, and the story may be rewritten to conform to the paper's distinctive style.
6. The story may have a title, but seldom will the title appear as the headline (27:288-89).

Newspaper personnel should be encouraged to visit the schools to develop an understanding of the school situation. Newswriters should have the feeling that they are always welcome. If the local newspaper editor can be induced to visit the school, he can gain a better understanding of educational problems and become a strong supporter of the school program (23:405).

Encourage editors to assign specific reporters to cover school news regularly. Editors know that good reporting in any field so complex as education requires familiarity with background and with the continuity of events. Reporters who can work regularly with schools over a period of time develop insights which result in more and better stories (23:405).

Co-operation with the newspapers can be built and maintained with effort on the part of the school. However, the school administrator must make the first move towards establishing friendly relations. This will promote a better understanding between the press and the schools, and the newspapers will contribute more toward the advancement of education.

Radio and television. The use of radio and television

as means of mass appeal presents limitless possibilities for selling the values of education to millions of people by the indirect approach of calling attention to what the schools are doing.

Television and radio stations are interested in ideas and materials with educational value. Serious and interesting programs are in demand because there exists a continuing hunger for knowledge (9:207).

School administrators and other staff members should work co-operatively with specialists in the field of radio and television. Much can be learned from specialists regarding what personnel can do (14:510). If possible, the school personnel should prepare script and develop programs to use for radio and television. In some communities, schools have made great headway in this area with the help of directors of local radio and television stations.

School exhibits and demonstrations. Visual exhibits are good methods of securing acquaintance with an activity. They have the advantage of giving the viewer a feeling of seeing something concrete. The rapid growth rate of community, county, state, national, and international affairs indicates the value and worth of information secured in this manner (25:165).

"School exhibits present an excellent opportunity

for the public to interpret the school" (25:165). These offer the public first hand observation of projects completed by the children. Class exhibits can come from arts, crafts, industrial arts, home economics and science classes.

Probably one of the best attended programs of this type is the science fair. The people have an opportunity to see the caliber of work accomplished in the science department. Rice reported that science fairs create good public reactions (26:29-34).

. . . science fairs can help insure good relations, both within the school and between the school and the public--an invaluable accomplishment in these days of searching criticism--and that a fair's success in this direction will be determined by the measure of its adherence to the opinion of the public (26:10-12).

School assemblies. School assemblies may serve as a public relations media by having local citizens as guest speakers. The public takes pride in assisting the schools in educational activities concerning the community. Public participation in this fashion aids in keeping the people informed and strengthens school-community relations. "A discerning outside speaker can often perform meritorious services in telling not only on general advantages of education but in helping the community realize its own specific needs" (8:267).

Music and dramatic activities. The public has great interest in music and dramatic activities and looks forward to seeing its school perform during the year. Parents can be reached through the activities of their children and offer their support. These activities broaden student participation, thus enabling more children to have an active part. Programs of quality and merit help identify education with accepted cultural patterns (23:203).

Athletics. The school athletics program receives much publicity. Many educators and other interested citizens believe that sports are overemphasized. Opposing this view is the group of sports-minded individuals who offer strong support.

The interscholastic program is here to stay. The schools are faced with the problem of providing the public with information. The more sports publicity the better, provided it guides public opinion in the right direction of understanding the true value of athletics and education as a whole. An understanding on the part of the public as to its importance, should be the goal in this phase of public relations (9:153).

Local papers give attention to this subject. The school administration should use this opportunity to work with the press for favorable coverage to show the real

educational value of athletics.

Parent-Teacher Association. "In most communities the Parent-Teacher Association has long played a major and uniquely constructive role in school-citizen co-operation" (23:369). While the effectiveness of local units varies, the association as a whole has supported educational improvements. The wise superintendent will utilize this organization and should consider it as part of the power structure. "The Parent-Teacher Association furnishes the best organized single agency around which a public relations program may be developed" (8:260).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The school-public relations program should be factual, truthful, and a continuous interpretation of the schools to a concerned community, with goals of establishing confidence and correcting misunderstanding. The community must be told, to be sold on the values and benefits of a good educational program.

The superintendent of schools has the responsibility of conceiving and initiating the public relations program. As head administrator he must promote the program, with school board approval, to create public understanding which will result in financial support sufficient to provide quality education for the children. In a successful public relations program the superintendent, through wise leadership, must receive the full support in words as well as actions of the local school board, school personnel, and the community power structure. These groups form a strong chain which will sustain a functional public relations program. However, if one link in the chain becomes weakened, the program suffers.

The administration must create and sustain high faculty morale. The public judges the schools by standards of apparent happiness of their children and the attitude and opinions of teachers toward their teaching environment.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to take the initiative in interpreting the schools to the public. Many methods of communication are available but wise selection should be considered. When selecting the media for a specific purpose, the best available should be chosen and then used to its fullest extent. Effective use of public relations media can help keep the community, school board, and school personnel informed about educational accomplishments, goals, needs, and issues. This can result in interest, information, and improved opinions and attitudes which will stimulate constructive action for the betterment of an educational system.

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