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A Survey of Material Portraying the Importance of the Role of the Principal to Faculty Morale

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A SURVEY OF MATERIAL PORTRAYING
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
TO FACULTY MORALE

A Research Paper
Presented To
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

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

by
Robert A. Van Woert

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THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE
COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

Del G. Peterson
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

PREFACE

Morale refers to the condition of a group where there are clear and fixed group goals (purposes) that are felt to be important and integrated with individual goals; where there is confidence in the attainment of these goals, and subordinately, confidence in the means of attainment, in the leaders, associates, and finally in oneself; where group actions are integrated and co-operative; and where aggression and hostility are expressed against the forces frustrating the group rather than toward other individuals within the group (6:145).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Imparting morale to the teaching staff of a school has not always been viewed as a problem. In the early days of education, the teacher was not always thought of as being a typical member of society. Following is an excerpt from a set of regulations used at one time in a Southern state.

I promise to take a vital interest in all phases of Sunday-school work, donating of my time, service, and money without stint for the uplift and benefit of the community. I promise to abstain from all dancing, immodest dressing, and any other conduct unbecoming a teacher and a lady. I promise not to go out with any young men except in so far as it may be necessary to stimulate Sunday-school work. I promise not to fall in love, to become engaged or secretly married. I promise to remain in the dormitory or on the school grounds when not actively engaged in school or church work elsewhere. I promise not to encourage or tolerate the least familiarity on the part of any of my boy pupils. I promise to sleep at least eight hours a night, to eat carefully, and to take every precaution to keep in the best of health and spirits in order that I may be better able to render efficient service to my pupils (9:360).

The community very often felt that the teacher or school master should have, as personal virtues, a combination of the distinguishing characteristics of a saint and a minister. The teacher was allowed very little personal liberty so far as personal habits were concerned. Dating, late hours, smoking, drinking, and so forth were taboo. Being human beings, however, many practiced these "vices" behind backs or behind closed

doors. This attitude of the general public created innate morale problems that never were brought to the surface.

Very seldom was sympathy, understanding, or loyalty shown by the headmaster in regard to his staff. No effort was used in making the staff a unified group. All too often tact, friendliness, and respect were forgotten under a domineering administrator aiming at public approval and job security.

Times have changed for both teacher and student. It seems possible that a teacher who is dominated and offered no chance of personal achievement will likely react the same way with students.

I. THE PROBLEM

It is difficult to determine exactly when administrators became cognizant of the importance of teacher morale. It appears to have become eminent following World War I.

It is very interesting to note how little attention has been paid to the subject of morale in the past. Research reveals no book or periodical reference on morale prior to 1918, when Harold C. Goddard published his study entitled Morale (6:144).

The task of building and maintaining the morale of the school faculty has fallen to the principal. The principal is the most direct contact with the staff and may best handle the morale factor and all of its implications.

In dealing with morale as a facet in quality and quantity of production, we might examine industry. Numerous studies have been conducted by organizations seeking higher levels

of production coupled with quality. Most of these studies have revealed a correlation between morale and level of production. Educators have followed the lead of industry and have conducted morale studies in the field of education.

"A group of five school systems in Connecticut held morale Surveys in 1954" (6:158). The systems participating found the survey useful in evaluating weakness and strength as well as pointing out areas for improvement. Many facets of morale have been discovered through these studies, including working conditions, hours, extra facilities, wages, vacations, fringe benefits, and, above all, human relations between employer and employee.

In dealing with this last factor, many of the previous facets may be included. The employer must make an effort himself to present or guarantee many such benefits to the worker.

Throughout the readings from which this study has been taken, each writer has emphasized human relationships as the dominant factor of morale.

The purpose of the study was to indicate the importance of the role of the principal in relation to morale. In presenting the material surveyed, the primary area will be the human relationship between the principal and the staff. Since most authorities view this point as the most important single aspect of morale, no outside forces will be dealt with. The study is limited primarily to the role of the secondary principal.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

In dealing only with the human relationship between principal and staff, considerable duplication has been found. The writings of the authors surveyed are accepted by leading authorities in the same field.

You cannot teach morale as a subject. Morale can be sensed, measured, increased or decreased and defined, but no one has ever seen all of the factors which prove its existence (7:86).

Morale can be developed without a good deal of financial expenditure. With good morale comes success, accomplishment and happiness. The lack of this entity leads to failure, dissatisfaction, and discontent.

Working under this premise, many factors may be presented. Each factor must receive special treatment. Listed, not necessarily in order of importance, we find, according to Lane;

Tact	Forcefulness
Sympathy	Dignity
Helpfulness	Facilities
Serenity	Routine
Loyalty	(10:230-31)

However, these attributes are not the only criteria to be met by the principal as the exponent of morale. Jacobson also says; "...failure to exercise the personal qualities of tact, sympathy, friendliness and respect for others," often leads to failure of the principal (8:495). In this same chapter can also be found a rating sheet viewing the principal from the teachers' standpoint. (See Appendix B) (8:496-99).

Other points to be considered are the principal who knows good teaching, praises it freely, and stimulates the interest of the teacher in self-improvement. However, one must be careful that praise is well-deserved.

Teachers must feel that they have a share in the development of the total school program. They must feel that they are offered a free hand in establishing policies and procedures in their particular area. They must feel that their responsibilities for their share of the curriculum are not forced on them. They should, however, understand that curriculum planning is part of their work load as well as that of the principal (8:495).

Taking Lane's points one by one, several observations can be made.

Tact. The principal should be tactful in his treatment of staff members. Teachers may have some particular area of interest that may benefit the school or curriculum. In their effort to meet these interests, the teacher may stray into some facet of the problem which may consume unnecessary time and effort. The principal may find it advisable to steer the teacher back to the right track. The principal should remember that a thoughtless word or phrase may curtail the entire activity. As Morgan puts it, "Many times the refusal of acceptance of a hard worked-on project may give the feeling of a personal rejection" (11:15).

At times, such as in staff or committee meetings, some member of the faculty may monopolize time. He or she may also

make uncalled-for remarks or comments. At such times a reminder of the position in which the teacher has placed himself may be necessary. To do this without sarcasm and personal embarrassment becomes the job of the principal. This may necessarily have to be done out of sight and earshot of the faculty (11:15-16).

Something of a very personal nature concerning a teacher may affect the morale of the faculty. Such things as dress or personal cleanliness are at times the problem. Handling such a problem calls for extreme tact but could also require outright direct comment.

Tactfulness may be necessary in making personal reminders to certain members of the staff. Occasionally some member of the faculty may continually arrive at work late or leave early. One who is often tardy in handing in reports and materials may be reminded as well. If other teachers are aware of such (and even though they may not be) a tactful comment could stop such a situation (11:16; 6:365).

A common failing of morale may develop between school activities. The interests of sports, music, debate, art, and others may seem to some staff members to be of greater importance in the total curriculum. Comments given thoughtfully may put each activity into its proper perspective within the entire group. This may take considerable time. The principal himself should not lose sight of the importance of each activity.

Occasionally personal conflicts may develop between faculty members. A tactful discussion with these people may alleviate the situation. At other times the principal may

have to act as an unbiased, tactful arbitrator over such a condition. In either case, he needs to be pleasingly firm. These personal conflicts, if allowed to fester, may destroy morale very rapidly (1:41; 6:365).

In some schools certain facilities of the plant may necessarily be used by several groups. Some conflicts may be eliminated by careful administrative planning of utilization of facilities and equipment and by creating understanding of their place in the total educational program (6:267).

Sympathy. In the prime sense of the word, the principal must be genuinely sympathetic to the aims and goals of the faculty. This understanding must be to each individual and collectively to the group. To show or state one feeling while the true feeling is completely different may be picked up by the staff and create a serious morale problem (7:87; 8:495-99).

In another sense of the word, the principal may be called on to act as counselor to a faculty member. In the event of a death or illness within the family of some member of the group, a little understanding goes a long way in preserving the morale. In times of personal strife of another nature--- financial or personal---sympathetic understanding may maintain a steady performance (6:380).

If a particular problem in the professional area arises, an understanding attitude on the part of the principal may create enough desire in the individual to see the fulfillment of the goal or desire (4:61; 7:87).

Helpfulness. Members of the faculty may occasionally come upon some problem they cannot solve. At such a time the principal should exercise all of his knowledge and understanding to help the person arrive at a solution. This help should be available regardless of the type of problem presented. Teachers frequently seek help in finding ways to become better teachers. The principal must offer suggestions, present areas to be strengthened, and praise wherever possible.

The principal should continually strive to offer constructive aid. All too often we may find that one may sit back and wait to be asked instead of volunteering help (4:61). On the other hand, thought may be required in deciding when not to offer aid. Creativity and self-expression, very necessary to morale, may be destroyed by too much assistance (1:41; 2:42).

Another role of the principal is disciplining his students. The teacher may not deem the problem of sufficient importance or seriousness to bring the student to the office. Through testing, observation, and consultation, the principal may recognize that a child will be a problem (6:345; 6:353).

Serenity. The principal is often placed in a situation of duress where a calm facade is important. A crisis may arise where the principal is observed by the entire faculty. Such an occurrence may be at some athletic, social, or musical event. In the maintaining respect and upholding the morale of the faculty, the principal must exert every effort to remain calm. Should some student be injured, the actions of the principal are more easily viewed by the teachers and parents.

In the event of a fire within the building, the principal will be looked to as the guiding hand. Should his composure be broken, staff and general morale very likely would fail.

At graduation time some students may display a lack of respect for school standards. Any outward appearance other than serenity may defeat staff morale. The principal would probably lose respect and understanding due him.

In the face of serious disagreements at faculty gatherings, it is essential that the principal maintain a cool head. If temper and impatience are exhibited by the principal, morale may be impaired (11:15).

Facing these situations with an air of calm and control can do much toward maintaining needed morale.

Loyalty. The principal may be placed in several situations where loyalty to the staff or a staff member is required. Should a parent create some serious pressure against a staff member, the principal will be called on to make an unbiased analysis of the problem. He should first give the staff member an opportunity to explain his point of view. He is then in a better position to defend the action by his staff member.

An occasion may arise when the principal may be called on to defend the action of a faculty member to the school board. If he cannot successfully defend the action of the staff member by knowledge of relevant facts, he may undermine morale (6:384).

In the area of finance and work load, the principal may be called on to act as liason between the staff and the school

board. He must evaluate all evidence and factual material before he makes a decision. If he does make his decisions on this basis, he will be less likely to impair the confidence his staff has in him. He could create greater admiration by using this method of decision-making (7:86; 8:500-1; 12:42).

Aims and goals are also necessary in formulating the curriculum of the school. In the formulation of these goals, Morgan says:

For any one group to function as a complete unit, there must be a feeling of unity. Aims and objectives of the school unit must be set forth. Not only educational aims and objectives but those which state for what the school stands (11:15).

Since the public is affected by these aims and objectives, the principal may be called on to defend the stand of the faculty. Failure to aid the faculty at such times will certainly destroy morale.

In this day and age of criticism of teacher method and discussion topics, the principal may be confronted with a serious problem. Should a parent or group of parents object to a teacher's methods or discussion topics, the principal will be obliged to evaluate and deal with the situation. If upon investigation, the principal finds no fault with the teacher's presentation, immediate defense is required. Conversely, if the teacher is found to be at fault, a reprimand may be necessary. Morale can be strengthened by such action (7:87).

Being a forceful person and maintaining morale are very closely allied. To succeed, the principal must exhibit energetic attitudes toward all of his problem solving and personal

relations. Should some task seem overwhelming, great drive and force must be transmitted to the watchful eye of the faculty to create good morale. Leadership of an energetic nature is of prime importance in retaining the respect and morale of the staff. It is important for the principal to remember that "the real problem is to make leadership and the exercise of authority operate according to the accepted values and beliefs of our society" (6:235-245).

The principal must have the courage of his convictions. If consensus has been reached in relation to a problem, then the administrator is free to carry out the will of the majority. However, the feeling of always being right is not safe. The principal's views, aims, and objectives must not be forced on the group. Campbell supports this fact by stating that "individuals want freedom to exercise personal creativeness without autocratic controls" (1:41).

Dignity. In viewing this entity, Jacobson states,

Teachers prefer to work for or under a principal who knows good teaching, praises it freely and stimulates the interest of the teachers in self-improvement (8:495).

Remembering that morale is an emotional quality to be kindled, the principal, in order to maintain and develop morale, must respect the worth and dignity of each individual staff member. Still, as human beings we must reap the harvest of the collective praise of and for the group (1:41). It is also essential that the principal have faith in the human intelligence of his staff.

Facilities. No teacher likes to be surrounded by a building or school plant that is not well-designed or well-maintained. Whether laborer or white collar man, in pleasant surroundings the effectiveness of the individual is increased. It becomes the duty of the principal to see that the work area of the plant is up-to-date, cheerful, and adequate to meet the needs and desires of his teachers. Here again, should this problem arise, the teachers themselves may be called upon to offer criticism and suggestions in designing or altering a new or old building. If the principal is faced with and recognizes this problem and rectifies it, he will have increased morale (6:381).

The equipment used by the teachers as teaching aids and general materials in everyday work are another facet to be examined. If these working materials are not of sufficient number (teacher-machine ratio) to facilitate proper instruction, morale will fail. If antiquated, inefficient equipment is being used, the same problem arises. The role of the principal in curtailing such feelings within the staff is to see that equipment is adequate in vintage as well as numerically efficient (6:83).

Equipping the athletic, physical education, and recreation programs creates the same problem. School pride, hence morale, will fail if representative teams present a shabby appearance. Coaches need to feel that the teams are safely equipped. The players should appear neat to spectators and opposing teams. Physical education programs must be equipped to adequately

meet the needs of a comprehensive program. This is also true in drama, debate, and other school-sponsored activities.

Teachers need to be separated from their students during part of the day. A good place to meet this need is the private faculty lunch room. A quiet, cheerful atmosphere apart from the students does wonders for teacher morale. Whenever possible some arrangement should be made to provide for such needs (12:42).

Providing an area for teachers' rest and relaxation is of great benefit to the principal in upholding his role. In this era of changing attitude toward teacher habits, some provision should be made for a coffee or smoking area. Regardless of the personal attitude of the principal concerning normal types of relaxation, the desires of the teachers should come first again. The teachers should be allowed to help formulate policies in this area--morale will be strengthened (12:42).

Some principals feel that recreation programs for teachers are of great benefit. Even if the recreation be only a quiet social gathering, benefits are derived. Handel includes in his writings two qualities derived from recreation, "...mental health and physical fitness" (7:86).

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

In summary we find that the principal can best increase the morale of his staff if he:

1. discards a dry attitude and cultivates friendly, understanding relations with his teachers.
2. has faith and confidence in all his co-workers.
3. creates a democratic atmosphere so that a modern approach to administration can be maintained.
4. gives his teachers full public credit for their contributions.
5. solicits the participation of qualified individuals in the solution of problems.
6. distributes the teaching load so that it is equalized within the school and reduces extra assignments to the minimum.
7. discovers the potentialities of the staff and utilizes their abilities to the utmost.
8. exercises leadership but not at the expense of individual freedom.
9. judges the work being carried on in terms of the abilities of the person concerned and the conditions involved.
10. encourages faculty social organizations so that friendships and loyalties can offer the teachers common ground (7:87).

A study of the importance of the role of the principal in relation to staff morale is necessarily and primarily a study in human relations. The importance of positive human relations is the prime underlying factor in all of the works cited. The principal must maintain the highest standards of professional ethics with the entire staff.

Tact must be exercised in guiding and coordinating staff projects, problems, interests, and activities. A sympathetic treatment of professional and domestic problems of staff members is a prime requisite in good morale. The principal must also be available to give and receive advice, complaints, and critical suggestions.

An aura of calm must be transmitted by the principal under many trying circumstances, to retain respect of the staff. The principal must back his staff to the utmost under many critical circumstances and in the general relations with the public and the school board. An energetic approach to problem solving will go far in building and maintaining morale. The aims and views of the principal, however, are not always right nor omnipotent. It is important for the principal to maintain perspective.

Praise and honors should be bestowed on individual and group alike. The personal dignity of the principal in his carriage and demeanor must be promoted by himself. A plant must offer some pride to the teacher to insure good morale. Equipment must be up-to-date and adequate to instill confidence and pride within the staff. Some area must be provided for teacher privacy and comfort. Freeing the teacher of a continuous routine may develop morale. The principal must fairly allot the work load and extracurricular load of each teacher.

Taken in its entirety, the task of the principal in

promoting and maintaining a high morale factor within his staff may seem staggering. Yet, if he is to succeed, these areas must be dealt with and given as much, if not more, time than any other area of his duties.

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APPENDIX A

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

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APPENDIX B

RATING SCALE FOR PRINCIPALS

This rating is to be entirely impersonal. Do not sign your name or make any other mark on the paper which could serve to identify the rater.

Be sure to put your check on the line where you think it should be to express your judgment on the principal.

INTEREST IN SCHOOL

/ / /	/ / /	/ / /
Interested in the classroom progress and all the school activities.	Seems mildly interested.	Takes very little interest.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND GROWTH

/ / /	/ / /	/ / /
Thoroughly trained for his position. Continues enthusiastically his professional training.	Fairly well trained but does little toward further preparation.	Has no professional training and does not attempt to get any.

ORGANIZATION

/ / /	/ / /	/ / /
So organizes his work that school runs smoothly on all occasions.	School runs smoothly most of the time.	Much confusion.

BALANCE BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

/ / /	/ / /	/ / /
Gives much time to helpful supervision.	Often involved in details. Little time for supervision.	Allows details of administration to consume full time and energy.

SUPERVISION

/ / /	/ / /	/ / /
Attitude inspires confidence. Many positive criticisms. Negative criticisms followed by helpful suggestions.	Many criticisms with few helpful suggestions.	Many nonconstructive criticisms.

STIMULATING INTELLECTUAL ATTITUDE

Inspires teachers to investigate and study educational problems and methods. Creates desire for research.	Arouses slight interest in study of new problems and methods.	Discourages desire to investigate and experiment.
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------

APPROACHABILITY

Teachers and pupils feel free to talk over problems.	Teachers and pupils hesitate to ask for interviews.	Teachers and pupils avoid interviews when possible.
------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------

NEW IDEAS

Presentation to faculty: Carefully thought out before presentation. Order of presentation: One new idea or method or experiment thoroughly established before advancing another.	Partly thought out before presentation. Second plan advanced before the first is established.	Vague and indefinite. Several new plans launched at same time.
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KNOWLEDGE OF DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTAL OR SUBJECT PROBLEMS

Familiar with problems of each department or subject.	Familiar with most of the departments or subjects.	Familiar with only a few.
-------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------	---------------------------

ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARD PRINCIPAL

Teachers have full confidence in him. Regard him as a helpful leader and co-worker.	Teachers accept his leadership but lack enthusiasm. Some feeling of restraint.	Teachers fear him. Is dogmatic and tyrannical.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------

SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Always courteous and considerate.	Tries to be considerate but finds it difficult at times.	Always sarcastic or "hardboiled."
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

FAIRNESS IN ASSIGNING WORK AND EXTRACURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

/ / / / /	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Absolutely fair and impartial to all.	Tendency to give more work to willing and capable.	Constantly assigns work to willing and capable, instead of bringing out timid, inefficient, or indolent.

RELATIONS WITH PARENTS

/ / / / /	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Always courteous, considerate, and sympathetic.	Usually considerate and sympathetic.	Antagonistic, sarcastic.

SENSE OF PROPORTION AND HUMOR

/ / / / /	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Always keeps proper balance; not over-critical or over-sensitive.	Fairly well balanced.	Over-serious; no sense of relative values.

SELF-RELIANCE AND CONFIDENCE

/ / / / /	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Always sure of himself; meets difficulties with poise.	Fairly self-confident; occasionally disconcerted.	Hesitant, timid, uncertain.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

/ / / / /	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Always well groomed; clothes neat and clean.	Usually somewhat untidy; gives little attention to appearance.	Slovenly; clothes untidy and ill kept.

PERSONAL PECULIARITIES

/ / / / /	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Wholly free from annoying mannerisms.	Moderately free from objectional peculiarities.	Constantly exhibits irritating mannerisms.