

Educators must be involved in a program of growth that enhances their contribution to students.

# The Principles of Principals Helping Principals

by James D. Singer and Robert D. Anderson

Nobody is an effective island in the sea of professional development. It is imperative that educators be involved in a program of growth that constantly enhances their contributions to students. The building principal helps establish the importance of this process by being personally committed to such a program. Although geographic barriers sometimes prevent Kansas principals from engaging in a higher education program with a major university, several professional organizations provide opportunities for growth.

The Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals (KAESP) makes many in-service opportunities available to elementary principals. The annual fall workshop provides an opportunity for participating principals to hear three speakers of national prominence address total group gatherings. Two rounds of mini-session workshops are also available at this meeting, and principals may choose to attend two of these 14 presentations. Most are presented by Kansas principals, superintendents, professors of education and classroom teachers. All programs are selected for and by practicing elementary principals, and input regarding selection of topics is solicited from KAESP members.

KAESP also offers a summer workshop session on the campus of a state university. A featured speaker makes a daily presentation that is coupled with sessions presented by practicing Kansas educators and members of the business sector.

Six professional publications are sent to member principals annually. Timely educational articles are included which are written by a host of practicing Kansas educators. The first yearly publication of this magazine is sent to all practicing Kansas elementary principals and superintendents.

Professional development days are sponsored on an annual basis for principals, other educational personnel, and parents. During the past year, a training session for "Assertive Discipline For Parents" was sponsored by KAESP.

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Drive-in conferences are sponsored by KAESP in each of the six membership districts twice yearly. These late afternoon and evening conferences are within easy driving distance. They are developed by Kansas principals and are attended by members and non-members of KAESP.

Publications and training sessions for beginning principals and retired principals have reached many.

The United School Administrators is nationally unique in composition and in efforts to provide training for all Kansas school administrators. Members include superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, special education directors, curriculum directors, professors of educational administration, transportation directors, food service directors, library/media directors, and business office directors. A board of directors represents each of the associations and is responsible for the educational planning for the organization.

Regular publications are prepared by the organization and sent to members. Information regarding Kansas and national legislation, educational news are included.

An annual conference is held in Wichita and features three speakers of national prominence. Several mini-session workshops are also presented by Kansas educators. Meetings including the entire membership are held with time allotted for member associations to meet to provide in-service for their members. Last year, KAESP presented a session regarding "Standards For Quality Elementary Schools."

The United School Administrators takes an active role with the state Legislature in the development of educational legislation.

Several smaller in-service sessions for all educational administrators are made available throughout the school year at many locations throughout the state. These are planned and developed by representatives of each member association of the umbrella group.

Phi Delta Kappa currently has 16 local chapters in Kansas with each chapter providing educational opportunities through programming for educators throughout the state. Many local chapters also provide research grants to members to encourage research.

Through the Phi Delta Kappa foundation, many national speakers come to Kansas and speak to members and non-members of the organization. Education-oriented travel opportunities are partially underwritten by the international organization for individual chapter members.

Their monthly publication, "The Kappan," is considered one of the most prestigious educational journals. It is sent to all members in addition to community members designated by local chapters.

The NAESP provides a multiplicity of opportunities to members. To equalize representation of members in the governance of the NAESP, the country is divided into nine zones. Each zone is comprised of a group of states with similar total membership to assure equalization. It also provides another opportunity for elementary and middle school principals to make various in-service opportunities available to members of the association.

These zone association groups meet annually. The theme of the conferences vary. The efforts to provide members the opportunity to hear recognized educators and participate in workshops and small group sessions have proved invaluable.

Meetings in regional efforts of this kind help participants define and discuss common problems. They present

opportunities to share in the expertise of fellow principals by sharing concerns or problems indicative of local schools for respected colleagues to critique and discuss. From the experience of others, many principals avoid certain problems. They also use this effort as a means to recover from problems already existing in their schools.

The NAESP presents many opportunities for members to participate and to contribute in-service actions to fellow principals.

The annual convention is an involved operation. It is designed to be of maximum assistance and professional renewal for principals throughout the country. Input by members help develop the content of the convention program, and contributes to making it a valuable and personal professional opportunity.

General sessions bring outstanding and recognized speakers to address the group on various issues. These speakers bring national and international perspectives to topics of interest to those attending.

Accompanying these general sessions are many individualized efforts to bring assistance and problem-solving skills to principals. Leaders of the majority of these efforts are practicing principals who not only know how to initiate these various techniques but have done so in their own schools with positive and productive results. The results of these principals helping principals efforts are meaningful and valid techniques for participants to take back home and incorporate in their own professional activities.

The "Principal Speaks" are sessions designed to make it possible for those who have experienced success in certain areas to share and provide leadership and expertise with colleagues from throughout the country. These opportunities for in-service bring integrity to the profession with leadership provided to principals active in the daily operation of schools.

Discussion leaders at tables designated to cover certain areas of school administration leave a potpourri for principals seeking assistance. These seminar activities are led by discussion leaders who seek to bring out the broadest coverage with the greatest depth of help for interested principals.

Outstanding speaker sessions bring widely known educators to the convention to share their expertise. Good speaker selection by those charged with convention plan-

ning have made these activities standing-room-only sessions in most instance.

The "Principal," a prize-winning and recognized magazine, has also proven to be a source of personal in-service for principals. It brings articles, studies, and reports to principals on a regular basis. The material is written by a wide variety of active professionals in the field of elementary education. Many of these people are elementary and middle school principals. They cover a wide range of topics and are designed to help answer and provide insight into various aspects of elementary education that confront principals each day.

A fairly recent addition to the communications division of NAESP is the "Here's How" publication. This one-page monograph deals with one specific part of the principalship. These are designed to give building administrators an opportunity to have a quick to read publication for enhancing their effectiveness. This comprehensive sheet gives the principal a quick lesson in areas such as dealing with the media, how to hold effective parent-teacher conferences, discipline, drugs and alcohol, and many other titles.

For the past two years, principals from throughout the country have met in June for a NAESP "Fellows" program. This effort has been held in cooperation with the Disney Corporation and has been an excellent corporate education effort for the in-service of principals to assist in developing more effective management skills. It has also helped bridge any gaps of communication efforts that might have existed between these two entities.

Local and state associations continually strive to meet the needs of principals in their area by providing a multitude of in-service activities. These sessions reflect a continuing feeling and responsibility on the part of principals to help themselves develop the skills needed to be more effective educational leaders.

Through all levels of these professional organizations a thread of education is woven to enhance the abilities and techniques of elementary and middle school principals by the use of meaningful in-service efforts.

In-service of principals by principals strives to meet current demands made on these administrators. The involvement of skilled leaders from the ranks of the principals makes the results of these efforts more meaningful, effective, and with the greatest possible help possible.

Quality schools demand and deserve no less.