A Central Administration Internship in the Kalamazoo Public School System

James D. Arnett

Western Michigan University

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A CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP IN THE
KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

by

James D. Arnett

A Project Report
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Specialist in Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1985
A CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP IN THE KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

James D. Arnett, Ed.S.
Western Michigan University, 1985

The Kalamazoo Public Schools serve approximately 14,000 students in 25 schools. Located in Kalamazoo County, the Kalamazoo Public Schools District is one of the largest employers in the county as they have 1,400 employees. The Kalamazoo Public School District is operated by a seven member Board of Education and supported by the people that reside within the school district boundaries.

The internship involved 240 hours working with personnel in Central Administration in the areas of public relations, personnel procedures and practices, organizational structure, curriculum development and regulations in special education, financial planning, contract negotiations and federal and state programs.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my appreciation to Dr. Lawrence B. Schlack for arranging the internship and supervision during it. A very special thank you is given to Mr. L. Henry Goodwyn, Assistant Superintendent, who personally arranged, organized and monitored this experience.

James D. Arnett
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CHAPTER I

A PROPOSAL FOR INTERNSHIP IN THE KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Background Information and Rationale for Internship

The experiences in the education field of this educator have been primarily limited to relatively small school districts. Those experiences have occurred while in the following positions:

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<td>4-6</td>
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During the last 20½ years, the experiences of this educator have been rich and varied. However, the one obvious shortcoming in these opportunities has been the size of the districts. The smallest district is Martin with 820 students while the largest district was Fremont with a total enrollment of 2,175. This educator strongly feels that an experience in central office administration of a relatively large school system is needed in order to view education from a broader perspective.

Kalamazoo Public Schools with an enrollment of 12,037 students
offers a wide variety of experiences for administrative and educational leadership skills development. It provides a variety of administrative positions that do not exist in smaller systems, and offers a multi-racial setting that this educator has had minimal contact with.

The Proposed Internship Experience

The proposed specific areas of experience included:

1. Public Relations
2. Personnel Procedures and Practices
3. Organizational Structure
4. Contract Negotiations
5. Financial Planning
6. Federal and State Programs
7. Special Education Rules and Regulations
8. Curriculum Development at the Secondary Level

The main concern during the course of this internship was the development of specific skills. The following section organizes the objectives and skills developed.

Desired Outcomes of Internship Experience

Development of Technical Skills

During the course of this internship, the intern attempted to meet five objectives in developing technical skills. The first objective was to determine the role of the superintendent in
seeing that the district is financially solvent and that financial records are kept. To do this the intern met with Mr. Gerlad Hedrick, Director of Budget and Finance in the district and examined financial records and reports of the district. The intern was able to present an explanation of the superintendent's role in relation to financial affairs of the Kalamazoo Public Schools system.

The second objective was to develop an awareness of the state and federal laws governing vocational education and special education programs. To meet this objective, the intern reviewed the state and federal laws covering the implementation of these programs. The intern interviewed the department head of each of these areas paying special attention to their sensitivity to state and federal laws. This experience resulted in the development of two terminal skills. First, the intern is able to cite the state and federal laws that govern special education and vocational education programs, and secondly, the intern is able to locate suggestions for the implementation of laws involving these programs.

The third objective was to develop an increased expertise in the use of and in understanding the various federal and state aid programs. To accomplish this the intern examined the federal and state regulations governing financial aid programs, and discussed the state and federal programs presently in operation within the district, with the specific program director. A terminal skill that is a result of this study is the ability to cite available state and federal aid programs and point out rules and regulations found in these programs.
To develop skills used in the writing of educational objectives and the analyzing of secondary instruction was the fourth objective. The intern met with the head of secondary instruction, and became a part of the curriculum committee as they examined secondary instruction. The terminal skill is that the intern is able to demonstrate an understanding of the curriculum evaluation process and the ability to produce sound educational objectives.

The fifth technical skill development objective was to determine appropriate large school methods for the evaluation of personnel, the recall procedures employed and the hiring practices used in the Kalamazoo Public Schools. The objective was accomplished in two experiences. The intern discussed the procedures employed by the superintendent in his evaluation of people under his direct supervision. The intern also studied procedures employed by the many directors in the system as well as methods used by line administrators. As a result of these contacts and experiences, the intern is able to demonstrate an understanding of the evaluation techniques and hiring practices utilized by key administrators in the Kalamazoo Public School system.

Development of Conceptual Skills

The first of four objectives to be met in the development of conceptual skills was to acquire an increased understanding of the operation of the central office of the Kalamazoo Public Schools as a whole and as specific departmental units. To accomplish this, the intern interviewed each department head within the central
office, examined the organizational chart of the Kalamazoo Public Schools' central office, and read individual job descriptions for each department. These experiences resulted in the intern being able to discuss the organizational structure of a large school central office.

To review the role of the assistant superintendent as a subordinate to the superintendent was the next conceptual objective. The intern met frequently with the assistant superintendent, observed his office and worked with him whenever possible. The terminal skill is that the intern is able to point out specific duties of the assistant superintendent and is able to relate how these duties are carried out within the organizational structure of the Kalamazoo Public Schools.

The third objective was to analyze the role of the superintendent and the director of budget and finance in relation to contract negotiations. The experiences and contacts required to meet this objective were that the intern read existing contracts and study rules and regulations that govern collective bargaining. Following this research, discussions with the superintendent and director of budget and finance regarding their individual roles in negotiations provided additional insight. As a result the intern is able to discuss collective bargaining procedures, and point out the budget and finance director's and the superintendent's responsibilities in these negotiations.

The fourth conceptual objective was to analyze the role of the director of special education in the development of curriculum. This was done by having the intern communicate with the director the
manner in which she coordinates curriculum development for special education programs within the Kalamazoo Public School system. The intern examined current curriculum developments and their implementation. This resulted in the terminal skill of being able to discuss and list the responsibilities of the special education director in curriculum development.

Development of Human Skills

The first of three human skills to be developed was to become familiar with the superintendent’s responsibilities as the official educational leader of the Kalamazoo Public Schools. To meet this objective the intern read and studied guidelines set down for the superintendent’s interaction with his school board, parent groups and community organizations. The intern observed the interaction between the superintendent and other representatives at meetings and other gatherings. The terminal skill developed is that the intern is able to discuss the role of the superintendent as the Kalamazoo Public School representative and cite any relevant state or local laws pertaining to this responsibility.

The second objective, under human skills development, was to discuss the role of the superintendent as it relates to the supervision of Kalamazoo Public School employees. The experiences and contacts used in meeting this objective were to talk with the superintendent about his role as district supervisor and to examine charts and diagrams which show and explain the organizational structure of the Kalamazoo Public Schools and explain how this
structure relates to the superintendent's role as district supervisor.

The final objective under human skills was to analyze the role of the director of community education and public relations relative to his responsibilities as liaison between the school system and the community. The intern attended board meetings, and committee meetings with the director. The intern also discussed responsibilities of the director as they pertain to community education and public relations. The terminal skill resulting from these experiences and contacts is that the intern is able to outline the manner in which a community education and public relations specialist would disseminate information to the community regarding the school.

Summary Statement of Proposed Internship

The specific skills mentioned above were developed through time spent working in the eight experience areas listed previously. Evaluation will be accomplished through the summary from the daily log; from information provided by Mr. L. Henry Goodwyn, organization supervisor; and by the Western Michigan University faculty advisor.
SKILLS DEVELOPED DURING THE INTERNSHIP

The primary concern of the intern during this experience was the development of specific skills in three areas: technical, conceptual, and human relations. Although two hundred and forty hours sounds like a lot of time, the time line is actually quite confining when the development of specific skills is involved. The following is an attempt to describe my impression of skill development in the areas listed in the original proposal.

In the area of technical skills development, time was spent with many central office personnel in meeting the objectives. Skills in understanding financial planning were achieved by working with the superintendent and the director of budget and finance. The intern was provided with a school district budget and spent time reviewing the material and questioning the assistant superintendent in regard to this document. Further financial involvement included a discussion with the directors of each department relative to their budget, how that budget was developed and the degree of their involvement in this process.

Developing skills in the understanding of and writing of educational objectives was limited to the observation of curriculum study groups in action and to meetings with Ms. Judith Johnson, Director of Secondary Education. Ms. Johnson shared with the intern the current goals and objectives for secondary education and areas
that were slated for change.

An understanding of state and federal regulations regarding special education was developed through readings assigned by Ms. Marion Ross, Director of Special Education, and Mr. L. Henry Goodwyn, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, as well as interviews with the above mentioned individuals.

Experiences which developed skills in understanding federal and state programs were developed by having the intern interview the person responsible for the monitoring of these special programs within the school system. The intern was given the opportunity to observe the migrant program in action. The observation of this federal program in action and interviews of students and staff added to the intern's understanding. State programs such as the Article III math and reading programs were discussed and guidelines were read.

An appreciation of the personnel procedures involved with staff evaluation and hiring procedures was developed by having the intern interview the director of employee services and survey the evaluation tools used in the system. A familiarization with the many district wide labor contracts assisted in the intern's understanding of personnel procedures.

Conceptual and human skills were developed through the internship. The conceptual skills of understanding the central administration procedures and practices, understanding the organizational structure, and clarifying the role and duties of the educational leader were interrelated. The human skills of
developing competencies in communication, developing favorable environment for staff, and developing positive public relations were also closely related.

The intern was allowed access to the central office mainstream and was able to observe personnel in various positions within the administrative structure as well as observing the relationships of supervisors and subordinates. The opportunity to participate in meetings which involved the use of problem-solving and mutual goal setting techniques was presented to the intern.

The relationship between the administration and the board of education was reflected during board meetings and by talking with the superintendent and assistant superintendent. An understanding of this relationship was developed through the above experiences and through the reading of all reports that were submitted to the board.

A better understanding of the public relations network was developed through extensive interviews with the directors of community education and public relations. An examination of the public relations techniques, i.e. brochures, lapel buttons, and internal communications added to the intern's appreciation for the complexities of public relations in a system of this size.

In summary, the following specific skills were developed or improved as a result of the internship:

1. TECHNICAL SKILLS: Understanding financial planning, understanding secondary curriculum development, understanding special education rules and regulations, and understanding federal and state program guidelines.
2. CONCEPTUAL SKILLS: Understanding the organizational structure, understanding the administrative procedures and practices, and understanding the roles and duties of various administrative leadership positions.

3. HUMAN SKILLS: Developing an understanding of public relations techniques, understanding skills and techniques in problem solving, and understanding superintendent-board communications.
CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE INTERNSHIP

The intern has two recommendations for improving the internship. First, the intern needs to spend more time on one specific area of the central office. The exposure to a variety of experiences was good and will prove valuable, but the intern feels that a greater concentration of time in one area with assigned tasks would have proven more practical. The second recommendation would be to develop a stipend system so that the intern could take time from his current employment and literally be paid for services rendered during the course of the internship.
CHAPTER IV

WEEKLY SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES

WEEK #1: June 10, 12, 20, 24, & 26, 1985

The intern was introduced to Mr. Henry Goodwyn, Assistant Superintendent, and to the staff in the superintendent's office.

Mr. Goodwyn outlined administrator responsibilities and discussed the history of the Kalamazoo Public Schools with the intern.

The intern was assigned the reading of the Personnel Policies of the Kalamazoo Public Schools as well as the manual entitled Programs and Services of the Kalamazoo Public Schools.

This first week was spent in many introductions and discussions with staff from all departments within the central office.

The intern was given an environment in which to work and made to feel a part of the organization.

WEEK #2: July 8 - July 12, 1985

Mr. L. Henry Goodwyn arranged it so that the intern could have a copy of the contracts, negotiated with support personnel, bus drivers, custodians, office employees, food service personnel, administrators, elementary and secondary professional staff. The intern spent many hours reviewing these contracts and making notes of the differences found in contractual wording from one bargaining group to the next.
Mr. Goodwyn again made himself available to discuss the agreements and explain to the intern how he perceived these tools to be working and speculate on upcoming bargaining.

The intern then interviewed a custodian that worked at the central office and questioned him regarding this perception of the agreement.

As the week progressed, the intern noted the degree to which larger systems are unionized. The intern was especially surprised to note that the principals were members of local 2150 of the United Auto Workers.

WEEK #3: July 14 - July 18, 1985

The week started with an interview with Mr. Mahlon Lantz, Director of Employee Services. Mr. Lantz explained the duties of his job and gave the intern his definition of personnel work. After sharing with the intern the criteria used by the Kalamazoo Public Schools for the hiring of personnel, Mr. Lantz discussed the issue of maintaining racial balance and the aspect of fairness in hiring practices.

Another meeting with Mr. Goodwyn was held and the layoff procedure was discussed as it pertained to the current hiring practices.

School board policies and procedures were made available to the intern to review prior to the first board meeting.

The intern reviewed material from superintendent to school board and prepared to attend school board meeting.
WEEK #4: July 19 - July 25, 1985

The intern was given the opportunity to interview the individual that is heading up the academically talented program for the Kalamazoo Public Schools, Mrs. Lori Holland. Unlike many smaller school systems in the area, the Kalamazoo Public Schools do not recognize the "talent" in the area of gifted and talented - their thrust is strictly in the area of the academically talented. The intern learned that the rationale for this approach is that the community resources are such that the talented individual would have an opportunity to express this skill without school intervention.

Mrs. Lori Holland arranged for the intern to spend some time observing their summer school program in session.

Another meeting was held with Mr. Mahlon Lantz, Director of Employee Services. Personal goals for the district were discussed with the intern at this meeting.

Mr. L. Henry Goodwyn arranged for the intern to meet with Mr. Fletcher Lewis, Coordinator of Physical Education and Athletics for the Kalamazoo Public Schools. Materials were presented to the intern regarding athletic administrative philosophy, budget and personnel.

The intern then arranged to meet with Mr. Charles Holland, Coordinator of Vocational Education and Adult Education. State and federal guidelines regarding vocational education were discussed and materials were presented to the intern for his study. Adult education was also discussed and Mr. Holland outlined his philosophy...
of adult education and how he hoped to involve the community college in his plans.

The intern then traveled to Loy Norrix High School for an interview with Mr. Jack Blank, Principal. Mr. Blank discussed his many years as principal at Loy Norrix and shared handbook, textbook lists, personnel lists and budget information with the intern. The intern was given the day to examine facilities and grounds of the school and interview office personnel and custodians.

WEEK #5: July 26 - July 31, 1985

The Director of Secondary Education, Ms. Judith Johnson, met with the intern and took a great deal of time outlining their secondary curriculum. Curriculum development, change, and implementation were discussed and Ms. Johnson gave the intern copies of current programs and discussed her role in the development and evaluation of their current 3-5 year plan.

The intern then was scheduled to spend some time with Mr. Gerald Hedrick, Director of Budget and Finance. The intern was assigned readings in the manuals used for school district finance. Mr. Hedrick discussed the importance of the state aid formula and enrollment to "in-formula" districts. Mr. Hedrick went on to explain his feeling that all districts regardless of size have the same economic breakdown.

Dr. Frank Rapley, Superintendent of the Kalamazoo Public Schools, met with the intern and discussed superintendent-school board relations, chain of command within central office and
financial considerations relative to decision making. Information relative to the recent school board meeting was reviewed with the intern.

Dr. Rapley created a new central office position after accepting the Kalamazoo superintendency. The position of Director of Community Education and Public Relations was given to Dr. Stanley Olsen. Dr. Rapley felt the intern should be aware of the role Dr. Olsen plays and suggested the two meet.

Dr. Olsen was extremely helpful to the intern as he provided the intern with a bounty of information regarding the internal workings of central office. The intern was also supplied with information regarding goal setting procedures, public relations approaches and community survey work that was the responsibility of the director of public relations.

The intern was given school district policy information regarding special education to review prior to a meeting with Ms. Marion Ross, Director of Special Education.

Ms. Ross discussed special education from the perspective of the local district and shared information regarding responsibilities of the intermediate school district.

State guidelines and expectations were reviewed and the director provided the intern with information regarding evaluation of staff, county wide coordination and the parental appeal process.

Mr. Goodwyn again felt it was necessary for the intern to get out of the central office for a different perspective and arranged a meeting between the intern and Mr. John Caldwell, newly appointed
principal of Central High School.

Mr. Caldwell arranged for the intern to spend time observing the facilities and grounds. Again, school personnel were interviewed regarding the positions within the Kalamazoo School system.

The intern found Mr. Caldwell to be very helpful. His philosophy of school discipline and administrator-student relationship was refreshing and enlightening.

WEEK #6: August 1, 2, 8, 14, & 15, 1985

The intern was invited to sit in on a central office planning meeting in Mr. Goodwyn's office. During the meeting, administrative strategies were discussed as well as a complete review of the upcoming school board meeting agenda.

Arrangements were then made for the intern to interview Ms. Karen Yager, Coordinator of Compensatory Education and the systems bi-lingual program.

Ms. Yager took much time explaining the systems use of state as well as federal dollars to benefit the students of the Kalamazoo Schools. Record keeping and monitoring of these programs was gone over in detail.

Ms. Yager then arranged for the intern to spend a day visiting the Lincoln School migrant program. The intern interviewed staff, observed classes, and spent time with students.

The intern was invited to visit junior high and elementary buildings in the district to get a feel for where the students come from.
After viewing the size of the district, the intern was given the opportunity to meet with Mr. Tom Smith, Director of Transportation. Mr. Smith discussed the logistical problems involved with racial bussing in a city the size of Kalamazoo.

Mr. Smith explained his responsibilities in regard to route development, transportation of private school children and the calling off of school for inclement weather.

The intern was then taken on a tour of the transportation department and given an opportunity to interview department employees.

WEEK #7: August 16 & 19, 1985

The intern was given the opportunity of going over the teacher contract negotiations with Mr. L. Henry Goodwyn. During this meeting, administrative strategies, the union position and financial considerations were discussed.

Mr. Goodwyn assigned the reading of the current contracts with: The Kalamazoo Education Association, Food Service Managers, Food Service Employees, Kalamazoo Association of Public Schools Employees (custodians), Teamsters (bus drivers), Educational Support Personnel (aides), Association of Education Office Employees, and the contracts with the elementary and secondary principals,
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

My internship with the Kalamazoo Public Schools has been educational and rewarding. I enjoyed working in the many different central office departments. The directors and their staff were always pleasant to learn from and work with. They gave an open invitation for me to inquire about methods, procedures, and techniques used within the school system.

My internship was an experience that I perceive to be a tremendous success, and I enjoyed it very much. I am grateful for the opportunity to gain experiences from such knowledgeable administrators and educational leaders in the Kalamazoo Public Schools.
### APPENDIX

#### LOG OF HOURS

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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