A Central Administration Internship in the Calhoun Intermediate School District

Donald J. Morris

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A CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP
IN THE
CALHOUN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT:

by

Donald J. Morris Jr.

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
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A CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP 
IN THE CALHOUN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Donald J. Morris Jr., Ed.S. 
Western Michigan University, 1983

The Calhoun Intermediate School District serves Calhoun County 
which is located in Southwestern Michigan, centered approximately at 
the intersection of I-94 and I-69. The school system serves students 
K-12 in 15 individual school districts. It serves as a link between 
local districts and the State Department of Education, furnishing 
services that single districts find difficult or impossible to 
perform. The CISD is operated by an intermediate school district 
board of education in cooperation with local boards of education and 
supported by the people of CISD and the people of the State of 
Michigan.

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

I wish to extend my appreciation to Dr. Lawrence B. Schlack for his assistance in arranging the internship and for his supervision during it. A special thank you to Mr. Warren J. Fudge, superintendent, and Mrs. Mary Currie, business office manager, who gave me the opportunity to enrich my experiences in becoming an administrator; and to my wife, Sally, and my sons, Brad and Greg, for their endless patience, encouragement, and support.

Donald J. Morris Jr.
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CHAPTER I

A PROPOSAL FOR INTERNSHIP
IN THE CALHOUN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Background Information and Rationale for Internship

The experiences in the education field of this educator have been limited to special education classrooms within juvenile detention facilities. Those experiences have occurred while in the following positions:

<table>
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<th>Position</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Student Teacher</td>
<td>Kalamazoo, MI</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-77</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Berrien Center, MI</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-83</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Marshall, MI</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>6 years</td>
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</table>

During this 9 years of institutional education, experiences have been broad and varied. While in these positions this educator has learned and practiced numerous technical, conceptual, and human skills, but strongly feels that an experience in central administration is needed in order to view education from a broader perspective.

Calhoun Intermediate School District offers a wide variety of experiences for administrative and educational leadership skills development. It is large enough to provide several positions in central administration, and specifically handles special education, which this educator has experienced only from a teacher's view.
The Proposed Internship Experience

The proposed specific areas of experience will include:

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

The primary objective during the internship is development of specific skills. The following section organizes the objectives and skills to be developed.

Projected Nature of Internship Experience

Development of Human Skills

The first of four human skills to be developed is to become familiar with the superintendent's responsibilities as the official representative of the Calhoun Intermediate School District. To meet this objective the intern will read and study the guidelines set down for the superintendent's interaction with constituent school districts, parent groups and community organizations. The intern will also observe the interaction between the superintendent and other representatives at meetings and other gatherings. The terminal skill developed will be that the intern will be able to discuss the role of the superintendent as the CISD representative and cite any
relevant state or local laws pertaining to this responsibility.

The second objective is to understand the rules of protocol governing the superintendent as he functions as the executive officer of the Calhoun Intermediate Board of Education. This will be done by observing the superintendent while he functions as executive officer at CISD board meetings.

The third objective, under human skills development, is to discuss the role of the superintendent as it relates to the supervision of all CISD employees. The experiences and contacts used in meeting this objective are 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 CISD. The resulting terminal skills are that the intern will be able to describe the organizational structure of the CISD and explain how this relates to the superintendent's role as district supervisor.

The final objective under human skills is to analyze the role of the director of special education in relation to his responsibilities as liaison between the special education staff and the community. The intern will attend agency board meetings, and committee meetings with the director of special education. The intern will also discuss responsibilities of the director as a consultant and special education coordinator. The terminal skill resulting from these experiences and contacts is that the intern will be able to outline the manner in which a director of special education would disseminate
information to CISD and local district special education personnel.

Development of Conceptual Skills

The first of four objectives to be met in the development of conceptual skills is to acquire an increased understanding of the operation of the CISD office as a whole and as individual departments. To accomplish this, the intern will interview each department head within the CISD office, examine a statement of purpose, and individual job descriptions for each department within the CISD, and examine organizational flow charts of the CISD. These experiences will result in the intern being able to discuss the organizational structure of an ISD.

To review the role of the business manager as a subordinate to the superintendent and as a department head, is the next conceptual objective. The intern will observe and work with the business manager as she plans, manages, and evaluates the financial and business affairs of the school district. The terminal skill is that the intern will be able to point out the specific duties of the business manager and be able to relate how these duties are carried out within the organizational structure of the CISD.

The third objective is to analyze the role of the superintendent and the business manager in relation to contract negotiations. The experiences and contacts required to meet this objective are that the intern will read and study the rules and regulations that govern collective bargaining, and will discuss with the superintendent and the business manager, their individual roles in negotiations.
As a result the intern will be able to discuss collective bargaining procedures, and point out the business manager and the superintendent's responsibilities in these negotiations.

The fourth conceptual objective is to analyze the role of the director of special education in the development of curriculum. This will be done by having the intern discuss with the director, the manner in which he coordinates curriculum development for special education programs within CISD. The intern will also examine any current curriculum developments and their implementation. This will result in the terminal skill of being able to discuss and list the responsibilities of the special education director in curriculum development.

Development of Technical Skills

During the course of this internship, the intern will attempt to meet five objectives in developing technical skills. The first objective is to develop an increased expertise in the use of and in understanding the various federal and state aid programs. To do this the intern will examine the federal and state regulations governing financial aid programs, and discuss the state and federal programs presently in operation within the CISD, with the specific program director. The resulting terminal skill is that the intern will be able to cite available state and federal aid programs and point out rules and regulations of these programs.

The second objective is 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 will examine financial records and reports of the CISD. The intern will then be able to present an explanation of the superintendent's role in relation to financial affairs of the CISD.

The third objective is to develop an awareness of the state and federal laws governing special education programs. To meet this objective, the intern will review the state and federal laws covering the implementation of special education programs. This will result in the development of two terminal skills. First, the intern will be able to cite the state and federal laws that govern special education programs, and secondly, the intern will be able to locate suggestions and guidelines for implementing the special education laws.

To develop the skills used in developing special education reports for CISD and local districts is the fourth objective. The intern will assist the special education director in development and dissemination of special education reports. The terminal skill will be that the intern will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the methods used in preparing special education reports.

The fifth technical skill development objective is to determine the appropriate methods for evaluating CISD personnel. This will be accomplished in two experiences. The intern will discuss the procedures employed by the superintendent in his evaluation of people under his direct supervision. The intern will also discuss and study the procedures employed by the director of special education in his evaluation of personnel under his direct supervision.
As a result of these contacts and experiences the intern will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the evaluation techniques utilized by the key administrators of the CISD.

Summary Statement of Proposed Internship

The above skills will be developed by working and consulting in the eight experience areas listed previously. Evaluation will be done through the summary from the daily log, from input from the organization supervisor, and by the Western Michigan University faculty advisor.
CHAPTER II

SKILLS DEVELOPED DURING THE INTERNSHIP

The primary objective of the internship was to develop specific skills in three areas: technical, conceptual, and human relations. The broad range of skills to be developed and the short length of time spent in the internship limited the extent that specific skills could be developed, but some time was spent in developing most of the skills listed in the original proposal for the internship.

In the area of technical skills development, time was spent with numerous central administrative personnel in meeting the objectives. Skills in understanding financial planning were achieved by working with the superintendent and the business manager. This proved to be the area in which the intern was able to spend the greatest amount of time and the area that provided the intern with many practical hands-on experiences. The intern was allowed to participate in the development of the 1982-83 annual budget. The intern was also asked to prepare the necessary materials for the school system banking. This experience included making deposits and withdrawal, interest calculations, appropriate journal and ledger entries, and financial reporting practices for the board of education. Further financial involvement included investment figuring and transactions. The intern was assigned the problem of deciding which investments to make, and was required to vindicate the decisions based on current investment market trends.
Developing skills in understanding curriculum development was limited to the familiarization with special programs under the Department of Instruction. These programs included: Gifted and Talented, Substance Abuse and Prevention, and Vocational Education programs. The Director of Instruction, Dr. Roger LaBonte, also spent time explaining the use of block grants to develop special programs and allowed the intern an opportunity to help write a proposal for a grant.

An understanding of the state and federal special education rules was developed by readings assigned the intern by the director of special education and the superintendent.

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 also given the opportunity to attend a meeting in Lansing with people from the Michigan Department of Education who are responsible for monitoring state and federal special programs such as Title I.

Conceptual and human skills were developed throughout 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 relations skills of developing competencies in communication, developing a favorable environment for staff, and developing positive public relations were also closely related.
The intern observed personnel in various positions within the administrative structure and observed the relationships of supervisors and subordinates. The intern was given the opportunity to participate in meetings which involved the use of problem-solving and mutual goal-setting techniques.

An understanding of administration-board relations was developed by talking with the superintendent and by attending board meetings. The intern was given a copy of all reports that were submitted to the board and was given the assignment of preparing an investment report for the board.

A better understanding of the public relations network was developed by attending a Rotary luncheon, legislative breakfast, and Schoolmasters meetings.

Skills in understanding human relations were further developed by the intern's involvement in contract negotiations. The intern attended negotiation meetings for the development of a new contract for teacher aides.

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

1. Technical Skills: Understanding financial planning, understanding special programs curriculum development, understanding special education rules and regulations.

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 of contract negotiations, and understanding superintendent-board communications.

The value of the internship, in terms of experiences which led to the development of skills as outlined in the original proposal, was greater than the intern had expected. The internship was both satisfying and fulfilling.
CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE INTERNSHIP

The intern has three recommendations for improving the internship. First, the intern needs to spend more time on one specific area of the intermediate district office. The variety of experiences was good and will prove to be valuable, but the intern feels that a more solid experience within one area would have been more practical. The second recommendation would be to make the internship longer and allow for financial arrangements to be made for services rendered by the intern. The third recommendation is to reduce the tuition rate for the internship. The intern is responsible for the initial development of the internship and its evaluation. This leaves the university with minimal responsibility and cost.
CHAPTER IV

WEEKLY SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES

Week #1, November 1 - November 5, 1982

The intern was introduced to the office personnel by Dr. Roger LaBonte, administrative assistant to the superintendent.

Mrs. Mary Currie, business office manager, discussed the intern's prospectus and her role in the internship.

The intern was assigned readings in the manuals used for school district finance.

Mr. Alfred Worde, director of special education, and Ms. Marlene Withers, assistant bookkeeper, explained their functions within the business office, and explained their relationships with the business manager.

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

The staff welcomed the intern and created a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.

Week #2, November 8 - November 12, 1982

It was arranged so that the intern could attend an office council meeting with the superintendent and the other department directors.

Mrs. Mary Currie arranged for the intern to travel to Lansing
with Mrs. Nancy Card to attend a meeting with Dr. Gerry Nester, about amendments to federal projects.

The intern studied the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act which was provided by the business manager. An explanation was also provided by the business manager as to how this act affects the operations of the business office.

The intern was assigned readings in cash management and in investments.

Mrs. Currie had the intern observe procedures used in filling in the cash flow worksheets.

Week #3, November 15 - November 19, 1982

The intern continued to do some work on the cash flow charts each day.

The intern was introduced to the accounts payable clerk, and he spent time becoming familiar with the clerk's functions in the business office.

The business manager explained transportation budgets and presented the intern with a local school district transportation budget for study and analysis.

Mrs. Becky Rocco arranged for the intern to go to Lansing and attend a Senate Education Committee meeting.

Mr. Warren Fudge, superintendent, took the intern to the monthly board meeting. The intern was introduced to the board and given a copy of the board report book.

Mr. Alfred Worde, director of special education, took the intern
to the Region 3 planning meeting for monitoring and reporting Section 52, 53, Title I, and Title VI projects.

This was a very busy, informative, and hectic week.

Week #4, November 22 - November 24, 1982

This was a short week because of the holiday break. The intern spent each day working with the business office manager on the completion of the general fund cash flow charts.

When the general fund cash flow chart was completed, the intern began preparing the special education fund cash flow chart.

Week #5, November 29 - December 3, 1982

This was a very beneficial week, as the intern picked up a lot of information concerning contract negotiations. The intern did this by attending negotiations meetings and discussing negotiation procedures with the business manager and other top negotiation team members.

Dr. Roger LaBonte arranged for the intern to accompany him to a Calhoun Area Superintendents Association dinner meeting.

The intern went to banks in Battle Creek with the business manager, where the intern was introduced to procedures and personnel of the bank's investment department.

The intern was assigned readings in two professional journals. The articles pertained to business office functions.
Week #6, December 6 - December 10, 1982

The intern spent one day this week becoming familiar with the filing procedures of the business office. The business manager assigned the intern the responsibility of preparing the monthly investment report for presentation at the next board of education meeting.

The intern was instructed in the procedures used in developing a pay schedule for the new teacher contract.

Time was spent this week in becoming familiar with the financial funding reports. The intern was given an opportunity to assist in preparing financial expenditure reports for the school system.

Week #7, December 13 - December 17, 1982

The intern worked with the superintendent and business manager on developing a new contract for non-administrative staff.

The intern discussed problem-solving techniques with the business manager and discussed ways she used these techniques when dealing with her staff.

The intern prepared checks for expenditures and accompanied the business manager on banking business.

Week #8, December 20 - December 21, 1982

The intern worked only two days this week and both days were spent with Dr. Roger LaBonte, administrative assistant to the superintendent. On the first day the intern attended two meetings with Dr.
LaBonte. The first was with Mr. Larry Straits and involved discussions on the topic of community surveys used for marketing education. The second meeting was in Battle Creek with Dr. Lawrence Schlack of the Western Michigan University, Educational Leadership Department. This meeting involved planning for an administrator's training program which was to be held at the Calhoun Intermediate School District service center building.

On the second day Dr. LaBonte and the intern reviewed the Department of Instruction's yearly goals and objectives. Dr. LaBonte also spent time explaining the various programs presently operating and in planning stages for the intermediate school system.

Week #9, December 27 - December 28, 1982

This week the intern again worked only two days at the intermediate office. These two days were spent with Mrs. Currie in the business office. The intern observed and assisted Mrs. Currie in preparation of the yearly budget.

Week #10, January 3 - January 7, 1983

Dr. LaBonte gave the intern the task of reading a grant proposal and submitting suggested changes in the form and content of the proposal. The intern worked with Dr. LaBonte's secretary in making changes in the grant proposal. Dr. LaBonte felt that the intern's suggested changes were very good and that the intern was to finish reviewing the grant proposal and make any changes he felt necessary without the approval of Dr. LaBonte.
The intern completed the paperwork for and accompanied the business manager on investment banking.

The intern was given the opportunity to meet with the contract negotiators while they discussed the teacher aides contract.

Week #11, January 10 - January 14, 1983

Mr. Warren Fudge, superintendent, arranged for the intern to accompany him to the office council meeting.

The intern spent time with the superintendent and discussed the superintendent's involvement in professional organizations. The intern also discussed with the superintendent, his selections of professional journals and why he subscribes to those specific ones.

The intern was shown the procedures used in operating the micro-computer for budget purposes, and was given the opportunity to experiment with the computer.

The intern was invited to attend an informal meeting between the business manager and her staff. This meeting was established so that the staff could explain to the office manager the problems they were having with other departments. These problems included a lack of communication and an apparent lack of proper use of office procedures.

Week #12, January 17 - January 21, 1983

The intern assisted the superintendent in preparing materials for the office attorney, concerning a suit being brought against the intermediate school system by a former employee.
The superintendent and the business manager spent a great deal of time working together this week. This situation created an opportunity for the intern to observe the working relationship between these two administrators.

The intern was shown how to complete a government employment survey conducted by the Bureau of Census.

The intern read over specific sections of the district's policy and procedures manual and made suggestions for possible revisions.

Week #13, January 22 - January 28, 1983

The intern met with the superintendent and his administrative assistant to discuss the district's policy and procedures manual. The intern was then given an assignment to review existing policies and procedures and offer suggestions for possible changes.

The superintendent arranged for the intern to attend a legislative breakfast meeting with him. Later in the day the superintendent met with the intern to discuss the topics presented by the legislators in the morning meeting.

Mr. Larry Straits met with the superintendent and the intern to discuss the present and future computer services utilized by the intermediate office.

The intern attended the Schoolmasters meeting with the superintendent. This meeting is monthly and is attended by all the superintendents in the county.
Week #14, January 31 - February 4, 1983

The intern was shown how to assign descriptions and computer codes to the budget.

Dr. LaBonte showed the intern the activities utilized by the CISD in purchasing supplies and services.

The intern attended a meeting with the director of special education, business manager, and assistant bookkeeper. The meeting was called so that preparations could be made for an insurance hearing.

The intern was given articles to read from professional journals.

The intern discussed the implications of the new contract on non-union personnel. The new contract calls for mandatory union fees to be paid by all non-administrative personnel (teachers) of the intermediate school district. This discussion was with Mr. Charles Dunham, union president.

Week #15, February 7 - February 11, 1983

The intern attended an administrative staff meeting with the superintendent.

Arrangements were made for the intern to attend an insurance workshop at Kent Intermediate School District office in Grand Rapids.

The intern attended the Southwestern Michigan School Business Officials Annual Winter Conference. While at this conference, the intern participated in workshops on finance and on communications.

The intern assisted the business manager in developing budget
reports for the Doris Klaussen Developmental Center energy projects.

Week #16, February 14 - February 16, 1983

The intern attended the office council meeting with the superintendent.

The business manager and the intern reviewed the office policies and procedures used in investment banking, for possible updating and revision.

The intern prepared a board report on energy conservation grants.

Mrs. Currie explained to the intern, the different ways to calculate interest rates on investment sources. She also explained the different sources of investments not utilized by her office, but available to school systems.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

My internship with the Calhoun Intermediate School District was very rewarding. I enjoyed working in the different areas of the intermediate office. The administrators and their staff were 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 a success, and I enjoyed it very much. I am grateful that I received the opportunity to gain experiences and training from such knowledgeable administrators and educational leaders in the Calhoun Intermediate School System.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

