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A Description of the Development of a Procedural Guide for Coordinating the Sturgis Public Schools' Language Arts Program

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A DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
A PROCEDURAL GUIDE FOR COORDINATING
THE STURGIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS'
LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

by

Viola A. Schuler

A Project Report
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
Specialist in Education Degree

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 1979

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my gratitude to the late Dr. William Viall who took the time after a class to encourage me to pursue the Specialist Degree. Dr. Viall, Dr. Weaver and Dr. Vaught provided invaluable guidance in completing the internship and preparing the internship document.

Mr. William Galberach, Administrative Assistant for the Sturgis Public Schools helped immensely by his guidance and support while I was fulfilling the internship requirements.

Thanks to Dr. Lawrence McConnell, Superintendent of Sturgis Public Schools, for his cooperation concerning the internship.

To the Language Arts Coordinating Committee for their faith in my leadership abilities, I will always be grateful.

My profound gratitude goes to my family who spurred me on during those times when I felt like retreating.

Viola A. Schuler

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A DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, ED-S., 1979

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM CURRICULUM.....	3
The curriculum as subject and subject matter	
The curriculum as experiences	
The curriculum as objectives	
Theories concerning analysis of curriculum and instruction	
The curriculum as a plan	
Curriculum plans and levels of planning	
Curriculum guides	
Horizontal and vertical articulation	
CHAPTER	
II. STRONG LEADERSHIP FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING.....	9
The role of the curriculum council leader	
System-wide curriculum council	
Functions of curriculum councils	
The role of the curriculum committee leaders or chairpersons	
The role of the curriculum committee members	
The fear of change	

	Page
Voluntary participation	
The role of the classroom to curriculum improvement	
Evaluation as a force shaping curriculum improvement	
The use of research for curriculum improvement	
CHAPTER	
III. THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE STURGIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS.....	25
Background for the development of the curriculum council	
Personnel of the curriculum council	
Curriculum committees	
CHAPTER	
IV. THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE.....	28
Language Arts coordinating committee task sheet	
Goals of the Language Arts curriculum committee	
CHAPTER	
V. THE RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING READING AS THE FIRST SPECIFIC LANGUAGE ARTS AREA TO STUDY.....	31
Specific reading goals	
CHAPTER	
VI. CONCLUSION.....	33
CHAPTER	
VII. LOG OF MEETINGS.....	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	46
APPENDICES.....	47

INTRODUCTION

This internship began shortly after the spring of 1978 when the Sturgis Public School's District Curriculum Council chose the intern, who was serving on the Council as an elementary representative, to be its Chairperson for the Language Arts Curriculum Committee. Five other chairpersons were also chosen to represent Health, Library, Science, Social Studies and Mathematics.

The Language Arts Curriculum Committee was formed after a poll was taken of all the teachers in the Sturgis Public School system. They were asked two questions:

1. If they were presently serving on a committee, and
2. If not, on which committee they would be willing to serve.

As a result of this poll the committee soon numbered thirteen members. It consisted of the chairperson, a principal, a reading specialist and teacher representatives from kindergarten through twelfth grades.

The intern, as chairperson, felt an acute need to develop a procedural guide to implement the many goals she had developed for the Language Arts Committee.

Not knowing exactly how to proceed with this complex assignment, the intern began an intensive study of curriculum during the summer of 1978. The intern read over twenty books concerning curriculum. However, to her dismay, curriculum appeared to be a very broad and sometimes vague subject; much like a slippery eel.

During the 1978-1979 school year, the Language Arts Committee met ten times and accomplished some very important goals which will be

discussed in depth in the content of this paper.

Since Language Arts consists of several subject areas, i.e. Reading, Spelling, Oral Communication, Written Communication and Handwriting, the intern would like for it to be known that this project will be ongoing for several years. For the sake of simplicity, organization and sanity, only the subject "Reading" was tackled during this project.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM CURRICULUM?

Many books have been written about curriculum. They have usually presented a particular view of the curriculum. Many of these conceptions have contained similar elements. Saylor has made some efforts at their classification.

The Curriculum as Subject and Subject Matter

The term "curriculum" has been widely used to refer to the set of subjects or courses offered in a school system's curriculum. Perhaps in terminology, program of studies would be a better term; however, the concept of curriculum as subject matter persists. It was given emphasis by the wave of curriculum development in the subject fields that began in the late 1950's after Russia's advance into outer space and the pressure that resulted to improve American education.¹

The Curriculum as Experiences

Caswell and Campbell in their popular Curriculum Development (1935) gave the Curriculum as Experience Theory wide exposure. They believed that "school curriculum should be composed of all the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers."²

¹J. Saylor. Planning Curriculum for Schools. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc. 1974, p. 2.

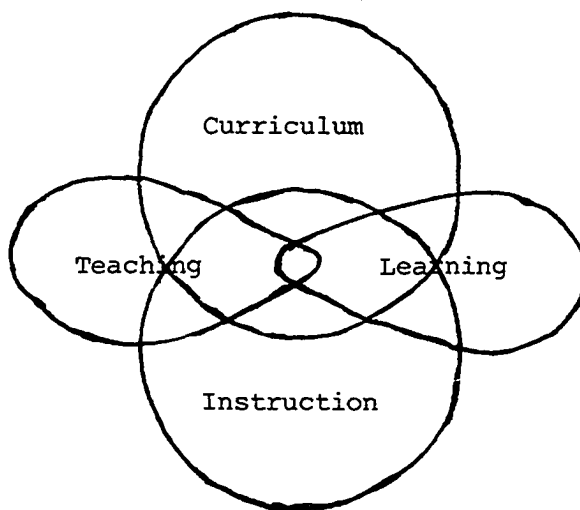
²H. Caswell and D. Campbell. Curriculum Development. New York: American Book Company, 1935, p. 69.

The Curriculum as Objectives

Curriculum at one time included both curriculum designs and instructional strategies. After much research during the 1950's many writers began to separate curriculum, and study programs of instruction. One result of this research was the definition of curriculum as solely objectives and that of instruction as the vehicle by which the objectives were attained.¹

Theories Concerning Analysis of Curriculum and Instruction

Macdonald dealt with curriculum, instruction, teaching and learning as four related, overlapping systems. He distinguished between curriculum and instruction by considering them as "essentially two separate action contexts, one (curriculum) producing plans for further action."² A model of Macdonald's theory follows:



¹Saylor, op. cit., p. 5.

²J. Macdonald, "Educational Models for Instruction--Introduction." in J. Macdonald, ed., Theories of Instruction (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1965, p. 5.

It is evident that the four systems Macdonald referred to cannot be separated. The Curriculum Council of the Sturgis Public Schools has encountered many areas in which not only the four systems Macdonald mentioned, i.e. Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Instruction, but much of the entire subject area is difficult to separate: examples being: Science and Mathematics, Reading and Spelling. This point is made to show the complexity of curriculum.

The Curriculum as a Plan

According to Saylor, curriculum includes specific plans for the anticipated learning situations. It should be focused on objectives, but not confined to them. Curriculum should include design, implementation and evaluation which are essential to the plan. Saylor also believes that the individual school is of the utmost importance. It is within the individual school that the curriculum unfolds; thus the plan should be tailor-made for that school.¹

Curriculum Plans and Levels of Planning

In actuality there are many levels of planning: national, state, school district, individual school, teacher group and the individual teacher. Curriculum planning is definitely influenced by all of these levels.

¹Saylor, op. cit., p.6.

Curriculum Guides

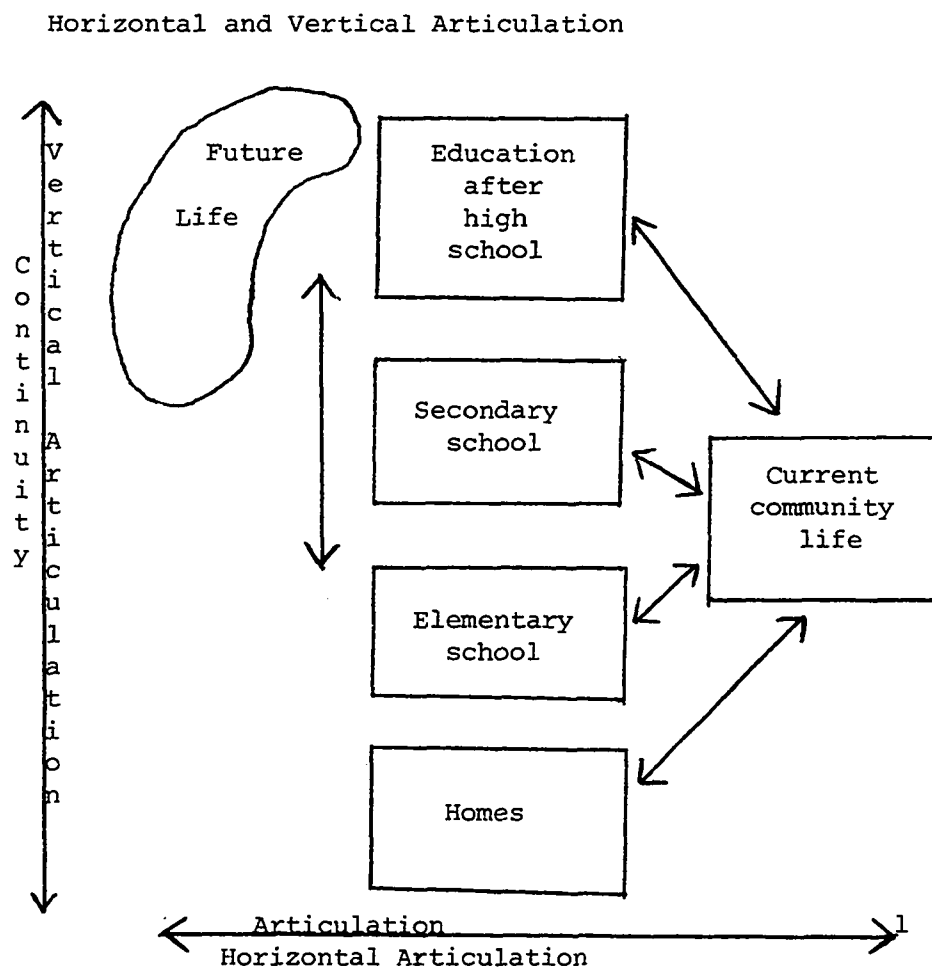
Most curriculum plans developed by state and local agencies are usually put into written form where they become curriculum guides. Many school districts find it desirable to prepare statements of their philosophy and program of education. Such general guides usually contain one or more of the following types of materials: philosophy and objectives; scope and sequence of learning opportunities, usually organized by subject fields; suggestions for organizing instruction; policies relating to the curriculum. Guides for self-study, assessment programs, preparation of curriculum materials, and other purposes are also prepared.

Most curriculum guides deal with the content of the curriculum areas. For the elementary and middle schools and much less frequently for high schools and in combined vertical presentation, these guides may indicate suggestions for organizing instruction in all curriculum areas. Many guides deal with a particular field for all levels of instruction, although separate courses of study for each high school subject are also quite common.¹

In the Sturgis Public Schools, statements of philosophy and programs of education are especially evident at the Middle and High School levels. However, since the establishment of the district-wide curriculum council the main thrust has been upon coordinating all areas of instruction. Developing curriculum guides for each subject area at all levels of instruction has been one of the council's main goals. There-

¹Saylor, op. cit., p. 50.

fore, it is most appropriate at this time to refer to Oliver's chart on horizontal and vertical articulation.



Each segment of curriculum must work together as a whole unit.

Oliver uses a medical analogy to help clarify this concept:

"The humerus (upper arm) and the radius and ulna (lower arm) are articulated at the elbow if this joining allows each member to carry out its particular function. A stiff elbow would prevent proper functioning. Similarly, members of the curriculum structure must be properly related to insure their best operation."²

¹A. Oliver, Curriculum Improvement: A Guide to Problems, Principles and Procedures. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1965, pp. 288.

²loc. cit., p. 289.

The development of curriculum guides is helpful to facilitate the horizontal and vertical articulation of curriculum.

Undoubtedly, some curriculum guides are not put to good use. None the less attention should be given to the important process of preparing guides. The growth that can come from cooperative work by school personnel in developing guides is perhaps one of the major reasons for maintaining the production of these materials. Furthermore, good guides, well planned and well written, can be of much direct assistance to school personnel.¹

¹Saylor, op. cit., p. 51.

CHAPTER II

STRONG LEADERSHIP FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING

A critical requirement for effective curriculum planning is strong leadership. The educational program of a school requires some one qualified person to be responsible for enlisting the resources, facilitating the processes, and advising the entire staff and other participants in planning, implementing, and evaluating the program. Whether the school district gives this responsibility to the principal or to the curriculum coordinator, the assistant principal, or one or more unit or team leaders, the person selected must meet several qualifications. As a minimum, these qualifications should include training in group process, goal-setting, team planning and teaching, use of instructional resources, individual instruction and counseling, curriculum theory and research, and community relations. Undoubtedly, each district would modify and expand these qualifications to conform to local needs.¹

The Role of the Curriculum Council Leader

The curriculum planning process will not be systematic or effective unless there is a responsible and competent individual officially designated as the curriculum leader. It matters little whether his title is assistant superintendent for instruction, director of curriculum, director of instruction, curriculum coordinator, or any other title used to designate his official function.

¹loc. cit., p. 96.

The management of a curriculum planning system involves many tasks. More than almost any other educator, the curriculum leader must be able to keep straight all areas of curriculum. As he works with individual teachers and principals, school faculties, district councils, curriculum designing units, and lay groups, he not only helps each individual and group to make a contribution to curriculum planning but sees to it that these contributions mesh well with each other.¹

Caswell emphasized this function of the curriculum leader:

"He or she must be in a position administratively to work with all groups affecting instruction. He must work cooperatively, depending upon the modification of view-points as a means of progress and thus must be in a position to lead in the development of an in-service educational program for workers in the school system. He or she must be in a position to coordinate supervision and to relate it to the evolving program."²

System-Wide Curriculum Council

The instrument by which the Curriculum Council Leader facilitates his goals is the system-wide curriculum council.

In the Sturgis Public School System, Mr. William Galberach is the person who has been assigned the very difficult job of Curriculum Council Director.

Functions of Curriculum Councils

The major curriculum study group in a local school system is the

¹loc. cit., p. 99.

²H. Caswell, "The Function of the Curriculum Director," Curriculum Journal, 9, 249 (October 1938).

central curriculum or instructional council. It is the function of this group to identify problems of common concern in the school system, to develop awareness of these common problems, to select problems for system-wide study, to organize the means and arrangements for the study of these problems, and to make recommendations on the basis of such study. Such a council usually consists of representative classroom teachers, principals, and central office personnel. In smaller systems, every building unit should be represented; in larger systems it is necessary to work out some system or rotation so that the total membership of the council does not become too large for working purposes.¹

The Role of the Curriculum Committee Leaders or Chairpersons

The leader or chairperson has many roles--initiator, facilitator, coordinator, expert in human relations and in working with groups.

For the one who becomes the leader of a group--whether by assignment or by selection by the membership, she or he needs to know how he can best discharge his obligations.

Planning is vital. Good leadership begins before meetings. What purposes are to be served? What methods are most likely to produce the desired results? Are there any materials or resource people that should be on hand? What are the members of the group like? Planning does not imply rigid structuring or predeterminating for the committee members,

¹E. Krug, Curriculum Planning. New York: Revised Ed. Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957, p. 287.

however thinking should go on before meetings as well as during them.¹

Setting limits for focus of discussion. Among the skills needed is the ability to help the group find both limits and focus for its discussion. The democratic approach does not mean laissez faire, yet sometimes by being overcautious about dominating, a chairperson may neglect this responsibility. It is part of planning to keep deliberation from wandering aimlessly and indefinitely.

The leader or chairperson as a member of the group. The leader should try to gain genuine membership. When the chairperson is accepted as another member, then his or her contributions can be judged on their merit rather than because of title or status.

Expectations of group concerning leadership. Especially when approaching a new group, it should be determined what their expectations are concerning leadership. Perhaps they are used to being told and prefer it that way. Why do individuals in the group prefer decision by one rather than by all? The answer to this question will help the leader plot strategy for moving the group to more shared participation. Some may be so familiar with autocratic procedures that they know no other way and therefore, reject the uncertainty of the untried. Some may have been rebuffed by colleagues or by an impatient leader and do not want to expose themselves again to rejection.²

¹Oliver, op. cit., pp. 448-449.

²loc. cit., p. 450.

The time element. The time element must be considered, too, in moving toward group responsibility. Such responsibility cannot be learned in a one-day conference; it is assumed that most curriculum planning will be carried on in a series of meetings throughout the school year. The leader must judge when and how fast to move from one condition toward another.

Self-understanding. The leader should realize that techniques are not enough. The leader's attitude, values and temperament will have much effect on the outcome of the group. The situation involves self-understanding. Does the chairperson feel secure about himself? In terms of others, does he believe in the uniqueness of the individual and the potential worth of the contribution of each? Can he stand being in the head chair at a meeting and yet have others pick up head roles? Will he be able to accept gracefully ideas different from his own? Does he look upon his position as a chance to further his own ends or as a challenge to the cooperative solution of common problems?

Knowing the group. The leader must know the group. What are the questions on their minds? Are they speaking and acting one way, when they really feel another? Perhaps the trouble is that some have what experts in group dynamics call a "hidden agenda": "We'd better get this meeting over fast so I can get home. My baby-sitter will be upset."¹

Communication. Throughout the planning stage, the discussion and the action, attention must be given to communication. The fact that some-

¹op. cit., p. 451

one has expressed himself and others have apparently listened attentively is no guarantee of communication. If what was said is not understood, either in its meaning or its intent, genuine communication has not taken place. If different or distorted meanings form in the listener's mind, it might have been better had nothing been said, since negative communication may block decision-making. The leader must watch for facial expressions, for remarks that will give a clue that communication has been incomplete. To improve leadership, attention must be given to ways to facilitate communication. One technique that might be used, would be for the chairperson to interject, "I think I hear you saying.....".

Chairperson as resource person for the group. Assuming that the leader was appointed (by the administration) or elected (by the group) because he possessed certain competencies, recognition should be given to him as a resource person for the group. What special skills, knowledge, experience does he possess? The leader should draw upon his resources where appropriate, while at the same time seek to release resources of the group.¹

The difference between direction and domination. There is a fine distinction between direction and domination. When the leader dominates, individuals feel less responsibility to the group. In fact, the group tends to shrug off its responsibility. Some people prefer the security of depending upon someone else, but this does not allow for the re-

¹ op. cit., pp. 451-452

education of teachers--so important to curriculum change. If the group likes to be dominated, while at the same time the philosophy advocates group-shared leadership, the leader must work out a "weaning" process in which domination gradually gives way to direction. Free and open discussion, in which individuals feel that their comments have merit, will help in the achievement of that result.¹

Democratic leadership calls for knowledge and skill, but it also calls for more. It realizes that this is a world of change for which the curriculum must also change.

The strategy for change should be as carefully thought out as the rationale for the program structure itself. Much can be accomplished by providing strong leadership personnel.

When change can be handled so that it does not undermine personal security, when the people involved are informed, when there is a genuine opportunity for group participation, then program metamorphosis can come about.²

The Role of the Curriculum Committee Members

Many an enthusiastic administrator or curriculum director has launched an ambitious program of curriculum study only to find it received by classroom teachers with indifference, and sometimes with contempt and hostility. It is unrealistic for a curriculum director to expect people busy with their own particular routines to display initial enthusiasm for an activity which on the face of it constitutes

¹op. cit., p. 454

²ibid.

one more thing to add to an already overburdened life. On the other hand, practically all teachers have a strong sense of idealism and professional obligation which can be tapped as a real source of power in curriculum work.

The Fear of Change

The prospect of change may be stimulating in some circumstances, threatening in others. It is especially likely to be threatening if the contemplated change implies extreme newness or difference from present practice.¹

There are several ways of guarding against the idea of change as a threat. One way is to develop curriculum planning in a school system as a normal, continuing activity rather than as a special project designed to put across a "new" curriculum in the sense of large-scale structural reorganization. Another is to stress the valid point that change in and of itself is neither good nor bad, and that specific changes should be evaluated rather than uncritically accepted or rejected. Curriculum planning is the process of orderly examining and guiding of changes in accord with problems which go beyond the program of classroom studies.²

Voluntary Participation

Whether teacher participation in certain kinds of curriculum

¹Krug., op. cit., pp. 278-279.

²op. cit., p. 286

planning activities should be voluntary or required is a question which has been long debated.

In one approach, the administration requires all teachers to take part in curriculum groups of some kind and, in addition, specifically assigns every teacher to a particular group.

In a variation of this approach, the curriculum director or administrator still requires every teacher to participate, but permits individual teachers to choose their spots in some predetermined structure.

Another approach still carries the requirement of participation, but teachers are not only permitted to choose their spots in the structure, but encouraged to take an active part in planning the nature of the structure itself. This usually works out pretty well, provided the teachers are given a real share in the planning.¹

In the last approach, participation is entirely voluntary. This approach has the greatest potential strength, for while fewer teachers will participate, those few participating will have greater drive and enthusiasm. A good program, enthusiastically participated in by a few teachers, will improve rather than tear down all-faculty morale. Teachers who are not participating are encouraged to participate by the good reports they hear. Of course, this approach calls for patience and skill on the part of the administration and may not always be consistent with the desire to make an immediate impression. Not only must the curriculum director share this feeling of patience, but he must

¹ibid.

have the assurance from the superintendent that immediate "results" are not expected.¹

The Sturgis Public School's voluntary participation of curriculum committee members closely matches Krug's third approach requiring the participation of teachers, but allowing them to choose their spots in the structure. This arrangement has worked out very well. Since the inception of the curriculum committees there has been a total involvement of teachers and administrators. While the work of the committees represents additional responsibilities and a considerable investment of time, it has also led to an increased awareness of system-wide curriculum and a definite sense of ownership.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CLASSROOM TO CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT

We have considered the individual teacher as a member of the faculty team and as a committee member working cooperatively on various broad curriculum problems. Now, in the classroom, there is an opportunity to view the curriculum in terms of specific applications. In teaching-learning situations the teacher sees the curriculum from an individual point of view concerning a particular small group. What is his role in interpreting the curriculum to that particular group? Can he apply principles of good curriculum development in his own teaching?

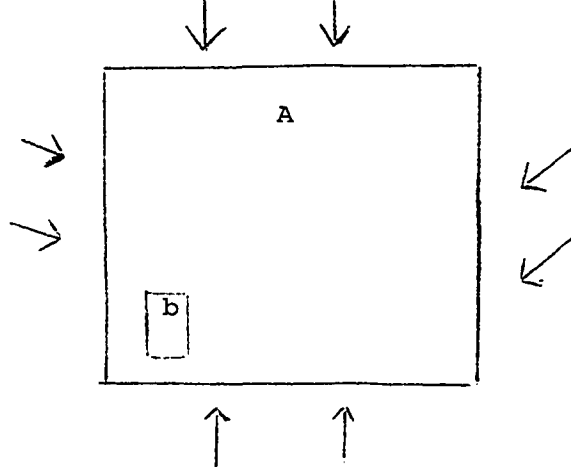
Oliver states that "what is good for the curriculum as a whole is good for the curriculum segment found in the classroom." He uses this

¹ibid.

diagram to show the message:

Improve Curriculum----Improve Teaching----Improve Learning.¹

Another way of considering Oliver's theory is to look at the following model and the explanation that follows:



"If A represents the total educational program, then b is the niche held by a single teacher with his students. All the forces that affect A exert an impact on b. Whatever principles and procedures have been desirable in the formulation of A should also be good principles and practices in b."²

¹Oliver, op. cit., p. 340.

²loc. cit., p. 341.

EVALUATION AS A FORCE SHAPING CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT

Evaluation is both qualitative and quantitative. It looks at the total situation rather than just at certain parts.

It might be well to point out the reciprocating relationships which exist both in the total curriculum of:

Objectives----Activities----Evaluation.¹

Evaluation should be continuous. Do not wait until the end. Evaluation will show that change should be made, and can provide the "before" status against which later progress is to be measured. As the study proceeds, progress checks must be made. These may indicate a necessary shift in direction, in method, in intensity. Thus, the continuous aspect of evaluation in sense makes it self-perpetuating.

Evaluation should be comprehensive. Evaluate outcomes in terms of the total situation, not just in terms of a test score or two. All means of gathering pertinent material must be considered.

Evaluation should be goal-related. Whatever evaluation is undertaken must be viewed in terms of the goals or purposes that have been formulated for the school, the program, the course, the lesson. When properly made, it serves to clarify the goals. The staff needs to have clearly in mind what changes are being sought.²

¹loc. cit., p. 404.

²ibid.

Evaluation should be diversified. A wide range of techniques must be considered. The ones finally employed should be appropriate to the kind of appraisal under consideration. In many cases it may be necessary to create or adapt some method to the local situation.

Evaluation should be systematic. Although rigidity is to be avoided, some system must be followed. Good appraisal is not easy; it can be improved by having the experienced and the inexperienced working out matters together. Without a plan, some learners could be tested unnecessarily; others, not enough. At the same time, elaborate procedures should be avoided which might discourage informal measures.

Evaluation should be internal. The use of instruments prepared "outside" has certain value, as do the judgments of experts from other than the local scene. However, emphasis should be upon self-study and self-improvement, rather than upon trying to match some nationally derived score.

Evaluation should be integral. Evaluation should be considered an integral part of the learning process; it also fosters learning in itself.

Evaluation should be cooperative. If curriculum development and if learning are two cooperative experiences, it is logical that evaluation, being an integral part of these, should be carried out cooperatively.

Evaluation should be inherent in classroom operation. Much of curriculum improvement comes from the individual teacher, not just from a

concerted effort by the school as a whole.¹

In conclusion, as far as evaluation is concerned, the teacher must evaluate each course that he or she teaches. He must know the relationship of that course to the others offered in his school, the relationship of that classroom experience to the student's whole life. A teacher really cannot plan a course without making value judgments all the time---planned and perceptive.²

THE USE OF RESEARCH FOR CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT

In carrying out the various steps leading toward curriculum improvement, many decisions will have to be made. Earlier it was suggested that a cooperative approach be employed in arriving at these decisions. However, whether answers to problems are arrived at by an individual or by a group, the process can be haphazard or it can be systematic. The art of curriculum improvement involves knowledge or relevant research by others, but it also entails knowing how to use research methods to investigate one's own curriculum problems.

To develop skill, understanding, and interest on the part of local curriculum works, a modified plan of research has emerged under the name of "action research." By this process, involving the customary steps in the scientific method, teachers can work to find answers to their questions about different methods of teaching, about the suitability of certain materials, about the organization and content of their courses. Administrators can study the pros and cons of various

¹loc. cit., pp. 405-406.

²op. cit., p. 95.

organizational arrangements, such as ability grouping.

The art of teaching can be improved by systematic inquiry. Self-study is the soundest basis for better teaching and learning. Teachers are in the best position to understand the intricacies of the classroom, but they often need direction and a plan of attack. Action research can provide the necessary framework without the frustrations of highly formalized research.

Groups will use varying degrees of precision in their procedures, and consequently there must be varying degrees of confidence in their findings. Any alert faculty, however, can progress along the scale from casual attempts to resolve current problems toward the methods of science.¹

Some basic questions which curriculum workers might ask before they begin research are:

1. Is the problem important to us?
2. Is it pertinent to our curriculum?
3. Does the proposed design for our attack give structure?
4. Have we outlined a problem and an approach that are manageable?
5. Have we identified a fundamental problem or only a surface manifestation?
6. Is there relevant research by others to guide us in making our decisions?²

While determining its own researchable problems and learning how to apply research techniques, a faculty must be aware of the roles that

¹op. cit., p. 96.

²ibid.

basic research can play. The behavioral sciences, the social sciences, and other disciplines are discovering clues which can be of value to the educator. Large scale studies can provide dimensions, technical resources, and funds not available to a local school, and the results should be made known to the groups for their study and consideration.

Better questions will be asked and better answers will be forthcoming as curriculum workers learn to build research into their plan of operation.¹

"Teachers who are challenged to explore the possibilities of a new curriculum design will become the action researchers who may make possible a breakthrough in the establishment of a research medium long needed in education."²

¹ibid.

²M. Crosby, Curriculum Development for Elementary Schools in a Changing Society. D. C. Heath and Co., Boston, 1964. p. 158.

CHAPTER III

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE STURGIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Prior to 1977 the Sturgis Public School's administrative organization for curriculum was accomplished by two separate channels: The Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Mr. William Galberach, supervised the secondary curriculum. The Elementary Supervisor, Miss Evelyn Schrump, was in charge of the elementary curriculum. (Appendix A)

Both Mr. Galberach and Miss Schrump had numerous other duties including many that dealt with the business operations of the school.

In 1977 under the new leadership of Dr. Lawrence McConnell, a revamping of the administrative organization took place.

The position of Administrative Assistant was changed to a major emphasis being put on the supervision of curriculum, kindergarten through twelfth grades.

All of the principals work directly with the Administrative Assistant for Curriculum, Mr. William Galberach.

The other administrative change took place after the retirement of Miss Evelyn Schrump. The elementary supervisory duties dealing with business affairs was changed to the Administrative Assistant for Business Operations for the entire school system. This position is administered by Mr. Lyle Sisson. (Appendix B)

During the Spring of 1978 another major change took place in the administrative organization of the Sturgis Public Schools. This change

came about by the development of the District Curriculum Council and the further development of six curriculum coordinating committees under the supervision of Mr. William Galberach. (Appendices C & D)

Background for the Development of the Curriculum Council

The Council was formed during the Fall of 1977. The Council, composed of teachers and administrators, was assigned the job of assisting with the determination of curriculum priorities in the school district. Specifically, the Council was charged with advising the superintendent on curriculum matters and having the following responsibilities:

- a. To establish study priorities.
- b. To organize study-action committees for the various fields and services.
- c. To establish study procedures and deadlines.
- d. To provide for meeting times for curriculum studies and for curriculum development.
- e. To receive, evaluate and transmit curriculum recommendations to the superintendent.

Personnel of the Curriculum Council

The Curriculum Council is composed of two high school teachers, two middle school teachers, three elementary teachers, the high school principal, the middle school principal and one elementary principal.

Curriculum Committees

On Tuesday, February 28, 1978, the District Curriculum Council

established five district coordinating committees, kindergarten through twelfth grades, in the following areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Media and Library, Science and Social Studies. The chairpersons for the coordinating committees were chosen by the council. The five coordinating committees were asked to:

1. Study goals and objectives for each content area kindergarten through twelfth grades to determine continuity between grade levels.
2. Coordinate all subject areas at all levels.
3. Develop brief curriculum guides in all subject areas to be used by teachers, administrators and parents.
4. Make recommendations to the District Curriculum Council pertaining to:
 - a. Changes
 - b. Improvements
 - c. Text book adoptions
 - d. Resources available
 - e. Assimilate feedback from classroom teachers

CHAPTER IV

THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

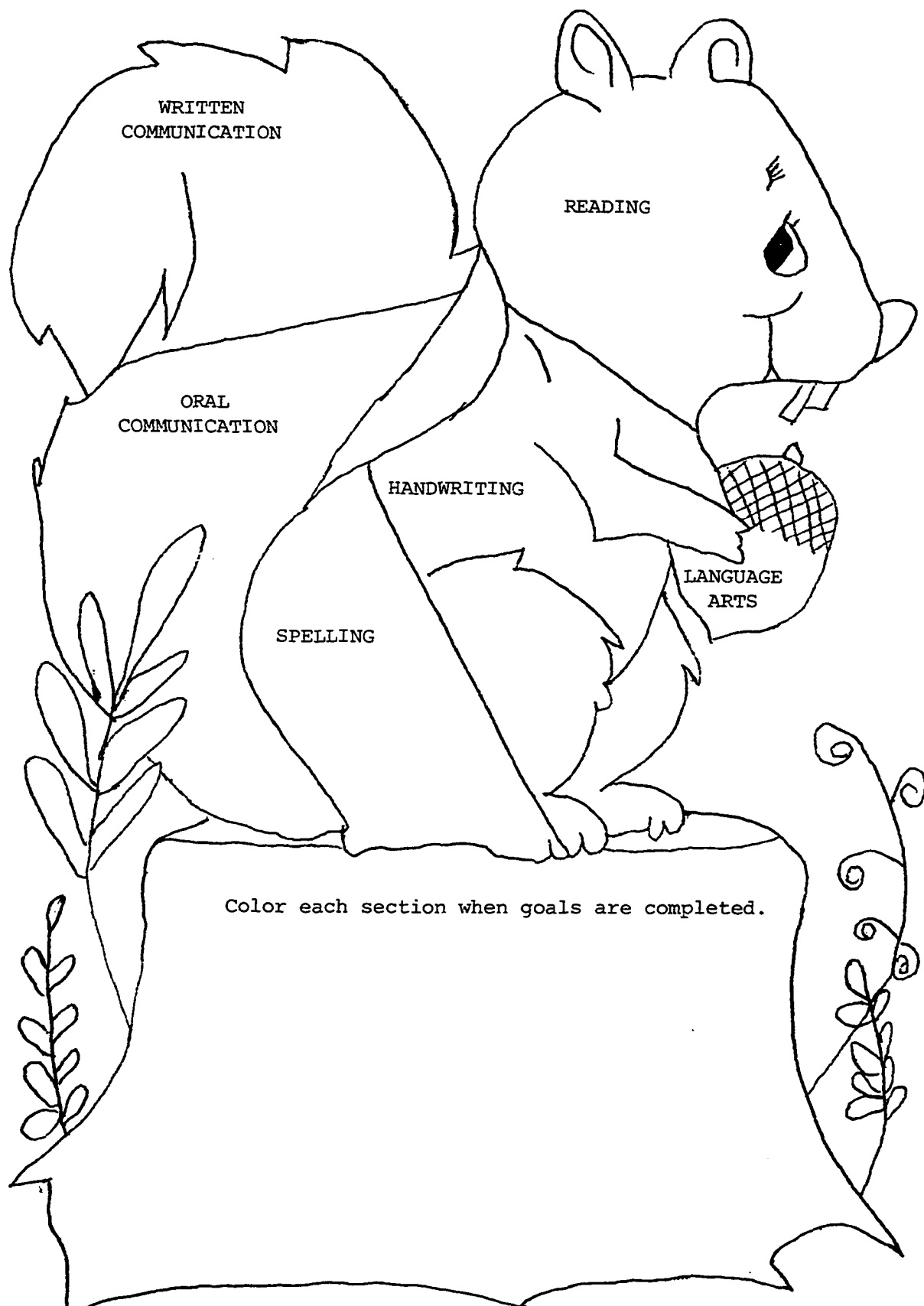
Vi Schuler was chosen Chairperson for the Language Arts Curriculum Committee in February of 1978. Shortly thereafter a survey was taken of all teachers in the Sturgis system. The teachers were to indicate if they were presently serving on a committee. If they weren't, they were asked on which of the coordinating committees they would be willing to serve.

The Language Arts Curriculum Committee was developed as a result of this survey.

For the purpose of tackling this very broad subject, we have broken Language Arts into five specific areas: Reading, Written Communication, Oral Communication, Spelling and Handwriting.

A task sheet pertaining to the five areas is included on the next page. It was used with the committee to add a little spice to our first meeting.

LANGUAGE ARTS COORDINATING COMMITTEE
TASK SHEET



Goals of the Language Arts Curriculum Committee

The goals of the Language Arts Curriculum Committee are:

1. To assess each of the Language Arts subject areas at every grade level, kindergarten through twelfth grades.
2. To suggest changes or improvements in the Language Arts subject areas at every level, kindergarten through twelfth grades.
3. To implement changes in the Language Arts areas, kindergarten through twelfth grades.
4. To develop brief curriculum guides in the Language Arts areas at every level.
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of learning in each of the Language Arts areas at every grade level.

CHAPTER V

THE RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING READING AS THE FIRST SPECIFIC LANGUAGE ARTS AREA TO STUDY

After the first meeting with the Language Arts Coordinating Committee it was very evident that one area of Language Arts would have to be explored at a time. The committee chose to study Reading first since the Sturgis Public Schools reading program has been very well coordinated for some time. This would enable the committee to get their "feet wet" before delving into the more difficult areas of Spelling, Oral and Written Communication and Handwriting.

Specific Reading Goals

The reading goals established were the same as those listed for the whole Language Arts program, except that they were more specific namely:

1. To assess reading at every grade level
2. To suggest changes and/or improvements in reading at each level
3. To suggest ways of implementing changes and/or improvements in reading
4. To develop a brief curriculum guide for reading, to be used by teachers, parents and other interested persons
5. To develop an evaluation device for each area

A specific assessment tool was used to assess the reading area.

It was called the Reading Assessment Check List. The list follows:

Reading Assessment Check List

1. Program used _____.
2. Component parts of reading program used _____.
3. Evaluation device or devices used _____.
4. Supplementary reading materials used _____.
5. Other supplementary materials used for skill development
(games, enrichment materials, flash cards, etc.) _____.
6. Teacher's suggested needs _____.
7. Complete changes needed _____.
8. Improvements needed _____.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Sturgis Public Schools with its very capable leaders have used some of the best national philosophies to establish the organization by which it operates.

Caswell's criteria for the qualities needed for a Curriculum Director have been quite evident in the abilities of Mr. William Galberach the Curriculum Director of the Sturgis Public Schools.

As a neophyte leader, much of the information that I gathered from Krug, Oliver and Crosby pertaining to a chairperson's qualities have been immensely useful.

Although the jobs of the Language Arts Coordinating Committee are far from being completed, this intern does feel a definite sense of accomplishment.

A brief summary of the highlights of this year's accomplishments is reported as follows:

The Language Arts Coordinating Committee has been in operation for one year and has met approximately twelve times. The committee has achieved all five of the goals which it had set up at the beginning of the year.

Some of the main by-products of this committee have been the culmination of goals numbered two and three respectively, i.e. to suggest changes and/or improvements in reading at every grade level and to suggest ways of implementing changes and/or improvements. As a result of these two goals, the committee together with other teachers in the system have

selected an alternate reading program for the first through sixth grade levels and Special Education classes.

The goal to develop a brief curriculum guide for each level has also been accomplished.

The Language Arts Coordinating Committee will be an on-going committee. Spelling, Oral and Written Communication and Handwriting will be on the committee's agenda for the next couple of years. There will also be a continual follow up on the reading curriculum.

This Specialist Project, A Description of the Development of A Procedural Guide For Coordinating The Sturgis Public Schools' Language Arts Program, has been very challenging. I feel that I have gained much knowledge, leadership experience and professionalism by being a part of this endeavor.

INTERNSHIP LOG

CHAPTER VII
LOG OF MEETINGS

April 20, 1978

The first meeting of the Language Arts Curriculum Committee was held at the Wall School Library. Vi Schuler, Chairperson, conducted the meeting.

The Chairperson had formulated a list of goals for the committee. Each of the fourteen members were given a copy of the goals:

1. To assess each of the Language Arts areas at every grade level Kindergarten through Twelfth grades.
2. To suggest changes and/or improvements in each area and at each level.
3. To suggest ways of implementing changes and/or improvements.
4. To develop a brief curriculum guide for each grade. These guides will be used by teachers, parents, administrators, board members and other interested persons.
5. To develop an evaluation device for each area.

A discussion was held for the purpose of determining which areas Language Arts should entail. The group agreed to the following areas with others to be added if necessary:

Reading	Spelling
Oral Communication	Handwriting
Written Communication	

Each member of the committee also received an assessment check list for Reading. They were assigned a specific grade level to assess. It was to be completed by the next meeting. The Reading Assessment Check List which the committee used is listed next:

1. Program used_____.
2. Component parts of reading program used_____.
3. Evaluation device or devices used_____.
4. Supplementary reading materials used_____.
5. Other supplementary materials used for skill development
(games, enrichment materials, flash cards and etc.
_____.
6. Teacher's suggested needs_____.
7. Complete changes needed_____.
8. Improvements needed_____.

May 9, 1978

A brief review of the goals of the first meeting were given. Each member brought the Reading Assessment Check List, which they had been assigned to complete, for a specific level. The entire meeting was focused on the assessments presented by the Kindergarten through Fifth grade committee representatives. Because of the fine preparation made by the committee members, much progress was made toward our first goal i.e., to assess each of the Language Arts areas at every grade level.

At this time for clarity sake, the Chairperson suggested that only one aspect of the Language Arts curriculum be explored at a time. Therefore, the committee agreed to complete all of the goals for Reading before starting any of the other assessments in the Language Arts area.

October 4, 1978

The accomplishments of the committee thus far were reviewed. Possible future meeting dates were established subject to clearance with Mr. Galberach's calendar.

A report from the District Curriculum Council's last meeting was given by Vi Schuler as it pertained to this committee:

1. Mr. Galberach would like for this committee to meet twice during the months of October and November.
2. A reminder that the curriculum guides should be kept very brief. The language should be stated so that parents and other interested persons can readily understand the guides.

A continuation of committee reports pertaining to the Reading Assessment Check Lists were held with the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth grade committee persons reporting.

Some of the inquiries that were generated from the reports were:

1. At the sixth grade level the question of whether each teacher teaches a sequence of skills in Reading and if so, what are the skills? Presently each sixth grade teacher uses a different basal series. For coordinating purposes is this a problem?
2. An entirely different approach is used at the Seventh and Eighth grades. A multi-materials approach is used whereby basal readers, paper back books and other reading resources are used. Emphasis is placed on Language Arts as a whole subject area rather than Reading in isolation. This approach to the teaching of reading could also cause some problems for coordinating purposes.

A recommendation was made by the committee that the members representing Sixth, Seventh and Eighth grades, meet with the Middle School Principal and the Chairperson of this committee, for the purpose of discussing some of the above concerns of this committee and to see how the individual reading programs at the Middle School effect the goals of the Language Arts Curriculum Committee i.e., the coordinating of reading Kindergarten through Twelfth grades.

October 23, 1978

The two high school committee persons completed the Reading assessment report.

A recommendation was made to the committee by the two high school representatives that:

A meeting be held with the High School Principal, the two committee persons and the Chairperson for this committee, for the purpose of looking more closely at Reading and how it is being taught at the high school level.

Having completed the reports from each grade level concerning the assessment of the Sturgis Public Schools Reading program, the committee divided into three groups:

Kindergarten, First and Second
Third, Fourth and Fifth
Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and High School

By using the Barbe Reading Skills check list, the Michigan Assessment Test and the Lippincott Reading Series as models, the committee started the process of developing a curriculum guide for Reading at every grade level.

Difficulty was soon encountered at the advanced levels. The language of the resources being used were not applicable at the secondary level. The suggestion was made by the secondary committee persons, to use the Scotts Foresman Reading Skills sequence, The Michigan Assessment and the The Stanford Achievement Test as models for the advanced levels.

Another problem was identified at the High School level. There are no staff meetings held for Reading per se. Therefore, the High School staff is not aware of what the other staff members are teaching in regards to reading.

The committee again recommended that the principals of the Sturgis Middle and High Schools call for some communication and coordinating at those levels. It was further recommended that the respective teacher representatives from this committee and the Chairperson be present.

November 14, 1978

The Language Arts Committee, tackling the job of coordinating Reading, divided into two groups:

Kindergarten through Fifth grades
Sixth through Twelfth grades

The Kindergarten through Fifth grade group continued to analyze each skill on the Michigan Assessment, the Barbe Skills check list and the Lippincott Basal Reading Series. They either accepted, rejected or made additions to the different check lists in order to develop a guide suitable to the Sturgis Public School System. This group had completed analyzing Kindergarten, First grade and nearly all of the Second grade levels by the end of this meeting.

The Sixth through Twelfth grade teachers used the Scotts Foresman Reading Skills, the Michigan Assessment Test and their own grade level objectives as their models. They accomplished a matching process with these resources compared to their units of study in Reading.

A topic of discussion for the committee was the curriculum guides. Is it possible to develop a very brief curriculum guide for teachers to use and still be written for parents to understand? Should there be two separate guides; one with technical language for teachers and the other in "layman" terms for parents?

These questions will be referred to the Curriculum Council for further clarification at the next meeting.

November 27, 1978

The elementary groups continued to analyze the resources that they were using i.e., the Michigan Assessment Test, the Barbe Skills check list and the Lippincott Reading Series comparing these resources to the Third grade objectives.

The Middle and High School groups using the Scotts Foresman Reading skills, the Michigan Assessment Test and their own respective grade level objectives, found it a more difficult process. Some of the problems that they encountered were:

1. An uncertainty at the Sixth grade level as to which reading skills each of the respective Sixth grade teachers were emphasizing.
2. At the Seventh and Eighth grade levels, the children are taught reading in a block of time designated as Language Arts. Not all of the children receive instruction for each of the skills, because they are tracked according to their ability. An example is: it is conceivable that if a child does not master the first six week block of Language Arts instruction he/she would repeat that particular unit.

November 28, 1978

After the meeting with the District Curriculum Council, Mr. Galberach reported he would try to obtain some released time after school is out for the summer.

In answer to the committee's concern about the curriculum guide, the District Curriculum Council felt that only one guide should be developed to be used by both teachers and parents. Language should be stated so that parents can readily understand what is intended.

February 12, 1979

This meeting was spent refining and coordinating the Kindergarten through Fifth grade curriculum guides.

March 14, 1979

Refining and coordinating the Sixth grade curriculum guide was completed during this meeting.

March 26, 1979

A meeting was held with only the Seventh, Eighth grade and high school committee members. A greater problem with developing curriculum guides and coordinating was encountered at these levels. Some work was accomplished toward these goals, but it progressed very slowly.

April 10, 1979

The attention of the committee was turned to the process of evaluation. The basal reading (end of level test) the Stanford Achievement Test, the Michigan Assessment Test and the Sturgis Minimal Performance Objectives were recognized as the tools for continual evaluation throughout the school system. Some children may not receive instruction for all of the skills, if they do not move into all of the successive units.

The committee made a recommendation: the Sixth grade teachers, Middle School Principal and the Chairperson for this committee should meet to discuss this problem.

Another recommendation made by the committee was: to ask the administration for some released time for the committee. The rationale behind this request was:

1. The Middle and High School teachers must wait from 2:30 until 4:00. The elementary teachers are not free until then, in order for a meeting to start.
2. The committee needed a larger block of time to complete the tasks. As it has been, the committee works in fragmented piece-meal meetings of approximately an hour after school.

3. The Language Arts Curriculum encompasses a large area of instruction i.e., Reading, Spelling, Oral Communication, Written Communication and Handwriting. Each of these areas must be thoroughly investigated.

The Chairperson agreed to take the request to the District Curriculum Council.

April 23, 1979

All of the first draft curriculum guides were completed. Mr. Galberach requested that more examples be given after each skill for the benefit of teachers, parents, administrators, board members and other interested persons. He requested that the curriculum guides be very clear.

May 10, 15 and 17, 1979 (Noon hours)

Representatives from three basal reading series were present during three different lunch hours to meet with teachers and administrators. They explained the main features of their respective materials.

May 30, 1979

An after school meeting was called by the Chairperson of the Language Arts Committee. Administrators, the Language Arts Committee and all interested staff were invited. The purpose of the meeting was to choose an alternate reading program to go along with the present program. The alternate reading program was a recommendation made by the Language Arts Committee.

At the meeting, the alternate program was chosen for its strength in a varied approach to reading. It will be used mainly for the slower readers who have not achieved well with a totally phonetic approach to

reading.

The alternate program was also chosen for the Special Education classes and the Sixth grade. Hopefully by coordinating these two areas with regular education, some of the coordinating gaps will be filled.

At the end of the meeting a written vote was taken. A unanimous decision was made endorsing one particular reading series.

June 13 and 14, 1979

The Middle and High School members of the Language Arts Committee together with the Chairperson and an elementary reading specialist, spent two half days after the completion of the school year, to complete the reading curriculum guides and the coordinating that was still necessary at the upper levels.

The committee was confident that all of the goals had been met for Reading and that the committee would be ready to start the assessment of Spelling in the fall.

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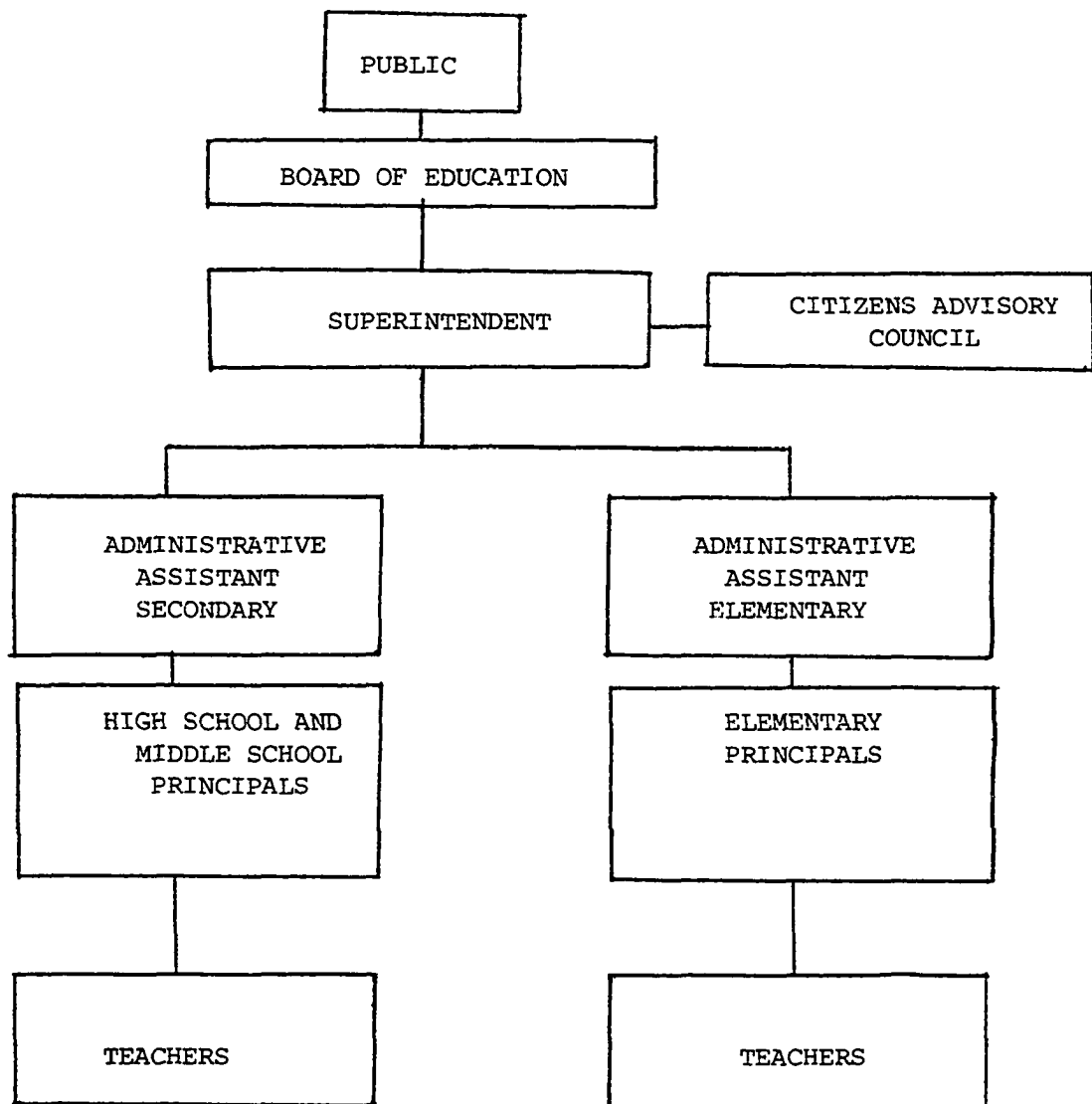
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APPENDIX A

STURGIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION

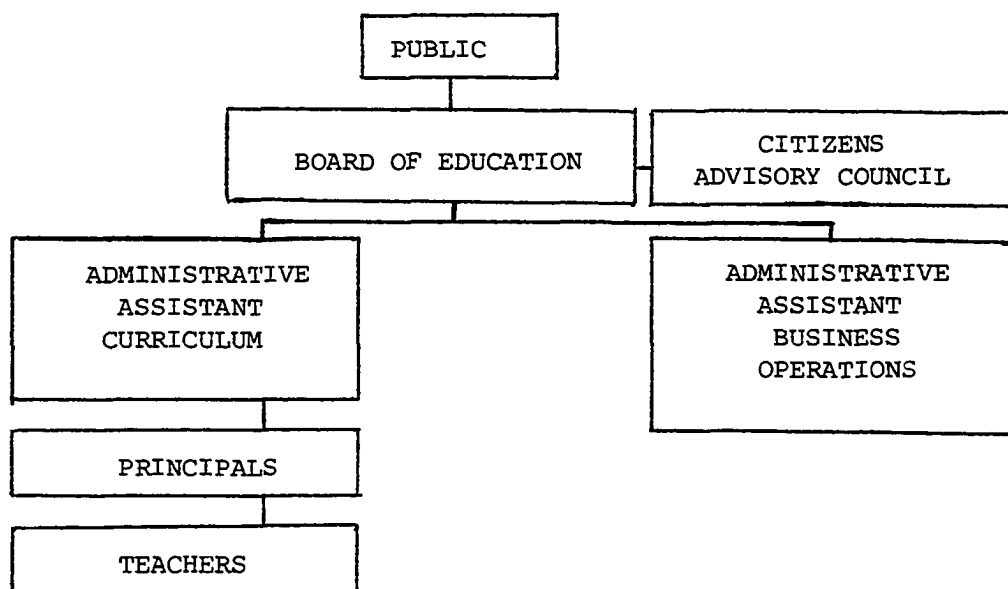
Previous Approach Until 1977



APPENDIX B

STURGIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CENTRAL CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION

Previous Approach 1977-1978

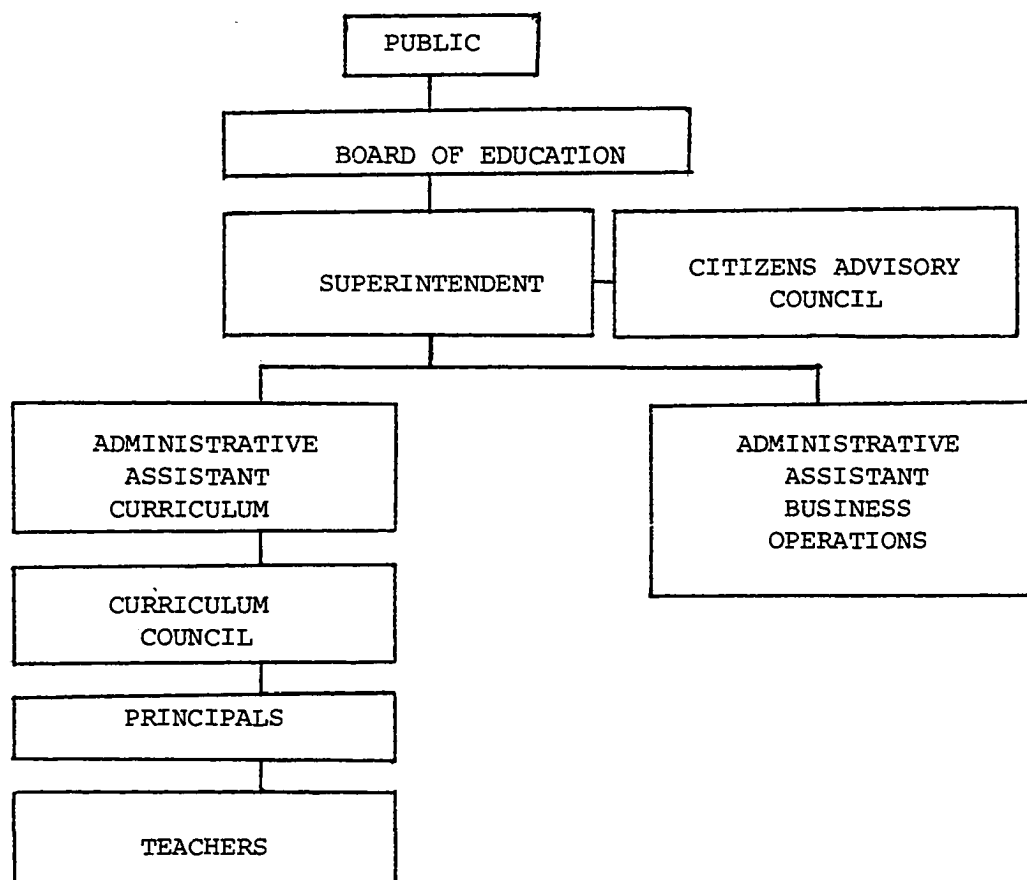


APPENDIX C

STURGIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION

Revised Approach Spring 1978



APPENDIX D

STURGIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION

Revised Approach Fall 1978

