A Report of an Internship in the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools, Galesburg, Michigan

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A REPORT OF AN INTERNSHIP IN THE GALESBURG－AUGUSTA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, GALESBURG, MICHIGAN

by

Robert C. Cretsinger

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
April 1987
This report is a summary of a 9-month internship in the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools, Galesburg, Michigan. The experience began in May of 1985 and concluded in January of 1986.

The objective of the internship was to introduce the intern to the roles and responsibilities of the school superintendent. The length of the internship was designed to provide a more extensive picture of the position of superintendent.

This report contains a log of activities and experiences. Examples of technical material produced during the internship are also provided. An evaluation is made regarding the attainment of objectives.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to Mr. John Wagar, superintendent of the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools, for encouraging me to work as an intern in the Galesburg-Augusta Schools. His faith in me was evident in the many responsibilities with which he entrusted me throughout my internship.

Dr. Lawrence Schlack, my advisor, also deserves my thanks for allowing me to serve my internship in my home district.

My wife, Nancy, has been a source of support and encouragement throughout, and I am thankful for her faith in me.

I am grateful to these people and all the other individuals who assisted me throughout this experience.

Robert C. Cretsinger
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CHAPTER I

PROSPECTUS AND RATIONALE

The intern was just completing his first year as director of community education for the Galesburg-Augusta School District, Galesburg, Michigan, when he began his internship program. Since the director's position extended over twelve months, it was a challenge to find the time to complete the internship. In discussing the internship with John Wagar, superintendent of the Galesburg-Augusta Schools, he suggested doing the internship with him. He thought the intern would maximize time on task because there would be no travel involved. He also reviewed the intern's goals and believed he could provide all the experiences the intern was seeking.

With the cooperation and guidance of Dr. Lawrence Schlack, professor of education at Western Michigan University, the intern was able to secure the internship with the Galesburg-Augusta School District. The time that the intern spent with Wagar and Schlack prior to the internship helped clarify how to separate the job from the internship. It appeared that the opportunities presented far outweighed the potential problems.

Demographic Information

In 1950 the Augusta School District and the Galesburg School District consolidated to form what is now known as the Galesburg-
Augusta Community Schools. Located in the eastern part of Kalamazoo County, it is served by the Kalamazoo Valley Intermediate Service Center and works closely with the eight other school districts in Kalamazoo County.

While the city of Galesburg has a population of 1,822 and the village of Augusta has a population of 913, the population for the entire school district is 10,500. As the numbers indicate, the school district has a strong rural influence. Both communities work hard to maintain their influence and ownership of the schools. For many years there have been three seats on the Board of Education which have been viewed as Augusta seats. The other four seats have been Galesburg seats. This balance has been maintained over the years.

Most of the people who live in the school district work in the Kalamazoo or Battle Creek areas. The largest employer in the district is the Eaton Corporation Brake and Axle Division which employs about 450 people. The potential for industrial growth is very good. Easy access to Interstate 94, the Kalamazoo River, and Amtrak rail service all add to the potential for further development. This rather peaceful community could experience some dramatic changes in the near future.

Description of the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

The Galesburg-Augusta Schools consist of two elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one community education building. Being a consolidated district, one of the elementary schools and the middle school are located in the village of Augusta. The high school, the second elementary school, and the community
education building are located in the city of Galesburg, four miles to the west of Augusta.

The school district employs seven administrators: superintendent, one high school principal, one high school assistant principal, one middle school principal, two elementary principals, and one community education director. Other supervisory personnel include: one director of transportation, one director of buildings and grounds, and one director of food service. The district also employs 78 teachers, 20 secretaries and aides, eight food service personnel, 11 custodians, and 19 bus drivers.

The 1985-86 annual operating budget was approximately $4 million. The state equalized evaluation (SEV) of the district was $64,154,272, and the citizens of the district levy 37.0 mills for general school operation. Therefore, the local taxpayers contributed $2,345,429 for the education of their children.

Expenditures are divided into the following areas:

- Instruction: 65.3%
- Operation and Maintenance: 13.8%
- Transportation: 6.4%
- Administration: 5.7%
- Support Services: 5.0%
- Board of Education: 3.8%

The public day school student population for 1985-86 was 1,307 with a total certified teaching staff of 78. The student-teacher ratio, including support personnel (one librarian and two counselors) was 16.4 to one. The student-classroom teacher ratio was 17.6 to one.

Background Information on the Administration

The administrative staff consists of the following instructionally
related positions: superintendent, one high school principal, one assistant high school principal, one middle school principal, two elementary principals, and one community education director. The director of maintenance and the director of transportation report to the superintendent and do not take part in the administrative team meetings.

Since the superintendent is the only central administrative staff member, many staff responsibilities are delegated to other administrators in the district. The superintendent's secretary is responsible for the school district's investments, one elementary principal coordinates the Chapter I program, and the other elementary principal is responsible for the school newsletter and the gifted and talented program. The director of community education serves as the curriculum coordinator. Even though these responsibilities are handled by building administrators, there are other areas, such as staff development, communications, public relations, and personnel, that are not given much attention.

It is apparent that the school district is in need of an additional central office administrator. This person would be able to assume the staff responsibilities which the line administrators are now holding. By so doing, the line administrators would have more time to focus on their primary task. The additional central office administrator would also be able to take a more proactive position rather than a reactive position. The Board of Education is in the process of considering such a position.
Internship Prospectus

Sponsoring Organization: Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

Field Supervisor: John Wagar, Superintendent

University Advisor: Dr. Lawrence B. Schlack
Western Michigan University

Major Focus of Experience: To work with a school superintendent in all aspects of his position

Duration: Eighteen weeks commencing April 29, 1985

Rationale:

In order to experience the total workings of a school system, it is necessary to work with the person charged with the running of a school system. Since the superintendent of the Galesburg-Augusta Schools is the only central office administrator, he is more directly involved with all of the day-to-day operations of the school than a superintendent of a larger school district. The intern is thereby exposing himself to as many areas of the school operation as possible, rather than working in one specialized area of a larger school system.

Having multiple interests in the area of school administration, the intern needs to experience the unique qualities of each administrative discipline. Since each area is an interdependent part of the school system, there is an opportunity to view the impact of change in one area on other areas. This overview should provide insight as to why certain decisions are made. Through this experience, the intern should derive insight into the complexity of leading a school system.

Wagar is willing to provide the intern with an opportunity to fully participate in the day-to-day activities of his job. There are a multitude of issues to be dealt with while serving the apprenticeship,
including closing the accounting books on the current school year and planning and budgeting for the upcoming year. At the same time, the intern is providing a service of benefit to the school and to the superintendent.
Projected Nature of Internship Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPERIENCES &amp; CONTACTS</th>
<th>TERMINAL SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Conceptual</strong></td>
<td>The intern will:</td>
<td>The intern will be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To analyze the chain of command in the district</td>
<td>Discuss with the superintendent and four building principals their understanding of the chain of command and how well it works</td>
<td>Produce data showing how administrators see the chain of command and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To review the procedures used in the recruiting and selection of employees</td>
<td>Observe how recruiting and selection are done, and who is involved</td>
<td>Discuss how people are involved with recruiting and if results are satisfying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To acquire a fuller understanding of how school district interacts with other districts on a county and state-wide basis</td>
<td>Accompany the superintendent to county superintendent meetings and observe the daily working relationship with State Board of Education</td>
<td>Cite the various ways superintendents work together; produce reasons why necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To review the methods used in both short and long-range planning for school district</td>
<td>Examine the procedures used and the people involved with planning</td>
<td>Discuss the techniques used and people involved in planning for school district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Human Relations</strong></td>
<td>The intern will:</td>
<td>The intern will be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To become familiar with the ways a superintendent communicates to the Board, teachers, staff and community</td>
<td>Interview board members, administrators, teachers, support staff, and community members</td>
<td>Point out methods used to communicate to these groups and their opinions regarding communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### OBJECTIVES

2. To discuss the methods used to motivate people in the school system

3. To analyze the induction process that is used in the school district and how it is evaluated

4. To understand how employees participate in decision making

### C. Technical

1. To participate in constructing the budget

2. To participate in constructing the agenda for a school board meeting

3. To develop an increased understanding of how curriculum is developed and evaluated

4. To develop an increased awareness of strategies involved in negotiating a teacher contract

### EXPERIENCES & CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Discuss the methods used to motivate people in the school system</td>
<td>Study the bargaining agreement to find motivational perks; talk with the superintendent regarding other motivational techniques used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Analyze the induction process that is used in the school district and how it is evaluated</td>
<td>Discuss with the superintendent and other administrators how the induction process runs and how it is evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understand how employees participate in decision making</td>
<td>Interview teachers and support staff regarding their opportunities to contribute to decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TERMINAL SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Discuss the methods used to motivate people in the school system</td>
<td>To identify the methods employed to motivate staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Analyze the induction process that is used in the school district and how it is evaluated</td>
<td>Outline the induction process for new employees; to evaluate and modify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understand how employees participate in decision making</td>
<td>List the ways employees can provide input for decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The intern will:

- Work with the superintendent to develop the budget
- Assist with putting together the agenda for a school board meeting
- Survey the process that is used and the people involved in curriculum development and evaluation
- Participate in strategy meetings with the Board of Education; assist in this process as instructed by the superintendent

### The intern will be able to:

- Discuss the steps in producing the budget
- Produce an agenda for a school board meeting
- Show how curriculum is dealt with in long and short-range planning
- Discuss preparation for negotiations, sessions, and settlement process
Internship Timeline Adjustments

It became apparent that the duration of the internship was going to run beyond the 18-week timeline. After discussing this concern with Wagar and Schlack, they agreed that there were more advantages than disadvantages to an extended time period. What appeared to be a problem became an opportunity for a more thorough view of the superintendent's role.

While this internship was designed to take place over an extended period of time (4-1/2 months), it actually was lengthened to nine months. The extended time was the result of the intern's separate work schedule as director of community education. The end results, however, proved to be beneficial to both the school district and the intern. Many of the experiences the intern was seeking were spread out over a longer period of time. Consequently, the intern was able to participate in the planning of events and also be around for the implementation and evaluation.
CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

Month of May 1985

After an initial meeting with Schlack and Wagar to review the goals of the internship, some time was spent with the superintendent going over the working relationship. It was made clear that the superintendent would involve the intern in as many experiences as time would allow. The intern was confident that this internship would provide a wide variety of learning experiences.

The first item of business involved costing out the teachers' association's first financial proposal to the Galesburg-Augusta Board of Education. It was necessary to meet with the payroll secretary to gather all the data on teacher salaries. Once this information was obtained, a projection was made as to where teachers would be on the salary schedule for the next year. Since this was a two-year proposal, it meant costing out both years.

The intern was also asked to develop a school calendar for negotiations. Included in the calendar was a schedule for making up potential snow days and an organized method of addressing the potential problem. While this proposed calendar would be scrutinized by the Board and superintendent and possibly altered, it did provide the intern with a voice in the decision-making process.
Wagar and the intern discussed the proposed calendar and the cost of the teachers' financial proposal. The discussion centered on fiscal planning. By looking at the cash carry over and the current budget, it became clear how many dollars were available for the upcoming year. It also became apparent that there are so many variables that come into play that even the best planning is based on soft information.

The intern's role during teacher negotiations was as a resource person. The superintendent did not attend the negotiations sessions; therefore, the intern did not attend. While the intern was somewhat disappointed at not participating more actively in negotiations, it was equally challenging to be involved with the gathering of information.

Month of June 1985

Throughout the month of June, the intern prepared five different financial proposals for the Board's negotiating team. All of these proposals reflected different percentages of salary increases and required costing out the total expense to the district. Wagar also discussed some of the language issues coming out of the negotiations. These discussions helped the intern understand the long-range implications the teacher contract has on a school district.

The intern attended some county-wide superintendents' meetings focusing on state funding. One meeting reviewed the entire issue of state aid to school districts, while another meeting addressed the changes in state funding for special education for the 1985-86 school year. These meetings revealed how difficult it is for a school district receiving state aid to make long-range financial plans. While good
planning requires hard financial data, the state formula for funding schools is not predictable.

Wagar asked the intern to represent the school district as a liaison to the local cable television board. This board meets on a monthly basis and is responsible for providing leadership in implementing the public access channels as well as administering the consent agreement with the cable television company. The intern was charged with making arrangements to hook up every school building in the district to the cable system.

At the end of the month, the intern met with Wagar to discuss the responsibilities which would be delegated to him during the superintendent's two-week vacation. Besides the specific tasks that needed to be addressed, the intern was to work closely with the superintendent's secretary to handle the routine tasks each day. In essence, the intern was placed in charge during Wagar's absence; and since the intern was an employee of the district, this opportunity was possible. The school board president was informed and instructed to contact the intern on school business in Wagar's absence. The superintendent arranged to telephone regularly in case some unusual situation developed.

Month of July 1985

During Wagar's vacation, the intern experienced the true feeling of being responsible for the operation of the school system. While the day-to-day work activities were conducted as usual, the real challenge came from coping with the unknown. While no major incidents occurred during the superintendent's absence, a subtle tension existed.
New school board members assumed their office in July; and as a result, the personality of the Board changed. It became clear that the human chemistry of the Board changed with the new members. Wagar spent a significant amount of time with each new Board member, introducing them to the workings of the school district, outlining their role as Board members, and answering questions they presented. One full day was set aside for this initial orientation for each new member.

The intern was also charged with meeting with the maintenance supervisor and reviewing the progress of summer work orders. Since none of the building principals works during July, the maintenance supervisor appreciated being able to discuss progress and problems with an administrator. The intern continued to meet with the supervisor throughout the summer and acted as a liaison between maintenance and central office. This experience provided the intern with an exposure to the chain of command within the maintenance department, and pointed out the need for good communications if the chain of command is going to enhance rather than hinder progress.

Securing bids on student desks and folding chairs was another responsibility given to the intern. Besides contacting suppliers for bids, it was also necessary to obtain a firm commitment on delivery. The delivery date had to fit into the summer maintenance schedule and also guarantee delivery before school opened in the fall.

Teacher negotiations continued to intensify during July. Costing out another financial package proposed by the teachers was one of the intern's tasks. More important was a meeting of all district administrators to discuss their response to a possible teacher strike. Even though
the negotiations were progressing, the potential for a strike existed, and it was necessary to begin planning for such an occurrence. The meeting proved to be a brainstorming session in which the superintendent asked for ideas on ways to deal with a potential strike.

The resignation of the high school/middle school band director resulted in the intern's exposure to the recruitment and selection of teachers. After posting the position, Wagar charged the intern with coordinating the selection of a new band director. The selection committee was composed of the high school principal, middle school principal, band booster president, and the intern. After screening credentials and interviewing candidates, the selection team made a recommendation to the superintendent. He then met with the candidate and the intern for the final interview. Once the job offer was made and accepted, the intern personally contacted all candidates who interviewed for the position and thanked them for applying. This contact was most appreciated by the candidates.

Month of August 1985

The most pressing issue this month centered around negotiating the teacher contract. Since the intern was not at the bargaining table, most of his attention was focused on reviewing contract language and costing out financial packages. Administrators were continuing to meet and plan for a potential teacher strike. As it turned out, the contract was settled one week before the scheduled opening of school. While plans for a strike did not need to be implemented, the administrative meetings provided an opportunity to share in the decision-making process.
The intern continued to serve as the school's representative at the Kalamazoo County Cable Commission Board meetings. As previously explained, this commission is responsible for establishing public access television for the Kalamazoo County CableVision service area. Of the three access channels available to the local communities, one is designated for use by K-12 education. The opportunities this provides for the school district are significant. The role of the intern on this committee required the establishment of clear communications between the school district and the cable commission. It appeared that this responsibility was going to be long term.

Month of September 1985

The intern met with Mr. Thomas Ryan, superintendent of the Gull Lake Community Schools. The meeting focused on his role as a school superintendent. Since his board and administrators had just participated in a goal-setting retreat, much of the discussion centered on short and long-range planning. This was the first time such a goal-setting retreat was conducted by the Gull Lake Schools. Ryan's satisfaction with the results seemed to point to such a retreat to be held on a regular basis. While the discussion covered many facets of the superintendent's role, the core of our conversation focused on the importance of planning.

The Galesburg-Augusta teacher contract dealing with personal leave language still needed to be finalized. The intern was asked to look at the Board's last proposal and respond to it from the point of view of a building principal. Since building principals are responsible for administering this section of the contract, it was crucial that the
language was workable. As it turned out, the building principals and the intern pointed out some major problems and suggested some changes that were than adopted by both the Board and the teachers.

Upon Wagar's recommendation, the intern was appointed by the Board to serve on the newly formed public relations committee. This standing committee, which was to be co-chaired by a Board member and the president of the teachers' association, was charged with improving public relations with the entire school community. The intern was appointed as the administrative representative. After the committee's organizational meeting, the intern read a 1981 report from a citizens' advisory committee dealing with public relations for the school district ("Improvement of Public Relations," 1981). It was agreed that the public relations committee would meet monthly.

September was the month that all the cable drops were installed in all the buildings in the district. This took longer than anticipated because two of the buildings required underground wiring which demanded some additional costs plus obtaining the necessary permits to go underground. The completion of the cable hook-up provided each school building with access to cable television.

A meeting with the district's Chapter I program director proved to be very informative. The program director at Galesburg-Augusta is one of the elementary principals; since many of the Chapter I dollars are spent at the elementary level, this appears to be the appropriate person delegated with the responsibility. However, there is a problem inasmuch as this position is more of a staff position than a line position. As is often the case in small school districts, administrators
hold some staff responsibilities even though their major responsibilities are line positions.

Month of October 1985

The public relations committee finalized its goals for the 1985-1986 school year. One goal was to participate in the Michigan Department of Education's Project Outreach Program. Through this program, an audit is conducted of the district's internal and external communications. The intern was given the responsibility of coordinating this effort. After meeting with the superintendent to explain the program and obtaining his approval, the Department of Education was contacted.

The application process for Project Outreach required some digging for information on the intern's part. One part of the application included a questionnaire focusing on all aspects of the district's communication effort. The intern met with the superintendent who assisted in completing the document. The other part of the application required gathering samples of all written information produced by the school district for the purpose of communicating with the staff and the public. Since the application requested specific documents, the intern became aware of communication voids that existed within the school district. The application was submitted to the Department of Education and we awaited their response.

The school district's curriculum council met to discuss goals for the year. One major recommendation was that the council schedule its monthly meeting during the school day rather than at the end of the school day. This change would require obtaining substitute teachers
for the four teachers on the council. It would also provide the council
the needed time to deal with curriculum matters. Since the intern co-
chaired this council, he approached the superintendent with the
rationale for the proposal. The superintendent's approval of the pro-
posal gave the entire curriculum council a new enthusiasm for their
work.

Attending the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Develop-
ment state convention provided the intern with an awareness of all the
resources available to school districts. Tapping into these resources
requires a great deal of short and long-range planning. Without plan-
ning, these good ideas become isolated improvements with little long-
term impact. While it is helpful to attend a conference for the
purpose of being exposed to new ideas, it is more beneficial to have
clearly identified needs that one is attempting to satisfy beforehand.
This conference did provide the intern with information that would
benefit the school district's curriculum council.

The Cable Commission appointed the intern to a steering committee
for the formation of a citizens' advisory board. The steering commit-
tee established a December, 1985, deadline for completing its work and
making a report to the Cable Commission.

The intern met with Donald Vetter, school board trustee, to dis-
cuss the role of the superintendent from a board member's point of
view. According to Vetter, a good superintendent keeps the Board
well informed at all times. While the Board's primary responsibility
is developing policy for the school district, it is equally important
that the Board be aware of the key issues the administration is
dealing with. While the Board wants the administration to handle the
day-to-day school operations, it does want to be informed of what is
happening. As Vetter said, "We don't want to be surprised by an issue
at a Board meeting." The ability to communicate appears to be a key
component for a superintendent.

Each year the Kalamazoo Valley Intermediate School District holds
an Administrative Academy for all county administrators. The planning
session for this academy is open to one administrator from each school
district. The intern was asked to represent the Galesburg-Augusta
School District at this planning session. The eight-week academy is
designed to meet the needs of school administrators. It was informa­
tive to listen to veteran administrators discuss the needs of their
colleagues. Since two of the eight sessions were to address retire­
ment, it appears that Kalamazoo County, like the rest of the nation,
will experience the loss of many administrators in the next few years.

Month of November 1985

The superintendent charged the intern with constructing a budget
for debt retirement for the school district. During the last audit,
it was pointed out that the district lacked a detailed accounting of
revenues and expenses for debt retirement. This project required the
intern to work with the superintendent's secretary to pull together
the individual revenues and expense items. The end result was the
1985-86 Debt Retirement Budget for the Galesburg-Augusta Community
Schools (Appendix A).

The curriculum council finalized its goals for the 1985-86
school year. Since this was the first attempt at goal setting for the
council, a process for goal setting was not in place. Being a member
of this council provided the intern with a close-up view of the develop­
ment of a goal-setting process for an organization.

In order to save curriculum departments from going through the
same time-consuming efforts to establish a process for goal setting, a
meeting was held at which time the curriculum council shared the goal­
setting process and its goals for the 1985-86 school year with all
department heads. The council also invited the departments to use the
same process in setting their goals. This uniform process would not
only provide a consistency of effort, but it would also allow all
department heads and the curriculum council an opportunity to evaluate
and improve the same instrument.

The meeting between curriculum council and department heads had
very positive results. For the first time the department heads viewed
their departments as a part of a larger whole. They also saw this
larger body as being helpful and supportive rather than just directive.
This coming together helped to eliminate the isolation of departments
that existed. It also helped the department heads realize that their
input played an important role in the overall curriculum direction for
the district.

The steering committee of the Kalamazoo County Cable Commission
continued to meet on a bi-weekly basis during the month of November.
After reviewing a sample of guidelines used by other public access
centers around the state, the committee began putting together bylaws
for the operation of a Citizens' Advisory Board. The committee was
able to put together a first draft of the bylaws during this month.

The public relations committee changed its name to the communications committee because members of the committee believed that "public relations" had a hard-sell image, whereas "communications" seemed to convey a more personal approach for attaining the same goal. The Board of Education accepted the suggestion and changed the name without question.

The intern was informed by the Michigan Department of Education that December 10, 1985, was the date for the district's communications audit. To prepare for this audit, individuals representing 13 different school and community groups had to be asked to participate in the audit. The process of lining up the 50 people to represent the 13 groups took three weeks. In order to properly inform people of the purpose of this audit and their role in participating, a personal phone call or visit was made to each person. The majority of the people asked to participate were willing to give one hour of their time to be interviewed by a member of the Project Outreach staff. All people were eager to share their opinions regarding the school system. Even the few people who were not able to participate were thankful for being asked.

Once all the participants were secured and the interview schedule was established, the interviewers from Project Outreach were given a copy of the schedule, and the two interviewers would begin talking with groups at 8:00 a.m. and continuing until 3:30 p.m. All 13 groups would be sharing their opinions concerning school communications during their one-hour interview.
Month of December 1985

Most of the intern's time in December was spent preparing for the Project Outreach interviews. A phone call was made to each of the 50 participants one week before the scheduled interview to remind them of the interview and answer any last minute questions they might raise. The *Kalamazoo Gazette* was also informed of our project, and they provided good news coverage for the program (Doherty, 1985).

Our efforts paid off with 100 percent participation by the 50 individuals. The interviewers from the Michigan Department of Education adhered to the time schedule, and the participants appreciated the opportunity to share their opinions regarding the school system. All participants were sent letters of appreciation which also explained how they would be receiving a copy of the final report.

The intern met with the Galesburg-Augusta Curriculum Council during this month. The council continued to revise its bylaws to better meet the needs of K-12 curriculum. As co-chair of the council, the intern has been directly involved with the council on an ongoing basis. One of the council's primary goals is to increase K-12 staff participation in curriculum.

The intern presented the Cable Commission steering committee's proposed bylaws for the Citizens' Advisory Board to the Cable Commission. In addition to serving on the steering committee, the intern also served as liaison between the steering committee and the Cable Commission. Serving as liaison provided the intern with a better understanding of the multiple issues that must be addressed when establishing a public access system. It also revealed the important role school personnel
play in community activities.

Month of January 1986

Meeting with Dr. Robert Hamet, superintendent of the Comstock Community Schools, furnished the intern with some new perspectives on the role of the superintendent. Hamet shared freely his ideas and feelings about being the educational leader of a school district. His enthusiasm and faith in people reflected in everything he said. His belief in shared responsibility was evident as he spoke about meeting with various groups in the school community on a regular basis. The intern left the interview with a better understanding of how a superintendent can use his/her people skills to improve the environment within a school district.

The intern contacted Craig Carter, a communication specialist at Project Outreach, to check on the status of the report. It was complete and in the process of being typed and copied. Fifteen copies of the report would be sent to the superintendent in February (Appendix B). He recommended that additional copies of the report be made available to all people who participated in the interviews. He also urged us to take advantage of the resources available in the Michigan Department of Education as we attempt to implement some of the recommendations.

The communications committee was waiting for the report from the Project Outreach personnel in order to use the findings as a step in goal setting. In the meantime, the committee began to work on a district-wide contest to select a slogan and logo for the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools. A slogan and logo would give the school
district a more distinct image and would also provide a positive way for community members to participate in school business.

The Cable Commission's steering committee concluded its work and presented the Cable Commission with its recommendations, which included bylaws by which the future Citizens' Advisory Board would operate, and a list of 50 possible candidates to serve on the new board. Members of the Cable Commission were pleased with the efforts of the steering committee and asked that they consider serving on the future Citizens' Advisory Board.

As the internship concluded, a final meeting was held with Wagar who expressed his appreciation to the intern for fully participating in all aspects of the responsibilities delegated to him. The January revision of the 1985-86 budget was also reviewed and discussed. Since the intern was employed by the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools, the superintendent encouraged the intern to continue his involvement with the various committees and projects. Thus ended a nine-month internship in the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Overview of Internship Objectives

This chapter focuses on the learning experiences the intern wanted to obtain during the course of the internship in the Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools. These learning experiences were in the following skill areas: conceptual, human, and technical. The conceptual skills involved seeing how the various interdependent components of the school system fit together as a whole. The human skills involved observing how the people in the organization interact with each other. The technical skills involved applying different processes and procedures to produce an end product.

Conceptual Skills

During the term of this experience, the intern was able to attain a good understanding of how the parts of the organization complemented the whole organization. Having an opportunity to participate in interviews, selection of teacher candidates, negotiations, budgeting, and curriculum revealed the interdependence of these various components. It became apparent that everything that takes place within an organization has an impact on the organization as a whole. Nothing takes place in isolation.
Because there was no apparent formal procedure for planning at the Board level, it was difficult to participate in or observe the planning process. The school district was just beginning to work with an outside consultant to establish a goal-setting process for the school district. Consequently, much of the planning that took place was short term and more reactive in nature. Even though it was not possible to become familiar with a process for district-wide planning, the intern benefited from observing and participating in the effort to institute such a process. The intern developed an appreciation for the energy and cooperation necessary to establish planning procedures.

Technical Skills

In the technical area, the intern was able to attain all of the objectives established in the prospectus. Having an opportunity to work with the superintendent in the construction of the preliminary budget provided insight into how much common sense comes into play in this process. Being able to follow this preliminary budget through its final stage and then through one revision helped the intern understand the fluid nature of a school budget.

Working with the superintendent's secretary as she prepared the agenda for school board meetings provided the intern with an understanding of the detail work that is required in preparing for Board meetings. Besides the agenda, it is necessary to prepare packets of information for each Board member which contain specific information on the various agenda items. Oftentimes the secretary spends a considerable amount of time contacting people for information to put in the Board packets. The
type of job the secretary does in putting together the agenda and the supporting information determines to a large extent how smoothly the Board meeting will run.

Being appointed co-chair of the Galesburg-Augusta Curriculum Council allowed the intern to fully participate in curriculum development. During the 1985-86 school year, the curriculum council revised its guidelines. Part of the revision focused on improving the process used by departments in goal setting and planning. Both short-term planning (one year) and long-term planning (five to seven years) were addressed. A copy of the revision is included (Appendix C).

Since the school district was negotiating a contract with the teachers' association, there was an opportunity to participate in some strategy meetings with the superintendent. The superintendent also had the intern prepare some of the financial proposals that would be used at the bargaining table. The intern was also involved with calculating the cost of financial proposals that were made by the teachers. When the contract was settled in August, 1985, the intern was able to experience the feeling of relief that all people involved with the negotiations shared.

Human Skills

The intern's work on the school district's communications committee provided all of the experiences necessary to meet the human objectives identified in the prospectus. The Project Outreach audit of internal and external communications provided a comprehensive view of how the school district communicates with all of its publics. Being responsible
for coordination of this project allowed the intern to learn the process for conducting such an audit while also learning from the actual findings and recommendations. Project Outreach provided enough learning experiences to devote an entire internship to it.

The most rewarding part of the internship was seeing the superintendent become more interested in cultivating the human resources of the school district. Most of the suggestions the intern made regarding human relations were supported by the superintendent. This support resulted in developing a program to recognize employee service. The end result found the Board of Education, the administration, and the various employee groups working together for the common good.

Recommendations

Greater care is needed in preparing students for the internship experience. The seemingly limitless number of internship opportunities presents as many pitfalls as it does opportunities. The Educational Leadership Department should provide a pre-internship seminar for all students preparing to do an internship. The seminar should provide insight into locating an appropriate internship, the recordkeeping function, and the culminating paper.

While the intern learned a great deal from the total internship experience, too much time was expended in locating basic information about the University's and the Department's expectations. Clearly defining the requirements for the internship would save all interns valuable time. It would also help interns to know and understand the internship process from the beginning to the conclusion. Providing
this information for interns would make for a more successful learning experience.
APPENDIX A

1985-86 Debt Retirement Budget
### Revenue

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Total Expenses: $247,810.90
APPENDIX B

A Communication Review With Recommendations
A Communication Review
With Recommendations
for the
Galesburg-Augusta Schools

February, 1986

by

Shirley Beckman
Public Information Specialist
Ingham Intermediate School District

and

Craig D. Carter
Communication Specialist
Michigan Department of Education
# Galesburg-Augusta

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INTRODUCTION

On December 10, 1985, at the request of John Wagar, superintendent of schools, a team comprised of Craig D. Carter and Shirley Beckman conducted a day-long Communication Review of the Galesburg-Augusta Schools.

A series of interviews with school and community people was arranged by school personnel and a packet of printed materials, used by the school district to communicate with various audiences, was sent to the consultants in advance.

The Communication Review is a service provided free to local school districts by Project Outreach of the Michigan State Board of Education and the Department of Education. The purpose of the review is to provide an objective view of the internal and external communication efforts of the district and to make recommendations to strengthen those efforts. We realize that at best this is a "windshield estimate" but feel it can still provide a valuable perspective for the district.

The members of the Galesburg-Augusta review team have varied experience in the communications field.

Shirley Beckman has been public information specialist at Ingham Intermediate School District for seven years. She previously worked as a newspaper reporter for weekly and daily newspapers and in hospital and library public relations. She is president of the Michigan School Public Relations Association and is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America.

Craig D. Carter, Communications Specialist for the Department, worked as an education writer for The Flint Journal for 8 1/2 years before joining the Department in 1979 in the Office of Public Affairs.

Carter suggested to State Superintendent Phillip E. Runkel that a "P.R. audit" or communications evaluation component be added to Project Outreach. Project Outreach Director Ned S. Hubbell and Carter developed the new component and Runkel expanded Project Outreach's services by implementing this Communication Review Service. Carter is the coordinator of this Outreach component.

Appreciation is extended to Superintendent Wagar and his staff for arranging the review. A special "thank you" is due to all persons who participated. We hope the report will prove worth their time and urge the superintendent to share this report with everyone who participated.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many resources in Michigan that local school districts can use in public relations planning. The Michigan
School Public Relations Association, the State Board of Education's Project Outreach, the Michigan Education Association, the Michigan Association of School Administrators, the Michigan Association of School Boards and many publications from the National School Public Relations Association are among the resources available.

We recommend that the superintendent and the board of education rely heavily on these resources in planning specific activities for improving community relations.

To strengthen communication efforts, we recommend that the board and superintendent:

1. Develop and adopt Board of Education communications policies. These policies would establish the Board's commitment to a planned program of two-way communications between the district and its publics, both external and internal.

2. Build on the recently established public relations committee of school and community people, making it an active and contributing group.

3. Assign the communications/public relations responsibilities to one person. The most effective plan would be to hire an additional, qualified person who would report to the superintendent. A second option would be to provide Bob Cretsinger with an additional staff person who could develop and implement a program under his guidance. Cretsinger appears to have the best idea of the importance of public relations and the best understanding of how to implement a plan.

4. Develop communication goals and objectives and a public relations plan, incorporating the four parts of successful public relations: research, planning, action and evaluation.

5. Make recommended changes in the district newsletter and establish other suggested publications.

6. Make improving internal communications the number one priority, with the understanding that this is the key to successful external communications.

7. Use the key communicator concept as one way to reach the community.

8. Meet at least once a year with government officials to discuss common concerns (How can we help each other?).

9. Establish working relationships with both Kalamazoo and Battle Creek newspapers, as well as appropriate radio and TV stations. Strive to generate more feature story ideas for the media to help in promoting district success stories.
10. Conduct a public opinion phone poll similar to the Project Outreach public opinion survey. Use data as basis for external P.R. planning.

11. Survey all staff to determine how they get information about the district and how they would like to get news -- how they feel about their jobs. Use this data in planning an internal communications program.

12. Develop and implement a program of recognition for outstanding performance, years of service, perfect attendance, for all staff.

13. Work with Kalamazoo Valley ISD to hold a Student Government Training Academy for high school student council officers.

14. Use the Project Outreach Student Leadership Forum format at the Galesburg-Augusta High School to learn more about high school student concerns and needs.

15. Work with local business people to develop meaningful two-way school, business partnerships. This could be started with a lunch in a school cafeteria or a breakfast session at the community education building. Remember a partnership means both parties will gain.

16. Establish a See For Yourself Program at each school as a part of efforts to improve communications with the senior citizen population in the district.

17. Prepare an Annual Report on staff and student accomplishments.

18. Establish a board action summary report and send it to all employees, news media and key residents within 24 hours of the meeting.

19. Establish a bi-weekly or monthly staff newsletter as a part of efforts to improve internal communications.

FINDINGS

Strengths --

- An educational program that is viewed positively
- Good school spirit at the high school, because of a winning football team
- Strong parent groups for specific activities such as Band Boosters and a fledgling academic boosters group
- A superintendent who is viewed as having good financial skills
- A board of education whose members work well together
• A teacher's group that is working hard to change the negative aftermath of a strike
• The Galesburg-Augusta Announcer, district newsletter
• Slogan/logo contest involving students and community. Winners will be announced at first Spring Fine Arts Festival
• Informative board meetings with principals reporting monthly on building activities
• Good community education program

Weaknesses --
• No local weekly newspaper and sparse coverage from Battle Creek and Kalamazoo dailies
• No internal staff newsletter or board action summary
• Poor distribution of community newsletter
• No parent building newsletters or parent advisory groups
• A superintendent who is perceived by some as a poor communicator and a poor delegator of duties
• An under-administered district
• A feeling of isolation on the part of some employee groups
• There is no feeling of community within the school family -- no feeling of a team working for a common goal

BOARD COMMUNICATION POLICIES/GOALS

The Galesburg-Augusta Board of Education does not have extensive policies on communications/community relations. The board's adoption of a set of comprehensive community relations policies is an important first step in organizing district communication efforts and states a commitment to public relations and improved communications with the community.

A set of comprehensive communications policies provides the guidelines and directions for administrators and staff members in implementing a continuing effort to keep the various "publics" of the school system informed of the quality of education provided by the district.

Such policies not only set the tone for school/community relations but serve as the basis for all communications activities in the district. The policies should state who is the spokesman of the district....something that should be understood by all well in advance of any crisis, such as a breakdown in negotiations or the inquiry of a student or staff member.

The policies also need to state that communications is a two-way process and it is the intent of the Board of Education to listen to its publics as well as to inform them of the activities, needs and accomplishments of the schools.
They also should address the issue of internal communication...being sure that all people who work for the district are knowledgeable about the district's goals, procedures, and programs.

Coupled with the policies should be annual communication goals and objectives for fulfilling the policies.

We also urge the Galesburg-Augusta school board to address, through new policies, efforts to improve communications with taxpayers who do not or no longer have children in the public schools.

Other policy elements worthy of consideration are:

- Provisions for receiving comment and opinion from the staff and community in a reliable and credible manner
- Provisions for keeping the community informed about how and for what purposes school district funds are expended
- Provisions for compliance with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (If not reflected in the basic communications policies, such a provision should be made in other sections of the Board policy manual.)
- Provisions for meaningful community involvement in planning and decision-making
- Provisions for annual review of the Board's communication and public relations policies and for planning its major communications activities for the year ahead, relating those activities to the general educational goals established by the board

We recommend that the superintendent work with the board to develop a set of policies and that the board adopt them as soon as possible.

Further assistance in developing communications/community relations policies is available from the Michigan Association of School Boards, 421 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933.

COMMUNICATIONS ORGANIZATION

While no one on staff is responsible for coordinating all district communications, the district does have a P.R. committee.

The committee's first goal for this school year was to have a Project Outreach Communications Review conducted to provide some direction to improving communications and community relations.

One document that we received from the district, that we feel can provide much of the needed direction in developing a communications plan, is the report on "Improvement of Public
Relations Between the Public and the School," which was developed by a citizen's advisory committee, April 1981.

While we probably will repeat some of the recommendations mentioned in this report, we feel that the advisory committee's report details most of the major elements that need to be established in the district to improve internal and external communications.

Currently, Beverly Kleinhans, an elementary principal, is responsible for producing the district newsletter. Everyone praised her for her work in producing this important communiqué, but some complained that it took her away from her responsibilities as a principal.

To better organize the district's communication efforts, we recommend that the superintendent designate someone as the communications coordinator for the district. Someone has to be at the helm to provide some direction and guidance to the district's communication efforts. Among the duties of the communications coordinator should be the production of the district newsletter, a staff newsletter, a board action summary newsletter and the coordination of all communication and community relations activities in the district.

The P.R. committee is a good start in efforts to improve communications, but not all members attend meetings regularly. We feel that the committee can be productive, but it is important to remember that it is not a substitute for a communications coordinator. The team or committee should work with the communications coordinator in developing and implementing a district communications/community relations plan.

We sincerely feel that the public relations efforts in a school district can be better directed if an annual set of communications objectives and goals is developed and implemented by a Communications Team. This approach gives everyone some "ownership" in the plan by involving all segments of the school family.

We urge school officials to identify a few tasks they would like to accomplish each year and concentrate their energies on these tasks rather than trying to do too many tasks at one time. Doing a few community relations tasks well is far better than tackling a sporadic battery of activities.

For example, the objectives for the Galesburg-Augusta schools could include the following:

**Communication Objectives for 1985-86**

1. Provide the Board of Education, the superintendent and the school staff with counsel, advice and assistance in the field of public relations.
2. Provide information about the school system to internal and external audiences using all available means.

3. Conduct an internal communications survey of all employees to learn more about their informational needs.

4. Establish a board action summary report and send it to all employees, board members, key residents and the news media reporters within 24 hours of the board meeting.

5. Make recommended changes in the district newsletter.

6. Establish **See For Yourself Programs** at each school to improve communications with those residents who do not or no longer have children in the public schools.

Under each of these objectives, the coordinator should spell out a timetable of major activities needed to fulfill each. The Communication Team members also can serve as reporters to gather news from each school and from throughout the community.

**As Appendix A we are providing a copy of the East Lansing School District's public relations plan. It was developed by a Communications Committee and a part-time communications director.**

Also, the National School Public Relations Association produces a packet of basic public relations tip sheets that deal with a wide variety of school programs and issues. **As Appendix B we are providing school officials with some of these valuable tip sheets.**

**EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLICATIONS**

One of the most important components of any school district's communication efforts is a district-wide newsletter that is mailed to all residents.

The district has a newsletter called the **GA Announcer**. We received three issues of the newsletter for our review. Two were 12 pages long, one was 16 pages. The newsletter is printed on white stock that is roughly 8.5 by 11 inches.

The newsletters we received were filled with stories about school programs, volunteers, special projects, classroom activities, staff members, adult education and school events and programs.

We commend school officials for realizing the importance of a district newsletter. However, we strongly feel that the newsletter should be mailed to all residents in the district to make sure all residents receive a copy. Some people get it inserted in a shopping guide, others pick it up at the post office.
Also, since the district newsletter is the only communique that is "readily available" to residents who want information about the schools, it should be produced on a monthly schedule.

To help school officials improve the GA Announcer, we offer the following advice:

- Photographs of students in a learning situation or classroom should be used on the front page of every issue. Photographs of children are a great attention grabber. The front page of the newsletter is the showcase and the district's students should be "out front".

- Photographs should be "action shots" that add something to a story. There also should be cutlines under each photograph. Photo quality in the issues we reviewed ranged from good to poor. Photos must be exceptional because some contrast will be lost in the reproduction process.

- Each article should have a headline (not a label) that expresses a complete thought about the story. Headlines also should span the width of the page.

- Design a new nameplate. The current nameplate, with the "classroom graphics" on the left side of the page, creates layout problems. It is impossible to use full column width headlines with the "graphics" extending into the headline space.

- The Announcer should be carefully evaluated as to what its goals are and if it is meeting those goals. It also should be distributed internally to all staff the day before it is distributed to the community.

People said the district is suffering because of the folding of a weekly newspaper. However, it has not done much to fill that gap. Suggestions might be:

- Elementary school newsletters. These could be produced with parent volunteer help. A tip sheet on newsletters for parents is included as Appendix C.

- An every-other-month "Announcer Special" -- single sheet, two-sided mailed to homes with information of upcoming events, etc.

- Give people (staff and public) some in-hand facts about their schools -- "Did you know?" information that helps build pride. Williamston Community Schools have done this in the simplest way for their elementary schools (copy included).
Any print materials should share a graphic identity that says Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools. This may be with a common logo, a slogan, color, a typeface or graphic design. It should be an identity that reflects the image the district wants schools to project.

If school personnel are going to take the time and effort to produce newsletters, the publications should be attractive and professional-looking.

Newsletter editors should remember that just because a publication is sent to residents they cannot assume that it will be read. There is tremendous competition for reader attention and people receive numerous pieces of printed material every day. School publications need to be attractive and neat if they are to receive reader attention.

To further assist school officials in the production of all types of newsletters and publications, we are passing along the following tips from the publication Communication Briefings:

- Finish this statement before you begin work on your next newsletter: As a result of people reading this newsletter, I hope the... Now apply what that statement tells you toward the planning of your next publication.

- Check every article to see if it will interest at least one segment of your readership. Ask yourself, what will it mean to members of that segment? If you were a member of that audience, would you read it?

- Be sure that you have a mix of articles that will be of interest to all segments of your readership. Keep a balance.

- Check to see if any of your articles smack of propaganda or gloss over the truth. If readers perceive even one item as being propaganda, you will lose credibility.

- Examine the articles to see if the writing is clear and concise, with short sentences, short paragraphs and short words. Avoid jargon and "shop talk" that might confuse the reader. Do you use analogies to explain concepts readers might not understand? Do your stories explain why something happened? Are your feature story leads punchy? Do the feature stories end with a bang, a strong quote, a question based on your central idea?

- And finally, how many of these vital functions do your story headlines perform? -- attract the reader, present the gist of the story -- sell the story to the reader -- satisfy the superficial reader with a message.
To help Galesburg-Augusta school personnel get a better handle on reader reaction to all their newsletters and publications, we are providing as Appendix D a publication evaluation form from the Michigan School Public Relations Association. We recommend that school publications be evaluated yearly.

**ANNUAL REPORT**

Another vital component of a district's communications plan is the Annual Report.

We are not talking about the annual financial report that districts are required by law to publish.

We strongly recommend that an annual State of the Schools report be produced, highlighting the accomplishments of staff and students, as well as detailing district finances.

The Annual Report gives school officials an opportunity to interpret to the community and staff the various goals and programs in operation in the district. Guidelines for producing such an annual report are provided as Appendix E.

**KEY COMMUNICATORS**

Also, to improve external communications, we recommend that the superintendent establish a key communicators program as developed by Don Bagin of Glassboro (N.J.) State College.

The use of key communicators has been found to be useful in many school districts in reaching external publics quickly and with specific information. These are people in the community who communicate with lots of citizens on a regular basis. They may be barbers or others whose occupation puts them in frequent contact with large numbers of people.

Bagen suggests, in establishing a key communicators program, that the superintendent meet with these key residents in small groups to explain the program to them and to let them know that they have access to him or her when they need accurate information about the district.

The key communicators would not be required to meet on a regular basis, Bagin said, but the superintendent would produce a key communicators newsletter to keep them informed on school events, news, issues and activities. It also is essential that these people receive all school publications and regular communiques.

A network of individuals within the community that can quickly disseminate accurate and supportive information about the
schools to others in the community can be formed in any school system, if the right people are selected.

Guidelines for Bagin's successful key communicators program are provided as Appendix F.

Superintendent Wagar also should explore the possibility of having an advisory council. An advisory council puts the superintendent into contact with patrons in the community who hold leadership positions. Advisory councils can be a positive mechanism for two-way communication between the administration and the community and serve as a basis for on-going support.

Guidelines for establishing an advisory council are provided as Appendix G.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Efforts to improve internal communications should be a major goal for all school districts. This vital area is the most overlooked in school districts, although it is, in our opinion, the most important.

We received mixed reactions on whether the district does a better job with external or internal communications. Some employees said the internal communications were better, while others said external communications were better.

The superintendent said he writes letters of congratulations to staff members when appropriate. He also mentioned retirement teas and opportunities in the spring and fall for staff to get together over coffee and rolls. Some staff members we talked to indicated they did not attend because they considered "it a waste of time!"

We feel that the superintendent should develop a plan to address the concerns and comments expressed about the poor internal communications. Some commented that they do not feel like they are a part of the "team" because the superintendent doesn't delegate enough of the administrative duties to his staff.

"He is trying to do too much himself," one person said.

There are many things the superintendent and the P.R. committee can do to improve internal communications. The first thing we recommend is that an employee survey be conducted to learn more about employee informational needs. The Project Outreach Office is available to help in the development of a questionnaire to learn where employees get information about the schools, what kinds of information they would like to receive more of and what they feel needs to be done to improve internal communications.
School personnel need to remember that all staff members like to feel they are being treated as "first-class citizens". Employees need to feel they are an integral part of the total school operation and receive recognition for their work.

Employees are a district's most valuable asset in a communications program, if they are well informed about the system's operation, goals, programs and schools. School officials need to stress to employees that they should view themselves as full-time emissaries of the school community. An atmosphere needs to be created that ensures that employees are comfortable in this role and feel like important members of the school family. If they feel "put-down" or "tuned-out", they may not present a positive picture of the schools.

When we asked employees what would be on a public relations "wish list", one employee said "more atta-boys". There seems to be a feeling that people like their jobs and feel they are doing them well. However, there is no recognition of a job well done on the part of administration or board.

There is no plan in place to see that people are recognized for their work, for years of service, extra effort, etc.

One person admitted to projecting negative feelings about the schools even though he felt he had a good job.

Some things that can help bring people together in other schools:

- Okemos Public Schools have a Board Valentine Appreciation Program. On Valentine's Day, the board members take a token of appreciation (coffee cup, bookmark, etc.) to every staff person, starting early in the morning with bus drivers.

- Williamston Community Schools' marketing committee plans a Christmas party for all staff and it is coming to be a school tradition.

- Ingham Intermediate School District holds an annual reception where employees are recognized for years of service. They receive pins in the shape of the district's logo. There is a different stone designating the years of service (i.e. 15 years, a ruby).

We suggest the following ideas as possible ways to build a team feeling within the district:

1. The family meetings -- the entire staff meets and uses the large group/small group process to identify problems and solutions
2. Quality of Work Life techniques -- where employees meet by building or unit to discuss and resolve problems

3. School improvement planning process -- use this process to bring all people in a building together under a common goal, to create an effective school, where all children learn

4. Two kits from the National School Public Relations Association, each of which has all the materials for a staff workshop: "Building Level PR" and "Lighting the Fire, Building Staff Morale". The latter is available at the Project Outreach Office.

Also lacking is an employee newsletter. An employee newsletter is important because it can keep employees informed about school events and decisions.

NSPRA says that employee newsletters should relay to staff important policy and administrative decisions, school events, announcements and promising teaching experiences. The newsletter also should contain news and features, not propaganda. These publications need to "talk" about people in the school system, highlighting job-related and personal accomplishments of all employees.

To assist school personnel in producing an employee newsletter, we are providing as Appendix H a tip sheet from NSPRA.

We also feel that the actions of the school board should be reported to the employees within 24 hours of the meeting. We are not talking about providing employees with a copy of the board minutes. Many districts provide a Board Briefs summary report that highlights the major board decisions.

This summary report should be printed on the same color stock, have a nameplate and use short bullet headlines in the left margin with each entry. Each entry should be a concise summary of the board action and not just a statement or agenda title. The items do not have to be printed in chronological order. The summary report will be easier to read if similar items are grouped together.

We feel such a board summary report is important because employees should be the first to know about the actions of the board before a summary of the meeting is published in the local newspaper. Besides keeping employees well informed, this practice gives employees the district's perspective on issues and board decisions before they read a reporter's interpretation of them.

School officials may want to consider producing a newsletter similar to the one in the Livonia Public Schools where the board action summary is on one side and the staff newsletter is on the other.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS/COMMUNICATIONS

One problem that was cited often by those interviewed is the apparent "split" or poor communication between the two towns -- Galesburg and Augusta.

We strongly recommend that the board of education hold a few of its meetings in the Augusta community in an effort to improve relations with these residents.

We also found it distressing that there are no parent support groups in the district, such as a PTA.

We also recommend that the superintendent consider establishing a district-wide Parent Teachers Association, that could rotate its meeting between the two towns, as a part of efforts to improve community relations and parent involvement.

Communications between the schools and the senior citizen population were described to us as "poor".

The senior citizens we interviewed said they are allowed to attend community education classes without paying the fee, if the quota is met. However, they were not aware of any Golden Pass program for them or any attempts to communicate directly with them. They said they were always treated with courtesy but didn't feel part of the schools anymore.

Some of these people would volunteer if there were short term opportunities. (Talk to one class at an elementary school not teach a series of art classes, for example).

One person mentioned millage information was difficult for them to understand.

This group was especially complimentary about the Community Education program.

We suggest that school personnel examine the See For Yourself Program which was developed in the Columbus (Ohio) Public Schools and the I've Been Back to School developed by Ann Arbor Schools and used by the MEA, for ways to get these and the nonparents into the schools.

The ever-increasing nonparent population is becoming the greatest communications challenge for Michigan's public schools. The premise behind the See For Yourself Program is that if you bring taxpayers into the school and show them what you are doing with their tax dollars, then they will support the schools. This successful program is described in Appendix I.
Another excellent way to get people involved in schools and for them to learn more about the district is to use them as volunteers.

The use of volunteers is one of the finest forms of school/community involvement. School personnel need to keep in mind that volunteers are not to be a replacement for employees or former employees, but should be used as an additional resource for present staff members.

We suggest the superintendent contact Ned Hubbell at the Project Outreach Office about our volunteer training program.

We think the district's Spring Arts Festival is a fine idea. We hope it is an annual event. Other ways to take the schools to the community:

- Regular displays of student work in community sites, such as the bank (being sure to include both Galesburg and Augusta).
- Work with the high school Student Council or Honor Society to provide a service program for the community (shoveling walks for senior citizens, for example).
- Establish a speaker's bureau with people who will give talks to Rotary, Women's Club, etc. Support this with slides and students, when possible.
- Establish and publicize a phone number to call where citizens can get an answer to questions about the schools.
- Be sure all staff members know about the successes and are encouraged to spread the word. For example: be sure all staff members get a clear explanation of the district's Michigan Educational Assessment Program test results (single sheet, one sided).
- Collect the success stories and publicize them in the G-A Announcer and on cable TV.

The superintendent mentioned that some in the community do not set a high value on education. If this is true, it is up to the district to correct that by demonstrating to the public, daily, year-round that "we are good and we are going to get better, with your help".

We recommend a booklet published by NSPRA, "Non-Parents and Schools: Creating a New Team". This booklet will provide ideas that will mushroom into others when the Galesburg-Augusta P.R. Committee reviews it. (NSPRA, 1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201, Arlington, Virginia 22209.)
We met sincere people who are pleased with the schools. We heard that lack of money has kept things from happening. At the same time, we heard about new programs.

We never heard from those we interviewed that these are bad schools or this is a bad place to work.

We did not hear an exuberance, an enthusiasm to let the community know what a good job the schools are doing.

Galesburg-Augusta Schools need a plan for developing an enthusiasm for the schools, a way to get out the good news. It needs to be a constant, year-round effort, not identified with millage in any way.

**MEDIA RELATIONS**

Many people we interviewed complained that "our kids are getting the short end of the stick" since the local newspaper folded and the district must rely on the Battle Creek Enquirer and the Kalamazoo Gazette for coverage.

We interviewed Don Doherty, a stringer for the Kalamazoo newspaper who is assigned to cover the Galesburg-Augusta district. He primarily covers the school board meetings.

Although he said there are no restrictions or difficulties in getting information from employees, he doesn't hear from the district as much as he would like. He said school personnel don't complain about any of the stories he writes nor do they offer many story ideas.

Based on our interviews and solid practices in improving news media relations, we recommend the following:

- That the news media reporters be given a packet of board agenda background materials at least two days in advance of board meetings. Having this information in advance gives reporters time to prepare more and better stories.

- That the district write press releases about the school board actions and school events and programs. Since reporters are unable to attend all school events, press releases can increase district coverage. A readily identifiable, pre-printed news release form should be used.

- That reporters be put on mailing lists to receive school and district newsletters and other publications. These publications can serve as sources for story ideas.
• That individual principals and other employees strive to generate more story ideas for the local media. School officials can use a news media tip sheet for staff members to relay newsworthy items to the communications coordinator.

We also recommend that the superintendent and/or the communications coordinator meet regularly with the reporters in the area to learn more about their needs, the kinds of stories they are interested in and to keep them apprised of school news and developments.

School officials should then relay these needs to all the principals, teachers and support staff members to help them do a better job of generating feature story ideas and understanding the interests of the reporters.

The key to good media coverage is to do some planning and to call reporters well in advance, (a week when possible), so coverage can be arranged. School officials should not wait until the day before an event to call a reporter and expect him or her to drop everything and rush to the scene.

Also, don't get discouraged when a story idea is not developed and used in the newspaper. There is tremendous competition for media coverage and school officials have to at least allow the reporter or editor to make a decision to cover something or not.

To provide further assistance in the area of media relations, we are providing as Appendix J media tip sheets -- both for print and broadcast media.

IN CONCLUSION

We realize that we have made a lot of suggestions and recommendations in this report to improve communications and community relations in the Galesburg-Augusta schools. It is going to take a lot of time and energy of dedicated people to put these recommendations in action.

We do feel that with the Communications Team approach, with every member of the school family involved, community relations and communications in the schools can be "fine-tuned" and improved, as everyone joins together to promote education and the community.

The Project Outreach Office stands ready to help school personnel in their efforts to implement our recommendations.
APPENDIX C

Curriculum Guideline Council Guideline
I. **PURPOSE OF CURRICULUM GUIDELINE COUNCIL**

The Board of Education and the professional staff recognize that the instructional program for our students needs continuing study and improvement.

To further this process, the professional staff recognizes that it can assist the Board in an on-going study in bringing about desirable changes in teaching methods, techniques, class compositions, course offerings, textbook selection, and other phases of the program. It is important that the student remain the center of the committee study or recommendation affecting the teaching-learning process.

The purpose of the Council is to coordinate curriculum in all content areas within the Galesburg-Augusta School District.

II. **MEMBERSHIP OF CURRICULUM GUIDELINE COUNCIL**

The Council will include a chairperson or co-chairpersons, one representative from each of the elementary schools, one representative from the middle school, and one representative from the high school. The term of office for representatives to the Council, shall be two years.

Replacements for elementary, middle school and high school representatives will be chosen when needed at the beginning of each school year by the administration from a list of persons indicating a desire to be a representative. The chairperson(s) will be an administrator(s) appointed by the superintendent. A recorder who is not necessarily a member of the Council, will be appointed by the chairperson(s).

Members of the Council may serve consecutive terms.

III. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF CURRICULUM GUIDELINE COUNCIL**

The Council is an advisory group. It shall make recommendations to the Administrative Council. Its recommendations will be based on Departmental proposals. The Council will also hear reports and proposals from other groups or individuals working on curriculum matters.
IV. CURRICULUM GUIDELINE COUNCIL ---- DUTIES OF CHAIRPERSON(S) AND RECORDER

A. The chairperson(s) or designee shall preside at all meetings of the Council.

B. The chairperson(s) shall have the power to appoint special committees within the Council.

C. The recorder will keep records of official actions by the Council.

V. CURRICULUM GUIDELINE COUNCIL MEETINGS

A. The Council will meet at least monthly.

B. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson(s) or by a representative to the Council.

C. For the transaction of business, a quorum shall consist of at least a chairperson and three members of the Council.

VI. CURRICULUM GUIDELINE COUNCIL DUTIES

The Council shall:

A. Act as the reviewing body for curriculum change prior to presentation to the Administrative Council for approval.

B. Function as a problem solving group to provide a means for bringing about desirable curriculum change.

C. Provide communication on curriculum matters at all levels.

D. Establish K-12 Ad Hoc Committees as needed.

E. Discuss, approve, ask for further study, clarification, or research concerning recommendations from Departments or Ad Hoc Committees.

F. Prioritize approved recommendations.

G. Present recommendations to administrative council for approval.

H. Present approved recommendations to the Board of Education for final approval or rejection.

I. Present departmental annual reports to the Board of Education at its May meeting.

J. Help plan inservice activities for the professional staff.
VII. GUIDELINE ADDITIONS OR MODIFICATIONS

Proposed additions or modifications to these Guidelines must be presented in writing at a Council meeting. An affirmative vote by four Council members will be necessary to approve any change.

VIII. CURRICULUM DEPARTMENTS

A. Recognized K-12 Departments will be:
   1. Business
   2. English
   3. Library
   4. Mathematics
   5. Reading
   6. Science
   7. Social Studies
   8. Special Education

B. Building principals will appoint all teachers to a Curriculum Department. Parents, students, board members, and administrators may be invited to be members of a department.

C. Curriculum Department Heads will be appointed by the Administrative Council.

IX. GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM DEPARTMENTS

A. All Departments have responsibility for the K-12 curriculum in their content areas.

B. Departments will study and evaluate the philosophy, methodology, textbooks, printed supplements, and other supporting material used in the instructional program.

C. Departments will formulate an annual written report of the departments activities before the Councils April meeting. The report will include:
   1. Name of department
   2. Name of department head
   3. Names of members
   4. Review of departmental goals for current year
   5. Summary of the years activities
   6. Recommendations
   7. Preliminary departmental goals for the next school year
   8. Acknowledgements

D. A final list of Departmental goals will be formulated and submitted to the Council by the third Friday of October.
X. CURRICULUM DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING PROPOSALS

A. Textbook Proposals

1. Any Curriculum Department anticipating textbook changes for the next year must submit a Textbook Consideration Form to the Council by October 15th of the current school year.

2. A Textbook Request Form must be submitted to the Council by April 1st for any textbook being requested for the next school year.

B. Curriculum Proposals

1. Any Curriculum Department anticipating a curriculum change must submit a written proposal to the Council by April 1st.

2. The proposal must:
   a. Indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the existing program
   b. Describe the proposed change(s)
   c. Explain how the new program will improve the present program
   d. Describe what effects the proposed program will have on existing activities in your own and other departments, grades, and buildings within the system
   e. Include a timetable for implementation
   f. Include a projection of costs

XI. CURRICULUM DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING PROPOSALS

A. A curriculum or textbook change is studied, a recommendation is formulated and accepted in the Curriculum Department. From this recommendation a curriculum proposal is written or a Textbook Request Form is completed.

B. The proposal or form is presented and explained at a meeting of the Council by the chairperson or a delegate of the Curriculum Department.

C. The proposal or form will be discussed and either passed, rejected, or returned to the Curriculum Department for further study and possible revision.

D. The proposal, when accepted by the Council, will be presented to the Administrative Council with a recommendation.
CURRICULUM GUIDELINE COUNCIL DEPARTMENT HEAD EXPECTATIONS

1. All Department Heads will be familiar with the contents of the Council Guidelines.

2. Department Heads will chair all formal meetings, which will be held at least once a month.

3. The Department Head will set the day, time, and place of the first meeting.

4. At the first meeting, the Department Head and the Departmental Committee will set and post the schedule for the rest of the year, including day, time, and place, according to the calendar schedule. A copy of the schedule will be delivered to all building principals and Council Chairperson(s), all administrators, Head Teachers, and Department Heads within one week of the meeting.

5. The Department Head and the Committee will select a secretary at the first meeting. Minutes will be taken at each meeting and copies sent to the Council Chairperson(s), all Administrators, Head Teachers, and Department Heads within one week of the meeting.

6. Department Heads will coordinate the study and evaluation of any philosophy, methodology, textbook, printed supplements, and other supporting material used in the instruction program.

7. Department Heads will submit the final list of Department goals to the Council by the third Friday of October.

8. Department Heads will submit the annual written report of Department activities to the Council by its April meeting.

9. At each meeting, the Department Head will summarize information from the minutes of the previous Council and Department meetings.

10. Department Heads must be available, when requested, to attend Board of Education and Council meetings.
The Head Teacher is the link between the Curriculum Guideline Council and the teachers of a particular elementary grade level. The Head Teacher is also an advisory person and coordinator of all teachers of that grade level.

1. All Head Teachers will be familiar with the contents of the Council Guidelines.

2. Head Teachers will chair all grade level meetings, which will be held at least once a month. Meetings will revolve around curriculum changes and proposals of curriculum committees and events taking place at that grade level.

3. Head Teachers will set the day, time and place of the grade level meetings using the school calendar as a guide.

4. Head Teachers will act as a guide and director to new teachers at that grade level.

5. Head Teachers will contact the building principal before each grade level meeting to discuss the agenda for that meeting.

6. Head Teachers will submit minutes of grade level meetings to all administrators and Council Chairperson(s).

7. The Head Teacher will direct any activities given them by curriculum committees.

8. At each grade level meeting, the Head Teacher will summarize information from the minutes of the previous Council and grade level meetings.
CURRICULUM COUNCIL CALENDAR

3rd Friday ---- Department goals due to the Curriculum Council of October

Nov. 15th ----- Textbook consideration forms due to the Curriculum Guideline Council

April 1st ----- Textbook request form due to the Curriculum Council

April 1st ----- Proposed curriculum changes due to the Curriculum Council

May 1st ------- Departmental annual reports due to the Curriculum Council


