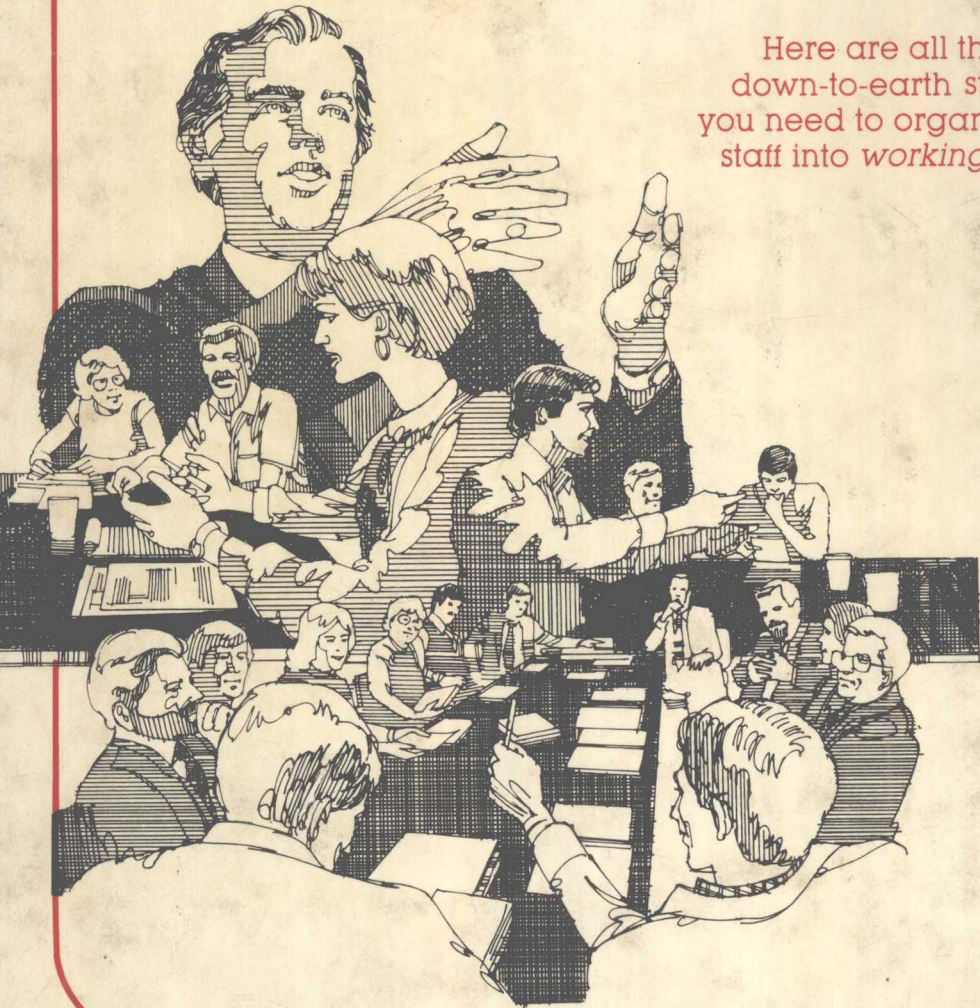


HOW TO BUILD STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Donovan R. Walling

Here are all the direct,
down-to-earth strategies
you need to organize your
staff into *working groups*.



HOW TO BUILD STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Donovan R. Walling

PRENTICE-HALL, INC.
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey

Prentice-Hall International, Inc., *London*
Prentice-Hall of Australia, Pty. Ltd., *Sydney*
Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., *Toronto*
Prentice-Hall of India Private Ltd., *New Delhi*
Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*
Prentice-Hall of Southeast Asia Pte. Ltd., *Singapore*
Whitehall Books, Ltd., *Wellington, New Zealand*
Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., *Rio de Janeiro*

© 1984 by

PRENTICE-HALL, INC.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ

All rights reserved. No part of this
book may be reproduced in any form or
by any means, without permission in
writing from the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Walling, Donovan R.

How to build staff involvement in school management.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Teacher participation in administration. 2. Management committees. I. Title.

LB2806.W27 1984 371.1'06 84-4839

ISBN 0-13-403080-X

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

HOW TO BUILD STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Also by the Author

Complete Book of School Public Relations

To Jim Burns

About the Author

Donovan R. Walling has experience as a teacher, administrator, department chairman, and union president, and has written numerous articles for professional publications, including *Educational Leadership*, *The Clearing House*, *English Journal*, and *Dramatics*. He has helped to design and implement gifted education programs in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where he directed an ESEA Title IV-C project for the affective education of gifted students, and in Zweibruecken, West Germany, where he coordinated program planning and initiation of gifted education for the Department of Defense Dependent High School. Mr. Walling's work with gifted education is described in recent articles in the gifted education journal, *G/C/T* and *Roeper Review*.

As in his first book, *Complete Book of School Public Relations: An Administrator's Manual and Guide* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), Mr. Walling has focused on communications and human relations, bringing to bear his wide experience with staff-management interaction. His other published works include newspaper features, several poems in journals and anthologies, and a radio play for Wisconsin Public Radio. He has spoken on the topics of communication and creativity before both general and professional audiences in the United States, Canada, and West Germany.

Mr. Walling holds a bachelor's degree in art and English from the Kansas State Teachers College (Emporia State University) and a master's in curriculum and instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Why Involve Your Staff?

If you're tired of books about school management that concentrate on the theoretical and philosophical aspects of school administration, then this practical book is for you. *How to Build Staff Involvement in School Management* grows out of the conviction that effective administration depends on the meaningful involvement of staff members in the day-to-day and long-range management of schools.

Is this a book about school management by committee? The answer is, emphatically, *no*! The issue of participatory management is essentially one of authority. Using staff involvement techniques will not diminish the decision-making authority of school leaders—superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, specialists, or department heads—in fact, their authority is often enhanced.

Staff involvement in school management enriches educational programs by broadening levels of understanding, strengthens educational philosophy through shared concerns, heightens teacher job satisfaction through participation in matters vital to the total educational process, and expands the professionalism of all educators by promoting a common sense of purpose.

Most administrators at all levels of the educational management hierarchy would agree that these are powerful reasons for developing more effective approaches to staff involvement. Teachers want to be involved in the school management process because it directly affects them. Administrators want and need the support, leadership, and assistance that involved teachers can bring to the management function.

In a study reported in *Phi Delta Kappan*, the education fraternity journal, Robert J. Krajewski asked principals to rank order both the *realistic* and *idealistic* levels of their major responsibilities as administrators.* In the *realistic* ranking, principals rated being an administrator

*Robert J. Krajewski, "Secondary Principals Want To Be Instructional Leaders," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1978, p. 65.

—i.e., a manager—of school materials and facilities as their most prominent duty. However, in the *idealistic* ranking, principals rated being instructional and curricular leaders first in importance.

Clearly, most administrators desire those roles that cannot be achieved without strong support and involvement of their staffs.

Gail Linnea Thierbach at the University of Wisconsin produced similar evidence of a desire for involvement on the part of teachers.* Her study showed that staff involvement in the management process, particularly in the determination of the school's organizational structure, positively enhanced teachers' feelings of job satisfaction.

These studies and others make it clear that both teachers and administrators want to develop ways in which staff can be involved in the management of schools. But there are some stumbling blocks that must be considered, one significant consideration being the relationship between the school administration and the teacher union.

HOW MANAGEMENT AND UNION CAN WORK TOGETHER

Whenever notions arise about staff involvement in traditionally management-centered operations, there also follows the question: What about the teacher union? So striking is the dichotomy between staff and administration—i.e., labor and management—in some school districts that the first thought upon introducing any strategy that seeks to have administrators and teachers work together toward some common goal is not, Will the strategy work?, but rather, What will the union say? This outlook is unfortunate.

Throughout this book, it will be consistently repeated that the best working and most productive relationship in the educational sense is a collegial one in which staff and administration work together to solve problems that affect both groups. Staff involvement does not need to result in nor is it intended to create "management by committee." It is not an attempt to foist administrative burdens onto the shoulders of already overworked staff members. Rather, it is a way to create greater rapport between staff and administration by fostering broader understanding and building a sense of the academic community.

Many school districts already practice the techniques of staff involvement described in this book. Others implement some of the practices. Still others would like to do so. The heart of the problem is

*Gail Linnea Thierbach, "Decision Involvement and Job Satisfaction in Middle and Junior High Schools," (unpublished paper), University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980.

change: moving from one mode of operation (noninvolvement or limited staff involvement) to another (greater involvement).

Change is always resisted. It is human nature to prefer the familiar to the unknown, even when the familiar is uncomfortable or ineffective and the unknown promises to be better. Thus, whatever the change may be, some staff members and administrators will oppose it simply because it represents a departure from the known situation.

HOW TO OVERCOME RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

What can progressive school leaders do to overcome this resistance to introducing greater staff involvement in the school management function?

First, at the administrative level, the chief administrator should examine and explain to subordinate administrators what forms of staff involvement are planned and how these techniques will be carried out. To what extent will the staff involvement strategies affect the present work of other administrators? What administrator attitudes need to be considered?

Thorough in-service work at the administrative level is essential to any smooth implementation of management innovations. Whether staff involvement strategies are introduced at the district or building level, responsible administrators seeking to introduce changes will do so only after consulting with their administrative peers and subordinates—e.g., superintendent with support personnel, such as curriculum supervisors; principals with assistant principals, deans, and so on.

Second, the administrator will need to approach staff leaders, such as teacher union officers and representatives. In-service work with key staff should begin at the leadership level so that staff leaders are familiar with the proposed innovations and can transmit that understanding to their colleagues.

By eliciting staff understanding initially at the teacher's union level, less resistance will be encountered later at the general staff level. Most union leaders will recognize staff involvement as a method of encouraging greater teacher self-determination in collegial atmosphere, where working together with the administration benefits everyone concerned.

BE AWARE OF CONTRACTUAL MATTERS

An area of special awareness for both the administration and teachers will be the contractual agreement between the board of edu-

cation and the teacher's union. Staff involvement will in no instance contravene contractual agreements, nor will such involvement be used to take the place of normal contract bargaining. Without such an understanding, serious problems will arise when contract and staff involvement outcomes fail to agree.

Yet greater staff involvement is also likely to influence future contractual agreements. A positive outcome of increased staff participation is the increased understanding it brings. Administrators gain insights into the problems and limitations of their teachers, while teachers enlarge their viewpoints to see more clearly the challenges and problems facing their administrators. These insights cannot help but influence future contract negotiations. Usually, the heightened mutual understanding helps to bring teachers and administrators closer together, thus making the bargaining process more open to compromise and understanding.

Staff involvement should hold no threat for anyone who is honestly concerned about improving intraschool human relations. Staff involvement is not about power (i.e., who decides what), but rather about progress—progress toward understanding and unity by which administrators, teachers, and students directly benefit in the educational process.

Donovan R. Walling

About This Book

If you are like most educators, you have spent many frustrating hours in meetings that seemed purposeless and on committees that accomplished little or nothing. Work groups that simply don't work are the bane of education.

Whether you are a superintendent, a principal or assistant principal, a curriculum supervisor, a department head, or if ever you have the job of forming groups of people to work together, this book can help you.

How to Build Staff Involvement in School Management is a practical, how-to guide to organizing individuals into *working* groups. Just a few of the topics covered are:

- How to decide when and why to form a committee.
- How to establish realistic goals and priorities.
- How to develop an effective task force.
- How to use the concept of *shared responsibility* to get results.
- How to foster feelings of "ownership."
- How to design successful plans of operation.
- How to gather needed information effectively.
- How to make staff meetings meaningful.
- How to keep advisory boards on-task and on-target.
- How to develop in-service seminars and workshops that really work.

The book also provides specific suggestions for vital group activities, such as processing ideas, building "community," forming communications links, identifying individual roles, building work skills, and evaluating and refining group structures.

Each chapter contains checklists, charts, examples, diagrams, and illustrations to give you the ammunition you need *now* to make the next committee or task force you form a group that stays on target and gets the job done.

Part One, "School Work Groups: Form and Function," deals with broad patterns of organizational and functional details that apply to most work group situations. Specifically, Chapters One and Two delve into the workings of the committee and its alter ego, the task force. Since many staff work groups fall into one of these two categories, it is appropriate to begin an examination of staff involvement from this point. Chapters Three through Six build upon the basics of group work, presenting ways to develop ownership and responsibility, techniques for assessing needs and gathering information, and plans for organizing and maintaining records. Chapter Six focuses directly on personal presentation skills that every group leader or coordinator needs to work effectively with peer and professional groups and with the public in general.

Part Two, "Staff Involvement: Traditions and Innovations," looks at several specific work groups. These include the staff or faculty meeting, advisory board, quality circle, in-service seminar, and workshop. Each is discussed in a separate chapter devoted to examining the inner workings of these traditional and innovative types of school work groups.

Chapter Twelve introduces a new concept that is making headway in several school districts. The notion of *shared governance* goes beyond staff involvement to include community members and others in the school management function.

Three appendices are also included to provide additional resources: Appendix A, "A Short Glossary of Terms," serves as a compendium of specific management concepts and related terms as they are used in the context of staff involvement. Appendix B, "An Easy Guide to Proper Meeting Procedures," reviews standard rules of order and provides important tips for keeping meetings moving productively. Appendix C, "Selected Resources," provides an assortment of reference books that may be helpful in further developing staff involvement strategies.

Experience has shown that aimless and ineffective groups do more than simply fail to accomplish meaningful goals. They also breed frustration, lower staff morale, and reduce feelings of job satisfaction among group participants. Moreover, unsatisfactory group experiences set a negative tone for the future and make it harder to achieve success in later groups.

Breaking the pattern of failure can only be accomplished by organizing groups that support their individual members while providing clear, positive direction to the whole group. This book shows you

the way to success through strategies that have been tried and proven successful.

In short, *How to Build Staff Involvement in School Management* gives school leaders the foundation needed to increase staff involvement through direct, down-to-earth organizational strategies that will fundamentally and positively affect the way your school functions—and succeeds!

Acknowledgments

Over the past several years, I have been able to work with many fine educators whose interests and ideas have both directly and indirectly contributed to the material in this book.

I am grateful for the encouragement received from James Arentsen, principal of Farnsworth Junior High School in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and from Dr. Richard Penkava, principal of Zweibruecken American High School in West Germany. Thank-you's (if somewhat belated) must also go to several colleagues in Wisconsin: Linda Helf, former president of the Manitowoc Education Association; and Dee Mateer and Wayne Homstad, both former chief negotiators for the Sheboygan Education Association.

Gratitude must also be extended to Dr. Marlin Tanck, Director of Instruction for the Sheboygan Area School District, who made it possible for me to administer an innovative project in gifted education; Gerald DeAmico, a long-time friend and colleague who succeeded me as project administrator; and Norman Heitzman, currently assistant principal at Mannheim American School, who was responsible for a gifted program I was privileged to coordinate during its initial phase.

Thanks also go to Dr. James S. Bonner, Director of Special Education for the Muskegon, Michigan Public Schools, who provided valuable insights into the use of quality circles in education.

Finally, a special vote of thanks must go to my good friend and colleague Jim Burns, whose encouragement and goodwill over many years helped spur this book along. A conscientious and concerned educator, it is to Jim that this book is dedicated.

Contents

Why Involve Your Staff?	vii
--------------------------------------	------------

About This Book	xi
------------------------------	-----------

PART ONE: SCHOOL WORK GROUPS: FORM AND FUNCTION	1
--	----------

Chapter One

The Committee—Developing a Workable Group	3
--	----------

- Aiming for Productive Outcomes—3
- When and When Not to Form a Committee—5
- Designing Committee Structures—7
- Who Participates and Why—10
- Orienting the Committee Compass—13
- Establishing Goals and Priorities—15
- Processing Ideas Successfully—17
- Six Keys to Effective Committees—18

Chapter Two

Structuring Teams and Task Forces	19
--	-----------

- Exploring Alternatives to the Committee Form—19
- Refining Group Structures—21
- Team or Task Force? A Question of Need—23
- Using “Shared Responsibility”—24
- An Example of a Task Force in Action—25
- Task Force as Linked Teams—26
- The Role of the Task Force Leader—28
- Three Roads to Results—29

Chapter Three**Creating Links of Responsibility 33**

- Fostering Feelings of "Ownership"—33
- Designing Communication Links—35
- Using Flow Charts Effectively—37
- Forging Clear Patterns of Authority—39
- Successful Job Charts—40
- Reinforcing the Role of the Individual—43
- Recognizing and Rewarding Staff Involvement—45
- Five Points to Remember—46

Chapter Four**Gathering Staff Input Efficiently 49**

- Surveys—Fishing for Facts—49
- Five Qualities of Effective Surveys—50
- Designing Written Forms—51
- Ensuring a Timely Return—56
- Using the Telephone Approach—58
- Planning for "Automatic" Tabulation—60
- Common Sense and Successful Surveys—61

Chapter Five**How to Simplify and Systematize Your Recordkeeping and Reporting 63**

- Compiling Information—A Segregated Card File—64
- Developing Clear Tables of Facts—66
- Illustrating Data Effectively—67
- Maintaining Ongoing Information Collection—71
- Breaking the "Big Job" into Workable Bits—73
- A Few Words of Caution—74
- Four Guides to Good Recordkeeping and Reporting—74

Chapter Six**Building Personal Presentation Skills 77**

- Feeling Comfortable in Your Role—77
- Alternative Modes of Group Leadership—78
- Organizing to Become a Successful Spokesperson—81