

IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

**How New School Management
Techniques Can Raise Learning,
Confidence, and Morale**

FREDRIC H. GENCK

IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

**How New School Management
Techniques can Raise Learning,
Confidence, and Morale**

Fredric H. Genck

PRAEGER

PRAEGER SPECIAL STUDIES • PRAEGER SCIENTIFIC

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Genck, Fredric H.

Improving school performance.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. School management and organization. 2. Academic achievement. I. Title.

LB 2805.G38

1983

371.2

82-18127

ISBN 0-03-062477-0

Other Books by Fredric H. Genck

*Effective Schools Through Effective Management
with Allen J. Klingenberg*

*Northwestern University School Management Course
Case Study Book*

Published in 1983 by Praeger Publishers
CBS Educational and Professional Publishing
a Division of CBS Inc.
521 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10175 U.S.A.

© 1983 by Praeger Publishers

All rights reserved

456789 052 98765432

Printed in the United States of America

FOREWORD

This book will help you improve the performance of your schools, whether you are a school board member, administrator, or teacher, or a parent, taxpayer, or student.

It explains why school performance has been declining. Traditional authoritarian administration, suited to an earlier era, has not yet been replaced. Continued application of old techniques in the face of new circumstances — not anything wrong with teaching talent or techniques — is causing school performance to decline by demoralizing teachers and administrators, eroding test scores, and reducing public confidence. It is also spurring the taxpayer revolt, and encouraging vouchers and tax credits.

The new but practical and proven school performance and management concepts and techniques described in this book have already been implemented successfully. The results are improved student learning, increased public confidence and staff morale, and better control of costs in a variety of districts.

This book emphasizes the human side of school management: communication, participation, relationships, and teamwork, coupled with recognition and reward for good performance based on fair and effective evaluation, information, planning, and responsibilities.

Teachers will no longer tolerate unfair practices, and are in a position to defend themselves successfully through unions. Parents and school boards are not prepared to accept assertions of good performance without evidence in the face of national indications of decline.

Consequently, past practices no longer work today. Traditions of secrecy and authority must be replaced by communication and participation, information and evaluation, and recognition and reward.

The new management techniques that work — invented and used successfully by school boards, administrators, and teachers — are described in this book:

Why participation, communication, and responsibility for performance are essential in schools today.

Practical planning and evaluation that is simple and straightforward.

Using performance information — e.g., test scores and parent/teacher surveys — to build confidence and morale, and improve performance.

Compensating and evaluating administrators based on fairness and performance.

Evaluating and developing teachers in a way they can accept and support.

Cost control and financial planning to build public confidence and support.

Part I of the book describes and explains these new management concepts and techniques in detail. The causes of declining school performance (i.e., decreased test scores, confidence, and morale) are made clear. The policies and practices working to improve performance are set forth. The connection between school performance and management is explained.

In Part II examples of good school management are presented, in case studies developed for the Northwestern School Management Course, based on the author's extensive consulting experience. These are specific practical examples of school management techniques that work to improve performance, with descriptions of implementation and results as well as hazards and pitfalls.

If these new school management techniques are more widely understood, and the skills required to implement them are developed, the downward trends of school performance in the past decade will be reversed. Student learning will increase, public confidence will rise, teacher morale will be lifted, and costs will be controlled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most indebted to the teachers, administrators, board members, and others whose creative perception and successful action are defining by example the kind of management that can improve school performance. I hope this book will result in the wider communication and application of the ideas they have pioneered and successfully applied. I want to express appreciation to three particular groups who have made a special contribution to my understanding of education and its management requirements:

My clients — the thousands of board members, superintendents, administrators, principals, teachers, and other staff members, as well as parents, students, and taxpayers — from whom I have learned what good school management is, and how it can help to improve school performance.

My colleagues on the board, and the staff of Lake Forest School District #67, where school performance and management have been exceptionally well developed, and where I've had the opportunity to learn as a participant.

The faculty at Northwestern University's School of Education and School of Management, and the board and staff of the Illinois Association of School Boards, who have supported and encouraged my efforts in public management writing and teaching as well as consulting.

And it would be inappropriate not to mention my personal gratitude for their guidance, encouragement, and support in a variety of ways to Jim Allen, John Barr, Ralph Westfall, David Wiley, Barbara Schneider, Hal Seamon, Jerry Glaub, Al Klingenberg, and Peter Warner.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
LIST OF EXHIBITS	xi
LIST OF CASE STUDIES	xiii

PART I – SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

1	INTRODUCTION: <i>Why a New Kind of School Management is Needed to Improve School Performance</i>	3
2	DECLINING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: <i>Circumstances That Are Causing It</i>	11
3	THE CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE MANAGEMENT: <i>Chaos and Conflict in Schools</i>	33
4	THE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT CONNECTION: <i>A Concept of School Performance</i>	48
5	THE ALTERNATIVE TO DECLINE: <i>Successful School Management Policies and Practices</i>	68
6	THE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PAYOFF: <i>Results of Good School Management</i>	91

PART II – EXAMPLES OF GOOD SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

7	INTRODUCTION TO PART II: <i>Background and Purpose of the Case Studies</i>	109
---	--	-----

8	THE WELL-MANAGED SCHOOL DISTRICT: <i>An Overview of School Management Requirements</i>	122
9	PERFORMANCE INFORMATION: <i>Planning and Evaluation to Improve Performance</i>	145
10	ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMPENSATION: <i>To Improve Fairness and Performance</i>	183
11	TEACHER EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT: <i>To Improve Confidence, Performance, and Morale</i>	212
12	FINANCIAL PLANNING AND COST CONTROL: <i>To Build Support and Improve Performance</i>	249
PART III – WHAT TO DO		
13	WHAT EDUCATORS SHOULD DO: <i>School Boards, Administrators, and Teachers</i>	279
14	OUTSIDE HELP: <i>Parents, Taxpayers, Citizens, and Universities, Corporations, and Foundations</i>	285
BIBLIOGRAPHY		291
INDEX		295
ABOUT THE AUTHOR		301

LIST OF EXHIBITS

1.1	A Concept of School Management and Performance	8
2.1	Circumstances, Characteristics, and Management Requirements (Overview)	14
2.2	New Circumstances	16
2.3	Characteristics	25
2.4	Requirements	29
4.1	Declining School Performance in Chicago	55
4.2	Pitfalls of School Management Development	60
5.1	Key Components of Successful School Management	70
5.2	The School Performance Accountability System	75
5.3	Summary of Annual Growth and Improvement in Annual Growth (Brookdale School District)	78
5.4	School Financial Planning and Cost Control Model	82
6.1	The Current State of School Management in Practice	92
6.2	Indicators of School Performance and Management	100
9.1	Regional Hearing Impaired Program Evaluation Project – Parent Survey Results	158
9.2	Regional Hearing Impaired Program Evaluation Project – Teacher Survey Results	161
9.3	Summary of Annual Growth and Improvement in Annual Growth (Brookdale School District)	176
9.4	Summary of Average District Scores and Average Annual Growth by Subject	177
9.5	District Reading Scores and Annual Growth	179
9.6	District Math Scores and Annual Growth	180
10.1	Summary of Comparative Compensation Information	190
10.2	Development of an Administrative Evaluation and Compensation Plan	193
10.3	Recommended Administrative Compensation Plan: Structure	199
10.4	Recommended Administrative Compensation Plan: Date	200
10.5	School Performance Concepts and Evaluation Components	205

10.6	The School Performance Accountability System: A Suggested Preliminary Format	207
10.7	Examples of Detailed Performance Criteria	208
10.8	Recommended Approach for Board Evaluation of Superintendent	209
11.1	Ten Management Techniques for Teacher Evaluation and Development	220
11.2	Other Teacher Evaluation Suggestions	226
11.3	Suggested Actions of Performance Review Group	244
12.1	School Financial Planning and Cost Control Model	253
12.2	Outline of Restructuring Issues and Factors	264
12.3	School Board Responsibilities	270
12.4	School Evaluation Model	273
12.5	Public Management Model	274

LIST OF CASE STUDIES

Chapter 8: THE WELL-MANAGED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ONE	Introductory Case Study: District A and B Comparing a Well-Managed District with a Poorly Managed One	123
TWO	Descriptions of Well-Managed School Districts	129

Chapter 9: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

THREE	Summary Report of the School Performance Research Project	147
FOUR	Parent and Teacher Surveys	151
FIVE	Test Data Analysis	166

Chapter 10: ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMPENSATION

SIX	School Management Compensation Survey Report	185
SEVEN	Administrative Compensation and Evaluation Plan	191
EIGHT	Superintendent Evaluation	206

Chapter 11: TEACHER EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

NINE	Interview Notes	213
TEN	Specifications for Teacher Evaluation	219
ELEVEN	Teacher Evaluation and Development Plan	225

Chapter 12: FINANCIAL PLANNING AND COST CONTROL

TWELVE	Financial Planning and Cost Control Model	250
THIRTEEN	Decision-Making Model	262
FOURTEEN	School Board Responsibilities	269

PART I

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

This section examines why outdated authoritarian school administration is causing performance to decline and why new school management techniques are needed. These techniques are identified.

1

INTRODUCTION: ***Why a New Kind of School Management is Needed to Improve School Performance***

Declining school performance is not usually recognized to be caused by the inadequacy of traditional school administrative practices to meet today's requirements. We usually look for something wrong with teachers, with children and parents, or with teaching techniques and materials. Seldom do we look for the cause on the human side of school management: changes in the internal operations and outside circumstances of schools, and how these are impacting on the people involved — teachers, administrators, board members, parents, and students.

Yet my firsthand experience in nearly a thousand schools during the past ten years demonstrates clearly that the cause of declining performance lies in challenging circumstances combined with inadequate management. Changes during the past decade — teacher unions, public concern, the taxpayer revolt — have in effect disconnected many schools and districts internally. Traditional, authoritarian, informal administrative practices just aren't working anymore.

This old style of school administration seemed to work well enough in the 1950s and before. Superintendents who were forceful leaders and articulate spokesmen for public education persuaded Americans to support schools with a breadth and quality unequalled elsewhere in the world. But that authoritarian style of leadership no longer works, because of new circumstances. A general climate of public concern with schools, sustained by continuing media attention and evidence of actual declines in key indicators of school performance

has influenced school management policies. Also, the advent of teacher unions, and the ability to demand fair, participative management, has played a major role in this area. These two key changes, as well as declining enrollments, the taxpayer revolt, and other challenging circumstances, have dramatically expanded school management requirements.

In the absence of management techniques suited to these new circumstances, and to the nature of education, most school districts are in a situation of internal disruption that is demoralizing, and damaging to performance and productivity. The internal communication and teamwork essential to good schools is made difficult, sometimes impossible. There is no means of pulling together the efforts of the many people involved. So naturally performance drifts lower. In spite of the widely documented and perceived decline, neither complaining nor setting higher standards will help schools improve, without the internal management practices that are required.

Yet some schools are performing well in spite of these circumstances. Districts and schools are functioning successfully, in every kind of community. What do these schools and districts have in common? They have created a more participative and humane process of management that emphasizes performance and results as well as people and relationships. What are the key features of their management process? They evaluate performance, using information wherever possible, even in a field like education that sometimes defies any quantitative indicators. They accept responsibility for performance, organizing teachers and administrators to strive for and achieve good results. They maintain teamwork and constructive working relationships among teachers, administrators, and board members, in spite of universal pressures toward conflict and fragmentation.

As a result, these districts are realizing the ultimate objective of all education — the academic achievement and development of students. They sustain high levels of public confidence, parent and community satisfaction, and staff morale, productivity, and job satisfaction. Costs are reasonable and under control. They are accomplishing these things whether their communities are black or white, rural or urban — and whatever their position on the socioeconomic scale.

This book describes these performance standards and achievements and the school management philosophies, policies, and practices that contribute positively to them. It also explains how the

combination of adverse circumstances and inadequate traditional administrative practices in schools is causing performance to decline. The goal is to stimulate and contribute to wider understanding and application of management appropriate to schools.

READER AUDIENCE

The book is designed to be useful to those responsible for the performance and management of education — school board members, superintendents, administrators, principals, teachers, and other staff members. Obviously their success in fulfilling these responsibilities determines how well our schools serve us. The book should also be useful to those who receive the services of schools (i.e., parents and students) and to those who pay for them (i.e., taxpayers and citizens). Understanding the connection between school management and performance and knowing the key requirements for improving the latter by means of the former should enable all of these groups to make a more constructive contribution to improving school performance through better management. In a democracy, for an institution as huge as public education, widespread understanding of what needs to be done is essential to accomplishing it.

Most people lack the opportunity for enough contact inside schools to understand what is really going on. They see only the external indicators — a teacher strike, school closing, or national media reporting of declining test scores. Even inside schools, teachers, administrators, and board members often have little understanding of management and how it can be a positive, constructive process. School management is not well defined. School administrators have had little or no management training. And board members often lack management experience, or have it in a field other than education.

The board of education and administrators of the district are primarily responsible for the quality of management and its contribution to good school performance. Teachers, however, are also now in a position to influence this, through collective bargaining. There are districts where they have successfully taken the initiative toward better management. And they certainly have good reason to, if the board and administrators won't act responsibly on their own, since the professional satisfaction and performance of teachers is directly

affected — for better or worse — by the quality of management in the schools and districts where they teach.

In an era of public concern, the obligation of teachers, administrators, and board members to find an approach to accountability, evaluation, information, and management that is fair and effective and actually works to improve school performance is their most essential responsibility. Education is the largest and some think the most important of our public services. It is the first public service to recognize the need for new management techniques, and take action to design and implement them in practice. While each public service is a little different in the specific information and management requirements it presents, many of the techniques described in this book also indicate directions in which the management of other public services should be developing. In this sense the book should serve a broader audience than education — the providers and consumers of all public services, a group that includes virtually everyone.

BACKGROUND

The basis for this book is my firsthand experience during the past decade — visiting schools, classrooms, and district offices, interviewing board members, administrators and teachers, and conducting management studies for school districts — in more than 100 school districts, 200 management studies, and thousands of interviews. For almost 20 years the purpose of my work as a general management consultant has usually been the overall improvement of performance, strategy, and organization. This work has generally focused on the human side of management — corporate strategy, plans, organization, and personnel policies, selection, development, evaluation, and compensation. The orientation has been to problem solving and decision making, helping make organizations more successful and effective in the satisfaction and productivity of staff as well as products and services to customers.

Like an itinerant anthropologist, I've had the opportunity to observe firsthand the inner workings of thousands of organizations, of virtually every size and type, in a number of countries. Many have been businesses — some small, others large multinational corporations. Over the years, my consulting practice has gradually shifted from business to public management. I've worked with more than 100 school districts as well as federal, state, and local