

# *The* Staff Development Manager

*A Guide to Professional Growth*

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# THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT MANAGER:

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—A Guide to Professional Growth—

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# Preface

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We wrote this book to answer a frequently asked question: How can I run a staff development program with little previous experience and very little time? Or, in more metaphorical terms, how can one learn from the experience and acquire the skills of effective staff development leaders who have successfully navigated turbulent waters in the sea of school change?

We address this book to those of you who have either been invited to or have seen the need to take the helm of this ship.

## THE AUTHORS

Our collaboration began ten years ago: Each of us brought a different organizational perspective. *Marjorie Bradley* has worked with staff development programs in personal and professional capacities all her adult life. In public schools she was a teacher partaking of staff development programs and then a guidance counselor in charge of the district's in-service program. As part of her doctoral work, she organized statewide staff development programs for counselors. Like 99 percent of her colleagues, she learned staff development management on the job. In 1979 she joined the Connecticut State Department of Education and since

that time she has been helping people in schools develop and conduct professional development programs in Connecticut and in other states.

*Bena Kallick* was director of the Teachers' Center at Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut. She was responsible for creating continuing education courses for the university as well as advising school districts. She is presently a nationally known consultant working with staff development programs in a variety of contexts across the country. Her present areas of interest are collaborative leadership and critical thinking.

*Helen Regan* has been a high school teacher and principal and is now director of a teacher preparation program. In her days as a high school administrator, she was both formally and informally responsible for staff development in her building. As a teacher educator, she has been involved in the design and implementation of statewide professional development programs for cooperating teachers, mentors to beginning teachers, and teacher assessors of beginning teachers. She often serves as a consultant in the staff development programs of districts and for other educational agencies.

We served and informed each other's work in significant ways. As we worked with other staff development managers, like bees fertilizing the growth of flowers, we encouraged the exchange of good practices through formalized institutes as well as through frequent informal conversations. Universities do not, as yet, provide full programs for staff development managers, so we tried to fill the vacuum. Finally, we were told, our knowledge is valuable, encyclopedic, and needs to be shared with a wider audience—you!

Our writing was also collaborative. We worked with many other staff development managers as well as each other. The collective voice in this book represents a world of experience from a group of optimistic visionaries.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been greatly enriched by conversations with many staff development managers. In particular we wish to acknowledge the contributions of Karen Berg, William Glass, K. Michael Hib-

bard, and Joanna Nicholson. We are also indebted to Russell Hammer (deceased) for his helpful editorial suggestions throughout the writing process, to Cathy Harris for her fine services in the final stages of preparation of the manuscript, and to our husbands for not complaining too loudly when we abandoned them to work many hours on our word processors.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge that the persons who serve throughout the country as staff development managers are both men and women. Consequently our solution to "the pronoun problem" is to use both the masculine and feminine forms interchangeably throughout the text.

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—SECTION I—

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**Setting the Stage**



## —INTRODUCTION—

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# The Promise of Staff Development

A revolution is taking place in education! And embedded in that revolution is evolution. The education community is finally realizing that change in education is a given and staff development is one way to initiate and manage change. The possibility that change can be directed to purposeful ends holds great promise for restructuring education to improve learning for all students.

As schools shift with current political and economic forces and deal with increasing knowledge in all disciplines, the education community looks to staff development to prepare teachers to provide the best possible work environment for student learning. The extent to which staff development is successful in this preparation is a measure of the fulfillment of its promise as an agent of purposeful change.

## TERMS OF THE DISCUSSION

In this book we use the term *staff development* to mean any systematic attempt to affect the professional practices, beliefs, and understandings of school persons toward an announced goal.

Staff development programs are efforts at new or reinforced learning, undertaken for the purpose of achieving the announced goal through acquiring skills, knowledge, and understanding. We chose the term *staff development* intentionally, after much deliberation, rather than the familiar terms *in-service education* or *teacher training*.

*In-service education*, for us, connotes an attempt to pour learning into the heads of participants, as if a funnel could be placed at the top of a person's head and knowledge could be poured in; a "servicing" of people in much the sense that cars or cows are serviced on a regular basis. (See the Appendix article, "Inservicing the Teachers.") *Teacher training* brings to mind an image of military basic training, as if teachers are being trained to return to the trenches (another all too familiar military image used in education). Since metaphors create images that connote meaning, we use *staff development* with the intent to convey the view that *staff* means all members of a school community (not just teachers) and that *development* implies a process of growth over time.

Given this definition, there are several reasons why staff development, with good management, can play a part in directing change. First, adults are lifelong learners. Staff development can create the proper setting for the learning that must take place in order for innovation and change to occur. Second, staff development can serve as a catalyst for bringing the best resources to a school organization to facilitate change. Third, a successful staff development program can provide new, participatory models of education for people who want to structure a new vision of education for the future.

## THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

This book addresses the work of people whose task is to organize learning processes for school personnel. We have decided to call these people *staff development managers* rather than *coordinators*, *leaders*, *developers*, *directors*, or *administrators*. As we pondered the connotations of each of these titles, *manager*

seemed to represent our most accurate meaning—a person who assumes a leadership role in working with others and ensures that the work will be done through the management of intentions, means, and ends.

In the best sense a manager creates a well-ordered environment so that work can be accomplished effectively and efficiently to the satisfaction of those involved. Considering the terms *leader* and *director*, we decided that, although leadership and directorship play significant roles in staff development management, those titles are usually reserved for other role groups within the district—for example, the instructional leader or the curriculum director. Since the staff development person manages on behalf of all those role groups, we suggest the distinction of *staff development manager*.

Not unexpectedly, given the promise of staff development, many districts are moving away from haphazard activities toward more formalized programs with specific designation of staff development managers. Nonetheless, the staff development leadership or management role, rather than being applied for, is often assigned or inherited. Simply by showing initiative and organizational ability to carry out their usual job, many educators find themselves with increasing responsibility for providing leadership to their district's staff development program. It is not unusual for such circumstances to culminate in an invitation to become the official staff development manager. Most staff development managers enter the position as teachers, principals, or assistant superintendents.

Given the diversity of the background of staff development managers, the knowledge and skills they bring with them to the new task of staff development management can vary greatly depending on their prior experiences. A new staff development manager coming from administration may know a great deal about how to organize large events and where to turn for financial support. A new staff development manager drawn from the teaching ranks brings an intimate and fresh knowledge of classroom life to the new role and carries innate credibility with other teachers.

The new manager coming from an administrative role thus may initially be quite skilled in seeing to the technical details of the staff development program, but less effective at marketing



that program to teachers. The new manager from the teaching role may begin quite oppositely, designing programs of high interest to teachers, but overlooking technical details, unaware of available resources for solving certain problems. Each of these new staff development managers usually acquires the needed skills in a hit-or-miss way in the school of experience. Rarely does anyone assist the new manager in assessing the skills she brings to the job as a function of past experience, and then provide help with learning the missing skills.

With little or no formal preparation for their responsibilities, staff development managers often find, too late, that they are attempting the proverbial reinvention of the wheel. Their trial-and-error efforts result in needless frustration and costly mistakes. It takes three to five years of this process, unfortunately, for the novice to reach the level of seasoned professional. People who assume the job often do not stay with it this long, so the job may keep being passed from one novice to another.

If this profile of a staff development manager describes you, you are browsing in the right book. Or, if you are responsible for teaching, selecting, or supervising staff development managers, you are browsing in the right book. And even if you are beyond the novice stage as a practicing staff development manager, you will find much useful, practical information in this book to help you perform your job better. This book is for you if you are an administrator, teacher educator, staff development coordinator, teacher leader, curriculum specialist, or anyone else with interest in or responsibility for either putting a staff development program together or teaching someone else how to do so.

We decided to write this book after several years of experience conducting two-day seminars on the management of staff development programs. We held conversations with hundreds of people interested in staff development management, learning from them as we talked, and we realized that many others would be interested in these conversations. This book is our attempt to widen the circle of people who teach each other about staff development management in a systematic way, changing the job from one that must be reinvented anew each time, to one in which all practitioners can benefit from the experiences of their colleagues.