

# HOW TO SUPERVISE

A GUIDE TO EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES  
AND PROGRESSIVE PRACTICES OF  
EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

BY  
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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON · NEW YORK · CHICAGO · DALLAS

ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

*The Riverside Press Cambridge*

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*The Riverside Press*

CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

IN few parts of the entire public school system have there been, within the past decade or so, such noteworthy advances, not only in technical knowledge and skill, but also in professional knowledge and spirit, as in the supervision of classroom instruction in the elementary school. Not many years ago the elementary-school principalship was regarded generally as the weakest link in the entire public school chain, and the principal conceived of his duties as very largely administrative, clerical, and disciplinary. While this characterization of the principalship still holds true for many schools and some school systems, it is happily no longer the case in a large and a rapidly increasing number of elementary schools, officered by principals who to-day represent the leaders in this division of our public school service.

Largely since 1900, entirely new conceptions as to the principal's chief field of usefulness have come into somewhat general acceptance, and to-day a new body of elementary-school principals, of which the author of this book for a time was one, animated by new professional interests and new desires to be educationally effective, is rapidly coming into control. The quite modern conceptions that the prime test of competency of an elementary-school principal is the desire and the ability to improve the teaching skill and to enlarge the professional interests of the workers in the school by means of leadership in the fine art of teaching, and that the prime measure of the principal's interest in such service is the means employed to secure time in which to give it, have to-day taken firm hold on our educational thinking. Still another conception, established within recent years, is

that the chief purpose of all classroom supervision, in addition to the improvement of technique, is that of liberating the teacher, freeing her from set procedures and definite prescriptions, and developing her, as far as possible, into a master teacher for the school system.

With the coming of these newer conceptions as to the work and place of both principal and supervisor, a number of new books on school supervision have appeared. The first type of these dealt largely with the organization for supervision, and was concerned mostly with status and procedures and relationships and standards. A second type dealt with the aims of instruction in the different school subjects, and with ways of improving the instruction in each by setting up standards of achievement which would enable the supervisor to measure the efficiency of the instruction given, and thus help the teachers to discover ways for improving their teaching skill. The third type is a treatise on the particular job itself; that is, on how to build up teachers in general and specific skills, and how to awaken new professional interests and enthusiasms in them for the work in which they are engaged. The first type of volume naturally concerned itself more with the problems of direction and control, the second type more with the theory of teaching and the aims of instruction, and the third more with supervisory procedures and the results of scientific studies which support the procedures recommended. The present volume is distinctively a book of the third type.

In giving to his work the title *How to Supervise* the author has well described both the character and the purpose of the book which he has prepared. He has done even more than his title indicates, for in the introductory chapters which constitute Division I he has presented a brief and a well-done historical statement, not previously available in any concise form, tracing the long road we have traveled in

evolving the master supervisory officer out of the head master, and the head master out of the still earlier laymen school committee control. In the second chapter he has shown how recently our present conceptions as to the nature and work of the school supervisor have come to be accepted as embodying a sound philosophy for the work of school supervision.

The two chapters which follow and which constitute Division II of the book, set forth our best present-day conceptions as to proper administrative organization for professional school supervision, and the functions and duties of supervisory officers. Division III, consisting of ten very practical chapters, deals in some detail with the proper use of those techniques of supervisory practice the mastery of which should be a part of the professional equipment of every supervisor and school principal. The presentation, instead of being a theoretical discussion, is supported by numerous facts and illustrative procedures drawn from supervisory practice as found in many of our best supervised school systems. Division IV, a very valuable addition to the previous presentation, outlines the techniques to be employed in the professional improvement of those three main types of teachers — the new teacher, the weak teacher, and the strong and capable but much neglected teacher — with which every school principal and supervisory officer has to deal. The volume represents a contribution to professional literature that is timely, useful, and very practical, and a contribution of a type that would not have been possible ten years ago.

In digesting and presenting, in well-organized form, a large number of important studies which numerous workers have made, within recent years, relating to various aspects of supervisory procedure, the author has rendered a service to all other workers in the field that is of no small impor-

tance. The volume should prove very helpful as a handbook for all supervisors of instruction, of whatever type, and of special usefulness to teachers in colleges and universities as a textbook in courses in school supervision.

ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY

## PREFACE

IN recent years, educational supervision has been emerging from that confusion of activities in which school officers have for long been engaged, until now it is gaining a markedly significant place in the work of the schools. Because of the great importance of proper classroom supervision to the improvement of teaching and the facilitation of learning, the work has become one with the techniques of which each school officer, responsible for supervisory functions, should be to-day thoroughly familiar.

The writer has endeavored to present in this book, in usable form, those educational principles and progressive practices which will aid supervisory officers in the efficient performance of their responsibilities. The materials included in the volume have been gathered from four sources:

1. The author's practical experiences, and his continued preparation for them, in various supervisory positions in public elementary and secondary schools.

2. The reported experiences and the thoughtful reactions of the many superintendents, principals, supervisors, and critic teachers who have been students in the writer's classes in supervision in the University of Michigan, University of California, Columbia University, University of New Mexico, and Washington University, during the past nine years.

3. The investigations and experiments in supervision carried on by various supervisory officers enrolled in the author's graduate research seminars in the University of Michigan and University of California, and by the writer himself.

4. The intensive study and the critical integration, by the author, of the literature dealing with both the special and the general phases of educational supervision.

The indebtedness of the writer is gladly acknowledged to the many supervisory officers, teachers, pupils, and others who have contributed to the development of this book. Their numbers preclude the special mention he would like to give to each person in appreciation of his contribution. However, throughout the volume appropriate acknowledgment is made of the many specific contributions included from the work of various individuals and groups.

Special acknowledgment should be made by the writer for the many suggestions and criticisms received from his colleagues, Professors S. A. Courtis, G. L. Jackson, A. B. Moehlman, and C. Woody, and from Deans J. B. Edmonson and A. S. Whitney, of the University of Michigan; and from former colleagues, Professors W. C. Bagley and F. M. McMurry, of Columbia University, Professors F. W. Hart, and C. E. Rugh and Dean W. W. Kemp, of the University of California, and Professor W. W. Patty, of Indiana University.

The contents of the book have been organized so that it may be used as a textbook by students of education preparing for classroom supervision, as well as a guidebook for supervisory officers at work. The questions and problems at the end of each chapter are typical of the numerous ones gathered by the writer from supervisory officers, and from his own experiences. The references have been selected with the purpose of providing a wide range of suggestive supplementary reading, available for presenting various progressive viewpoints held and variations in procedures followed. The use of the exercises and references will furnish enrichment and enlargement of study beyond the possibilities of the learning experiences which can be provided in the limits of a single book dealing with schoolroom supervision.

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**HOW TO SUPERVISE**



**DIVISION I**

**HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SUPERVISION**



# HOW TO SUPERVISE



## CHAPTER I

### HOW SUPERVISION DEVELOPED

A BRIEF history of educational supervision will serve to show (1) why various activities were developed to meet specific, recognized educational needs; (2) how these supervisory functions were gradually vested in certain individuals, because of their apparent fitness to perform them; and (3) how efforts are now being made to differentiate supervision from other activities with a view to the development of greater efficiency in our educational organization. Such a treatment, though necessarily limited in extent in such a book as this, will aid the reader to understand better the nature of schoolroom supervision, and the reasons for the existence of the several supervisory offices which have in time been created.

#### 1. *The beginnings of school control*

Supervision in American education had its inception in the early ideals and environmental factors which led the Pilgrim Fathers to cooperate in community enterprises undertaken for their mutual welfare, benefit, and progress. It was inevitable that these people, who for long did not differentiate between their religious congregation and the civil town, should assemble in the sole meeting place built in each center and deal with all community problems which confronted them. Consequently, they soon included in their deliberations and decisions the formulation of educational policies

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to be followed and to be enforced, as they soon felt the need of providing educational facilities so that their children might be trained to follow in the footsteps of their parents. The growing generation needed to be instructed in the religious beliefs of their fathers, the laws they were developing, and the work they were doing.

Before 1640, many New England towns held meetings in which schools were established, teachers chosen, and salaries fixed. These very simple beginnings of the supervision of education by the freemen in their town meetings were given a legal status by the provisions of the Massachusetts Law of 1642, which read as follows:

This Cort, taking into consideration the great neglect of many parents & masters in training up their children in learning, & labor, & other implyments which may be profitable to the common wealth, do hereupon order and decree, that in euery towne y<sup>e</sup> chosen men appointed for managing the prudentiall affajres of the same shall henceforth stand charged with the care of the redress of this evill, . . . and for this end, they, or the greater number of them, shall have power to take account from time to time of all parents and masters, and of their children, concerning their calling and im- ployment of their children, especially of their ability to read & understand the principles of religion & the capitall lawes of this country. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Suzzallo cites numerous instances which show that the selectmen in the different towns put the law into effect. They examined children or deputed persons to do it, gave hearings to persons who had not given acceptable attention to the training of their children, and reported cases of neglect to the town meeting for consideration.<sup>2</sup> Thus the selectmen undertook the rudiments of a lay supervision, and their

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. II, pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Suzzallo, Henry. *The Rise of Local School Supervision in Massachusetts*. Teachers College Contributions to Education, no. 3, pp. 24-26.

activities were given legal sanction by the law. Another legal step soon followed. The Massachusetts Law of 1647 ordered:

Ev<sup>r</sup>y towne in this iurisdiction, aft<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Lord hath increased y<sup>m</sup> number to 50 household<sup>s</sup>, shall... appoint one w<sup>th</sup>in their towne to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write & reade, ... &...where any towne shall increase to y<sup>e</sup> number of 100 families or household<sup>s</sup>, they shall set up a grammer schoole, y<sup>e</sup> m<sup>r</sup> thereof being able to instruct youth so farr as they shall be fited for y<sup>e</sup> university...<sup>1</sup>

This law established two other important precedents which were to affect the growth of supervision of schools by the State. It decreed that public money raised by a general tax might be used to pay for such education as the State required even for "education higher than the rudiments."<sup>2</sup> It further provided for the assessing of fines against a township which was delinquent in making some provision to abide by the law, the sum collected being turned over to the "next schoole."

Since the institutions thus legalized were intended to serve specified educational purposes, inspection of them to see that the requirements were met was an inevitable next step. The selectmen, in charge of the prudential affairs of the town, assumed, on their own initiative at times and through delegation by the town meeting at others, various types of supervisory authority. Hence, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1654, recognized supervision by the selectmen as an accepted precedent when it commended to

the serious consideration & special care of the... selectmen in the seuerall townes, not to admitt or suffer any such to be contynued

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<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. II, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, George H. *The Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System*, p. 15.

in the office or the place of teaching, educating or instructing of youth or child, in the colledge or schooles, that haue manifested y<sup>m</sup>selves vnsound in the fayth, or scandelous in their liues, & not giueing due satisfaction according to the rules of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

While these beginnings in the delegation of supervisory duties to the selectmen were thus occurring, the development of a clear-cut policy in this respect was complicated by another precedent involving the place of the ministers in educational matters. The assumption of prerogatives by some of the ministers and the granting of them to others were inevitable trends in the early settlements, because of the prominent place of religion in the lives of the Pilgrims. The ministers were both the spiritual and the educational leaders in the towns, not only because of their position, but also because they were the college-trained men of the communities. Hence, they were the best qualified to say whether or not a schoolmaster was "sound in the faith" and worthy of being entrusted with the education of the children and especially the youths.

By 1700, however, selectmen in at least four Massachusetts towns were appointing teachers. This practice soon spread to other towns in the Colony, and thus became established as a principle.<sup>2</sup> Precedents for authorizing selectmen to assume similar responsibilities, in the seventeenth century, were set by some towns delegating various responsibilities to be managed to special committees, and in the course of time, these came to include educational matters. By the close of the century many towns had provided for *special* school committees, and a few had appointed some *standing* school committees.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. III, pp. 343-44.

<sup>2</sup> Suzzallo, Henry. *The Rise of Local Supervision in Massachusetts*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-76.



The early practices and trends toward organization for supervisory and administrative purposes spread to the other New England Colonies, except Rhode Island. Laws quoted *verbatim*, and records of town meetings elsewhere so similar to those found in Massachusetts, are evidence of the widespread general agreement growing up in practice. The similar but independent beginnings in the Dutch Colonies sowed germs of somewhat similar ideas, but they were not to be realized for more than a century because of the lack of religious and civil unity during the early colonial period. The early attempts to enforce the maintenance of public schools in Pennsylvania were defeated because of sovereign disapproval, while the lack of concentration of peoples into compact communities in the Southern Colonies contributed markedly to disinterested attitudes toward public education.<sup>1</sup>

The precedents in the development of the control of education in New England were, therefore, the only colonial ones of far-reaching importance. In the seventeenth century, however, this control consisted only of appointing teachers, and satisfying the community in a general way that these teachers were satisfactory. Excellent though these ideas were, the methods of control employed included one phase — that of supervision by laymen — which only centuries of gradual readjustment are to-day eliminating. If all of the supervision needed had remained that of the early period, no change would have been required, but an expansion of supervisory duties occurred quite rapidly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

### 2. *Beginnings of certification and inspection*

This expansion of the conception of supervision increased the duties and responsibilities of the selectmen, ministers,

<sup>1</sup> Cubberley, Ellwood P. *Public Education in the United States*, pp. 20-24.