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AN INVESTIGATION
SHOWING SOME OF THE
RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN
HIGH TEACHER MORALE
AND
BETTER EDUCATION
FOR
OUR CHILDREN

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO
THE DANBURY STATE TEACHERS
COLLEGE

PARTIALLY
FULFILLING REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF EDUCATION

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MARCH 1957

PREFACE

I. Why this study was made. This study was based on the assumption that better education is an outcome of high teacher morale. The main objective was to investigate what factors contribute toward a high degree of morale among teachers. In the preliminary stages of investigation the following questions came into the foreground:

1. What causes low morale among teachers?
2. How can teacher morale be improved?
3. In what ways is high morale important?

II. Sources of information. A major part of the data for the investigation was obtained through personal interviews with teachers, principals, parents, teachers' college administrators, and school superintendents.

Other information was gained through visitation to various schools both in and out of Connecticut, including those of Massachusetts, New York State and Minnesota. Attendance at conferences held by the National Education Association and the Association for Childhood Education International provided data also. The greater part of the information presented has come from national magazines, newspapers, text-books on education, educational public relations pamphlets, reports and educational journals.

Perhaps, the largest contributing factor responsible for this project was my own personal educational re-awakening brought about, I sincerely believe, through the inspiring mental journeys which I enjoyed during what I shall call my initiation into the Masters' Program at Danbury State Teachers College. The course to which I refer and which served as an enlightening guide to my thinking was entitled "Contemporary Problems of Education".

INTRODUCTION

I. The challenge of teacher morale. Teacher morale is one of the most challenging problems in education today. Inside the school buildings--crowded or uncrowded, brand-new and fluorescent-lighted or decaying and dim--the heart of a school is the heart of the individual teacher.

What conditions, to be specific, are contributing to the immensity of this challenge? First, today's college graduate is too often unwilling to enter the teaching profession because of the too low salaries. Second, too many teachers now in service find it necessary to live at substandard and subprofessional levels. Third, expenditures for self-improvement through in-service education, when possible at all, must be drastically curtailed. Fourth, unsatisfactory conditions of employment too often make teaching an unattractive career.

All over the nation teachers are saying that the heavy teacher load is one of the serious problems which prevents pupils and teachers from reaching the goals of modern education. We see this load driving many competent classroom teachers away from teaching. This continuing loss, combined with the already existing teacher shortage, has affected adversely the educational opportunities of thousands of children.

These are but a few of the problems facing not only

all teachers but all citizens. If it is accepted that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, then it may also be said that a nation is only as enlightened as its most illiterate state.

It seems, therefore, that the strength of our nation is dependent upon a strong educational system, which, in turn, is dependent upon high teacher morale, not only in scattered communities here and there, but throughout the nation as well.

II. The scope of this study in relation to teacher morale. This study will attempt to point out: (a) what factors contribute toward high teacher morale and suggestions for developing them, (b) what factors contribute to low morale and suggestions for eliminating or preventing them.

How can high morale be developed and maintained?

A. The agencies responsible for education. Since public education is the joint responsibility not only of the teaching profession but also of the public, help toward the answer to this question must come from:

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| Group
A | 1. | The community |
| | 2. | The board of education |
| | 3. | The parents |
| Group
B | 4. | The superintendent of schools |
| | 5. | The principal of the school |
| | 6. | The teachers themselves |

It can readily be seen that the first three groups lie outside the immediate school structure, whereas the last three categories include those within the educational walls, so to speak.

B. An interpretation of administration to include teacher morale. Administrators, it is commonly and generally conceived, are comprised of a group beginning with the principal, including supervisors of instruction and leading to the superintendent. A broader grouping of administrators, however, might include the parents, the board of education and the community. It is with this broader interpretation of administrators and their responsibilities toward the accomplishment of acceptable goals of education for all American children that this study deals. The desirability for close cooperation between the various sections of Group A with those of Group B needs no explanation.