STRATEGIES FOR ESTABLISHING CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

by

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Abstract

The involvement of citizens in decision-making is generally considered to be an essential component of a community education program; this paper focuses on strategies and guidelines for establishing and operating citizen's advisory committees in community schools.

There is abundant literature on community education but, other than stating there is a need for an advisory committee of citizens, it is void of much concrete help in establishing one. In addition, a basic conflict is revealed in the matter of authority or power the committee will be allowed to assume. While saying on one hand that they advocate serious citizen involvement, most proponents insist the professionals retain the authority for final decisions.

A glance at nineteen community schools operating in the lower mainland of British Columbia finds some elaborate programs underway. None have evolved beyond the "community-use-of-the-school" stage of development. The scope of operation of the advisory committees, consequently, does not yet include the regular school curriculum to a significant extent.

Advisory committees are currently operating in nine of the elementary and junior-secondary community schools.
surveyed. Composition, selection procedures, operation, and authority of the committees vary widely among the groups described. Change is occurring at a rapid rate, although no significant pattern can be detected at this early stage of experience.

An advisory committee of citizens should be part of the planning from the beginning of a community education program. Combining successful experiences with sound theories can provide the framework for establishing and operating these advisory committees. Strategies so derived are offered with respect to an initial planning committee, determining the composition and selection procedures for members of the new committee, and suggested operating guidelines for the beginning advisory committee.

Ultimately, the key to a successful advisory committee can be found in the nature of decisions they will be allowed to make, and the effect of these decisions. If their role at first is clearly 'advisory', then the citizens should not be led to believe otherwise. If, in addition, as the group and the program mature in their operation, they are not gradually given the responsibility for some greater decision-making, then the committee will probably collapse. They must be allowed to gradually assume what is called 'meaningful' participation, something iv
considerably short of total community control. Inevitably, a few traditions will have to fall and attitudes will have to change. Some new learning is also part of the development. Most citizens to not yet know how to participate in this kind of decision-making any more than present day bureaucracies know how to share in the process.
"..... when community residents -- most of whom feel powerless -- are given a role in which they must exercise authority and responsibility over one of the nation's major social institutions, that very role may help restore in them a sense of potency and identity. Giving the powerless a stake in restructuring urban schools can create a new environment of hope and trust for both adults and their children. What, indeed, is our alternative? (Fantini, 1968, p. 60-1)
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Chapter 1

THE CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

INTRODUCTION

How does a community school in British Columbia establish a committee of citizens to assist in the decision making processes necessary for a successful community education program? This paper proposes to gather the information that can be found in community education literature, blend the useful material with that found in pertinent sociological works, and emerge with a set of guidelines and strategies for establishing advisory committees in British Columbia community schools.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

A school can be considered a community school if it undertakes a program of community education:

"Community education is an educational philosophy which permeates basic beliefs. It enlarges and enhances the role of the public school so that it is quite different from before. The school becomes responsible for all aspects of education as it relates to its community. To further enlarge the conceptual base, education is no longer interpreted to mean formal types of classes but any experience leading to the more successful handling of experience. Thus the public schools have some kind of responsibility
for almost all activities that take place within the community. The school, however, does not become all things to all people. It attempts to recognize the needs of the community and to act as the coordinator, facilitator, or initiator to see that these needs are met. The school plays a catalytic role, serving an organizing function." (Minzey, 1972, p. 152).

The above definition is perhaps the one most widely accepted and often quoted by the proponents of community education. A school that undertakes such a program of community education faces a complex task. New roles will be created and existing roles modified; the school will become more accessible to more people for longer periods throughout the year; and residents of the community will be provided new opportunities for education and recreation.¹

INVolVING THE CITIZEN IN COMMUNITY SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING

An effective and successful community education program demands that the constituents of the community, that is, the consumers of the school program, be intimately

¹"A more detailed articulation of a community school was made by Leonard Covello who pioneered the concept of a community-centered school in New York City with a predominantly Italian community:

'It would seem, therefore, that the broad principles of the community-centered school might be conceptualized as the utilization of the school - 1. as explorer of community social backgrounds, as a research agency, and as the medium for the practical application of the knowledge acquired through these means to the school-community program; 2. as coordinator - through the school curriculum - of
involved in its operation. The organization must provide for citizens and professionals to work together in the decision-making process. Thus it is vital that each community school have some form of advisory committee or council composed of citizens from the community.

Most schools in British Columbia seeking to establish an advisory committee presently lack adequate knowledge about such an undertaking. Existing structures in the main are widely varying and all are still in the process of development. Common elements of successful practice should be shared, however, if these elements can be extracted from the literature and established practice.

THE THRUST FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Unlike the experience of most other innovative trends in education, the pressure for the development of community education is strong and is being applied by non-

school departments, personnel, extra curricular activities, and so forth, with the activities of students and the community;
3. as planner - through continuous curriculum revision - for the actual needs of the child within the community patterns and interests;
4. as a direct channel of inter-communication between school and community, through contacts with homes, youth groups, community social agencies, and the broader phases of community life;
5. as a participant, through social committees composed of students, teachers, parents, and community representatives of all groups, in the community activities, as
educators. The main thrust is being nurtured by the discontent and concern of a society developing an awareness of their ability to cope with contemporary problems. We are moving into an era when the consumer in society is demanding to be heard, and many people, from landlords to corporation presidents are beginning to listen. Leaders in education are also responding, but efforts to date seem to be slow in coming.

"... the most advanced concept of the community school... features a fundamental change in the role of the community. The community participates not only as client, not only in an advisory role, but also as a decision-maker. It joins with professionals in planning and operating the school. The clients no longer take it on faith that the school exists to serve the community; they take an active educational media for students and community residents; 6. as instigator of community participation in the conduct of the school and in the use of the school's resources; 7. as a base for the establishment of 'outposts' in the community; i.e., units of experiment in solving community problems; 8. as a socializing agency in intercultural relationships and the expansion of the local social world; in the development of community-consciousness and communal cooperative effort; 9. as a center for adult education in relation to objectively evaluated community needs; 10. as an educational guidance center, mainly for pupils but also for adults and community groups, and for leisure time activities; 11. as a testing ground for leadership ability within the school, and for training community leadership. 28

role in determining the nature of the services and in ensuring that it is continually responsive to their needs as they see them." (Fantini, 1970, p. 48).

A recent study in B.C. (Wallin, 1972) exposed many concerns of parents surveyed regarding their involvement in the school system.

"More and more people, by virtue of their own higher level of education and greater awareness of alternatives, feel they have the right to influence in a more direct way the kind and amount of education the children of this province are receiving.

However, a great many parents and other citizens expressed the belief that there do not now exist adequate means whereby they can become meaningfully involved and their views can be conveyed to Boards of Trustees or to principals and teachers." (Wallin, 1972, pp. 6, 10).

Some steps have been taken in B.C. which may make it easier for school-based decision making, shared by citizens:

1. Legislation introduced in 1974 by the provincial government grants more autonomy to local boards in many respects such as the development of local curriculum and selection of text books;

2. Delegates to the 1974 annual convention of the B.C. School Trustees Association endorsed the principle of community school councils operating under the umbrella of school boards acting as a sort of mini-board; and

3. The Vancouver School Board has reconstructed the district's central administration by creating five sub-districts, hopefully to provide a more favorable climate for
school-based decision-making. In addition, every school is currently being encouraged to establish a consultative committee of parents.

THE SETTING FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN B.C.

Community education programs, and particularly advisory committees, will have many characteristics that are unique to their locale. For the same reason, but on a larger scale, B.C. provides a setting that will not allow community schools to develop the kind of operation, nor allow the advisory committee to assume the kind of role that emerges from the theory in the literature.

Apart from its prime function of providing a community education program, the community school is generally seen to be the vehicle for the delivery of services to the residents of the community. This latter aspect of operation involves health, social welfare and other agencies. Coordination of the delivery of these services is felt by most to be the responsibility of the community school. In addition, matters of concern to the community, whether or not they bear direct relation to the education program, are still considered to be within the jurisdiction of the school's advisory committee.
In greater Vancouver, community schools are going to have to compete with existing and proposed organizations set up to undertake these functions. Such groups as area councils, dealing with civic and general community matters, and the proposed Community Resource Boards, dealing with the delivery of social services, are probably not going to be phased out in favor of a network of community schools. Some form of neighborhood government may not be too far off into the future. The role of the community school in that event should still be based on the fulfillment of identified needs, but more likely within an educational and recreational context.

It remains to be seen just where community resource facilities such as Vancouver's Britannia complex and that being planned for the south-east sector of the city will fit. While the school facility will dominate the physical structure, the integration of recreational and social facilities under the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Library Board, and the city Social Planning Department suggest that the advisory board of citizens will be much more than a 'school' committee. In all likelihood, a separate or sub-committee of citizens will have to be formed as an advisory group to the school on the operation of its program and facilities.
OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

A summary of the practice and theory relating to citizen's involvement and leadership in community education as described in the current literature is found in Chapter 2. It is offered here as completely as possible, even though it is not all considered appropriate advice for community schools in B.C.

Chapter 3 contains a résumé of the experience of the first lower-mainland B.C. community schools with respect to their programs and the extent of involvement of citizens in their decision-making processes. Although the experience is short, (less than three years), and the schools are few, (under twenty), the information is useful.

An attempt is made in Chapter 4 to detail a step-by-step procedure for establishing an effective advisory committee in any community school. Guidelines for composition, selection, and operation of the committee are offered.

Concluding remarks in Chapter 5 deal in part with the right and ability of citizens to participate in the operation of community schools.
SUMMARY

A school that attempts to expand its role in the community by assuming a responsibility for the provision of educational, social, and recreational opportunities for all its residents is what is called a community school. Its community education program is not going to achieve maximum effect and success until local residents become intimately involved in the decision-making process in the school. Establishing the means of involvement, an advisory committee of citizens, seems to be a difficult endeavor, and one for which there is little practical advice.

An increasing number of citizens feel they have a right to participate in schools and education as more than a client. They want an active role. Steps are being taken at the local, district and provincial level that will facilitate the growth of community schools, and allow the participation of the citizen in decision-making.

There is a danger in believing that community schools in British Columbia are going to resemble the examples that have evolved in other locations in North America. Here, there is a proliferation of other community organizations and government agencies, and attempts to develop a
community school will require new approaches. The role of the citizen in the school, however, does not have to be impaired by these factors.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON COMMUNITY SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

INTRODUCTION

No literature on community education is without reference to the involvement of citizens. Yet the vehicle for the most effective involvement, the community school advisory committee or council, is largely undefined. What mention there is, is generally with regard only to the need for such a committee. The material in this chapter outlines the suggestions and recommendations found relating specifically to citizen’s advisory committees for community schools.

Much of what has been written on community education has been based on what has happened in Flint, Michigan since the 1930's. Regional Community Education Development Centres supported by the Mott Foundation throughout the United States have provided most of the influential writers on the subject. Unfortunately, they purport to be advancing a totally new concept in education, when most of the key aspects have been very much a part of the past. It rapidly becomes evident, too, that the most often quoted sources come from this inner circle of writers. While the literature is presented here as completely possible, some of it is later not viewed as
relevant since it bears little relationship to the perceived needs in British Columbia. The major departure concerns the extent to which the advisory committee can become, in effect, the local neighborhood government. This paper focuses on the role of the citizen in an advisory capacity to a community school, whereas, what is frequently described as such is really intended to be a community council. For those whose motives are more the latter, then one approach to the formation of a community council can be found in Appendix 'A'. (Minzey and LeTarte, 1972, pp. 68 - 77).

WHY ESTABLISH ADVISORY COMMITTEES?

The argument for the establishment of a community advisory committee in the first place, is generally based on the following: Solutions to problems are fostered best when given immediate consideration in the local setting by those directly involved, local citizens are in the best position to identify, understand and help plan programs for the genuine needs of the community as well as to know what local resources are available; and, local citizens can most effectively establish lines of communication between the school staff and the community.
PURPOSES SERVED BY A COMMUNITY SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As a representative community organization, the committee may have the following specific purposes:

1. To discover and recognize problems, carry on study and planning, and make recommendations regarding the solution of those problems for consideration by responsible authorities.

2. To provide a means through which civic groups or individual citizens can present plans and secure cooperation for the purpose of enriching community life.

3. To assist in the development of programs geared to the needs and wants of the community, utilizing the human, physical, and financial resources of the community in that programming.

4. To provide a means of communication, a channel, for disseminating information in providing interpretation of information to all civic organizations and individual residents of the community regarding Community School projects.

5. To provide a 'sense of community' in support of projects necessitating full community support.

2Taken from a list provided by the Northwest Community Education Development Center in Eugene, Oregon.
6. To stimulate member organizations and individuals on the community advisory committee to conduct a periodic self-evaluation of its operation.

7. To operate such programs as are of service to all civic organizations and residents which cannot be undertaken by any single organization or individual within the community.

8. To maintain relations with sources of assistance on local, state (provincial), or national levels.

9. To provide a means of democratic action in meeting local needs through existing agencies, organizations and institutions.

10. To identify through the operation of the community advisory committee, potential community leaders and to develop their qualities of leadership through community betterment.

COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEES

Without exception, it is suggested that the composition and structure of the advisory committee be determined locally, since it must, by definition, be one of a kind. Membership must include residents (not just parents), and should include students, teachers, school administrators, and the community school coordinator. It may also
include representatives from groups such as P.T.A.'s, Block clubs, civic organizations and service clubs; agencies such as social service, health, police and churches; and central administrative bodies such as the school board, parks commission and social planning department.

It is further suggested that citizens on the committee be as representative as possible of the community, taking into consideration geographical location, age, ethnic origin and special interests.

The size of the advisory committee may vary, with suggestions from a minimum of eight to a maximum of thirty. Whatever the number, it is considered essential that the constituents of the school, (that is, the students and residents), comprise the majority on the committee.

The involvement of more people and greater effectiveness in operation can result from the use of a number of sub-committees. Their structure and membership is discussed later in this chapter.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

In this area, there is very little advice available, other than to suggest that members may be elected, appointed or selected in some other manner by specific groups. The Northwest Community Development Center has prepared a list
of models which may be used individually or in combination:

"1. Block Club - In this type of organization, one person from every block in the neighborhood is considered to be a member of the community advisory committee. That person is responsible for attending the meetings and for getting information about the council and the community school to the people living on that block. The organization requires an executive committee.

2. Appointive Body - In this model, the principal or community school coordinator appoints a number of people to serve on the advisory committee.

3. Elected Body - The community elects the members of this type of council in a general community election. Council members would have to run for these positions.

4. Opinion Leader - In this type of organization, the community school coordinator talks with a number of people, (usually at least twenty), and asks each of them for the names of five people in the community that they consider leaders. This list is then compiled and the twenty most-mentioned people are asked to serve on the committee. Those who decline are replaced by the next name on the list.

5. Existing Organization - This type of committee merely names another organization, (ie., the P.T.A., parent group, local service organization, or other such group), as the community advisory committee.

6. Open Committee - In this type of council, anyone that lives in the community and that shows up at the meeting is eligible to vote and is considered to be a member of the advisory committee. This type of organization required an executive committee."

Whatever method used to determine the membership of the committee should provide for the adequate representation of the community. Some mechanism or procedure may be incorporated to correct a situation where a significant gap in representation exists.

LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

It is most often suggested that, in the initial
stages, the community coordinator assume the leadership of the committee. As soon as possible, however, the committee should determine its own leadership and the coordinator act as a consultant or advisor. From the beginning, there should be a chairman agreed upon by the group, one who commands the respect of the others, who can efficiently provide for adequate preparation and orderly conduct of the meetings.

FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The most comprehensive list of functions and responsibilities is that found in the Flint Community Schools Guidelines (pp. 10-12). They are presented here, occasionally revised for brevity:

"Communications - Each council [committee as it is referred to in this report] should concern itself with improving relations between the school and community. This can best be accomplished by fostering more and better lines of communication between the school staff and community residents. The development of a system of continual dialogue should be a necessary and major goal of each council. Efforts should be made to develop innovative techniques and methods to insure this necessary dialogue.

Building and Plant Utilization - Each council should concern itself with the manner and extent to which existing school facilities are being used. A major goal should be to ensure that each school is using its facilities to the maximum potential.

Planning for New Schools and Renovations of Existing Facilities - Each council should be involved in the planning and development or renovation of any school facilities for its community. This should include working directly with school staff and architect to ensure the new facility reflects the needs and aspirations of the community."
Student Activities - Each elementary school council should concern itself with developing an interesting, diversified and meaningful program of activities and events for the children residing in the school's community. It is essential that the council work closely with representatives of the student body in developing this program.

Adult Activities - Each council should concern itself with developing a diversified, interesting and meaningful program of activities and events for the parents and residents of the community. Special emphasis should be given to finding a way to encourage parents to become active in the school, student and community sponsored programs, as well as adult programs designed for, and by adults. It is recommended that a needs assessment survey be conducted to determine the needs and desires of the community.

Neighborhood and Social Problems - Each council should concern itself with gaining a better understanding of the concerns and problems of its respective neighborhood problems - offering both advice and direct assistance in seeking ultimate solutions. It is anticipated that a council could become involved with such problem areas that relate to the school as redevelopment, housing, traffic safety, health, drugs, unemployment, crime, etc. To achieve the ultimate goal of eliminating these social ills and improving the quality of life in the community, it is further recommended that each council: relate to and work with the various groups and organizations that operate in its community; and utilize the resources of the school, social services, municipal government agencies, and all the interested parties - making specific referrals when it is deemed desirable and necessary.

Curriculum - Each council should be involved in reviewing the curriculum at its school to gain a better understanding of the educational program and be of assistance to the school staff in the continual development of a curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to the needs of the students and the community.

Human Relations - Each council should be involved in promoting human relations both within and outside the school and the community. Emphasis should be placed on initiating, developing and implementing programs and activities specifically designed to improve human relations. A special effort should be made to enhance the racial and ethnic interaction - between individuals and groups - both within the confines of the school and the over-all community at large.

Humaneness in Education - Each council should assist
in the development of a process that will encourage and ensure that all students, parents, teachers, administrators and others are accepted and treated by each other as individual personalities - fully recognizing and appreciating that individual differences, wants, needs and desires exist.

Community Affairs and Activities - Each council should instigate and implement a variety of activities and events designed to stimulate a true feeling of community involving young children, teenagers, parents, senior citizens, school personnel, etc. Appropriate examples of these activities would be fairs, carnivals, dances, dinners, receptions, contests, etc.

Coordination of Social Services - Each council should be involved in working with the various agencies and social services functioning in its community. Efforts should be made to develop coordination and to avoid duplication of services. It is anticipated that a council would work closely with such groups as United Fund agencies, health services, etc."

It bears repeating at this point that the summary of information relating to the establishment and operation of an advisory committee in this chapter does not exclude items considered inappropriate for effective operation in the B.C. setting. Some of the above recommended responsibilities and functions are deleted or modified in Chapter 4.

MEETINGS

The advice from the Community Education Development Centres is that meetings be held on a regular basis, as often as required. All meetings should be announced ahead of time and be open to the public. Accurate records of
meetings should be kept so that there is a permanent record of their activities, programs and proposals for future reference.

Several recommendations state that there be as little formal structure as possible, since people get 'turned off' with complex structures of organization. This appears to be inconsistent with other suggestions, such as that for formal record keeping, and that which recommends councils develop a constitution and a set of by-laws relating to their operation and structure.

SUB-COMMITTEES

It is frequently recommended that temporary or permanent committees be established to assist the councils in achieving their objectives. Such committees might be: education, neighborhood and social problems, school facilities, programs and activities, volunteers, and fund raising.

These committees are generally chaired by a member of the main committee, but should consist of as many non-members as possible, preferably those who are most directly involved with the purpose of the committee, (teens, senior citizens, etc.).
AUTHORITY (POWER)

Most of the literature is rather puzzling on the matter of how much authority becomes vested in the advisory committee. The word 'advisory' constantly used is in itself a clue to the general attitude toward the power of the group. In nearly every case, the literature mentions the ultimate responsibility given by the statute to the district board and its administrators. Therefore, the advisory committee can do no more than advise and the final decisions must rest with those given ultimate responsibility.

While that position may give the professionals a feeling of comfort, other writers advocate more power to the citizen. Although not speaking specifically of community school advisory committees, the thoughts of two of these writers are pertinent here:

Marilyn Gittel states;

"No system of election [of local community school boards] can guarantee extensive participation unless such participation is seen as meaningful (that is, effective with regard to budget and jobs)." (Levin, 1970, p. 123)

Mario Fantini cautions against giving the community token involvement:

"The new movement for the involvement demands 'meaningful' participation. At present, meaningful participation stands somewhere between professionally circumscribed participation on one hand and total community control on the other. It calls for a parental and community role in such substantive matters as budgeting,
personnel and curriculum. The vehicles of participation may be structured at the individual school level or elected bodies on a neighborhood basis. In either case, one of the chief criteria is proximity of educational decision makers to affected schools. The major political criterion is accountability of the professional and the school system to the community. (Levin, 1970. p. 51)

Community education writers such as Kerensky and Minzey advocate serious citizen involvement in the total process. One other writer, John Warden, in a strong and well stated argument for effective citizen involvement, (Warden, 1972), claims, however, that a community advisory committee by itself is simply an example of the 'ritual' of participation rather than the reality of true involvement (p.2). His summarizing statement speaks for almost every writer on the subject;

"In future, community education must be established on the premise that people must be involved in community decisions that affect them." (p. 7)

Yet, he and others seem to want to keep the advisory group as no more than just that - 'advisory'.

The Edmonton public school system has adopted a position that supports neither total professional nor community control:

"There is little doubt that such extreme positions have resulted from a previous lack of opportunity for citizens to perceive and become involved in a meaningful, influential and participatory role. The school must strive to establish a position where the ideas, judgement and desires of the community are fully recognized in determining directions in curriculum and administration. Schools must
welcome the suggestions and expertise of others to maintain a balance between professional funded knowledge and the conventional wisdom of the community." (p. 52)

A resolution passed at the 1974 Annual Convention of the B.C. School Trustee's Association would retain responsibility for making final decisions on such matter as curriculum and school staffing, after seeking advice from the school advisory committee. It was felt, however, that the community could handle other areas such as recreation, adult education and social services.

SUMMARY

A survey of the literature that encourages community education reveals much enthusiasm for the participation of the citizen on the community school. Little specific advice regarding the establishment of an advisory committee is available, yet their existence is considered essential.

The purposes served by the advisory committee are basically to identify problems in the community; to assist in development of programs geared to specific needs of

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1 Actual wording of the resolution was as follows: "...that the BCSTA support the principle that those local interest groups most directly involved in the operations of a community school should participate on the governing body of that community school within the policy guidelines laid down by the local school board."
residents; to provide a means of communication; to engender a 'sense of community'; and to identify potential community leaders.

The membership of the advisory committee should include local citizens as well as representatives of school staff and students. It may have representation from various social, civic, recreational, or service organizations. The citizens should, as far as possible, be representative of the community. The size of the committee may vary providing that the constituents of the community are in the majority.

A number of means are available to select members, but generally representatives are appointed to the advisory committee by their own group. In the case of citizens, this usually means that they are elected by the community.

The community school coordinator will probably be the first chairman of a new advisory committee, but as soon as possible, the group should elect its own chairman.

Meetings, held on a regular basis, should be informal, yet it is suggested that a good record be kept of proceedings. Sub-committees can be used to facilitate the operation of the advisory committee.

There is a conflict in the matter of authority or power that will be granted the group. In most cases, the decisions made by the advisory committee are still subject
to veto by the administration at the school or district level. The interim step toward more authority will lie somewhere between total school control and total community control. The current position of the B.C.S.T.A. is a move in this direction.

In view of the different situation that is found in British Columbia, a great deal of the information and advice regarding community education and advisory committees must be viewed as not relevant. Chapter 4 includes what is pertinent to the establishment of advisory committees in our community schools.
Chapter 3

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS UNDERWAY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

INTRODUCTION

Originally, it was felt that a survey of current practice in B.C.'s community schools with respect to their involvement of citizens in decision-making was an essential component of this paper. With that intent, personal contact was made by telephone with the principal and/or coordinator of fifteen schools operating in the lower mainland under the label of 'community school'. Of these, one was a senior secondary school, two others were junior secondary schools, and the rest were elementary schools.

Information was sought as to:

- description of school and community;
- composition of advisory, including their manner of selecting members;
- operation of the committee, including the extent of program involvement, their authority, use of committees, and operating procedures.

The information obtained during this survey is of limited value. The primary reason for this is that no
identifiable trend of development seems evident, and what exists is in a constant state of change. Where no change was imminent, the situation had not really withstood the test of time.

Consequently, the summary that follows is not a sophisticated analysis of facts and statistics. Such an approach is not compatible with the data obtained, nor would it serve any useful purpose. It is possible, however to comment upon significant experiences of the schools.

THE SCHOOLS

It is reasonable to state that not one of the schools has what could be called a community education program as it is defined in the literature summarized in Chapter 2. What is happening would be more accurately called 'community-use-of-the-school'. That is not meant as a direct or implied criticism since one would not expect a full-fledged community education program to be operating within a relatively short time span. It is probably fair to say, too, that most of the people involved, particularly the lay public, still have a rather fuzzy concept of community education.

Nine of the elementary schools had advisory committees of some nature. Of the three secondary schools,
only one had a committee at all, and this committee consisted of representatives of agencies or groups using or responsible for the facilities. Both of the others had tried to form a committee and had failed. The main problem with the secondary school appears to be the larger area from which it draws students. Since the opportunities for involvement for the lay person are very much different in secondary, and also since parents generally are less involved with the students at this older age, the participation one sees at the elementary school level does not exist for secondary. The P.T.A. has experienced this phenomenon throughout North America, so the difficulty should not come as a surprise.

**SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

One, and just about the only point of similarity shared by all but one of the groups was size. Most had fifteen or sixteen members; they ranged from twelve to seventeen. The exception had a membership varying from twenty to twenty-five.

No two committees had a comparable composition. Six of the groups had some elected members; the others had different combinations of invited and/or appointed members. Of the former number, four were pre-existing groups that
were acting in place of, or had become, the advisory committee to the school.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE

Election procedures were not clearly established, but all groups with elected members held a large meeting for the purpose. In two situations, the community school had formed a society under the Societies Act, and therefore they were holding elections within a confined and easily identifiable population.

Non-elected members to the committees generally included one or more of the following:

1. The school principal, the coordinator and representatives of the school staff;

2. representatives from police, family court, school board, and parks board;

3. representatives from service clubs such as Lions and Kinsmen;

4. representatives from community rate-payer and ethnic groups; and

5. representatives from user organizations such as the cubs and scouts, and the Y.M.C.A.

The representatives were usually appointed by their own group, and in some cases they had to be residents of
the community as a condition of belonging.

OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

Most groups had a regular chairman, although in two situations, it was the coordinator. Some had tried a rotating chairmanship only to find it unworkable. One newly-formed committee was still planning to rotate the chairmanship every two months.

Very few groups were operating under a constitution or set of by-laws, although many claimed to be in the process of establishing one.

It is extremely difficult to comment on the scope of operation for any of the groups. There had been no specific structuring of committees under the whole group for other than short, specific tasks. Without exception, there was little real involvement in the regular school program in substantive matters.

AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE

The question of authority, that is, whether the committee had any decision-making power, is one that cannot be dealt with on the basis of a quick survey. Some claimed that their group was more than advisory, that their decisions would or could not be vetoed by the principal.
To be valid, that opinion would have to be shared by all the members on the committee, and furthermore, survive more than a few months of application. In fact, in one of the schools surveyed that appeared initially to have an excellent advisory committee, the group has ceased to function until the school board has defined a policy regarding the power of their advisory committee.

It was a little disturbing to hear how some groups arrived at decisions. In at least two schools, matters were talked out until 'consensus' had been reached. That way, it was felt that one (the principal) would not have to veto any decisions. The area within which such decisions were made (budget, program, etc.) were not identified.

In most other situations, the principal retained his right to make final decisions on the basis that he was held accountable by the board for the building and what happens within it. The question of authority within the advisory committee, as well as other matters relating to the operation of the group requires a considerable amount of additional discussion.
SUMMARY

A quick survey of the community schools operating in the lower mainland of British Columbia shows that one-third of them have no advisory committee. The remaining schools have a mixture of appointed and/or elected representatives from the community and agencies acting in an advisory capacity. The programs underway indicated more a 'community use of the school' than a community school as currently defined. Consequently, the committees spend most of their time on the 'added on' programs, which are mostly social and recreational in nature.

Although some groups feel they are more than advisory, the principal has generally retained his right to make final decisions. Some groups make decisions in a manner that allows the principal to avoid having to veto any decision - they arrive at consensus.

No group seemed to feel that they had the answer to the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process. The amount of uncertainty and confusion among the few schools surveyed indicates the need for some direction and more practical assistance in becoming established. Chapter 4 may offer some help.
Chapter 4

STRATEGIES FOR ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

One reason that the literature on advisory committees seems to avoid detail is that there are so many variables in the development of a community education program. There can be no question about the fact that a school's unique circumstances will ensure that the formation and operation of its advisory committee will be equally unique. Taking the possible variables into consideration, however, one still should be able to develop guidelines and strategies that will assist a beginning or growing community school to maturity and self-dependence in its leadership and decision-making processes.

INFLUENCES THAT SHAPE THE COMMITTEE

The most important variable of all is the extent to which the advisory committee is going to be allowed to share in the decision-making. The power or authority of the advisory committee as it is perceived by its various
components is the crucial matter of concern. There is much
talk of shared decision-making, but in most instances,
control remains in the hands of the district and school
administration. Boards and administrators say that as long
as the ultimate responsibility is theirs by statute, then
they must also have final say in decisions. One cannot argue
much with that position as things now stand, but it is wrong
under those circumstances to give a school advisory committee
the illusion of power, as is often the case.

Some of the other important variables that can affect
the eventual operation and components of the advisory
committee are:

1. The source of thrust for community education. Is
it being pushed on the community? By whom? The school or a
few of the residents pursuing special interests? Or is it a
logical answer to the needs of the community? Are the
residents receptive?

2. The pre-existence of home-school groups. Does
there already exist a P.T.A., Parents' Association, Home-room
Mothers' Club, or other such group? What is their range of
interest and activity, and their scope of influence in the
community?

3. The variety of components in the community. Is
the area geographically sparse or compact? Is it
substantially residential or is there a large commercial or industrial section? What is the socio-economic range, and are there pockets of ethnic groups present? Is it easily divided into natural regions for representation? Will communication be a problem?

4. Commitment of school staff. Does the existing professional and supporting staff understand and want to become involved with a community education program?

5. Resources available for additional staff. Who will provide funds for the coordinator and extended operation? If another agency becomes involved, (i.e., Parks Board or Social Planning Department), to what extent, and what are the lines of responsibility to the school administration?

6. Suitability of facility. How adequate is the school building for extended use? Can a wide range of programs and activities be provided? Is security going to be a problem? What other facilities (i.e., ice rinks, community halls, etc.,) are in the neighborhood and under whose jurisdiction are they?

7. Presence of other community action groups. What other groups in the community offer social services or recreational and educational opportunities to residents? What type of coordination can occur and will it require their
representation on the school advisory committee?

8. The extent and nature of the needs of the residents. Can they be identified easily and is the school in a position to fulfil them? Is this to be a comprehensive community school, or will it be little more than use of the school by the community?

Some of these variables, and the list is not complete, are just as essential for the development of a community education program as for the formation of an advisory committee. It underscores a basic belief that one cannot happen without the other. The presence of an effective citizens advisory committee is vital to a community education program.

ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A community school advisory committee plays an important role in the decision-making involved in the program and activities in a school and its immediate vicinity. Its prime function is to assist in determining that identified educational, recreational and social needs of the community are organized and carried out efficiently, utilizing the resources of the school and community to the best advantage.

Certain suggestions that follow are at variance with the literature summarized in Chapter 2. However, they are
considered to be more realistic and practical in terms of the situation that generally exists in schools and communities in British Columbia.

PRE-EXISTING GROUPS

There has been a tendency in B.C. to take an existing parents group in the school and turn it into the advisory committee. Such a practice could lead to problems. Hillman and Seever noted;

"...that councils made up only of existing organizations do not include those without affiliations." (Cox, 1970 p. 284).

In addition, the Flint Guidelines suggest that existing school-community groups, like the P.T.A.;

"when compared to a school-community advisory council, are not as comprehensive in scope nor as extensive in purpose. Thus, an existing group may very well be the nucleus for expanding and/or modifying to become a true school-community advisory council, or it may desire to have representation on the council, but it alone cannot serve in lieu of a council." (p. 15).

Therefore, such a group could easily be involved with the interim or steering committee that should be struck to set up the machinery for the establishment of the first school advisory committee.

THE START - AN INTERIM PLANNING COMMITTEE

One prime function of this interim committee or task
force should be to derive the procedure for selecting the members who will make up the new advisory committee. They should refrain from trying to operate as an advisory committee, that is, to make major policy decisions or establish complex operating procedures in advance. And while the Flint Guidelines suggest that this interim committee should also draw up a tentative set of by-laws, such a step is probably premature at this stage. A set of by-laws should be an early objective of the new group, once established.

DECIDING THE COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Before they can decide how the new members should be selected, the interim committee should determine the composition of the proposed advisory committee, that is, how many members and from what source. The following suggestions should be considered:

1. Members should be selected by the groups they represent (Flint Guidelines, p. 8). Inherent in this is that citizens on the committee should be chosen by the residents of the community. An election of some nature is almost essential. A system whereby representatives of the community are appointed, either by the school administration or some central agency, is not going to be effective in the long term, even if the names for such appointments are put
forward by the community. Marilyn Gittel, referring to groups that could be likened to Britain's local school governing bodies, offers comments that are appropriate here:

"The method by which a local school board is selected will influence the composition of that board. Depending upon the procedure used, different segments of the population might be induced to run for office. Procedures will also influence community loyalties. The possibilities of procedures range from appointment by a central agency (making it unlikely that the board would have significant local loyalties or would include any new local power elements) to local election of all members. Local elections, if arranged at a regular community election, might reinforce the role of the existing political party structure and not engage any new local interests in the process. Elections through the schools with the constituency made up of either parents of school children or of all community residents are more likely to stimulate involvement by new groups who are particularly concerned with education problems." (Levin, 1970, p. 122).

2. The size of the group should be kept to a reasonable figure, perhaps a minimum of ten to a maximum of twenty. Most of the existing committees in B.C. are within one or two of fifteen members. The Flint Guidelines suggest an optimum size of a minimum of fifteen to a maximum of thirty, however, a group of the latter dimensions could be very unwieldy. Murray Ross quotes two studies (Ross, 1967, p. 183) that show smaller groups are more effective for fuller communication, and satisfaction for participants. He suggests that five is better than twelve, but one must balance the need for efficiency against that for maximum representation.

3. In addition to the elected members, some provision should be made to include the school principal, the
community school coordinator, representation from school staff, and perhaps in some instances, the students. The matter of their voting status is one that must be determined by the committee. Success is evident in situations where they are full voting participants and in others where they are considered as advisors or consultants. The total number of school administration and teaching staff on the committee should be less than the number of citizens on the committee. In some cases, the committee may wish to include representation from the central administrative bodies such as the School Board or Parks Commission. While they should perhaps be included, it is probably impossible and unnecessary for them to be present at all meetings.

4. Since the citizens on the committee should be representative of their community, and further, make up the majority of the committee, then representation from special interest groups or agencies should not be considered. There is little reason why a general advisory committee should include some whose field of interest is understandably restricted. While it seems sound to include representatives from 'user' groups, that is, those who presently use part of the facility on a regular basis, it is easy to see that a conflict is inevitable. How can the representative be objective when his group is threatened by a change that is
considered necessary for a better community education program? To then suggest that the representative must be a local resident as well, does nothing to minimize the conflict.

Representatives from agencies or neighborhood service groups, such as the police or probation office, should be given an invitation to be present during meetings and contribute as consultants, but full voting capacity on the committee is unnecessary and difficult to justify.

SELECTING NEW MEMBERS

After having determined the proposed composition of the advisory committee, the interim committee can then turn to setting up selection procedures for new members. Administrative, staff and student representatives should be selected by their own groups. Therefore, the interim committee's main concern will be the nomination and election of citizens from the community.

If the objective in establishing the group is to form the nucleus for a community council, rather than simply an advisory committee, then the procedure suggested by Minzey and Letarte in Appendix 'A' is probably appropriate at this point. Since this writer feels that the community council model is one that may occur in the latter stages of the evolution of the community education program, and one that
will not be reached for several years in any event, the advice offered here is restricted to that felt necessary for an advisory committee.

Probably the most difficult, but certainly the key objective is to ensure adequate representation of the community's residents. Since communication to and from the community is the vital component in a community education program, then representation according to geographical areas or from significant segments of the population, i.e., ethnic groups, is essential.

It is unlikely that any community is well enough organized to include all residents in block clubs and/or condominium councils. If it were, it would then be possible to elect members on a form of 'ward' system. The two chief objections to ward elections are that areal boundaries would have to be fairly well defined and members might tend to 'over-represent' their area to the detriment of the total community education program.

On the other hand, electing members at large in no way guarantees that the representation sought will be achieved. Rather than try to evolve a complicated system of voting, it would be simpler to elect all but two or three of the citizens' positions on the proposed committee. Then the elected and other members of the advisory committee can fill
the vacancies by appointment, ensuring that areas or groups left out in the election at large are represented. Candidates for these appointments could be taken from the list of unsuccessful nominees or could be sought directly from the areas concerned.

CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY ELECTION

Preparing for the election itself requires first that some means of nominating candidates be found. No set of guidelines can hope to include all of the possible means of obtaining potential members. Some suggestions derived from the literature on community organization and practice in schools may help to avoid some pitfalls;

1. Assuming the election will be held at-large within the community, it must be possible for any resident to become nominated. The interim committee will immediately cast suspicion upon itself, and even the new advisory group, if it devises any scheme to make it more difficult for some than others to become nominated.

2. No one should assume that all potential candidates are going to spring forward upon cue. In many cases, those who would make excellent members may be unaware of their status and need encouragement to try for a seat on the new committee.
Murray Ross suggests that a successful community association must involve leaders, (both formal and informal), identified with, and accepted by major subgroups in the community. A means of representation must be devised which requires first an identification of the groupings of people which have significance for the participants, and then identification of the leaders of these groups. (Ross, 1967, p. 168-171).

Elsewhere he states;

"The accepted and identified leaders..... are leaders not because they are pleasant, nor skillful at meetings, nor able to articulate with facility. Their leadership is based on a complexity of factors which may include, but is not dependent upon, getting on well with outside groups. Because they speak for a group, discussion may be a good deal more frank and honest, conflicts may appear more frequently, a common language may be more difficult to secure. But such a group of leaders is the community in miniature; and the unity within which diversity is to exist, is not easily achieved." (Ross, 1967, p. 172-173).

3. While some potential candidates may offer to run for just one year, the interim committee should encourage each candidate to be prepared for a longer commitment to provide for a successful start. William Biddle states;

"It is part of his responsibility to persuade initiators to enter upon the community development process, expecting it to be nonterminal. The citizens they recruit are encouraged to become a part of the process, not for a single great effort, but for the long pull of planning a community-serving future. He should ask all to make a commitment to stay with the nucleus, through success and failure, for a period of time. Usually three years is a realistic minimum as a start. Such an early commitment
pledges citizens to faithfulness until the process is well started. It does not obligate individuals to nonterminal participation even though the process is set up to last indefinitely. The individual citizen may look upon his participation as limited in time, with obligations passed on to others." (Biddle, 1968, p. 202)

PUBLICIZING THE ELECTION

Information about the election should be effectively publicized. While the publicity will likely involve a series of newsletters, there should be as much personal contact with residents as possible through members of the interim committee. Not only should residents be aware of the candidates and the location and date of ballotting, but hopefully they would have a good understanding of the purpose of the advisory committee. It is probably easier for the residents to understand that their representatives will be able to participate in the school’s decision-making process than it will be for them to understand what community education is all about.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

The interim committee will have to give a considerable amount of thought to the manner in which the residents will cast their ballots. The local schools that have elected citizens to their advisory group have had a large, open meeting for the purpose. It is assumed that those who
attended and vote are residents of the community. Compiling a voters list is almost an impossibility unless some type of community school association is formed. The annual payment of a nominal fee to 'belong' to the association establishes not only a membership list, but also a reasonable means of determining a boundary of operation. Rarely will the total user group live within official school boundaries.

For the first meeting, depending on the number of positions and candidates, a fairly simple election procedure is possible. The meeting could begin with a short introductory statement regarding the nature of the community education program envisaged, and how it is anticipated that the citizens will share in the decision-making.

Before any balloting has taken place, some opportunity for further nominations from the floor should be provided. All candidates should be introduced, and perhaps be given a three to five minute time in which they can give an indication of their goals and how they foresee their participation in the community education program.

Two forms of voting are suggested, but many others are possible. Almost any procedure will require that a ballot listing the candidates, (with extra spaces for last minute nominations), be provided. The simplest method, requiring one ballot is for residents to place an 'X' beside
the name of any candidate(s) up to the number of positions to be elected. The successful candidates will be those in rank order of the number of votes. For most situations, this type of election will be quite satisfactory.

A second procedure involves two or more separate ballots. While it would take considerably longer, it ensures that successful candidates are elected with a majority of those voting behind them. In addition, it helps to establish greater representation, since it allows voters to decide on the basis of knowing already successful candidates. To be declared elected, a candidate must have 50% or more of the ballots cast. With each subsequent ballot, those elected, as well as the candidate with the least number of votes, are dropped from the ballot. Naturally, each separate set of ballots should be printed on a different color paper for ease in control and counting.

In reality, the type of election will be determined by various local factors involved. Although the meeting should be held at a time that allows most residents to attend little can be done to accommodate those who cannot be present. An all-day polling station or a form of mail ballot should be rejected on the basis that it cannot provide the opportunity for voters to hear sufficient explanation of the procedures or to meet the candidates.
THE NEWLY ELECTED ADVISORY COMMITTEE: GETTING STARTED

Once the new advisory committee has been elected, there should be no further need for the interim committee. In all likelihood, many of those who were involved were nominated and probably elected to positions on the new advisory committee.

The new committee should waste no time in establishing itself. To facilitate the first meeting or two, the community coordinator or school principal could assume the chairmanship. As soon as possible, however, the group should appoint a chairman from the elected members. The chairman's position should not be seen as one of power or authority over the group, even though the individual will frequently be called upon to act as the spokesman for the committee. The main functions of the chairman are to assemble the agenda in advance of the meeting and control the orderly progress of the meeting itself.

The first act of the new advisory committee, often referred to hereafter as just 'committee', should be to appoint members to the vacant positions, if any, held back from the election, or not filled during the election. Representation that provides the best two-way communication with the community should be the key consideration in
Preparation for the first meeting of the whole committee should provide for discussion and action on the following points:

1. Rules of order and accepted procedure. While it is true that complicated procedures can 'turn off' people, so can informality and rambling discussions. Murray Ross states that rules of order are important in that they can create a sense of security. Flexibility does not have to mean no procedures, and there can still be opportunity for a variety of methods. (Ross, 1967, p. 188).

2. Procedures for recording the minutes of the meeting. The only record of policy and operation at first, and perhaps for a considerable time, will be the minutes. Not only should the motions be recorded, but a summary of the debate's major points as well. A great amount of detail is unnecessary, but the context within which decisions are made should be apparent to readers of the minutes.

3. The frequency of meetings. A schedule of meetings should be determined in advance in order that participants in the meetings can avoid over-lapping of commitments. It is not a good policy to schedule meetings only according to need, except on an occasional basis.

4. The number and composition of sub-committees.
The advisory committee cannot hope to handle by itself all the different functions and responsibilities expected of it. Some of these committees will have continuous and on-going activity. Others will be struck for a specific purpose and will cease to exist when their work is completed.

Examples of the standing, or permanent, committees could be: publicity and communications, education or curriculum, programs and activities, finance, and nomination and elections. For adequate reporting and assured effective representation, these sub-committees should be chaired by members of the advisory committee.

The real advantage of a system of sub-committees, established early, is to involve the residents in the process, and not just the program. Many willing participants who would not commit themselves to the larger task of the advisory committee can be used effectively on these committees. Here, too, is an opportunity to involve special interest groups or individuals in a manner more appropriate than providing a token place for them on the advisory committee. That is, rather than try to have representation from special sub-groups, (such as teens, or senior citizens), on the main advisory committee, a sub-committee should be established whose membership is primarily from the special group concerned. While the role of the advisory committee member
may initially be that of chairman of the sub-group, it may
develop into one of liaison as the sub-group grows into
maturity and independence.

5. Selection of the new chairman. Most of the
literature suggests that the coordinator chair the committee
until it has matured and can be chaired by one of the
Citizens. They suggest this could last several months! It
is unlikely, however, that the committee will mature
properly unless it can develop on its own, with the
coordinator acting as Biddle would call an 'encourager';

"No one is in as favorable a position to cultivate
emergent leadership as is an encourager of the community
development process. His has a key function, both in
building up the dignity of the local people and in helping
develop that local leadership which is essential to compre-
hensive programs of reform." (Biddle, 1968, p. 86).

How long the chairman serves in his role is a matter
for the committee to decide, but it is interesting to note
that the rotating chairmanship is short-lived where it has
been tried. Continuity and community identification are two
key arguments in favor of at least a one-year term for the
chairman.

6. The matter of a constitution and by-laws for
future operation could be discussed, if not at the first
meeting, certainly very soon in the life of a new advisory
committee. A sub-committee could be struck to prepare the
document for the whole committee to consider.

It should be understood that the constitution simply states the name and objects of a group; that terms of membership, voting procedures and such are called by-laws. In addition, matters of operating policy are stated in general terms in the by-laws, so as to eliminate frequent and complicated amendments. Detailed explanation of policy, or items likely requiring regular amendment should be recorded in a handbook of policies and procedures. For example, the by-laws may state that there shall be a membership fee, but the policy handbook will record the amount of the fee.

7. Before embarking on any major concerns, the committee should carefully determine a priority of goals and objectives for their first few months of operation. The problems can be determined in a number of ways, and the manner of finding solutions to them can be discussed briefly and noted, but the essential step is to categorize them, rank them in order of importance, and begin a systematic approach to dealing with them.

OPERATION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A detailed explanation of the operation of a committee is probably impossible, and even if it were not, is unnecessary. The committee will have to find its own
best way of functioning and begin its long path to maturity by itself. Very likely, the committee will develop as does the community education program. It certainly will not be an instant process.

Two matters, however, that are offered for consideration relate to the scope of operation and the method of arriving at decisions.

The list of functions and responsibilities that were developed for the Flint Guidelines and listed in Chapter 2 describes reasonably well the ultimate role of the advisory committee. Obviously, it will take a considerable period of time before any community education program will develop, and its advisory committee mature, to the point where it can effectively function in each category. As previously indicated, some of the functions are now performed by other groups, (Community Resource Boards and neighborhood associations), and the best that may develop is a coordination of effort among these groups and the school. At this point in time, it is difficult to predict the nature or success of effective coordination of efforts among all these groups. The process will be one of evolution, and the pattern that develops will undoubtedly follow many years of trial and error.

A beginning advisory committee will probably start by
considering matters that primarily relate to 'community-use-of-the-school'. That is, they will be more concerned with fostering the development of social and recreational activities that take place in the school when the regular school is not in operation. They may also become involved in matters relating to neighborhood and social problems in a minimal fashion. Their concerns for building and plant utilization, deployment of staff, and community-school communications will reflect their initial pre-occupation with non-school matters.

Gradually they will begin to become involved in the educational program that justifies the school's existence in the first place. There is tremendous opportunity in British Columbia for community input into the learning program offered in a school. Teaching staff in the school will, for the most part, welcome the advice and assistance of the committee and other residents in the community in the shaping of the curriculum. Identification and utilization of neighborhood resources is another area for valuable participation. Teachers will, however, resent what could be called meddling or interference in what they rightly consider their professional domain. Thus, while the goals and objectives of the curriculum should be jointly developed by the staff and community, the staff will want to apply their own technology and philosophy to the means of reaching these goals.
Beyond the first two stages just outlined exists an area of 'maybes' and 'ifs'. It is really unlikely that the committee will become the vehicle for neighborhood government. It is also unlikely that school-based committees will wield the power currently given the district school board in matters relating to budget and personnel. Anything is possible, however, and a number of years of evolution may see some committees grow into either or both of these realms of power.

MAKING DECISIONS

What can be considered a most important aspect of committee operation is the means of arriving at a decision. The most unrealistic approach, and one that is in popular use in several existing committees, is one that employs 'consensus'. Not everyone agrees on the same definition of consensus, but it is generally described locally to mean that a matter is discussed, delayed, and/or diluted until everyone on the committee can agree with the position arrived at. That is, if anyone is able to determine exactly what that position is, since usually the process rules out any vote at the end.

The motive for trying to reach decisions that appear to leave no conflict is obvious and laudible, but really
unnecessary. Hillman and Seever, in discussing several strategies, suggest:

"While the strategy of consensus does imply some base of agreement, it by no means assumes an absence of tension or the lack of disagreement. Protestant Community Services in Detroit in one of its reports, uses the term cooperative contention to illustrate its notion of the tension inherent in many situations where different forces are at work.

While there may be basic agreement over the long haul, specific issues or situational factors may create points of difference. In other words, not all conflict is ruled out in the strategy of consensus." (Cox, 1970, p. 279)

While it is hoped that most decisions have the support of all of the participants, it is quite likely that there will be dissent and opposing opinion. The measure of opposition and the fervor of discontent determine whether or not it is wise to proceed on a decision made with less than unanimous support. Most of the time, committee members will be quite happy to register their opinion, vote and then abide by majority decision. That is the parliamentary and democratic way, and there is no reason why it should not be successful with advisory committees.

SUMMARY

Although each community school will assume a unique shape within its locale, many factors that influence its development can be applied to most situations. These factors will determine not only the type of community education
program, but also the nature of the advisory committee of citizens established to participate in the school's decision-making process.

The plans for the formation of the advisory committee which should be a new group, should be undertaken by an interim committee. The interim committee should concern itself basically with the composition and structure of the proposed committee, and the determination of appropriate methods for the nomination and election of citizens.

The advisory committee, which should be kept to approximately fifteen members, should be established in a way that permits adequate representation of geographic areas or significant population segments. Once underway, its immediate concerns should be with those factors that will affect the operation of their group; rules of order, recording procedures, meeting schedules, formation of sub-committees, leadership (chairman), constitution and by-laws, and initial determination of goals and objectives.

At this stage, the committee begins its long road to maturity. In its infancy, it will not nearly resemble the preconceived image held by those monitoring its development to this point. Nor will the program, of course, and initial activities will likely be of a social and recreational nature. At the beginning, its involvement in the regular
curriculum, or its potential as a community council will not be evident.

The final responsibility for decisions will remain with school or district administration. Any attempt to disguise this fact, which may lead the committee to believe it has much authority or power will result in serious problems. Most decisions can be reached using the reliable 'majority rules' approach; the use of a 'consensus' technique will probably prove futile in the long run.
Chapter 5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

An attempt was made in Chapter 1 to describe the setting within which community education programs are developing in British Columbia. While the environment for lay participation in school decision-making here is not hostile, it is evident that the type of involvement envisaged must be slightly but significantly different from that proposed for other areas of North America. The primary difference is that there does not appear to be the need, (nor the room), for the advisory committee to become, in effect, the local neighborhood government. Not only does it appear to be an impossibility, but the underlying belief of this paper is that it should not.

In Chapter 2, pertinent literature is gleaned of advice that may be helpful in determining the purposes and functions as well as the establishment and operation of a community school advisory committee. It becomes apparent that little practical advice is offered in community education literature, and some advice on community organization and lay participation is obtained from other sources. It is
also evident that much advice is more appropriate for the
'community council' model than for the community school
advisory committee model suggested in this paper.

The survey of local community schools that is
summarized in Chapter 3 demonstrates a wide variation in
approaches to involvement of the citizens, (or lack of it).
The relatively high amount of change undertaken or antici-
pated indicates the early evolutionary stage of development
in British Columbia. Collectively, however, enough local
experience has been established to begin to guide further
development in other schools.

Chapter 4 offers what some may consider a restrict-
ive approach to the establishment of an advisory committee
for a community school. In practical terms, however, such
detailed steps are essential in many cases where no one is
really certain where to begin. Once a school initiates the
process, it should rapidly become self-sufficient and not
require outside help. The guidelines and strategies offered
should be enough to enable any school to reach the point of
self-dependence.

THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Much mention has been made throughout this paper of
the various stages reached by various schools called
'community schools'. Every school is, to some degree, a community school. In very few, if any locations, is the facility not put to use outside regular school hours. Involving the community as an additional resource for the learning program is surely now evident to some extent in every school. As well, parents and other citizens are now involved in some capacity, either as volunteers, or in another manner, where they are beginning to influence what happens in the school. The main point is that the mere designation of a school as a 'community school' does not automatically mean that it suddenly becomes something different from what it was before.

The new label does bring with it additional personnel and resources that facilitate the evolution, but substantial results will not be instantaneous. Incidentally, the move towards total community education can no more be impeded than it can be accelerated. Well-meaning educators and school trustees could heed the warning of Murray Ross:

"There is recognition that the will and desire of people for a given change should precede initiation of any programs leading to such a change. There has long been recognition, of course, that if will and desire were present, change would be greatly facilitated. But what does one do when no such will or desire exists? The tendency in many community situations has been to push ahead without such support. The results have not always been so pleasant or fruitful as one might wish.

To seek to impose ideas or techniques or projects on the community when there is no desire for these may not
always lead to failure. ... The idea, technique, or service may be accepted. But a community does not grow under such circumstances. It grows and develops capacity only as it develops will and desire to grow, only as it struggles and strives to overcome its difficulties, only as it achieves strength in the conquest of its own problems." (Ross, 1967, pp. 37-38)

FACTORS HAMPERING THE GROWTH OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Allowing the citizens to have some say in the determination of what happens in their community and its school is a natural and essential step to take in view of the current concerns expressed both by educators and society. Establishing the machinery to effectively provide for this form of decision-making input, however, is hampered by a few other factors.

The most significant factor is that of attitudes held by the major participants; citizens, students, teachers, administrators, and elected officials. Another is the current structure of the system that thwarts efforts to give the lay person an influential role. In the first place, the majority of citizens do not know how to perform in that role, and secondly, most professionals see any power or authority within the community as a threat. In a system where authority is delegated and responsibility accepted along a narrow vertical line, lateral extensions seem difficult to connect.
WHAT AUTHORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

Few advocates of community involvement are really suggesting that the community take full control of the school. However, a changed pattern of school and system administration is not only desirable, but inevitable.

"Community involvement cannot be merely attached to our present obsolete administrative structure. To do this can lead to dysfunctional conditions for education with frustration to all concerned. We need a new theory and practice of administration designed for total community education, and education in which all the people of the community are involved. Such education mandates community involvement in educational programs. However, complete control of education could mean a narrow, provincial, even racist education for some communities. Such a development could surely be a threat to true democratic education."

(Kerensky, 1971, p. 163)

Yet it seems that most of the writers in community education, including Kerensky, wish to see that the statutory power granted boards of trustees and school administrators be maintained. As in this paper, they use the term 'advisory' to refer to the council or committee.

If community education is to become a reality in British Columbia, and if it is to resemble what is now in theory, then the school advisory committee must be given more than token authority.

By starting in an advisory capacity, and growing effectively, the committee will gradually desire and become
capable of policy-making power in certain areas. Such growth must be allowed to occur, or the concept will not reach fruition.

"Responsible citizen participation requires their independence at the policy-making level." (Hillman and Seever, in Cox, 1970, p. 287)

Initially, citizens will probably be quite willing to accept an advisory role, providing no one promises more than that. Failures with committees locally and in the United States have tended to occur where the participants either discovered they did not have the decision-making power they were led to believe they had, or they were not allowed to assume greater responsibility as they matured.

WHERE DOES THE PROFESSIONAL STAND?

It is interesting to note that many of the chief proponents of community education are professional educators. Yet a strange mixture of opinion becomes evident, as has already been noted. While indicating that the committee could become politically powerful, (ie, a community council), most writers still see the group in a strictly advisory capacity to the professionals in the school.

It has been stated emphatically earlier that no group of citizens is going to accept a meaningless role in the decision-making process in the school. What, therefore,
are the limits of citizen participation before the professionals themselves feel powerless?

If anything is typical of the schools today, it is a desire to adapt, to become responsive to the needs of both the individual student and the community.

The professional, seeking to satisfy these needs, is compelled to use a variety of inputs to determine the particular approach that promises to be most successful. Once aware of the needs, the professional can apply his expertise to establish the means for satisfying them.

In other words, it does not have to be threatening to the professional to give the average citizen a substantial role in the school. The professional should respect the right of the citizen to decide what is important for his child; the citizen should respect the right of the professional to determine how it is best accomplished.

If that is the basis for joint decision-making, then conceivably, the citizens can assume a significant role in matters beyond the social and recreational program. Ultimately, the advisory committee, (which should have by then outgrown that title), may participate in decisions relating to matters such as budget and personnel.

At that point, the degree of mutual trust and cooperation among participants, lay and professional,
should be such that indeed the position of the professional is enhanced.

CONCLUSION

When community schools were formally introduced into British Columbia, understandably, the major influences came from those areas where the concepts were pioneered. Information and assistance were freely given, particularly from the Northwest Community Development Centre at Eugene, Oregon. There is no doubt that their help has allowed those in British Columbia to advance at a greater pace than would have otherwise occurred.

As we mature, however, external experience becomes less valuable than our own. It is the opinion of this writer that we have now reached that stage. Schools now wishing to embark on that long, slow path would be wise to seek advice from those schools already established in the province, particularly with respect to the role of the citizen in the decision-making process.
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APPENDIX "A"

Organizing a Community\(^1\)
(One Approach)

To initiate our discussion on the organization of a community, it is necessary to begin with several assumptions. Rejection of any one of the assumptions invalidates the organizational structure being presented.

Assumption No. 1

It is impossible to involve all people in any meaningful community organization. Some form of representation must be established. The size and complexity of our society and existing communities negates the possibility of involving all people in discussion and dialogue in a process of community problem-solving.

Assumption No. 2

There is a direct relationship between community leadership and a knowledge and understanding of community problems and needs. True leaders, (those who are perceived as leaders because of personal qualities rather than status position), are ascribed leadership positions because they understand, accept, and cope with the problems of life and of the community. An individual's ability to understand and assist in the solution of another's problem is an integral part of leadership.

Assumption No. 3

Most communities are a composite of many segments, both formal and informal, and by determining what segments exist in a community and finding the leadership that exists within these segments, it is possible to establish a cross section of community thinking and concern. Because the real

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leaders do understand and reflect the attitudes and feelings of those ascribing them a leadership status, they can represent these attitudes and feelings with a fair degree of accuracy. Leadership is not authority, since true leaders are more bound by the group policy than the other members.

Assumption No. 4

There are basically two forms of leadership, formal and informal, and both must be recognized and incorporated into any meaningful community organizational structure. Formal leadership exists within the organized structure of the community. It includes business and industrial leaders, governmental officials, and other leaders emerging from the formal, organized, structure of the community. This group represents the traditional community leadership, as identified by Floyd Hunter.

A number of informal structures also exist within a community with their own leadership structure. The informal nature of these organizations makes them no less important. Unlike the pyramid structure of leadership described by Hunter, the informal structure appears in a parallel pattern. Important community issues, ethnic and religious concerns, and other special interests create groups with a fairly narrow scope of interest, but with a definite, although somewhat informal, leadership structure within them. These parallel structures, while maintaining a variety of goals and purposes, often incorporate many of the major community issues.

To ignore the formal leadership structure is to ignore wealth, traditional community power sources and vast majority of the citizenry in the community. To ignore the informal structure is to ignore the voices for change; the alienated, the concerned, and the minorities.

Assumption No. 5

Once formal and informal leadership has been found, it can be used as a communication bridge between community institutions and the general public. This is true because of the unique rapport that exists between genuine leaders and those ascribing leadership.

From the five assumptions presented, it is suggested that one of the best means of assessing and describing community needs and problems is through determination of formal and informal community leadership and that that leadership, because of its unique relationship with the community can provide the basis for an excellent two-way communication process between community institutions and their constituency.

Determining Community Leadership

With the acceptance of the five assumptions previously listed, it is now possible to initiate a discussion regarding the determination of existing community leadership. While a variety of excellent techniques exist, one that seems to allow for the determination of community leadership while assuring appropriate representation from many diverse community groups is a modified version of a plan presented by George Brower resulting from a discussion between he and Irwin T. Sanders. This plan is initiated by interviewing public figures from as many segments of the community as can be determined, including government, business, banking, industry, social services, and health.

During this interview, questions similar to the following should be considered. Questions one and two should be used and either questions three and four.

1.) If you had a plan for improving some part of the community that needed total community support, who would you go to to seek support? Name five and list the part of the community that each represents.

2.) In your estimation, who are the five most successful people in the community? List the part of the community they represent.

3.) If you wanted the thinking of the total community on an important issue, what five people could best represent the community? List the part of the community that they represent.

4.) If your community was involved with other communities on a regional plan to restructure community services for the entire region, who would you select as representatives from your community? Name and list the part of the community they represent.

The individuals mentioned should then be asked the same questions. The process should be repeated until the names begin to be repetitious. At this point, the data collected should be analysed, both for frequency of mention
and for cross-area representation.

There are only two modifications that are suggested to this plan.

1.) Unless careful consideration is given to the initial determination of community segments, only the formal leadership structure will be included. It is necessary to identify the parallel leadership structure as well as the informal leadership within ethnic groups, neighborhoods, special interest groups, etc., must be identified if true representation of the community is to result. This can only be accomplished at the inception of the study by recognizing the informal structure of these community segments, incorporating them into study, and attempting to find the leaders of these groups.

2.) By adding two questions to the four suggested, extensive additional insight can be gained about the feelings of the community.

   a.) What are the major strengths within the community that can be utilized in combating the problems mentioned?

   b.) What are the three most important problems facing the community?

These two questions can provide insight into community concerns and potential resources for the solution of these concerns.

In analysing the leadership list it is important to not only find individuals that are mentioned frequently as leaders, but also people who seem to be mentioned frequently by diverse elements within the community.

While the process works best on a community-wide basis, it can also work effectively on a local neighborhood basis. By identifying community segments in a local neighborhood and using the same procedures, neighborhood leaders can be identified. Because homes within an elementary school boundary often do not form a natural community, community leadership does not always fall within the boundaries of the elementary school. Provisions for the inclusion of community representatives from outside the elementary school boundaries must be made. The process described established leadership in a community. The inclusion of interested individuals not selected as leaders is also important. The process suggested, when used at a neighborhood level, will provide the names of leaders in the community. Many leaders will not be pinpointed and provision should be made for their inclusion in any determination of leaders. It is at this point that the community school
director must rely upon his intuition and knowledge of his service area. If he has been working with a block club, a P.T.A., a merchant's group, etc., and knows that there are individuals within the groups that are leaders, they should be included in a leadership listing, regardless of whether or not their names are specifically mentioned in a study. What we are recognizing here is the value of a systematic community study, but also recognizing the limitations that exist. No community study techniques presently exist that are completely accurate and inclusive.

Once data has been collected, on either a community-wide or neighborhood basis, a priority list of community leadership can be established that incorporates the various leaders of different community elements within the priority structure. Establishing who the leaders in a community are provides the basis for establishing the problem-solving process for the community - the community council.

Establishing a Community Council

It seems evident at this juncture that the establishment of an effective community council should be based upon the priority listing of community leaders that results from the community leadership study. Establishing a council of 15-25 people based upon the pre-established leadership listing of the community provides a microcosm of community thinking and an opportunity for extensive two-way communication with the entire community. Obtaining individual leaders consent, then, is essential. This is often difficult because school committees have frequently been misused in the past and a few citizens are willing to expend time and effort with committees they consider meaningless, whose function is not clear, and whose conclusions and suggestions are often ignored. The purposes of the community council, then, must be carefully determined prior to asking any individual to serve. The educational system must also analyze its own motives for establishing a community council, honestly answering whether or not their purpose in establishing a community council is for honest communication and feedback or for support of educational programs that are endorsed by the existing administration. It is important to ascribe a clear and concise role to any citizen's group at its inception and to assure that group that the time spent will be on important community and educational issues and problems. Let us look at existing concepts of a community council for a moment and define what it is, or should be,
and what it is not.

Many community councils are misused and, in fact, misnamed. They are often composed of a group of people chosen arbitrarily with little forethought as to total group composition or purpose. The members are called together occasionally, often to discuss rather meaningless aspects of the Community Education program. The statement is frequently made, for example, that the community should assist in planning the program that is provided for the community. In response to this, the community school director establishes a citizen's group to vote on the course offerings that will be presented the following semester. We maintain that this is not an appropriate use of a community council and is, in fact, a misuse of it. It is really an attempt to maintain minimal community involvement - involvement at a safe level - so that the community school director or the educational system can establish the real priorities and make the major decisions.

Community councils made up of true representatives of the community can be of invaluable assistance in establishing educational purposes, providing an awareness of community problems and concerns, and assisting in establishing the basis for programs that might solve some of these problems. A community council should be issue-based, rather than program-oriented. It should assist the educator in clearly understanding community thinking and concerns. It should be a communication bridge between the many diverse and opposing groups in a community, assuring two-way communication between school and community.

Good community councils incorporate several concepts:
1.) Adequate representation from all segments of the community. Any decision-making process should incorporate the thinking of the community in it, regardless of the time and effort required to assure this.
2.) An opportunity for the community, through its representatives, to present its concerns and criticisms to educators in an open and positive setting.
3.) An opportunity for an interchange of ideas. When community problems are presented to the educator for consideration by the educational establishment, an opportunity should be provided the educator to present his concerns to community leaders for feedback into the entire community. The council should assure a process of give and take; an opportunity for discussion of issues and points
of view.

4.) Establishment and support of strong community leadership. This is an essential part of community growth and should be encouraged whenever possible. Community councils should greatly strengthen and encourage existing informal leadership by providing opportunities to accept leadership responsibilities.

5.) Positive and cooperative efforts between existing public and private agencies designed to serve the public interest. These should be considered an essential product of any good community council's efforts. As councils become involved in discussions of community problems and concerns, much of the discussion will extend into areas of concern outside of the responsibilities of education. This presents an excellent opportunity for involving other community agencies on the solution of problems of mutual concern.

It appears there is very little relationship between these five general concepts and many of the existing councils. The five principles established here seem to indicate that community councils must become problem-solving groups. Councils provide the opportunity to combine the thinking of educational and community leaders, and direct it toward solving important community problems.

The authors believe that there are specific sequential steps that a community council should take in attempting to become a meaningful problem-solving group.

First, some agreement must be reached concerning which problems facing the community are the most crucial. This can only be done through extensive discussion and debate. One the problems have been established, they should be listed by priority - the most important problems first. This again takes extensive discussion. It is important to recognize that the very nature of a representative council will dictate a great deal of conflict within the group during these initial stages. All of the conflicting interests and goals of the community have been compressed into one small group called a community council.

Once problems have been determined and assigned priorities, the next question becomes that of determining the best way to attack them. This can be done by taking each problem that has been identified and agreed upon and dissecting it into smaller parts, attempting to discover
major causes for each problem. Once these causes are established, the group should then attempt to determine general objectives that should be accomplished by any program designed to solve the problem. Some objectives might be established that will require total elimination of the problem, others that might require a greater understanding between people, and still others that attempt to merely begin to attack the problem. Establishing objectives, whatever they are, establishes the general direction that must be taken by any program that is designed to solve a given problem.

Once problems have been determined and objectives established, the actual problem-solving process can begin. The next step obviously becomes that of asking what can be done. The resources of the entire community should be considered when answering this question, not just those of the education system. Initiation of this stage is best handled through several brain-storming sessions. The group should be encouraged to verbalize as many ideas as possible, attempting to obtain a variety of different suggestions for solving or viewing the specific problem being discussed. Once this has been done, the group should expand upon the variety of ideas presented, weighing the potential advantages of each suggestion against other suggestions, discussing possible outcomes resulting from each approach, and determining relationships between the approach suggested and the pre-established objectives that the group wanted to reach. This process will ultimately result in some rather specific means of dealing with specific community problems.

Solutions will usually require the combined efforts of many agencies, community groups, and the schools. Once this point is reached, it becomes the community educator's task to work through the council and establish a means of responding to the suggested solutions. This action phase may be assigned to any members of the committee or the director himself, depending upon the nature of the action and the person or group most appropriate to respond. Because a variety of agencies have usually been incorporated into plans for solving problems an ideal opportunity is presented for getting different community agencies together to establish cooperative programs. If there is a limitation in funding (and there usually is) the problems at the top of the priority list should obviously receive the greatest amount of available resources. By combining the resources of many agencies, you are assured of utilizing available
resources to the greatest advantage.

As decisions are made and council suggestions implemented, periodic reports should be made to the council reporting on any progress that has been made and any problems faced in following through on their recommendations. This gives the council an opportunity to react to stay abreast of the implementation of their suggestion. It also assures a knowledgeable group that understand what cannot be done if there is inadequate funding and insufficient community support.

Once programs are in operation, the group should begin evaluating their effectiveness in terms of the stated initial objectives. As the evaluation continues and the program grows and develops, new problem priorities establish themselves and new program objectives become important. The entire process begins again. With each complete cycle, the community educator can expect greater community input into and involvement in the total Community Education program. This results in Community Education that truly meets the problems and needs of the community - as the members of the community themselves perceive their problems and needs.