A STUDY OF CERTAIN ORGANIZED LAY GROUPS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN MONTANA

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Education degree
in the Department of Education
Montana State College
May 30, 1964

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ABSTRACT

A number of cases have appeared recently, questioning the quality of instruction in our public school systems. Most of these so called cases have been in reference to curriculum changes being made by the schools, thus a study of this nature has been prepared by this author dealing with the topic, "Organized Lay Groups and Their Influence on Public School Curriculum in Montana".

Purpose: To find out which lay groups, and to what extent, they are influencing curriculum revision in the state. A number of other questions are answered also pertaining to this study, such as: are individuals more influencial than lay groups, what courses in the curriculum are most often affected, and at what level, primary or secondary, are these groups most active?

Method: A questionnaire was submitted to school superintendents of public schools throughout the state in an effort to evaluate the problem. The administrators were chosen, as they appear to be in the best situation to view the problem as it exists in the school system.

Discussion: Out of 168 questionnaires mailed, 132 were returned giving an 80% completion. Chi-square was run on the first five questions and all but one (no. 5) were deamed significant at the .001% level. The remainder of the questions were rated according to a percentage scale.

Summary: The results from the questionnaire indicate that 82% of the administrators felt lay groups were not a problem in their school, in fact they stressed that individuals do more harm than the so called special interest group.

It was noted, however, that about 72% of the school systems returning the questionnaire did make a number of major curricular changes in the last five years. These changes existed primarily in the fields of math, science, and English, which accounted for about 70% of the total.

The outstanding influences were reputable surveys of the field (Conants report), and accrediting associations, with parents and colleges the least influential.

Community lay groups, particularly the P.T.A. was judged the most controversial of organizations, with lesser amounts due the American Legion, and Church factions. Interesting enough, the P.T.A. was considered as being the most consistent by the other group in that they tended to give the greatest support to curriculum planning and decisions, by the superintendent.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1957, James Conant undertook a curriculum study of American high school systems. In his report, which gained national acclaim, he concluded, "That the general school curriculum was inefficient and outmoded in preparation of todays student."[1] His over-whelming influence has guided a large number of high schools to modify or revise their curriculum according to his recommendations.

It is not unusual for groups to formulate opinions which encompass the curriculum. In fact, there is an ever growing awareness that special interests are working for changes to be integrated into school programs.[2] Methods of presentation, emphasizing certain subscribed materials, and denial of other curricula areas tend to be the most often questioned points. The general education pattern which has been adhered to for a number of years, has now become an open and serious topic for consideration.

Thus, it is the intention of this writer to discover to what extent groups are influencing the curriculum of the

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[1]Conant, James B., The American High School Today, McGraw-Hill Co., New York, 1959, p. 145.

[2]Douglass, H. R., The High School Curriculum, Ronald Press, New York, 1956, p. 556.

school. A desire for further understanding about this problem has led to the selection of this topic for investigation.

Statement of the Problem

A large number of individuals and organizations have shown an interest in what the content of the school curriculum should cover, particularly in cases where controversial issues are involved. The teacher may have difficulty selecting certain details of the curricular content when a number of individuals or lay groups influence the structure. Thus, the question arises, "How and to what extent are certain lay groups and individuals influencing the public school curriculum?"

This writer is primarily interested in reporting conclusions from the academic or classwork area of the school curriculum. This involves opinions and ideas gained from the questionnaire on the content changes and use of the course of study, as it applies in a school situation associated with lay group factions.

Procedure

A check list was prepared and submitted to a panel of experts, composed of Dr. H. deBruin and Dr. John Picton, for their consideration. Having been accepted as measuring what it was intended to measure, it was judged valid and mailed to school superintendents of public schools throughout Montana. The high school administrators were chosen for a study of

this type, as they are no doubt in the best position to substantiate the information asked for on the questionnaire.

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by the "test-retest" method, where a shortened version of the first was administered to ten superintendents approximately two weeks after receiving the first form. A consistency was noted in that the two forms tended to give similar statistical results, thus establishing the reliability of the questionnaire.

The check list was tabulated, the information being placed in twelve tables, and conclusions were drawn in an attempt to summarize the topic under investigation.

Limitations

The study is limited in the following specific ways: Only public school administrators were questioned on the probability that they face this problem more or as much as any other group. Interest in particular problems of this area, limited the questionnaire to the state of Montana. The check on reliability was limited to ten randomly chosen administrators, which was deemed sufficient forstatistical purposes.

Definition of Terms

The word curriculum should be more fully understood in that it is a sequence of potential experiences set up in the school for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in

group ways of thinking and acting. It is also frequently said that it is a reflection of what the people think, feel, believe, and do.[3]

The word administrator will be interpreted in this study as refering to the school superintendent of public school systems.

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[3]Smith, O. B., Stanley, William, and Shores, Harlan, Fundamentals of Curriculum Development, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., New York, 1957, p. 3.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Increasingly, in recent years, most governmental and public agencies have been subjected to accelerating pressure from groups with special interests in mind. Public schools and public school teachers have been subjected to these pressures as much as, if not more than, the average public agency. Agencies that wield an influence upon the curriculum are so numerous that only the major groups will be considered in this study.

Smith, Stanley, and Shores make note that:

> Nowadays an individual is a member of one or more organizations such as labor unions, chamber of commerce, manufacturers' association, farm bureau, business or professional organizations, etc. If one wants to attain some social, economic, or political objectives, he works through these organizations. Seldom does he depend chiefly upon the sentiments of a local community to bring about the action he desires.[1]

Jim Wilde, in his article, "Pressure Groups and Public Education" defines pressure groups in the following ways:

> As any organized association that tries to influence elections and the legislature by rejecting

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[1]Smith, O.B., Stanley, William, and Shores, Harlan, Fundamentals of Curriculum Development, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1957, p. 34.

> or endorsing candidates by conducting systematic educational or propaganda campaigns among the public to promote or to propose matters of public policy.
>
> One of the means by which people participate in a democratic government.
>
> Organizations by which social power is translated into political power.
>
> Shared attitude groups that make certain claims upon other groups in the society.[2]

A group has power when it has the capacity to make its interests felt as an impact in community decision making.

Of special interest is an article by Dan Dodson, where he claims "the school system is the handmaiden of the power group of the community."[3] Certain persons in a community have more influence than others, which has been confirmed many times by sociological investigations. Dodson, indicates:

> That there were about thirty men at the top of the pinnacle of power in the average community, of which the superintendent was not one of them. They called the tune to which the community danced. This handful of influential people seem to be willingly accorded their position of influence by their fellow citizens.[4]

Ken Erickson in his report, "Pressures Affect the High School Curriculum", claims the problem arose when a pride

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[2]Wilde, Jim, "Pressure Groups and Public Education," The High School Journal, Dec., 1961, Vol., 45, 3, p. 119.

[3]Dodson, Dan, "Power As A Dimension of Education," Journal of Education Society, 1961, Vol., 35, 5, p. 204.

[4]Ibid., p. 204.

wounded United States needed a space-race escape-goat, thus education was elected as whipping boys responsible for the nations ills. Consequently many Americans clamored for a selective school program to train intellectually capable students.[5]

The pressure group is not always subversive nor is it undemocratic. They represent people and people represent the public. Interest groups operate against any agency for the purpose of accomplishing its will or its way of thinking on the group.[6]

Jim Wilde gives credit to special interest groups when he states:

> Interest groups serve a valuable aid to the formulation of policy by giving technical advice, serving as consultants in specialized areas, and by conveying how certain people feel about a certain problem. They also act in such a manner that it allows the educator to feel the public pulse and determine what the people want.[7]

The so called "informal power struggle" is well known in most communities. Progress of truly significant proportions

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[5]Erickson, Ken, "Pressures Affect The High School Curriculum," Educational Leadership, February, 1959, Vol. 16, 5, p. 279.

[6]Wilde, op. cit., p. 120.

[7]Ibid., p. 120.

has never been made without the approval and support of those whose influence is decisive in the community.[8]

A dominant power group in a community moves through integrative procedures and conflict that may develop. Reference by Dodson indicates that, "you can not have freedom and not differences," thus groups tend to form around them and some conflict may insue.[9] The problem was further discussed in that:

> Youth learn more from what the pitch of power is in the community than they do from schools, when it comes to citizenry. The climate of the community out educates the educators.[10]

Considering the pressure group: should the administrator ignore it, yield to it, expose it, or positively identify with it? In an article written by Jensen, titled, "Power Struggles in Educational Systems," it is possible to identify and discuss several kinds of organizational decision making conditions which create authority and power struggles.[11]

> Those in which decision-making is nonpublic or nonvisible to the person directly affected by the decision, tend to make people "suspicious and non-communicative."

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[8]Dykes, Archie, "Influencing The Power Elite," Educational Digest, October, 1963, Vol. 29, 2, pp. 28-29.

[9]Dodson, op. cit., p. 208.

[10]Ibid., p. 208.

[11]Jensen, Gale, "Power Struggles in Educational Systems," Education Digest, January, 1963, Vol. 28, 5, pp. 12-14.

> Bad decision-making for goal settings, planning, and resource allocation for the educational system, when external social and economic conditions are changing drastically.
>
> Persons who use organizational resources as patronage to build personal power, and for jobs holding a good deal of authority.
>
> Conditions which produce struggles, with differences between personnel, with respect to values and objectives of the educational system.
>
> When outside organizations which supplies resources or holds police power, continually demands an accounting of organizational activity.
>
> When persons in authority fail to exercise their authority to obtain decisions needed by the educational system.[12]

Dodson describes the methods used by pressure groups, as to apply as much pressure against the agent which must make the decision, using any available means of communication, education, or propaganda. It may be open and above board; in the form of paid advertising, protest meetings, letters, phone calls, and delegations. It may also be in more subtle ways; in the form of boycotts, bribery, or threats. Finally, the silent pressure type, which is the attitude of being non-committal or independent.[13]

In the article by Benton, Kravetz, Saiki, and Temple, they define "power politics" as those forces within a

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[12] Ibid., p. 13-14.

[13] Dodson, op. cit., p. 210.

community which exert pressure on educators as teachers, and as private citizens.[14]

It was discussed that we need not fear when minority opinions and dissenters stimulate or inspire constructive activity in the improvement of the general welfare, however, there must be alertness and concern for social pressures which tend to limit discussion or channel observation along narrow, dogmatic lines, toward predetermined answers.[15]

Pressure within the social system has been with us since the days of Athens when the forces of power politics caused Socrates to drink poison, states Jensen.[16]

It is recognized, says Dodson, that:

> The organized groups and the minority groups will be heard constantly, but the group that is seldom heard is the one that may really decide the policy of the school.
>
> The problem of these groups facing public education is not the real problem, but how to react to these groups, what attitudes to take, and how to weigh the arguments.[17]

Harl Douglass, in the book titled The High School Curriculum, lists the following methods used by

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[14]Benton, G., Krauetz, E., Saiki, J., and Temple, A., "Power Politics and The Teacher," Education Digest, December, 1957, Vol. 23, 4, p. 5.

[15]Ibid., p. 6.

[16]Ibid., p. 8.

[17]Dodson, op. cit., p. 206.

pressure groups as avenues of shaping opinions and determining the nature and amount of information possessed by citizens and future citizens of our country:

> Personal representation to administrators and the board of education.
> Circulation of unfavorable rumors, true or false, about teachers or administrators.
> Locate and encouraging disgruntled teachers and capitalize on dissatisfactions, fears, and incompetencies of the system.
> Capitalize on the desires of large taxpayers to create dissatisfaction with the school.
> Insistence on more attention on certain subject areas.
> Cultivating key teachers and administrators socially through golf, bridge, and other clubs, to gain influence in the school situation.
> Incorporation of instructional materials favorable to the interests of pressure groups.
> Circulation of pamphlets attacking the school or their programs.
> Holding meetings at which attacks are made upon the schools or their programs.[19]

Benton, Kravetz, Saiki, and Temple list several methods used to intimidate the school setting:

> Attack on teachers, in regard to subversive activities by over zealous patriots who take advantage of present situations.
> Individuals who seek to use, by means of propaganda, the use of schools for their own advantage.
> Pressure which results in voluntary censorship or introduction of modern methods, which cause teachers to play it safe, rather than sacrifice or risk conflict with the community.

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[19] Ibid., pp. 150-151.

Objection to loyalty oaths which causes undo insecurity and concern on the part of the teacher.[20]

Special interest groups are catagorized by Miller into: political, vocational, patriotic, racial, religious, and social-recreational areas.[21] Wilde, classifies them into five general areas; of relious, commercial, private individuals, political, and social organizations.[22] Breslow and others list three general areas; forces generated by special-interest pressure groups, forces arising out of general social and technological trends, and forces generated by new insights from the scholarly field.[23]

Recently in his book, The American High School Today, James B. Conant gave Americans some constructive recommendations on school organization, while at the same time criticized the psuedo-educational authorities.[24] One such "authority", Admiral Rickover, favors copying the European educational system, claims Erickson in his report.[25]

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[20]Burton, Kravetz, Saiki, and Temple, op. cit., p. 8.

[21]Miller, Van, "Educators and The Influentials," Overview, July, 1960, Vol. 1, 7, pp. 42-43.

[22]Wilde, op. cit., p. 120.

[23]Breslow, Alice, Disque, Jerome, Sausford, Gunnar, Smith, Robert, Soles, Stanley, Whilelms, Fred, and Zahorsky, Mary, "Forces Influencing Curriculum", Review of Educational Research, June, 1960, Vol. 30, 3, p. 199.

[24]Conant, op. cit., p. 140.

[25]Erickson, op. cit., p. 279.

American colleges many times specify courses necessary for college admission, thus forcing continuation of the same public school curriculum. Wiles lists three methods where by colleges exert an influence on the public school curriculum:

> College education provided the teachers, in that they develop subject matter areas around which is devoted a continued study in that department.
> Forcing continuation of the same type of curriculum (freezing) for college entrance.
> Developing a prestige tract in high schools where too many of the students tend to enroll, regardless of their ability.[26]

The "halo" of prestige over the scientist, placed there by the congress of the U.S., in the form of the National Defense Education Act, places the federal government in a position to influence school curriculum.

The N. D. E. A., as expressed by Erickson, "encourages a curriculum in line with national emergencies,"[27] Teachers returning from summer institutes financed by the federal government speak with a new found confidence on what changes should be made to "improve" the curriculum.[28] Foundation grants of "improved courses" cause many schools to make changes in their curriculum to meet the so called "new standards."[29]

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[26]Wiles, Kimball, The Changing Curriculum of the American High School, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood, N. J., 1963.

[27]Erickson, op. cit., p. 280.

[28]Hostford, Philip, "Pressure is Energy", Educational Leadership, May, 1963, Vol. 20, 8, p. 496.

Federal support for vocational education has hindered curriculum improvement by having federal control through higher pay for those teachers under the program, causing tension and resentment between teachers.[30]

Federal "youth for fitness" drives may alter the high school as well as the elementary physical education program. It remains to be seen what effect it has had in many areas.[31]

Federal assistance on educational television places pressure on the rest of the curriculum to make some changes or it may cause the release of teachers from some positions.[32]

The authority for regulating both the context and the conduct of public education in the U.S. resides in the state legislature. The agency of the legislature for controlling and operating the public schools in a state are the school boards. Thus, the state legislature and its subordinate, the state department of education, can have almost iron-clad control of the curriculum.[33] The information is explained in the following statements:

> Curriculum is "strait jacked" with the number of minutes per subject stipulation.[34]

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[30] Wiles, op. cit., p. 43.

[31] Hostford, op. cit., p. 50.

[32] Ibid., p. 49.

[33] Erickson, op. cit., p. 281.

[34] Ibid., p. 282.

> Requiring study in such minor areas of safety, alcohol, conservation, or religion.[35]
>
> Designating given days for student activities such as Arbor Day, U.N. Day, etc.[36]
>
> State wide testing programs cause teachers to teach toward test.[37]
>
> Curtailed financial legislation can inflict severe restrictions on curriculum.[38]

Local school officials may hinder curriculum improvement through a number of methods, as listed by Douglass:

> School boards not appropriating funds to carry on research and inservice training.
> "Halo" effect of what was good for the school board members is good for the student of today.
> Unusual heavy teaching loads and insufficient hiring of staff.
> Teachers lack of confidence in the administration or board members.
> Lack of communication among teachers, administrators, and board members.
> Lack of cooperation in the system through suspicion, poor training, and little enthusiasm.[39]

Conant has expressed the thought, that school boards should not make any curriculum decisions except insofar as they affect the budget.[40]

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[35] Ibid., p. 280.

[36] Ibid., p. 280.

[37] Wiles, op. cit., p. 60.

[38] Thatcher, Fred, "School Boards and Curriculum Decisions", Education Leadership, Oct., 1961, Vol. 19, 1, p. 16.

[39] Wiles, op. cit., p. 70.

[40] Conant, op. cit., p. 35.

School board members are lay persons and generally not technically trained in educational theory and procedure, thus their policy should be to hold the administration and staff responsible for curriculum changes, studies and research. However, the school board is held legally responsible for the actions or omissions of its agents.[41]

Accrediting agencies tend to perpetuate the status quo by meeting out certain standards, however a number are now encouraging experimentation by establishing a continuous improvement program in high schools.[42]

Book publishers tend to push old standards beyond their days and thus tend to "freeze" the curriculum, in many instances.[43]

The impact of power politics on teachers, where there have been attacks regarding subversive activities, has lead to voluntary censorship in the discussion of controversial issues.[44] Elements of the right wing plunge into the field of textbook analysis and seek to tell the schools what textbooks not to use. These groups look and find sentences in

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[41]Thatcher, op. cit., p. 17.

[42]Wiles, op. cit., p. 30.

[43]Erickson, op. cit., p. 281.

[44]Skaife, Robert, "Neo-conservatives Are On the March With "Sound Education" As a Battle Cry," Education Leadership, May, 1957, Vol. 59, 5, p. 55.

books which are offensive to them or subversively written, and point out to all who will listen.[45]

Many times influences have a healthy affect in speeding up curricular changes, but in other cases the demand is for a return to practices which the schools have legitimately abandoned.[46]

Laymen representing special interest groups should participate in an end object of good schools and good instruction in ways approved by school boards and administrators. "The laymens role is only advisory," says Thatcher in his report.[47]

Useful career assistance was suggested in an article by Hanes, called, "Outside Influences." He recommended that:

> Members of civic clubs can give information in their individual areas of interest, and be of useful assistance.
>
> Local organizations can arrange tours through their businesses.
>
> Teachers become acquainted with numerous unaffiliated subject matter groups and send for their material.
>
> Teachers should be involved in curriculum planning through workshops and classroom research.
>
> Sponsored teaching materials are available nationally and should be carefully examined for class use.
>
> Scholarships, fellowships, and research grants are made available to those who qualify.

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[45]Hosford, op. cit., p. 497.

[46]Skaife, op. cit., p. 55.

[47]Thatcher, op. cit., p. 18.

> The positive approach should be made through self-study and evaluation, sound counseling, and realistic class sectioning.[48]

Douglass listed several safe-guards from pressure groups that help maintain freedom of teaching:

> An unbreakable courage on the part of the teacher.
> School administrators that will defend their systems and teachers to the professional limit.
> Security of tenure.[49]

In conclusion, Dykes review several steps which will minimize the effect of pressure groups in an average school system. They are to:

> Identify community leaders outside the formal institutions and agencies of local government, and get to know them well.
> Educate the informal leaders to the needs of the school and local educational program.
> Be the community's educational leader through professional competence and dedication to the program.[50]

Chandler claims:

> It is naive and dangerous to assume that intuition of people, or their need for education

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[48]Hanes, Robert, "Outside Influences," Educational Leadership, May, 1963, Vol. 20, 8, pp. 512-515.

[49]Douglass, op. cit., p. 150.

[50]Dykes, op. cit., p. 28.

> will motivate them to support good schools or to make wise decisions about their schools.[51]

Summary

We may conclude, by saying that the curriculum must be the best possible selection and arrangement of stimuli to experience which will result in maximum growth toward that kind of individual who will function to the best of his ability. In the organization and revision of the curriculum, the general objectives of education must be kept in mind, and balance must be maintained so that growth will be stimulated toward all objectives and not toward just specific areas.

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[51] Chandler, B.J., "The School Administration and The Power Struggle," American School Board Journal, June, 1958, Vol. 136, 6, p. 29.

CHAPTER III

IMPLICATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS REVEALED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 168 questionnaires were sent to Montana school administrators and 132 were returned, which gives an 80% return.

For the sake of clarity, the facts will be presented in a number of tables. Also, each table will be accompanied by an explanation and interpretation. The questionnaire used will be found in its entirety in Appendix B.

In the first table to be presented in this chapter, information will be given representing views of school administrators on lay groups influence on curriculum.

TABLE I. ADMINISTRATORS VIEWS AS TO ORGANIZED LAY GROUPS BRINGING TO THEIR ATTENTION CURRICULUM REVISION.

	Number	Answer	Percent
	19	Yes	14.4%
	109	No	82.57
	4	Uncommitted	.03
Totals	132		97.00

This question was judged statistically significant by chi-square at the .001% level. It is evident that little pressure is being brought to bare on the public schools by organized lay groups in Montana as administrators view the point.

With the appearance that lay groups do not cause a great deal of concern, it is interesting to note if the administrator feels that overall lay groups do more good than harm, or are indifferent to them. Table II gives these results.

TABLE II. ADMINISTRATORS THOUGHTS ON LAY GROUPS DOING MORE GOOD THAN HARM.

	Number	Answer	Percent
	23	Yes	17.4
	39	No	29.5
	70	Uncommitted	53.0
Totals	132		99.9

By chi-square it was found that the question is statistically significant at the .001% level. The table reveals that the administrators appeared to be indifferent or did not care to comment or commit themselves to any degree on this topic. Of those that did answer the question, almost half agreed that they probably did do more harm than good, however, there is rather inconclusive evidence to indicate this.

To compare the results between lay groups and individuals questioning curriculum development, Table III was prepared to give the necessary information.

TABLE III. ADMINISTRATORS FEELINGS IN INDIVIDUALS BEING MORE ACTIVE IN QUESTIONING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS THAN LAY GROUPS.

Number	Answer	Percent
114	Yes	86.3
10	No	7.3
8	Uncommitted	6.2
Totals 132		99.8

The question was found to be statistically significant by chi-square at the .001% level. It is quite evident by an overwhelming majority that administrators felt that individuals were much more active than lay groups in questioning curriculum revision in schools. Thus, it is more or less unlikely that these socalled lay groups have any influence in curriculum changes, construction, or policy decisions.

Looking into the past we can see some rather interesting inovations that have been made. Table IV presents the figures to show what percent of the schools have made some changes.

TABLE IV. NUMBER OF SCHOOLS MAKING CURRICULUM CHANGES IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Number	Answer	Percent
96	Yes	72.7
22	No	16.7
14	Uncommitted	10.6
Totals 132		99.8

This question has been proven statistically by chi-square to be significant at the .001% level. It can be seen that nearly three-fourths of the administrators returning the questionnaire have made curriculum changes in the last five years (1959-1964). A rather small percentage of schools have not made changes at all, undoubtedly due to factors of location, size, and financial obligations. Thus, curriculum changes are indicated in a little over four out of five Montana schools.

The actual curricular changes made are listed in the next table. They are broken down into elementary and secondary areas with ten changes being made in the former and seventeen being made in the latter. Table V was prepared to show in what areas there had been changes and to what degree or extent they have been made.

In comparison, the first four curricular changes (math, science, English, and social studies) were in order of importance in both primary and secondary areas. There was a higher percentage of math changes being made in both secondary and primary than in any other subject by a considerable amount. The table also shows that there was a greater number of changes overall in the secondary level than in the elementary area, by about twenty. There appears to be some experimentation at the secondary level with quite a number of minor courses geing added and dropped as the need occurred. It would be difficult to predict what effect pressure groups

may have had in most cases. However, it is possible that the great number of changes in math may be a direct affect of the scientific space-age drive for more appropriate mathematics.

TABLE V. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM CHANGES IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Subject	Number of Changes		Percent	
	Elem.	Sec.	Elem.	Sec.
Math	82	70	43.3	34.64
Science	43	46	22.7	22.77
English	21	28	11.1	13.86
Social Studies	17	24	8.1	11.37
Foreign Language	3	17	1.5	8.41
Spelling	4	1	2.1	.50
Reading	15		7.3	
Art	3		1.5	
P.E.	1		.5	
Typing	1		.5	
Shop		5		2.47
Vo-Ag.		2		.99
Voc. Training		2		.99
Guidance		1		.50
Music		1		.50
Speech		1		.50
Political Science		1		.50
Home Economics		1		.50
Literature		1		.50
Distributive Ed.		1		.50
Drivers Training		1		.50
Totals	189	203	98.6	100.00

Is the greater proportion of curricular changes over with? It appears not, as shown by Table VI, which indicates the percentage of changes upcoming in the next school year.

It was found that there was no significant difference than what would be expected by chance alone, thus the results mean very little. However, it is interesting to note that

there appears to be better than 50% of the schools in the state are going to make some curriculum changes in the coming year (1964).

TABLE VI. NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS CONTEMPLATING CURRICULAR CHANGES FOR THE COMING 1964-1965 SCHOOL TERM.

Number	Answer	Percent
69	Yes	52.2
59	No	42.4
7	Uncommitted	5.3
Totals 132		99.9

Some of the changes being contemplated for the coming year are shown in Table VII. This table shows both the secondary and primary levels and to what extent changes are being planned.

TABLE VII. LIST OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY CURRICULAR CHANGES CONTEMPLATED FOR THE 1964-1965 SCHOOL TERM.

Subject	Number of Changes		Percent	
	Elem.	Sec.	Elem.	Sec.
Math	25	12	40.32	20.0
English	9	10	14.51	16.6
Social Studies	9	9	14.51	15.0
Science	6	13	9.67	21.6
Reading	4		6.45	
Physical Education	3	1	4.83	1.6
Writing	2	1	3.38	1.6
Spelling	2		3.38	
Vocational Training	1	4	1.60	6.6
Foreign Language	1	2	1.60	3.3
Home Economics		3		5.0
Vocational Ag.		2		3.3
Psychology		2		3.3
Economics		1		1.6
Totals	62	61	100.00	99.86

It can be seen by comparison that this chart is similar in nature to the other in that the same four areas (math, English, social studies, and science) are at the top of the subjects being changed. Again, math in the elementary division far exceeds any other subject in either the elementary or secondary level. This chart again shows anumber of minor changes being made in lesser subject matter areas. It would be difficult to determine if lay groups would have had any influence in the change of the curricula from this chart. However, math appears to be of considerable interest to the school and to the country, in that it is probably being changed due to pressure of upgrading, in order to meet existing social needs.

There are a number of groups who do have some influence in establishing curriculum patterns in public high schools. These groups come from a wide variety of locations and represent a considerable number of views. These pressure groups are listed in Table VIII, along with the extent to which the school administrator believes they influence their decision.

The reputable survey of the field led accrediting agencies nearly two to one in influencing the administrator on curriculum revision decisions. There were a number of other areas which had some influence, particularly school boards, administration, staff, and book publishers. Local pressure appears to be slight in this instance.

TABLE VIII. ADMINISTRATORS VIEWS ON PRESSURE GROUPS WHICH HELPED INFLUENCE ANY CURRICULAR CHANGES MADE.

Area	Number	Percent
Reputable Survey of Field (Conant's Report)	71	36.59
Accrediting Association	34	17.52
School Boards	19	9.79
Book Publishers	15	7.73
School Administrator	14	7.21
School Staff & Guidance	16	8.24
Community Need	13	6.70
College Requirements	6	3.00
Parents & Students	6	3.00
Totals	194	99.86

The three general areas of the public school systems are affected to varying degrees by pressure groups and these are presented in Table IX on the following page.

This table indicates that in over one-half of the cases, when pressure was brought to bare on the school, it was for extra-curricular reasons. Vocational and academic areas make up another one-half, but it can be seen that there is only moderate influence being exerted in academic areas where curriculum changes are made, whereas the other areas may tend to feel the affect of lay groups.

Table X is a list of new programs that may have been incorporated to some extent in Montana schools. Oral-Aural is a new English program in the use of grammar. The School Math Study Group initiated an improved math program from the fourth grade through high school stressing concepts derived from math since 1800. The Physical Science Study Committee

presented a new program of physics stressing four areas: simple introduction, light, motion, and electricity. The Biological Science Curriculum Study has developed three versions, which are: the yellow-or traditional genetics and development, the green-or the ecological-evolution approach, the blue-or physiological-biochemistry approach. The Science Research Associates Reading program which attempts to build speed and comprehension into the skill of reading. Chemistry Bond is the use of logical connections among diverse chemical phenomena or the forces that operate between atoms and their molecules. Audio-linguistic is the system of language labs where each student is in direct contact through an electrical apparatus with the instructor, on an individual basis. Table X presents these programs in use.

TABLE IX. GENERAL AREAS OF THE SCHOOL PROGRAM AND THE AFFECT PRESSURE GROUPS HAD ON THEM.

Area	Number	Percent
Extra-curricular	96	51.61
Vocational	48	25.80
Academic	42	22.58
Uncommitted	12	
Totals	186	99.99

These programs are all new within the last five years, however, it is evident that about 30% of the total answering this question on the questionnaire do not have any of these new programs in existance at this time. This might indicate

that these programs are not suited in many schools, that many schools in Montana are beind the times, or that it would be rather costly to start programs of this nature in many systems. Whatever the reasons, there is little evidence to date to indicate that lay groups have an influence over these new programs of the modern school curriculum.

TABLE X. LIST OF NEW PROGRAMS INCORPORATED IN MONTANA SCHOOL SYSTEMS.

Program	Number	Percent
Oral-Aural	40	29.19
School Math Study Group (SMSG)	31	22.62
Physical Science Study Committee (PSSC)	19	13.86
Biological Science Curriculum Study (BSCS)	17	12.40
Science Research Associates Reading Program	16	11.67
Chemistry Bond	12	8.75
Audio-Linguistic	2	1.47
Uncommitted	59	
Totals	137	99.88

The new English program, Oral-Aural, and the math program, SMSG, lead the field of seven in making up a little over 50% of the total of new curriculum programs.

Table XI indicates the occupational areas which tend to show interest in curriculum as viewed by the school superintendents. There are five general areas which might tend to be of more interest than one would perhaps believe. This information is listed in the table on the next page along with its interpretation.

TABLE XI. GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL AREAS SHOWING INTEREST IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Area	Number	Percent
Farmer-Rancher	92	35.24
Professional	80	30.68
Skilled	53	20.24
Unskilled	23	8.81
Business	13	4.98
Uncommitted - 17		
Totals	261	100.01

This question may be somewhat influenced by the regional nature, where farmers and ranchers outnumber others in many areas. The top three in the chart are of about equal influence with no clear cut difference between them. A number of those answering the question failed to see any one area influencing the school curriculum more than another, thus they probably withheld their answer.

A study of this type would not be complete unless a table of special interest groups were given to explain what lay groups are functioning and to what extent. Thus Table XII gives the results of the information gained from the questionnaire.

Those organizations which appear most consistent in supporting school curriculum are the P.T.A. and civic organizations as viewed by administrators. About 50% of them agreed that these two probably shared the title as being the most help to the superintendent in formulating curriculum policy and revision.

TABLE XII. LIST OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS ADMINISTRATORS FELT MOST CONSISTENT AND LEAST CONSISTENT IN SUPPORTING SCHOOL CURRICULUM CHANGES.

Group	Number		Percent	
	Least	Most	Least	Most
Parent-Teacher Association	12	75	18.18	27.37
American Legion	13	29	19.69	10.58
Civic Organization	4	61	6.06	22.26
Church	10	39	15.15	14.23
Women's Clubs	8	39	12.12	13.50
Fraternal	9	25	13.63	9.12
Veterans of Foreign Wars	5	3	7.88	1.09
American Association of University Women		2		.73
Citizens Committee		2		.73
Farm Bureau	2		3.03	
John Birch Society	2		3.03	
Montana Taxpayers	1		1.51	
League of Women Voters		1		.36
Uncommitted - 49, 23				
Totals	66	274	100.28	99.97

The figures in the table show that there was probably no one organization which was least consistent in support of curriculum revisions. About five groups shared in being the least consistent. It is interesting to note that the P.T.A. was near the top in being consistent in one area while in another it was not consistent at all. This could place it as being one of the most controversial organizations on the school scene as far as curriculum could be concerned.

The administrator failed in 37% of the cases to answer the question on the least consistent, while about 17% would not commit themselves on the most consistent question. This may indicate by the absence to answer the questions that

their is more to the problem than has been exposed in this paper. It would certainly warrant more study in this area before any major conclusions could be agreed upon.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The review of literature, information derived from the questionnaire, and certain generalizations make it possible to briefly summarize this material.

Lay groups do exist, without question, but do they tend to do enough good to perhaps offset the number of instances where they have been harmful? After careful examination of the material we find that they are of help in many ways so it is difficult to assess how harmful they may really be.

Eighty percent of the administrators claim that lay pressure groups are of no concern to them in bringing about curriculum revision, whereas about 86% of them agree that individuals question curriculum more than lay groups. Yet it is interesting that 75% have made curriculum changes in the last five years and alittle over 50% contemplate changes in the coming year of 1965. It might appear that the administrator at first glance is not influenced by any group. However, it is evident by the number of changes made, that he has made his decision after something has occurred to convince him of its value.

It can be noted that reputable surveys in the field teamed with accrediting associations amounted to 53% of the

administrators claiming that these groups helped influence their curricular decisions in organizing several new programs in their school systems. These programs are in the major fields such as English, math, physics, biology, chemistry, reading, and language which encompasses both the secondary and elementary level.

Montana being the kind of country that it is comes under a rural atmosphere and therefore pressure groups are somewhat limited in scope to farmers and organizations supporting farmers. Local lay groups exist, however, and also probably account for the greatest proportion of general discord as far as curriculum revision is concerned. Their ranks are relatively few and the occasion for pressure being applied is rather inconsistent and of short duration, but it is definitely evident. Thus, it is difficult to determine their affectiveness in relation to the school situation in the state.

Conclusions

In drawing conclusions it might be well to note the trends that have been formulated due to a rising tide of pressure on the schools in many areas of the country. These implications affect the schools in a number of ways, but there can be little doubt that curriculum is the outcome.

1. There is an increasing awareness on the part of the general public of the key position the schools hold in the survival of the nation.

2. That there is an increasing amount of subject matter being taught in the schools, particularly in the elementary schools.

3. The growing awareness and concern for the potential drop-out.

4. The concern over different views on the purpose of education: education for knowledge versus education for life adjustment.

5. Moving allotments in the school away from the humanities and general culture in favor of more research, science, and mathematics.

6. Deeper, stronger, more realistic evaluation and formulation of the goals of education.

7. The increasing number of inconsistent people due to the increased pace of today's living. They argue for stronger unified local control, yet are eager in many cases to receive state and federal assistance.

Many of these statements apply to our own area, some more than others, but in general these are the major concerns of the general public over the schools. Our problem is not to disregard, criticize, or agree, but attempt to understand their intent and function and make the best possible adjustment to their presence.

Recommendations

One can predict that there will always be new and varied pressures to cope with in the future as there has been today and in the past. So a continued re-examination and evaluation of the current pressure groups is necessary to draw further conclusions. Thus, it would be advisable that

a continued study be done in this area periodically in an attempt to keep abreast of these groups and their intent.

Above all, the following suggested recommendations should be considered carefully:

1. School administrators should carry on an extensive public relations program in order that lay groups will have adequate knowledge of school organization and functions.

2. See that the necessary arrangements are made for lay people to help work and plan curriculum changes through citizens committee participation.

3. Plan school functions for local participation stressing the importance of the community and the advantages that can be gained.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

18 Jefferson Court
Bozeman, Montana
January 22, 1964

Dear Sir:

This form is being sent to you, an administrator, as part of a survey on "Organized Special Interest Groups and Their Effect on Curriculum Revision." You may have knowledge of this problem in your area. If so, would you kindly complete the enclosed questionnaire.

This study has three basic functions:

1. To determine differences in the attitudes of school administrators.
2. To discover which individuals or groups are involved.
3. To what degree do they have an interest in school curriculum.

The information I receive on this topic of investigation will be used in completing a research paper in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Education degree at Montana State College.

It is my belief that this problem can best be investigated through your assistance as school administrators. By completing the enclosed check list it will enable me to correlate certain facts necessary to draw conclusions for completion of the study. Your replies will be held in strict confidence.

Sincerely,

John Harris

lc

Enclosure

Please detach letter from questionnaire.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1

DIRECTIONS: Please answer every item as it applies in your school system. A check may be placed in the appropriate blank.

1. In your situation, are you confronted with organized lay groups bringing to your attention, aspects of curriculum revision?
   Yes_____ No_____

2. Do you find these groups do more <u>good</u> than harm in curriculum planning?
   Yes_____ No_____

3. Are individuals <u>more</u> active in questioning curriculum development than lay groups?
   Yes_____ No_____

4. Have you made any <u>major</u> curriculum revisions in the last five years?
   Yes_____ No_____

5. If so, in what areas?
   (a) Elementary
   Math_____
   Social Studies_____
   Science_____
   English_____
   Others (specify)_____

   (b) Secondary
   Math_____
   Social Studies_____
   Science_____
   English_____
   Others (Specify)_____

6. Are you contemplating any curriculum changes for the coming year?
   Yes_____ No_____

   If so, in what areas?
   (a) Elementary (please list)

   _____

   _____

   (b) Secondary (Please list)

   _____

   _____

Part II

DIRECTIONS: Place checks in the blanks which most apply in your situation.

1. If curriculum changes were made in your school, what influenced your decision? (a) Reputable survey in the field___ (b) Parents___ (c) Book Publishers___ (d) School Board___ (e) Accrediting Association___ (f) Others _____.

2. Which general areas are affected most by outside influences? (Check two) (a) Academic___ (b) Vocational___ (c) Extra-curricular___.

3. Check any of the following new programs which have been incorporated into your curriculum. (a) B.S.C.S.___ (b) S.M.S.G.___ (c) P.S.S.C.___ (d) Chem. Bond___ (e) Oral-Aural Lang.___ (f) Others_____.

4. Check <u>three</u> of the following occupational areas which have shown the greatest interest in school curriculum. (a) Unskilled Laboring Class___ (b) Farmers and Ranchers___ (c) Skilled Laboring Class___ (d) Professional Groups___ (e) Others (please list)_____

5. Check <u>three</u> of the following lay groups which are most consistent in supporting school curriculum policy. <u>Encircle</u> the one you feel is <u>least</u> consistent. (a) P.T.A.___ (b) V.F.W.___ (c) American Legion___ (d) Church___ (e) Fraternal Groups___ (f) Womens Clubs___ (g) Civic Groups___ (h) Others (Please list or specify)
_____.

Any comments or criticisms you wish to make on the bottom of this check list will be greatly appreciated.

Place the completed questionnaire in the stamped envelope and return as quickly as possible.

Thank you.