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Signature Glen Alan Thomas

Date July 30, 1970

PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER ORIENTATION PROGRAMS IN THIRTY-FOUR MONTANA SCHOOL SYSTEMS

by

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ABSTRACT

In most school systems, programs of teacher orientation are held prior to the opening of each school year. This study was conducted: (1) to survey pre-school teacher orientation programs in various Montana school systems, (2) to enable the researcher to comment on teacher orientation programs in terms of effectiveness, and (3) to gather information and data which might be useful to school administrators in planning, organizing, and presenting teacher orientation programs.

Responses to questionnaires concerning all phases of pre-school teacher orientation programs were received from thirty-four of thirty-nine superintendents of school systems selected for the study. Information obtained pertained to philosophies, structural patterns, numerical data, and program activities of the orientation programs of the selected districts. A study conducted by the Helena school system concerning teacher reaction to the orientation program was also utilized by the researcher. Additional teacher information was obtained from a researcher-devised questionnaire regarding orientation completed by twenty-five Helena teachers. Results were tabulated, and trends were discerned throughout the study.

The researcher found that: (1) there was wide variance in teacher orientation practices in Montana, (2) there was a trend for longer teacher orientation programs in Montana, (3) there was question as to whether or not new and returning teachers should participate the same number of days in the program, (4) a variety of activities were utilized in the various programs of the thirty-four districts, (5) teachers view orientation somewhat differently than do administrators, and (6) teachers want time spent in the orientation program to be worthwhile and effectual.

In light of the information gathered and the views of the researcher, the following recommendations or observations were made concerning teacher orientation programs: (1) The teacher orientation program should be considered by administrators as possibly the most important single event of the school year. (2) Teachers can and should help in the planning of the teacher orientation program. (3) Pre-school teacher orientation programs need to be reviewed, re-evaluated, revised, and up-dated every year. (4) New teachers in a school system need special consideration and preparation during the orientation program. (5) More study is needed on the subject of teacher orientation in Montana.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Each fall thousands of recent college graduates enter the teaching profession. In addition, thousands of experienced teachers move to different schools or school systems. Both groups of teachers are faced with the problem of adjusting to new situations, their adjustment being a basis for ultimate success or failure in their respective positions. Coupled with these groups are the returning teachers in a school system who resume their roles as classroom teachers after the summer interlude. This veteran group returns to face additional and unique challenges in the year to come. In some instances there will be new curricula, new materials, new methods, and new policies with which the returning as well as the new teacher must familiarize himself.

To aid teachers in adapting and preparing themselves for the school term, the common practice employed by most school systems is to have teachers report a few days prior to the opening of the school year to participate in a planned program of orientation. In Montana the range is from little or no teacher orientation in some school districts to five days in one Montana school system for the program. The orientation program may be the same for all teachers in the system or it may differ, depending upon the status of the teachers involved. In some

school systems first-year teachers and experienced teachers new to the system undergo a longer period of orientation, owing to their unfamiliarity with the situation in which they find themselves.

Orientation for new teachers actually begins before the new teacher signs his contract. According to Stickler, orientation for new teachers ideally includes the following periods: 1) from original contact with the teacher to contract time, 2) from contract to reporting time, 3) from reporting time to the time school opens, and 4) from the time school begins throughout the year (7). In many school systems orientation emphasizes the latter two periods indicated above, as contact with the prospective teacher is generally limited up to that time. The most concentrated period of orientation frequently is the period of reporting and getting started, the orientation week program provided by most school systems.

Prior to the orientation week program, the prospective teacher usually has had an interview with someone from the school system, was given some literature or general information about the school district and community, and, if fortunate, may have toured the facilities in which he will operate and met some of the people with whom he will work. Some new teachers are fortunate enough to have learned a substantial amount about their school system, school, or community before reporting for the orientation week program. These teachers are probably more the exception than the rule, however, since many new teachers do not arrive

in the community in which they will teach until shortly before the time they are to participate in orientation week activities. Therefore, most school systems rely heavily on the orientation week program to do the job of preparing the teacher for his assignment.

Veteran teachers in the school system frequently are involved with a summer job, attending a university, or a vacation and generally have little contact with their school over the summer months. Much can happen during this time. The returning teachers need to be brought up to date on their school situation during the orientation program.

Conducting and assisting in the orientation week program for teachers might be administrators, school board members, consultants from within and outside the system, experienced teachers in the district, members of the community, and various non-teaching personnel of the school district. A variety of activities might be utilized in the course of the program.

The days shortly before the start of a school year can bring feelings of anxiety to any teacher, new or experienced, who contemplates what the ensuing year will hold for him. Beginning teachers, in particular, are placed in a position of apprehension before the school year begins. According to Moffitt:

> They [the beginning teachers] meet new people—many of whom are teachers who have taught in the same situation for years and consequently have made some adjustments and are free from a feeling of strangeness. This awareness of others' adjustments adds to the concerns of the beginner. Not only are the people new, but the very anticipation of the act of teaching is

> frightening. Teachers, students, books, the curriculum—everything is new (2).

The extent to which the individual new teacher makes satisfactory adjustment can have a crucial bearing on his future. It can affect the quality of his teaching, influence his decision to return to the same system the following year, and determine his continuance as a member of the teaching profession. It is important for him to get off to a good start.

Moffitt feels that for the new teachers "the help most needed is psychological: the acceptance, understanding and support of the professional staff—particularly the administration" (2). Beyond this psychological help there is much information with which the new teacher and even the returning teacher must be provided in order to undertake his assignment successfully. The school system needs to supply information regarding such matters as school objectives, policies, procedures, duties, and expectations. This is done through the orientation program.

The orientation program may have different purposes for the various types of teachers involved. Vanderlip believes that the purpose of orientation for new teachers "is to help the new teacher adjust to his situation as an employee, a professional colleague, a member of the social milieu, and a community member" (8). The pre-school orientation program for new teachers usually introduces these teachers to, and familiarlizes them with, the operation of the entire school system, in general, and their individual school, in particular. When school

begins, the new teacher should be an "old hand", according to Vanderlip (2). Much of the pressures of learning procedures, making acquaintances and getting rooms ready should be completed so the teacher can concentrate on the students.

For returning teachers in the system many of the afore-mentioned adjustments will have long since been made, but there is still much to be gained from an orientation program. There are new teachers to meet and assist, new ideas to hear and consider, new plans to implement, and new problems to solve. The returning teacher must be familiar with policies and procedures which may have changed from the previous year. He, too, must be ready to focus his attention on the students. If he is not prepared to do this, he is in perhaps no better position than the beginning teacher.

Orientation does not end with the completion of orientation week activities. Stickler asserts that "the responsibility for insuring high quality service from the first-year teacher and his retention in the school system extends over a minimum of one year" (7). The amount of professional guidance and direction both new and veteran teachers receive during the year differs depending upon each situation. In nearly all school systems in the state of Montana some kind of orientation continues throughout the school year. This might be in the form of faculty meetings, departmental meetings, individual conferences, workshops, or other planned in-service programs. The scope and procedures

used vary from district to district.

Determining the value and effectiveness of various aspects of the pre-school orientation program can be very important to the planning and presentation of the program. Practices in conducting the orientation programs can and do vary considerably from school system to school system. Likewise, so might the worth of the various programs vary. Furthermore, interpretations by administrators and teachers sometimes differ as to the value and comprehensiveness of the local orientation practices. A study by Bond and Smith revealed that of the administrators surveyed, 89 per cent believed that their individual programs were of value, but 44 per cent of the teachers contacted felt that these same pre-school orientation programs were either not helpful or were of limited value. The same study indicated that 97 per cent of the administrators considered that school routines were explained carefully and completely during pre-school orientation week, but only 60 per cent of the teachers agreed (4).

General Statement of the Problem

The problem facing school administrators is to give new and returning teachers the help necessary to prepare them for the school year by presenting effective programs of pre-school orientation. This investigation attempts to survey the practices used in thirty-four selected Montana school systems and to comment on the sufficiency of various practices in preparing teachers for the school year ahead.

Chapter 2

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Purposes Of The Study

This study was undertaken because the author felt that there was a definite need to obtain more information on the subject of pre-school teacher orientation programs in Montana. The investigator was extremely interested in this subject because of his personal experience, and because of his personal belief that getting the year off to a good start is one of the most important bases for a successful year. It is during the first few weeks of the school year when students are "sizing up a teacher" and establishing behavior patterns for the entire year. The writer believes that knowing "what's going on" is essential to a successful start of the year for the teacher. Indecision or ignorance of school matters could make life miserable for the teacher and the students. Teachers bring with them to the orientation week program a great variety of backgrounds. Therefore, the pre-school orientation program has a monumental task to perform in readying teachers for the school term so they can operate effectively both individually and collectively.

Specific purposes of the study were:

1. To survey programs of pre-school teacher orientation in the public schools of thirty-four Montana districts in the fall of 1969.

2. To enable the writer to comment on pre-school teacher orientation programs in terms of their presenting information and experiences helpful in preparing teachers for the school year.

3. To gather information and data which might be of benefit to school systems in planning, organizing, and presenting pre-school orientation programs.

These purposes have common goals. These goals are to ascertain the practices now in existence, and, if necessary, to provide some criteria for revamping them.

Procedures Used in Conducting The Study

For this investigation the 1969 pre-school teacher orientation programs in thirty-four public school systems in Montana were examined. Programs were reviewed in Anaconda, Billings, Bozeman, Browning, Butte, Chester, Chinook, Choteau, Columbia Falls, Conrad, Cut Bank, Deer Lodge, Dillon, Fort Benton, Glendive, Great Falls, Hamilton, Hardin, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Lewistown, Libby, Livingston, Malta, Missoula Elementary, Missoula County High School, Polson, Poplar, Red Lodge, Roundup, Troy, Whitefish, and Wolf Point. These school systems were chosen because they represent some of the larger systems in the state and because the researcher felt they would present a sampling large enough to obtain many different viewpoints. The investigator also endeavored to obtain information from Glasgow, Miles City, Shelby, Sidney, and Whitehall but these districts failed to respond to letters of inquiry.

In February 1970 the author of the study sent a questionnaire accompanied by a letter of explanation (See Appendix A) to the superintendent in each of the afore-mentioned school systems requesting information about the orientation program conducted during the week prior to the opening of school. The questionnaire asked for information concerning the number of new and returning teachers in the system, the number of days devoted to the orientation program, the organization of the program by grade level, the types of activities presented in the program, the objectives to be accomplished by such a program, and the most beneficial aspects of orientation as seen by the administration. The superintendents were also requested to provide a schedule of orientation week events, if possible, and to enclose in the self-addressed envelope provided with each questionnaire any other information which might be useful in the study.

After the thirty-nine questionnaires were sent out, thirty responses were received within ten days. The other four replies were received within a period of three months. As mentioned before, five superintendents failed to reply. The investigator did not pursue them any further as they undoubtedly had reasons for not wishing to respond to the inquiry. Some superintendents provided vast amounts of material about their orientation program, while others were quite brief in their replies. Thirty of the thirty-four superintendents provided a schedule of their orientation program.

The questionnaires were examined and the results tabulated when practical. Comments of superintendents regarding their programs were noted and utilized when appropriate. When schedules of orientation programs were submitted by the superintendents, they were scrutinized to determine how much time was spent on various activities in the program. Other information offered by the superintendents was inspected to obtain a more extensive view of their programs.

A principal part of this study was to survey orientation programs in Montana. This was done as described previously. Another important aspect of the study was to get teacher viewpoints concerning orientation. In an attempt to determine what Helena teachers felt about their orientation program, a study was conducted in the fall of 1969 by Mr. James L. Weir, secondary coordinator for Helena Public Schools. With the permission of Mr. Weir, the author utilized some information obtained from Mr. Weir's study as well as conducting a study of his own, on a smaller scale.

Mr. Weir sent a questionnaire concerning the orientation program to each of the 355 teachers in the Helena Public Schools approximately two weeks after the beginning of school. Responses were received from 202 teachers in the system. The questionnaire asked for responses concerning the teachers' impressions of the program, the desirability of the length of the program, and the part of the program that was most informative. Each teacher was also asked to comment on the program or

make suggestions for improving the program in the future. Responses were tabulated and various comments and suggestions were noted in the summary of the study released by Mr. Weir.

In addition to the study by Mr. Weir, the writer asked twenty-five teachers in the Helena system to fill out a questionnaire (See Appendix B) prepared by the researcher. The questionnaire asked the teacher what he felt was the most important objective of an orientation program, what he felt was the most beneficial and the least beneficial part of the orientation program, and how he felt most of the time in the program should be spent. All twenty-five teachers given questionnaires responded. Results were noted and will be discussed later in this report.

After all the data and information from all sources was compiled it was examined to determine possible trends and relationships running throughout the entire study. Comparisons were made of the overall content of the different programs. Teachers' reactions were compared with those of administrators. Any information that might be useful in shedding light on an improved orientation program was noted, and an attempt was made to bring this out in the report.

Delimitations

There were two main limitations to the investigation reported in this paper. First, the study is limited to the examination of preschool teacher orientation programs only. This includes only those

activities related to the planned program of orientation conducted during the week prior to the opening of school in the fall. As was mentioned previously, orientation ideally takes place both before the planned week of orientation activities and after. But because of the enormous scope of such a study, this study does not endeavor to examine any orientation conducted before or after the orientation week program.

The other limitation for this study is the concentration of the investigation on those thirty-four school systems mentioned previously. It is hoped by the writer that the scope can be expanded in future investigations.

Definition of Terms

Pre-school teacher orientation program. Throughout this paper the term "pre-school orientation program" or "orientation week program" is interpreted as meaning the planned program during the week immediately prior to the first day of school designed to prepare teachers for the opening of school.

New teacher. In this study the term "new teacher" is interpreted as meaning the teacher who has not taught previously in the particular school system. Neagly and Evans classify new teachers into five categories. These categories are:

1. The inexperienced teacher.
2. The teacher from another school system.
3. The teacher from another school in the same system.
4. The teacher assigned to a new department or level of teaching.

5. The experienced teacher who returns to teaching (3).

However, the definition of the new teacher used in this investigation refers to teachers from the first two categories above.

Returning teacher. The term "returning teacher" refers to those teachers who have taught in the school system previously.

Chapter 3

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Survey of Pre-School Teacher Orientation Programs in Thirty-four Montana Districts

There is wide variance in teacher pre-school orientation programs in Montana, as indicated by a study of thirty-four school systems in the state. Information obtained for this study was supplied by the superintendents of each of the school systems investigated in this report. Their responses to a questionnaire distributed to them by the writer, and their contribution of additional information about the pre-school orientation program conducted by their school district was utilized to obtain an overview of practices in Montana as well as a more detailed look at individual programs.

Superintendent responses conducive to tabulation were charted and are shown in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. Table 1 (pages 15 and 16) shows a wide range in the number of teachers employed in the systems studied. The span was from a total of twenty-eight teachers in the Red Lodge school system to 940 teachers in Great Falls, a substantial and significant difference. The average size of the teaching staffs in the districts encompassed by this investigation was 161, and the median was eighty-six, an average of the Whitefish and Browning staffs. This indicates that the average is somewhat misleading, the larger systems

Table 1

Numbers of Teachers in the School Systems Studied

School System	Number of teachers in system	Number of new teachers fall 1969	% of new teachers fall 1969
Anaconda	130	4	3.1%
Billings	878	90	10.3%
Bozeman	218	54	24.8%
Browning	88	4	4.5%
Butte	500	75	15.0%
Chester	32	11	34.4%
Chinook	37	9	24.3%
Choteau	32	9	28.1%
Columbia Falls	113	25	22.1%
Conrad	62	13	21.0%
Cut Bank	78	3	3.9%
Deer Lodge Elementary	45	—	———
Dillon Elementary	50	3	6.0%
Fort Benton	48	21	43.8%
Glendive	133	22	16.5%
Great Falls	940	120	12.8%
Hamilton	67	10	14.9%
Hardin	110	45	40.9%

Table 1 (continued)

School System	Number of teachers in system	Number of new teachers fall 1969	% of new teachers fall 1969
Havre	158	32	26.6%
Helena	355	116	32.7%
Kalispell	186	32	17.2%
Lewistown Elementary	61	2	3.3%
Libby	160	50	31.3%
Livingston	106	17	16.0%
Malta	41	11	26.8%
Missoula Elementary	300	57	19.0%
Missoula County H.S.	174	41	23.6%
Polson	67	14	20.9%
Poplar	54	13	24.1%
Red Lodge	28	9	32.1%
Roundup	40	6	15.0%
Troy	32	14	43.8%
Whitefish	84	15	17.9%
Wolf Point	62	16	25.8%

throwing the average out of proportion.

In looking at the number of new teachers in the thirty-four systems shown in Table 1, it is interesting to note the disparities when comparing ratios of new teachers to total teachers in the systems. For example, in Anaconda only 3.1% of the teachers were new to the system, in Lewistown 3.3%, Cut Bank 3.9%, and Browning had 4.5% of the total being new teachers. But in Troy, 43.8% of the teachers were new to the system, in Fort Benton 43.8%, and in Hardin 40.9% were new. In some districts, Helena, for example, there was a fairly large percentage of new teaching staff (32.7%) because of an occurrence beyond the control of the school system. In Helena the Catholic schools closed and there were 55 teachers added to the staff in addition to those new teachers filling vacancies of teachers who left the system. In some other districts there may also have been similar reasons for the high percentage of new teachers of which the researcher is unaware. It might be worthy to note that the two largest school systems in the state, Great Falls and Billings, had 12.8% and 10.3% of their teaching staff new to their systems respectively.

It is hard to determine which new teachers are in a less difficult situation, those in a district with a high or a low percentage of new teachers. Those in a system where most of the teachers are returning might be able to obtain a considerable amount of assistance from the administrators and the other teachers because new teachers are so

few in number comparatively. Yet, in these same systems the new teachers might be somewhat apprehensive because most of the other teachers are "old pro's," or at least they appear that way. In the system where a high percentage of teachers are new, the new teacher may be able to relax somewhat, as many others are in the same situation as he. But because of the large numbers of new teachers, the administrator may be extremely busy and hard-pressed, too busy to find enough time to give to any one individual. Then, too, there may not be enough "old pro's" to go around, or there may not be any veteran teachers in the particular subject area of the new teacher, and he, therefore, must proceed alone. One can see that each situation depends entirely upon the people involved. Either of the afore-mentioned situations can be a real boon to the new teacher, or it can be a real hindrance. Hopefully, the orientation program can utilize the situation for the good of the new teacher.

Examining the length of new teacher programs (Table 2), one again finds a considerable spread in the number of days allotted to the orientation programs in the various districts. The range is from one day for new teacher orientation in Anaconda, Butte, Chester, Chinook, Hamilton, Hardin, and Livingston to five days in Great Falls. Seven systems devote one day to the new teacher program, one district allots a day and one-half, one district sets aside two and one-half days, six districts allow three days, two systems run their program for four days,

Table 2

Length of Orientation Programs in Systems Studied

School system	Length of new teacher program in fall, 1969 (days)	Length of returning teacher program in fall, 1969 (days)	Does system plan to change length of program in fall, 1970?
Anaconda	1	1	no
Billings	3	2	no
Bozeman	3	2	no
Browning	4	4	shorter for returnees
Butte	1	1	no
Chester	1	1	no
Chinook	1	1	longer
Choteau	2	1	longer
Columbia Falls	3	2	shorter
Conrad	2	2	longer for new teachers
Cut Bank	2	2	no
Deer Lodge Elementary . .	2	1	no
Dillon Elementary	2	2	no
Fort Benton	2	2	longer
Glendive	1½	1	no
Great Falls	5	5	no

Table 2 (continued)

School system	Length of new teacher program in fall, 1969 (days)	Length of returning teacher program in fall, 1969 (days)	Does system plan to change length of program in fall, 1970?
Hamilton	1	1	longer
Hardin	1	1	no
Havre	2	2	no
Helena	4	2	no
Kalispell	3	2	no
Lewistown Elementary	2	2	no
Libby	2	2	longer
Livingston	1	1	no
Malta	2	2	no
Missoula Elementary	$2\frac{1}{2}$	2	no
Missoula County H.S. . . .	3	2	no
Polson	2	2	no
Poplar	2	1	no
Red Lodge	2	2	no
Roundup	2	2	no
Troy	3	2	no
Whitefish	2	2	longer
Wolf Point	2	2	longer

and one system provides five days for the new teacher orientation program. The median, therefore, is two days of new teacher-orientation for the thirty-four districts studied. It might be of some significance to note that the five smallest school systems under consideration in this investigation (as measured by number of teachers in the system)—Red Lodge, Troy, Chester, Choteau, and Chinook—had two, three, one, two, and one day of new teacher orientation respectively. The five largest school systems—Great Falls, Billings, Butte, Helena, and Missoula Elementary—required five, three, one, four, and two and one-half days of new-teacher orientation respectively. If there is a trend to be noted here, it is that larger districts tend to operate their new teacher orientation program for a longer period of time than do the smaller school districts in the systems studied.

Determining whether the number of days devoted to the new teacher orientation program is sufficient is a difficult problem, and the solution depends upon many factors which might be unique to each situation. It might depend upon on how much orientation, if any, preceded the orientation week program, the background of the individual teachers, and the content and utilization of the programs. For some individual teachers in some school systems, one day of orientation might be sufficient, while for other new teachers in other systems or even the same school system, ten days of orientation might not do the job.

Table 2 also shows the lengths of the orientation programs for returning teachers in the thirty-four school systems. The range in this category is, once again, from one day in several districts to five days of orientation for returning teachers in Great Falls. Ten systems allow one day for orientation of returning teachers, twenty-two districts provide two days for this activity, one system operates its program for four days, and one district conducts the program for five days. In looking at the amount of time that returning teachers spent in the preschool orientation program in the five smallest systems studied, the programs in Red Lodge and Troy, lasted two days, and the programs for returning teachers in Chinook, Choteau, and Chester took one day. In Great Falls, Billings, Butte, Helena, and Missoula Elementary—the largest school systems in Montana—the programs lasted five, two, one, two, and two days respectively. Once again, there was a tendency for the larger districts to spend more time with this aspect of the orientation program, although the tendency was more slight in this instance than in the case of the program for new teachers.

It seems worthy to note that twenty-two of the school systems examined ran their program for new and returning teachers the same number of days, while the remaining twelve systems required new teachers to be in attendance one or two days more than the returning teachers in the system. However, not all of those systems operating their program the same number of days for all teachers had the same meetings and

activities for new and returning teachers. By examining the schedules of the orientation week program provided by thirty of the thirty-four school systems concerned with this study, the writer found that six of the twenty-two systems with equal orientation time for all teachers had some separate meetings or activities strictly for new teachers—namely Whitefish, Libby, Hardin, Chinook, Butte, and Great Falls.

The practice of having new teachers undergo extra days of an orientation program appears to be open to some question among the school districts considered. In the majority of the systems surveyed it was apparently felt that new teachers do not need a more extended period of time for the orientation week program than returning teachers in the system. Arguments for both policies could be advanced. What these arguments would be might depend upon the individual situations in the various systems and the individual teachers involved. Some administrators might feel that the new teacher should not be separated from the group with which he will work and that the best way to orient the new teacher is to have him plunge into the business at hand with his veteran counterpart. Other administrators might believe that the new teacher in the system needs to be "eased into the water" a bit more gently and that returning teachers need not be subjected to some portions of the program which would be highly repetitious or irrelevant. Segments of some programs conducted exclusively for new teachers will be discussed later in this report.

Table 2 also shows the responses of the superintendents when asked if they planned to change the length of their program in the fall of 1970. Table 2 indicates that twenty-four systems do not plan to change the number of days allotted for the orientation program, while the remaining ten systems do plan changes in the length of teacher orientation week. One superintendent indicated that his program would run the same number of days in the fall of 1970 as in 1969 but that he would like it longer. Apparently in some districts the decision to lengthen the orientation program would have to be made by others in addition to the administration. Most likely this would be the school board and possibly the local teachers' association. It is important to keep this in mind when comparing the lengths of the individual programs.

Of the ten school systems planning to change the duration of the pre-school teacher orientation program for the fall of 1970, eight districts plan to make their program longer, while the other two intend to shorten their program. Among the eight districts, one district, Conrad, specifically plans to lengthen the program for new teachers only. Of those two systems intending to shorten their programs, Browning plans to shorten the length of the program for returning teachers only. If there is a trend to be noted here, it is that there is a tendency among the thirty-four school systems to lengthen their orientation programs.

Table 3 (pages 26, 27, 28) indicates whether the elementary and

secondary portions of the orientation programs in the selected districts were conducted separately, jointly, or with some separate and some joint characteristics. The responses of the superintendents show that the most frequent pattern followed by the systems was to have some joint meetings of elementary and secondary teachers and some separate meetings. Six of the districts studied conducted their teacher orientation program separately for elementary and secondary teachers, one system had the same program for both elementary and secondary teachers, and the other twenty-seven school systems included joint and separate activities for elementary and secondary instructors in their pre-school teacher orientation program.

Of the six school systems conducting elementary and secondary teacher orientation programs separately, four of the districts were strictly elementary, those being Deer Lodge, Dillon, Lewistown, and Missoula. One other district was strictly secondary, that being Missoula County High School. Therefore, only one other school system, Chester, conducted the elementary and secondary teacher orientation programs separately. The only school system to present the same program for both levels of teachers was Anaconda. No schedule for the Anaconda program was enclosed so the writer does not know the format of the Anaconda teacher orientation program.

Apparently, the administrators of most of the school systems feel there is a definite need for teachers of various levels to be

Table 3

Organization of 1969 Teacher Orientation Programs in Systems Surveyed

School system	Are elementary and secondary orientation programs run separately?		
	Entirely separate	Same program for both	Some joint meetings; some separate meetings
Anaconda		x	
Billings			x
Bozeman			x
Browning			x
Butte			x
Chester	x		
Chinook			x
Choteau			x
Columbia Falls			x
Conrad			x
Cut Bank			x
Deer Lodge Elementary . . .	x		
Dillon Elementary	x		
Fort Benton			x
Glendive			x

Table 3 (continued)

School system	Are elementary and secondary orientation programs run separately?		
	Entirely separate	Same program for both	Some joint meetings; some separate meetings
Great Falls			x
Hamilton			x
Hardin			x
Havre			x
Helena			x
Kalispell			x
Lewistown Elementary	x		
Libby			x
Livingston			x
Malta			x
Missoula Elementary	x		
Missoula County H.S.	x		
Polson			x
Poplar			x
Red Lodge			x
Roundup			x
Troy			x

Table 3 (continued)

School system	Are elementary and secondary orientation programs run separately?		
	Entirely separate	Same program for both	Some joint meetings; some separate meetings
Whitefish			x
Wolf Point			x

together at least some time during the orientation week program, as evidenced by the fact that twenty-seven of the thirty-four districts follow that practice. There does not appear to be any trend away from this practice even when the districts become quite considerable in size. Great Falls with 940 teachers and Billings with 878 did not indicate any intentions to discontinue the practice of having elementary and secondary teachers meet jointly for some common purpose.

There are many different activities that could be carried on during the pre-school teacher orientation program. Some of these activities might be in the form of general sessions for all or large portions of teachers, building meetings, departmental or grade-level meetings, workshops in the various subject areas, classroom work time, various community-sponsored activities, open houses and tours of educational facilities, and coffee hours, teas, luncheons, picnics, and other similar activities for the purposes of providing fellowship and opportunities for getting acquainted.

General sessions frequently include all teachers in the system, all new teachers in the system, or some other large grouping of teachers in the school district. The programs presented at the general sessions might vary from district to district, but generally the formats are somewhat similar. Usually general sessions include welcoming speeches from various officials and community members; remarks by administrators regarding the local system; information about local procedures,

policies, organizations, community facilities, and other matters pertaining to the local situation from various people connected with each particular aspect; and an address from an educational authority outside of the system or a local administrator. Figure 1 (page 31) shows the typical format for a general session for new teachers, the one shown being used in Helena in the fall of 1969 as the opening session for teachers new to the system. Figure 2 (page 32) is an example of a general session for all teachers in the system conducted in Bozeman in August, 1969.

Building meetings generally consist of meetings for teachers in the particular buildings in which the teachers will perform their duties. During these meetings teachers meet and assist other faculty members, and discuss procedures, policies, duties, expectations and problems of the individual schools. Group discussions might also be a part of the building meeting program.

Departmental or grade-level meetings usually consist of meetings for teachers in the various subject fields, e.g., history, English, mathematics, or at various grade levels, e.g., all fourth grade teachers, either in the individual buildings or throughout the school system. The teachers attending these meetings generally discuss matters pertinent to their teaching field or level such as procedures, course outlines, materials and resources to be used, and activities which might be utilized.

Tuesday, August 26

For Teachers NEW to the system
Cadets and Observers

Place - Senior High School Library

8:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M.

Greeting from Board of Trustees	C. W. Leaphart, Jr., Vice Chairman
Opening Remarks	A. G. Erickson, Superintendent of Schools
The Helena Schools System	Maynard Olson Assistant Superintendent
Teaching in Helena	James L. Weir, Secondary School Coordinator
Professional Organization	Ron Dooley, Helena Education Association

10:00 A.M. to 10:30 A.M.

Coffee Break	Helena Education Association, Host

10:30 A.M. to 12:00 A.M.

Credit Union	Donald E. Roberts, Treasurer School Employees Credit Union
U. S. Government Bonds	Ben Ulberg, Montana Director U. S. Government Bonds
Federal Projects	Gerald Roth, Coordinator of Federal Projects
Business Routines	Virgil K. Janes, Clerk and Business manager
Helena Newcomers	Mrs. Charles Greenfield

Figure 1

Opening of School - 1969
Helena Public Schools

Thursday, August 28

8:45 - 9:30 A.M. Willson Library	M. E. A. Coffee Time
9:30 - 10:00 A.M. Willson Auditorium	Introduction of New Staff Wallace Forsgren, Master of Ceremonies
10:00 - 10:45 A.M. Willson Auditorium	"Protest May Be The Answer, But What is The Question?" M. K. Negus, Superintendent
10:45 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 11:45 A.M. Willson Auditorium	Montana Physicians Service Health Insurance Tom Mullaney
11:45 - 12:00 A.M. Willson Auditorium	Dress Review
Noon	
1:15 - 2:15 P.M. Willson Auditorium	Review of New Programs
Nebraska English	Wallace Forsgren
Career Exploration	Milton Negus
Inservice and Continuing Education	Woodrow Wold
Continuous Growth	Olive Owens
Nursery & Kindergarten Education	Loretta Suhr
High School English	Hiney Lund
Mini Programs	Francis Olson
Sex Education	Wallace Forsgren

Figure 2

Opening of School Conference
Bozeman Public Schools
1969-1970

Workshops might be similar to departmental or grade-level meetings in that they may include all teachers from a department or a grade level. However, the breakdown would not necessarily have to be the same. The workshop could include all teachers from one school, for example. Workshops are unique in that they usually have one distinct topic or area that is considered by those in attendance, and that they are led by an authority either from within or outside the system, on the subject at hand. Workshops usually involve a large amount of participation from teachers attending as they frequently are a "doing" activity. An example of a workshop presented as part of the teacher orientation week program was one presented in Columbia Falls in 1969 dealing with the Roberts English Series. All teachers in grades three through eight plus high school English teachers attended this workshop. It was conducted by a member of the high school English department and a representative from the book company publishing the Roberts English Series. The workshop lasted a total of six hours.

Classroom work time is time allotted to the teacher specifically for getting his individual room ready for the opening of school. This would include putting up bulletin boards, gathering and organizing textbooks, materials, and equipment to be used, and completing any other tasks which must be done in the classroom prior to the school opening.

Open houses and tours of educational facilities are another part of some teacher orientation programs. This activity might lend

itself more to larger school systems than smaller ones since in the large systems there might be more facilities to observe. An example of this type of activity was a tour of the Helena Vocational-Technical School conducted as part of the new teacher orientation program in Helena in 1969.

Community-sponsored activities would cover a wide variety of activities sponsored by community agencies, organizations, businesses, or individuals. These might include community tours, breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, or social hours designed to welcome teachers to the city and inform them of community affairs and activities. In those districts detailing their schedule of orientation activities, it was noted that breakfasts, luncheons, or dinners sponsored by community groups (most frequently the Chamber of Commerce) were held in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Chester, Great Falls, Helena, Missoula Elementary, Missoula County, and Poplar in the fall of 1969. In nearly all the above districts, the dinners were held for and in honor of new teachers to the system. One of the most unique community-sponsored activities was a tour of the St. Regis Paper Company's logging and lumber processing operation conducted for new teachers in Libby. The tour showed cutting of trees, skidding, loading, hauling, and final processes of making lumber and plywood.

Coffee hours, teas, luncheons, picnics, and activities of this type are frequently included in the program to acquaint teachers with

one another. They generally are sponsored by the district or some school-allied group like the local teachers' association or the Parent-Teachers Association. Activities like the coffee hour might be before or after a general session or during a break in some portion of the program. Picnics might be scheduled during an afternoon or evening. Luncheons are frequently sponsored by a community group as has been mentioned before, but occasionally they are sponsored by the school board or the district. Luncheons in Conrad and Kalispell were of this nature.

Table 4 (pages 36, 37, and 38) shows the types of activities that are a part of the orientation week programs in the thirty-four school systems as indicated by the superintendents on the questionnaire checklist. In some instances the information contained in Table 4 might be somewhat misleading because of different interpretations by the superintendents as to what makes up the various activities. For example, a workshop to one administrator might mean something else to another. Thus, their responses might be affected by their interpretation.

Examining the information contained in Table 4, we see that some of the activities are common to most or all of the systems while other activities are more sparsely employed. All of the school systems have general sessions, either one for new teachers exclusively or one for all teachers in the system. Some systems have both types of session. Every system also had building meetings, and all but four systems—Chinook,

Table 4

Activities That Form a Part of Teacher Orientation Programs in the Systems Studied

School system	Which of the following types of activities are a part of your teacher orientation program?							
	General sessions for all teachers	Building meetings	Departmental or grade level meetings	Workshops in various subject areas	Time to work in classroom	Open houses of facilities	Community-sponsored activities	Coffee hours, teas, luncheons, etc. for getting acquainted
Anaconda	x	x	x					
Billings	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Bozeman	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Browning	x	x	x	x	x			x
Butte.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Chester	x	x	x		x		x	x
Chinook	x	x						x
Choteau	x	x	x		x			x
Columbia Falls	x	x	x	x				
Conrad	x	x	x	x		x		x
Cut Bank	x	x	x		x			x
Deer Lodge Elementary.	x	x	x	x	x			x

Table 4 (continued)

School system	Which of the following types of activities are a part of your teacher orientation program?							
	General sessions for all teachers	Building meetings	Departmental or grade level meetings	Workshops in various subject areas	Time to work in Classroom	Open houses of facilities	Community-sponsored activities	Coffee hours, teas, luncheons, etc. for getting acquainted
Dillon Elementary . . .	x	x	x		x			x
Fort Benton	x	x	x		x			x
Glendive.	x	x	x		x			x
Great Falls	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Hamilton	x	x	x					
Hardin	x	x	x		x	x		x
Havre	x	x	x	x		x		x
Helena	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Kalispell	x	x	x	x	x			x
Lewistown Elementary .	x	x	x	x	x			x
Libby	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Livingston	x	x			x			
Malta	x	x	x		x			x
Missoula Elementary . .		x	x		x		x	

Table 4 (continued)

School system	Which of the following types of activities are a part of your teacher orientation program?							
	General sessions for all teachers	Building meetings	Departmental or grade level meetings	Workshops in various subject areas	Time to work in classroom	Open houses of facilities	Community-sponsored activities	Coffee hours, teas, luncheons, etc., for getting acquainted
Missoula County H.S. .	x	x	x				x	
Polson	x	x	x	x	x			x
Poplar	x	x	x		x		x	x
Red Lodge	x	x			x			x
Roundup	x	x	x	x	x			x
Troy	x	x			x			x
Whitefish	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Wolf Point	x	x	x	x				x

Livingston, Red Lodge, and Troy—conducted departmental or grade-level meetings as part of their orientation program. Sixteen of the systems indicated that they conducted workshops. Twenty-six district programs allotted time for the teacher to work in the classroom. Seven school systems held open houses of their facilities. Eleven programs included community-sponsored activities, and all but six of the school districts had get-acquainted activities like coffee hours, picnics, etc., sponsored by the school system or school-allied groups.

Another activity that may or may not come under one of the above categories, was a group work program conducted in Columbia Falls. The entire teaching staff of the system was divided into sixteen groups of seven and group interaction was used. Curriculum and in-service problems were dealt with after an opening exercise on the Apollo 11 moon-landing was completed by the whole group. Three and a half total hours in two separate sessions were devoted to this exercise. A similar type exercise was conducted in Whitefish.

One other activity conducted by some districts as a regular part of the orientation week program was holding a regular meeting of the local education association. This was done in Columbia Falls, Fort Benton, Hardin, and Havre. In many districts the objectives and activities of the local, state, and national education association were discussed during some part of the orientation program, but only in the above-mentioned districts were actual meetings conducted, as near as

the writer could determine.

Upon examination of the schedules of the orientation week programs provided by most of the districts studied, the writer found that the most common practice is to open the orientation program with a general session. This might be either for new teachers, in the event of those districts having an extended program for new teachers in the system, or for all teachers in the system, if new and returning teachers spend the same number of days participating in the program. Example formats of general sessions, as have been discussed previously, are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

What happens after the opening general session varies from district to district. Figures 3, 4, and 5 (pages 41, 42, and 43) show examples of the entire orientation schedule in three of the thirty-four districts—Billings, Havre, and Helena. By examining these schedules, one can see that the time spent in various activities differs somewhat. For example, in the three systems described, meeting time was broken down as follows: Billings used one-fourth of the meeting time for general sessions, five-twelfths of the time was spent for grade-level group meetings, and one-third of the time was spent in the individual buildings. In Havre one-fourth of the time was spent in general sessions, one-eighth of the time was in group meetings, and five-eighths of the meeting time was spent in the individual buildings. In Helena one-fourth of the time was spent in general sessions, one-fourth in

Tuesday, August 26	
8:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.	All New Teachers Lewis & Clark Junior High Auditorium
10:45 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.	New Elementary Teachers Grand Avenue Multi-Purpose Room
	New Junior and Senior High Teachers Lewis & Clark Junior High Auditorium
Wednesday, August 27	
9:00 A.M. - 12 Noon	All Teachers, Principals, Supervisors, and Consultants West High School Auditorium
1:30 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.	All Elementary Teachers, Principals, Supervisors, and Consultants Lewis & Clark Junior High Auditorium
	All Junior and Senior High Teachers, Principals, Supervisors, and Consultants West High School Auditorium
Thursday, August 28	
9:00 A.M. & 1:30 P.M.	Principals and All Teachers of each school meet in their respective buildings
Friday, August 29	School gets underway according to schedules to be announced later

Figure 3

Billings Public Schools
Orientation Meetings for Week of August 25, 1969

Thursday, August 25

9:00 A.M.	General Meeting of all professional personnel at Havre High School Cafeteria.
10:30 A.M.	Principals will meet with school staff in buildings where you will work.
	(The balance of Thursday will be utilized at the discretion of each building principal)

Friday, August 29

9:00 A.M.	General Meeting of all professional personnel at Havre High School Cafeteria.
	a. M.E.A. organizational meeting and business meeting.
	b. Meeting of school faculty groups to elect representatives for the Teacher-Administrative Advisory Committee.
10:30 A.M.	Special group meetings
1:00 P.M.	Report back to your school for meetings with building principals.

All unscheduled time will be utilized getting classrooms, books, supplies in order for the opening of school. Personnel are expected to be on the job from 9:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. during these two days.

Figure 4

Havre Public Schools
Schedule for Pre-School Orientation Activities

For all new teachers, cadets, and observers

Tuesday, August 26	
8:30 A.M. to 12:00 Noon	General introductory session Helena Senior High Library
1:30 to 4:00 P.M.	Grade level and subject area meetings Helena Senior High
Wednesday, August 27	
9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon	Building meetings Report to respective buildings
2:00 to 4:00 P.M.	Tour of Vocational-Technical School

For all teachers, cadets, and observers

Thursday, August 28	
8:00 to 9:00 A.M.	Coffee hour Sunhaven Cafeteria
9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon	General session for all teachers Sunhaven auditorium
12:00 Noon to 2:00 P.M.	Luncheon for new teachers Chamber of Commerce, host Jorgenson's
2:00 to 4:00 P.M.	Elementary teachers report to respective buildings Junior and senior high teachers report to Helena Senior High for subject area meetings
Friday, August 29	
9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.	All teachers meet in respective buildings with principals
2:00 to 4:00 P.M.	Instructional materials center open house

Figure 5

Schedule of Meetings
Helena Orientation Week Program

grade-level and subject-matter group sessions, and one-half of the time was spent in the individual buildings. Breaking down how the meeting time in the individual buildings was utilized is extremely difficult because each principal could organize the time as he saw fit.

Surveying the orientation week program schedules submitted by thirty of the thirty-four superintendents of the districts involved with this study, the researcher found that generally about one-fourth of the meeting time was spent in general sessions, approximately one-fourth of the time was used for some type of group meetings (grade-level, subject area, etc.), and nearly one-half of the time teachers were in their individual buildings for meetings with their principals, preparing their rooms, assisting or getting help from other faculty members.

Interpretations and Evaluations of Teacher Orientation Programs

If an orientation program for teachers is to be successful, it should meet some pre-determined objectives. What these objectives for the program might be would vary from system to system and administration to administration. On the questionnaires sent to the superintendents of the selected districts and on the questionnaires distributed to the twenty-five teachers in the Helena school system, there was asked the question, "What do you feel is the most important objective to be accomplished by an orientation program for teachers?" Thirty of the thirty-four superintendents responded, and all twenty-five of the

teachers supplied an answer to the question.

Representative answers of several of the superintendents as to what they felt was the primary objective of the teacher orientation program are shown below:

> "To get together and share ideas that would help teachers and students."
>
> "To establish good communication."
>
> "To set specific goals to be accomplished during the school year."
>
> "To find out about the community and the system."
>
> "To acquaint new and old teachers with our system and our major educational objectives."
>
> "To explain policy, acquaint the new staff, and stimulate the entire staff."
>
> "To allow the teachers to get an overview of the year's program."
>
> "To get teachers acquainted with the background of the students and with new and/or old materials."
>
> "For teachers new to the system: to acquaint them with the school system—its philosophy, programs, and expectations. For returning teachers: to acquaint them with changes and to get them back to thinking about school."
>
> "To make teachers feel at home with our system and materials."
>
> "To obtain a philosophy for all to be guided by."

One can see that the specific objectives of the superintendents quoted do vary, but that many of the general intentions seem to be quite similar.

Teachers might view the orientation program in a different light than the administrators. Answers typical of the responses received from the teachers when asked to indicate their feelings about the most

important objective of an orientation program follow:

> "To get acquainted with the staff and facilities of the specific school in which one teaches."
>
> "To acquaint the teachers with the procedures of administration and let the teachers know what the community expects of them."
>
> "To familiarize teachers with the workings of a school. It should be explained how tardinesses, passes, absences, etc., are handled as well as other general policies. It is also important to acquaint the teacher with available materials that may be used."
>
> "To coordinate curriculums and to gain an understanding of the objectives used progressively throughout the curriculum."
>
> "To make known where different schools are, what special facilities or services are offered by various departments, and just who's who."
>
> "To learn the philosophy of the school board, the philosophy of the principal, and the philosophy of the department in which the teacher is to practice his profession. This should not be general and too vague (as philosophy often is). A teacher needs to know what is expected of him and what he can expect from the system."

When comparing the responses of the teachers with those of the superintendents, one finds that the objectives appear to be very similar. Upon closer examination, however, if any difference is to be detected, it appears that teachers more expressly feel that orientation should be concerned with learning the specifics of their particular positions. Whereas many of the objectives of the superintendents seem to be rather general in nature, many of the teachers want to know exactly how they stand and what specifically they must do as teachers in the individual schools. Perhaps the difference in the outlook of the superintendent and the teacher, if indeed there is a difference, might

stem from the fact that the superintendent must look at the total picture while the teacher looks at that part which is most significant to him.

After objectives have been clarified and established, the major task facing the school districts is to make their teacher orientation programs as successful and worthwhile as possible. Many systems are constantly revising and revamping their programs in hopes that the content will be more effective in orienting the teachers of the district to their respective roles and positions. Some systems have called upon the teacher for help in revising the program format.

Table 5 (page 48) shows the results of a survey conducted by Mr. James Weir, secondary coordinator of Helena Public Schools, to determine teacher reactions to the Helena teacher orientation program conducted prior to the opening of the 1969-1970 school year. Replies were received from 202 of the 355 teachers in the system. Responses were separated as to whether the teacher was a beginning or returning teacher in the system and as to whether the teacher taught at the elementary or secondary level (junior high teachers being considered as secondary for the purposes of the study). There were responses from ten beginning elementary teachers, eleven beginning secondary teachers, ninety-one experienced elementary teachers, and ninety returning secondary teachers. Questions were asked about the teachers' impressions of the program, the desirability of the length of the program, and the part of the

Table 5

Summary of Survey Taken by Helena School System
Concerning Pre-School Teacher Orientation Program

Questions	Responses of Beginning Teachers		Responses of Experienced Teachers	
	Elem.	Sec.	Elem.	Sec.
Total number of responses	10	11	91	90
What was your impression of the program?				
Excellent	3	2	21	13
Good	7	8	63	65
Fair	0	1	0	0
Poor	0	0	7	12
What did you think about the length of the program?				
Too much time	6	2	31	50
Not enough time	0	1	3	0
About right	4	8	52	33
Which part of the program did you feel was most informative?				
Tuesday A.M.	4	3	—	—
Thursday A.M.	5	5	42	41
Time in buildings	8	8	63	67

program felt to be most informative. Teachers were to check one response for each of the first two questions, but they could check more than one response for the third question. The teachers were also asked to make general or specific comments which might improve the program in the future.

In presenting information about the Helena program, it in no way is intended to degrade the Helena program, its directors, or the programs and directors in any other systems covered by this study. The information gathered from studying the Helena program can in most instances be applied to the other districts involved with this investigation as well as those not included.

When given four choices (excellent, good, fair and poor) to select from in indicating their impressions of the Helena program, most of the teachers in all categories felt that the program was good—approximately 71% of the teachers responding. The second most frequently checked response by all groups was that the program was excellent. No beginning elementary or secondary teachers felt the program to be poor, but seven (8%) of the experienced elementary teachers responding and twelve (13%) of the returning secondary teachers believed the program was poor.

The second question shown in Table 5 asked for teacher opinions as to the length of the orientation program. It should be recalled here that Helena has a four-day program for new teachers and requires

returning teachers to be in attendance for two days of the program. Table 4 shows that the opinions of the various groups of teachers differed concerning how long the program should be. Of the ten beginning elementary teachers responding, six (60%) believed the program to be too long while four (40%) felt the length to be about right. In contrast, two (18%) of the eleven beginning secondary teachers felt that the program took too long, one (9%) thought there was not ample time, and eight teachers (73%) indicated that the length was appropriate. Likewise, experienced teachers had differing opinions as to the length of the program. Thirty-one (36%) of the eighty-four experienced elementary teachers responding felt that the program allotted too much time, three (3%) said that the time was not sufficient, and fifty-two (61%) believed the length to be satisfactory. On the other hand, fifty (60%) of the eighty-three experienced secondary teachers responding to this question believed that the program occupied too much time, while thirty-three (40%) of this same group felt that the program was about right in length. It would be interesting to know why all these groups differed as they did. Overall, opinions were fairly evenly divided between too much time being spent for the program and the time being about right, with those teachers believing the time allotted to be satisfactory having a slight edge.

The last question shown in Table 5 asks for opinions as to which parts of the program were most informative. The choices were

limited to three areas—Tuesday A.M. (an introductory general session for new teachers), Thursday A.M. (a general session for all teachers), and time spent in individual buildings. The teachers were allowed to check more than one response to this question. Looking at the data presented in Table 4, one sees that the most frequent response for all groups as to the most informative part of the program was the time spent in the individual schools. The Thursday morning general session ranked second in this respect. The fact that teachers deemed time spent in their buildings as most valuable might also reflect an earlier reported observation that teachers are most interested in specifics. These specifics would more likely be obtained in the individual buildings than in general sessions.

When asked specifically how they believed most of the orientation time should be allotted, some of the twenty-five Helena teachers whom the writer surveyed gave the following responses:

> "I think it can most profitably be spent if the various departments of the school meet."
>
> "Talking as a group with the principal regarding policies in one's own school."
>
> "Teachers need to know all the various details pertaining to their individual schools."
>
> "Curriculum planning and development."
>
> "Subject area meetings."
>
> "Working with experienced teachers and getting ready for the first day of school."

As one can see, nearly all the responses included above (as well as many of those not included) pertained to learning procedures and

curriculum in the individual schools. The teachers seem to be somewhat divided on what aspect is more important—learning about the subject area or ascertaining and clarifying school procedures.

The teachers were also asked by the writer to indicate which phases of the program were least beneficial in preparing them for their teaching position. Some replies were:

> "Coffee hours and stuffy little 'get acquainted' dinners, as they really didn't accomplish their purpose."
>
> "All the speeches that go on and on—and just take up time. I feel a morning of this for all teachers is enough."
>
> "Introducing too many new people at one time and spending too much time on their achievements. Most of them I've never had occasion to meet again."
>
> "The subject area meetings held for all teachers in the system because many of the items discussed were not relevant to all teachers in all the schools. Each school has unique problems, materials, and circumstances, and the time could be better spent with departmental meetings in each building."
>
> "General sessions to discuss school philosophy."
>
> "Grade level orientation for all teachers."

The above responses represent a variety of personal feelings and interests which may or may not adequately describe the reactions of the teachers as a whole. Yet, they are representative of all those received by the writer of this paper. Again this points to the fact that many teachers feel the time best spent is not in general sessions or large group meetings but in the building where the teacher is to work. This is not to say that all teachers feel that general sessions, large group meetings, coffee hours, etc., do not have their place. As

one returning teacher commented:

> I suppose the big group meeting was least beneficial. However, I think it is probably good for us to see ourselves in perspective—how large a group we are—how effective we should be—etc. Personally, I enjoy seeing everyone in the fall. This is usually the only time the teachers are all together.

The Weir study asked teachers for suggestions that would improve the pre-school teacher orientation program in Helena. The following suggestions were noted in the summary released by Mr. Weir:

> "Permit new teachers to have three full days in their rooms."
>
> "More building meetings could be profitable to new teachers."
>
> "New teachers at the elementary level should have an opportunity to meet the specialists who will be working with their students."
>
> "Less time in group sessions—more time in classroom."
>
> "Resource people could be a big help."
>
> "More outside speakers in specific areas."
>
> "More time spent in getting acquainted with facilities and materials."

Some of the responses were similar to what has been discussed previously. What many teachers apparently feel is that every moment of the orientation program should serve a distinct purpose and be carefully organized to provide the best possible effect. New teachers seem to appreciate efforts to make them welcome, but they, as well as returning teachers in the system, indicate a desire to get down to "brass tacks"—orientation to their individual situations—as soon as possible in the pre-school teacher orientation program.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Becoming acquainted with the school environment and adjusting to the teaching task are matters of extreme importance to the new teacher in a school system. Reassuming the teaching role, learning about changes that have occurred, and meeting and assisting new teachers are matters facing the returning teacher in a system prior to the opening of the school year. Most school systems attempt to facilitate these situations by providing a planned orientation program for teachers, both new and returning, during the week preceding the opening of school.

The study reported in this paper was undertaken in an effort, first of all, to survey pre-school teacher orientation programs in Montana public school systems. A second purpose of the investigation was to enable the writer to comment on teacher orientation programs in terms of their effectiveness. Gathering information and data which might be helpful to school systems in planning, organizing and presenting pre-school orientation programs for teachers constituted a third objective.

Questionnaires concerning all phases of pre-school orientation programs were mailed by the writer to thirty-nine Montana public school districts. Replies were received from thirty-four systems within the

state and the survey was based upon these systems. Information obtained from the systems pertained to the number of teachers in the systems, length of programs, types of activities used in the programs, schedules of activities, philosophies of superintendents regarding objectives of orientation, and various miscellaneous information which several of the selected school systems provided. A study conducted by the Helena public school system concerning teacher reaction to the Helena orientation week program was also utilized by the researcher. The writer, in addition, obtained responses to a questionnaire from twenty-five Helena teachers regarding teacher orientation. Results were tabulated, compared, and noted when appropriate. Trends were discerned throughout, and information felt to be apropos was discussed and commented upon.

Conclusions

There was wide variance in teacher orientation in Montana. The thirty-four Montana school systems surveyed in this study conducted programs which differed in many respects. Days allotted to the orientation program in the districts studied ranged from one to five. New teachers in some districts were involved in the same program as were returning teachers, while in other systems new teachers participated in a longer program. Some systems separated elementary and secondary meetings entirely. Activities conducted during the programs varied significantly from district to district with some systems placing emphasis on different aspects of the programs than other systems.

Some superintendents have different outlooks regarding orientation than do other superintendents. All in all, one must conclude that although there are many similarities among the various programs, there are many important and significant differences which make each program unique.

There was a trend toward longer teacher orientation programs. Eight of the thirty-four school systems studied plan to lengthen their teacher orientation programs in the fall of 1970. This report indicated that the most common length of teacher orientation programs in 1969 was two days. In a few years this figure might more closely approach three days or more if the present trend continues.

The question of determining how many days should be set aside for teacher orientation could not be ascertained by this study. The researcher feels it logical to assume that, up to a point, the more days set aside for teacher orientation, the more prepared the teacher should be for the start of the school year. Of course, this assumption is subject to many qualifications and contradictions, but if the program is well organized and effectual, the assumption should have definite validity.

There was question as to whether new and returning teachers should participate the same number of days in the program. Twenty-two of the thirty-four systems required new and returning teachers to spend the same number of days participating in the program, while the other

districts ran an extended program for new teachers. Two more systems plan to make distinctions in the length of the program for new and returning teachers in the fall of 1970. Thus, there seems to be a slight trend for programs for new teachers in the system to be one or two days longer than the programs for returning teachers. It seems to the writer that this is a desirable trend. New teachers need special introduction to their teaching role. Some of this can be done without the presence of returning teachers in the system, as some parts of the program would be repetitious or irrelevant for returning teachers. How many days the new teacher or the returning teacher should attend can not be answered here. It does seem reasonable, however, to question if one day of orientation is enough to prepare a beginning teacher for the start of the school year if little or no orientation has taken place previously.

A variety of activities were utilized in the various programs of the thirty-four districts. No two of the orientation programs in the districts surveyed were alike. Activities of the several programs generally fell into the categories of general sessions, building meetings, departmental or grade-level meetings, workshops, open houses, community-sponsored activities, and get-acquainted activities. Three of the least utilized activities were workshops, community-sponsored activities, and open houses, while the other above-mentioned activities were employed in most systems. The important aspect to consider when

noting types of activities is how the various activities are used. Some systems undoubtedly make better use of certain practices than do other systems. It appeared to the writer that some districts make a careful effort to organize their teacher orientation program, while other systems do not. In some systems it appeared to the researcher that the program was largely a "hit and miss" proposition.

Teachers viewed orientation somewhat differently than do administrators. In contrasting viewpoints of orientation objectives of superintendents and teachers, it seemed to the writer that administrators had a more general outlook regarding what orientation was to accomplish. Teachers seemed more interested in learning the specifics of their particular teaching assignment, while superintendents appeared to be more concerned with providing an overview of the whole system. What seems important here is not who is right, but that the differences in the points of view are taken into account when planning the orientation program. Perhaps the answer lies somewhere in between these two outlooks.

Teachers wanted time spent in the orientation program to be worthwhile and effectual. New teachers in a system have much to learn about their role and, therefore, want every minute of the orientation program to be directed toward that aim. Returning teachers have much, too, that they can gain from an orientation program, but they do not

want to feel that they are wasting their time participating in the program by being subjected to needless repetitions year after year. Teachers from whom responses were obtained in this study felt that time spent close to their individual teaching position was most valuable. This represented time spent in the individual rooms, with teachers in the same department or grade level in the school, or with members of the individual school faculty and administration.

Many teachers felt that general sessions had their place, but that they should not be extended unduly. One teacher indicated that "a good speaker sure makes your motor race," but when there are numerous speeches and introductions, the appropriateness and value of the session might be questioned. For example, one practice that some school systems follow is that of introducing and relating backgrounds of all new teachers in the system during a general session. This practice probably serves a very noble purpose if the system has a reasonably small number of new teachers. But when the number is large, the practicality and effectiveness seem doubtful. A solution for this situation was provided by Bozeman Public Schools in their preparation of a booklet giving pertinent information on teachers new to the system. Thus, if it is necessary to introduce teachers during a general session, then someone can consult the booklet if he desires further information. The point here is that efficiency is extremely important to an effective pre-school teacher orientation program. Efficiency need not represent

impersonalness or coldness, but it is essential that the orientation time be put to the best possible advantage.

Recommendations

In light of the information gathered by the writer, there are recommendations in addition to those already suggested which might be made concerning pre-school teacher orientation programs in Montana.

The teacher orientation program should be considered by administrators as possibly the most important single event of the school year. A successful year hinges upon everyone in the school situation getting off to a good start. Getting the year started properly is a primary purpose of the teacher orientation program. Teacher orientation should not be taken lightly by administrators or teachers. There is an important job to be done during orientation, and it is imperative that the best efforts of everyone concerned with the program be put forth to make orientation be a truly significant experience.

Teachers can and should help in planning the teacher orientation program. There is much that the teachers who have participated in the orientation program can offer to those responsible for conducting the program. Teacher evaluations of various aspects of the program can be utilized along with administrative experience to form a more meaningful and effectual teacher orientation program. More studies like the one conducted by the Helena school system need to be undertaken to bring

about improvement of the various individual programs.

Pre-school teacher orientation programs need to be reviewed, re-evaluated, revised, and up-dated every year. There probably is no magic formula for a successful orientation program for all occasions, times, and conditions. Therefore, the program will need renewed attention every year if it is to gain or retain its proper perspective, depth, and utility.

New teachers in a school system need special preparation and consideration. The new teacher in a school system frequently undergoes a period of anxiety previous to assuming his teaching assignment. The school administration has an obligation to alleviate a substantial portion of the apprehension through the orientation program. Several systems in Montana begin orientation for new teachers a day or two prior to the beginning of orientation for the entire teaching staff of the district. If the time is utilized in an effective manner, the practice seems highly attractive to the writer. Some school systems not currently following this procedure might give serious thought to adding days for the new teacher program, or, at least, differentiating in the present program between the orientation needed by the new and the returning teacher.

More study is needed on the subject of teacher orientation. For some reason, school district teacher orientation has not received the

concern due its important role in the education drama. Since the scope and content of the study reported in this paper is by no means exhaustive, there needs to be further study of orientation practices in Montana. Hopefully such a study can shed more light on the curtain raising event of the teacher year, the importance of which has probably far too often been underestimated.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A. Letter of Explanation Sent to Thirty-Nine Superintendents

1805 Joslyn #6
Helena, Montana 59601
February 27, 1970

Dear Superintendent:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Education degree in school administration at Montana State University, I am writing a professional paper on pre-school teacher orientation programs in Montana. I am conducting a study of practices and procedures utilized by various school districts in the week immediately prior to the opening of school in the fall to acquaint and prepare teachers, both new and old, for the ensuing school year. This study is to be a survey of existing programs, not a critical examination of any particular orientation program in any individual district. I will need information about your district pre-school teacher orientation program, and I am hoping that you will be able to supply it as the information will be vital to my survey.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed envelope. Any additional information that you might be able to supply concerning your district's program would also be extremely helpful. (For example, the results of any studies that you may have conducted on this topic.) If you could return the questionnaire and any other information at your earliest possible convenience, I shall be most grateful to you.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Results of this survey will be available later this spring or in early summer, and I shall be happy to furnish them to you if you so desire.

Very truly yours,

Glen A. Thomas

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER
ORIENTATION PROGRAMS IN MONTANA
IN FALL 1969

* *

Please place an X in the appropriate box or supply the necessary information in the space provided.

Name and location of school district _____

Number of teachers in your system _____

Number of new teachers in fall 1969 _____

How many days did your pre-school orientation program for new teachers run in fall 1969?

___ one day ___ two days ___three days ___four days

___ five days

How many days were returning teachers in your system required to attend orientation meetings?

___ same as new teachers ___ none ___ one day ___ two days

___ three days ___ four days

Do you plan changes in the length of your program in the fall of 1970?

____ no ___ longer ___ shorter

Are elementary and secondary orientation run separately?

___ entirely separate

___ congruent programs for elementary and secondary

___ some joint meetings; some separate meetings

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

Please indicate which of the following types of activities are a part of your teacher orientation program

___ general sessions for all teachers

___ building meetings

___ departmental or grade-level meetings

___ workshops in various subject areas

___ time to work in classroom

___ open houses of facilities

___ community-sponsored activities

___ coffee hours, teas, luncheons, etc., for getting acquainted

other _____

What do you feel is the most important objective to be accomplished by an orientation program for teachers?

What do you feel is the most beneficial part of your program?

If at all possible, please enclose a schedule of your pre-school teacher orientation program last fall. If you do not have a printed schedule to enclose, could you please briefly summarize your program below on a day-by-day basis? (Use back of this page if necessary)

If you plan significant changes for next fall's program, could you please indicate these below? (Use back of this page if necessary)

QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THE 1969-70 PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER ORIENTATION PROGRAM IN HELENA

Note: I am working on a Master of Education degree at MSU and hope to receive it this summer. The topic for my professional paper is pre-school teacher orientation programs in Montana, and I have surveyed the programs in thirty-four districts in Montana. I would like to get additional information on what teachers feel about orientation programs. Therefore, I would appreciate it very much if you could take a moment of your time and answer a few questions. Thank you.

Glen Thomas

Status Fall 1969 (check appropriate blank)

___ New teacher to system ___ Taught previously in Helena

1. What do you feel is the most important objective to be accomplished by an orientation program for teachers?

2. What did you feel was the most beneficial part of the program held last fall?

3. What did you feel was the least beneficial part of the program held last fall?

4. How do you feel most of the time in the orientation program should be spent?