

A SURVEY OF SUPERVISORY PRACTICES
IN VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Education
University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by
John William Jordan, III
August 1957

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
VIRGINIA

APPROVAL SHEET

The Undersigned, appointed by the Chairman of the Department of Education, have examined this thesis by

JOHN W. JORDAN, III, B.S.

Candidate for the degree Master of Science in Education and hereby certify their approval of its acceptance.

Mary J. Barbour

Miss Mary C. Barbour

O. K. Campbell

Dr. O. Kenneth Campbell

C. H. Phipps

Dr. Calvin H. Phipps

E. F. Overton

Dr. Edward F. Overton, Chairman,
Department of Education

DATE:

August 5, 1957

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer is indebted to many people who helped in various ways, but particularly to these:

The Virginia elementary principals who gave their time and effort to make this study possible.

Dr. E. F. Overton and the other members of the committee for the high standards expected.

My parents for the help and encouragement freely given.

My wife for her patience, understanding, and endurance while this study progressed to its present form.

My son, Brad, who provided innumerable distractions, but who, nevertheless, provided the primary motivation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem.	1
The Immediate Purpose.	1
The Ultimate Purpose	2
Justification of the Problem	2
The Thesis	4
Limitations.	4
Definitions.	5
Organization of the remainder of the thesis.	6
II. THE PREPARATION OF THE SURVEY.	7
Constructing the Questionnaire	7
The Richmond Pilot Study	8
Justification for the Pilot Study.	8
Results of the Pilot Study	8
Pilot Study Summary and Conclusions.	10
The Virginia Sample.	11
The Sample	11
Analysis of the Returns.	11
A Note on the Scope of the Sample.	13
Treatment of the Findings.	13
Tabulation	13
Presentation	13

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. THE VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL AS A SUPERVISOR.	15
Some Characteristics of the Virginia Elementary School	15
The Assistant Principal and Supervision.	20
Classroom Visits	20
Conferences after the Visit.	23
Helping the Teacher Through Demonstration Teaching	26
The Principal's Work Week.	29
The Principal's Background and Training.	33
The Principal Evaluates the Teacher.	37
IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	40
Summary.	40
Background	40
Method	40
Results.	41
Conclusions.	43
Recommendations.	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47
APPENDIX	49

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Per Cent of Virginia Elementary Schools Having Full- Time Special Teachers	16
II. Per Cent of Virginia Elementary Schools Having Part- Time Special Teachers	18
III. Special Supervisory Services Available to Virginia Elementary Schools.	19
IV. Average Number of Classroom Visitations Made per Week by Virginia Elementary Principals	21
V. Time Spent per Week by Virginia Elementary Principals in Classroom Observation.	22
VI. Frequency of Visits to the Same Classroom More Than Once During the Same Week	24
VII. Frequency of Follow-up Conferences After Classroom Observation	25
VIII. Certain Bases of the Supervisory Conference	27
IX. Frequency of Demonstration Teaching by Virginia Elementary Principals.	28
X. Demonstration Teaching Fields of Virginia Elementary Principals.	30
XI. Rank Importance of Certain Job Functions as Given by Virginia Elementary Principals.	35
XII. Rank Importance of Certain Means of Teacher Evaluation. . .	38

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Percentage Returns of the Questionnaire Sent to Twenty-nine Richmond Principals in the Pilot Study	9
2. Percentage Returns of the Questionnaire Sent to 424 Virginia Elementary Principals	12
3. Average Weekly Time Distribution of the Virginia Principal's Work Week.	32
4. A Comparison Between the Virginia Elementary Principal with Supervisory Assistance and the Principal with no Such Assistance.	34

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The elementary principal today sees increasing emphasis placed upon supervision as a means of improving the instructional program for children. Just as business has recognized that supervision is a wise investment and a necessity,¹ so has education come to realize the value of proper supervision by a capable principal.

If any person in a supervisory position is not contributing to more effective learning in the classroom, his existence in that position cannot be justified.²

If it is true that, "the most effective way of supervising has not yet been determined,"³ then it appears that finding more effective supervisory practices is one of the larger problems that faces the elementary principal.

A. THE PROBLEM

The Immediate Purpose

The solution of a large problem usually means solving other smaller problems first. If more effective supervisory practices are to be found, it would seem to be necessary first to discover the current status of supervision.

¹Thomas H. Briggs, Improving Instruction (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 2.

²Kimball Wiles, Supervision for Better Schools (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 3.

³Ibid.

Although much data can be found concerning supervision in other states and in the nation as a whole, only a limited amount of information could be found about the principal's supervisory duties in Virginia.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to investigate the complete field of supervision in Virginia. An investigation of this sort is far beyond the scope of this study, even if it were possible.

Because of the lack of information, however, this thesis has several immediate purposes:

1. To determine the amount of time spent by Virginia elementary principals in some of the various phases of supervision.
2. To determine some of the kinds of supervisory activities of these principals.
3. To determine the frequency of certain supervisory activities.
4. To determine something of the background, the training, and the assistance that these principals have to aid them in performing their supervisory duties.

The Ultimate Purpose

The ultimate purpose of this thesis is to establish a basis for finding more effective means of supervision.

B. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The United States Office of Education, in a study of supervision of elementary education, reported that:

It is interesting to note the increasing importance of the elementary school principal in a supervisory capacity. Approximately half of

the cities of the 100 studied indicate that the elementary school principal has a major share of the responsibility for the elementary school program.⁴

Throughout the wide range of educational literature, this increased emphasis upon supervision by the elementary principal is noted.

Contrasting with this enlarged role of the elementary principal as a supervisor, is the feeling on the part of the teacher that supervision is not helpful.⁵ It would seem that even though education is becoming more aware of the necessity for good supervision, more effective techniques need to be developed.

Probably in all of the positions that exist in the field of education, none has a greater variety of duties than that of the elementary principal. Besides being disciplinarian, counselor, supervisor, and building inspector, he must also be a general handy man who can make emergency repairs of projectors, lights, plumbing, skinned elbows, and torn hems. Indeed, many principals become so involved in petty details that they lose sight of their real purpose.⁶

There appears to be a definite need, then, to determine the status of supervision in Virginia as it now exists. Only when this present status is known can a practical beginning be made on the problem of making these supervisory practices more effective.

⁴United States Office of Education, Organization and Supervision of Elementary Education, Bulletin 1949, No. 11 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), cited by John T. Wahlquist, et al., The Administration of Public Education (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952), p. 266.

⁵Wiles, op. cit., p. 3.

⁶T. H. Briggs, op. cit., p. 33.

This thesis attempts to fill to a limited extent this felt need of determining the present status of supervision.

C. THE THESIS

Limitations

It is not possible to develop all of the many ramifications of supervision in a thesis. This thesis can only hope to investigate a few of the many. This is its most serious limitation.

The nature of the supervisory problems that the elementary principal faces is many-sided. This, too, is beyond the scope of this study. However, included on the questionnaire that was sent out are two optional questions that reveal on a small scale the nature of these problems. The results of this parallel study are not included in the thesis because of an inadequate return and inconclusive results.

A questionnaire, such as the one used here, is generally regarded as being only partly objective at best. The answers called for are colored quite naturally by the personality, experience, and training of the individual respondents. An attempt was made to construct questions that would minimize subjective interpretation and so increase the validity of the replies. A more detailed discussion of the construction of the questionnaire follows in the next chapter.

The survey does not include all of the principals in Virginia. Only white principals are included, because no racial comparisons are intended and no combined information desired. Principals of schools with less than five teachers are not included. This is in line with the Virginia

State Department of Education classification and is done because these small schools often have only a head teacher or a building principal who is not responsible for supervision of instruction. The principal of the combined high and elementary school is not included, because this study is concerned only with the elementary school. The teaching principal is not included. This is done under the assumption that the principal who teaches must use all available time outside of teaching for carrying out his routine administrative duties and so is unable, because of lack of time, to carry out to any appreciable extent the several supervisory factors investigated in this survey.

Definitions

The definitions of supervision are as many and varied as are the functions. A definition of supervision can be found to fit almost any length or any degree of complexity desired. Wiles defines supervision as "a service activity that exists to help teachers do their job better."⁷ This short definition is in marked contrast to the much longer one of Briggs:

Supervision is the systematic and continuous effort to encourage and direct such self-activated growth that the teacher is increasingly more effective in contributing to the achievement of the recognized objectives of education with the pupils under his responsibility.⁸

⁷Wiles, op. cit., p. 3.

⁸Thomas H. Briggs and Joseph Justman, Improving Instruction Through Supervision (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), p. 126.

Regardless of the source of the definition, each definition has several things in common with the others. The common thread that runs through each definition is either stated or implied. Each definition states in some way that help is given to the teacher in improving the instructional program. Each definition indicates that the help given is planned help.

For the purposes of this study, then, supervision is thought of as planned, creative help by the principal in the self-evaluation and improvement of the classroom instructional program.

Whenever the survey is mentioned in the body of the thesis, it includes all of the respondents except the Richmond elementary principals who served as a pilot group.

Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

The method of attack and the treatment of the findings are discussed in Chapter II. Special attention will be paid to the problem of constructing and revising the questionnaire.

The results of the findings are presented, discussed, and interpreted in Chapter III. An attempt is made to determine what the average principal in Virginia is doing about supervision. Also to be considered are some of the interrelationships involved and the extensiveness of certain practices in supervision.

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in Chapter IV. This last chapter is followed by the bibliography and the appendix.

CHAPTER II

THE PREPARATION OF THE SURVEY

Since personal observation of the supervisory activities of the Virginia elementary principal would be extremely difficult in a study of this sort, the questionnaire is used as the device for gathering the necessary data. The questionnaire has the advantage of making possible a wide range of inquiry at a fairly nominal cost. The disadvantage of using this device lies partly in the subjective nature of the replies and partly in the mechanically restrictive characteristic of the instrument. Both of these limitations can be overcome to a certain extent.

A. CONSTRUCTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Fitting the Problem

The problem of finding the status of supervision in Virginia is complex. Supervision has many functions; so many, in fact, that it probably would be impossible to investigate them all. An attempt was made to construct questions that would call for unequivocal answers, and that would be representative of the many and varied supervisory duties.

In general, all of the answers called for on the questionnaire are of the short answer type. Most can be either checked or circled. A few require that a blank be filled in and some allow for additional answers not included on the questionnaire. Two questions at the end of the form are of the essay type and are concerned with some of the types of supervisory problems that the principal faces. The returns on this section are

not discussed in the results, because the answers were optional and it was not felt that an adequate return was obtained.

After the questions were formulated and the questionnaire arranged, several people were asked to complete the form in order to determine the clarity of the questions and the ease of answering. Also from these, a very rough idea of the amount of time it would take to complete the form was obtained.

B. THE RICHMOND PILOT STUDY

Justification of the Pilot Study

In order to prevent wasted time and effort, determine the validity of the replies, check the mechanics of the questionnaire, and get an indication of the number of replies expected, it was decided to use a small portion, the Richmond principals, as a pilot group. The selection of the Richmond group was largely a matter of convenience; however, this group is probably fairly typical and one that would meet satisfactorily the purposes stated above.

Results of the Pilot Study

Questionnaires were sent to all of the Richmond principals whose schools met the size requirements outlined in Chapter I. Figure 1 shows graphically the percentage of returns. The three questionnaires that were returned unanswered cited a lack of time as the reason. One telephone call was received commenting on the difficulty of answering such specific questions, but, as a whole, the fifteen who replied apparently had no real difficulty.

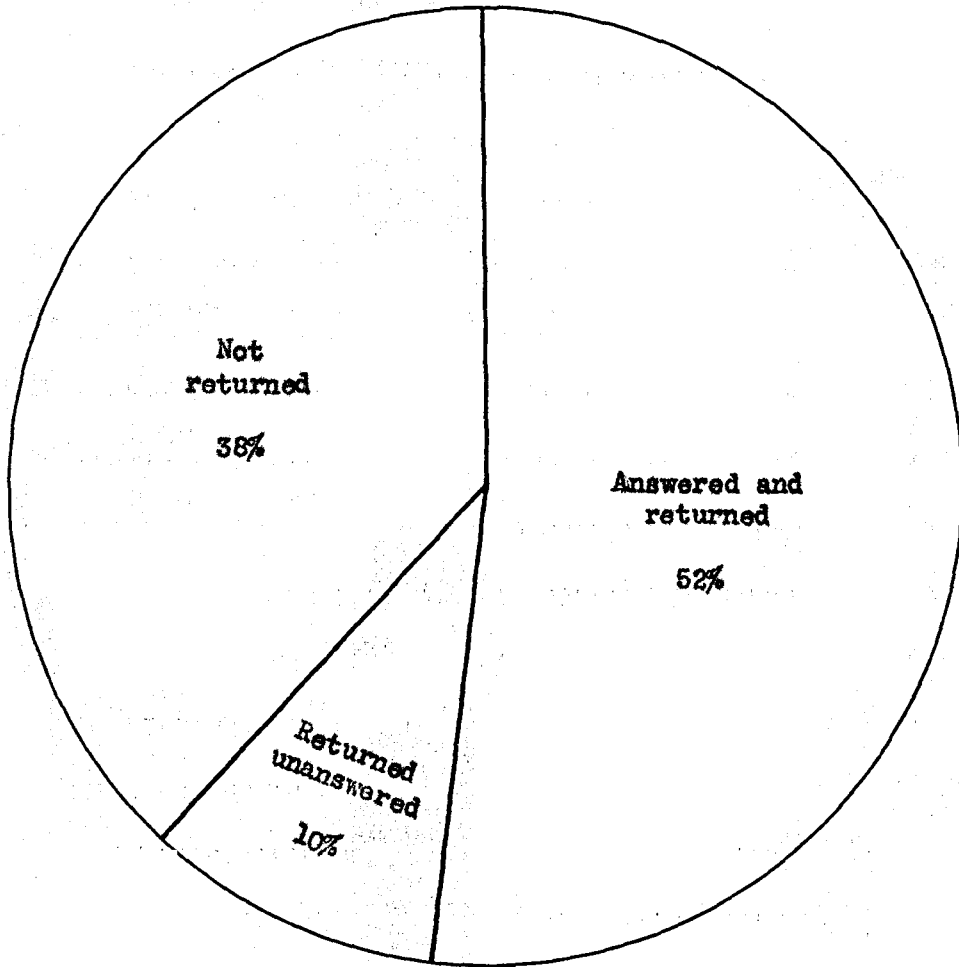


FIGURE 1
PERCENTAGE RETURNS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE
SENT TO TWENTY-NINE RICHMOND
PRINCIPALS IN THE
PILOT STUDY

An examination of the returns showed that certain revisions were necessary. A question was added to obtain information about double shifts in the school. Some of the principals in the pilot group replied that they had general supervisors available. An addition was made on the questionnaire to provide for this.

In the pilot study, the principals were asked how many college courses they had taken "in supervision." Since the replies to this ranged from one to twelve, it seemed that there was some misunderstanding about what constituted a course in supervision. In an attempt to clarify this, this question was changed to read, "college courses in supervisory techniques." As it later developed, this attempt at clarification was futile.

The question about the assistant principal was altered, so the principal could state definitely that he had no assistant, if such was the case.

The section pertaining to teacher evaluation added self-rating scales to differentiate between the self-administered and the supervisor-administered types.

Pilot Study Summary and Conclusions

The pilot study indicated certain points that needed revision. These revisions were made.

The co-operation of the pilot group and the answers they gave showed that the more comprehensive state-wide survey would be both feasible and worth while.

C. THE VIRGINIA SAMPLE

The Sample

After revision, the questionnaire was sent to all of the white Virginia elementary principals who met the following qualifications:

1. Full-time elementary principals with no regularly assigned teaching duties.
2. Principals of schools with elementary grades only.
3. Principals of schools with five or more teachers.

This classification is in general agreement with that used for certain statistical breakdowns by the Virginia State Department of Education. The justification for these limitations is found in the first chapter.

The State Department of Education furnished the basic mailing list.¹

An Analysis of the Returns

The questionnaire was sent to 424 elementary principals throughout the state. Figure 2 shows that 274 principals, or 64.6 per cent, answered and returned the questionnaire. The number of returns was considered adequate for a continuation of this study.

A comparison with the returns of the Richmond pilot group shows the percentage of returns to be significantly higher. Three possible reasons might account for this difference:

1. The Richmond principals are more pressed for time than the state group.

¹Commonwealth of Virginia State Board of Education. Educational Directory. School year 1956-1957, Vol. XXXIX, No. 5 (Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia. Division of Purchase and Printing, 1956).

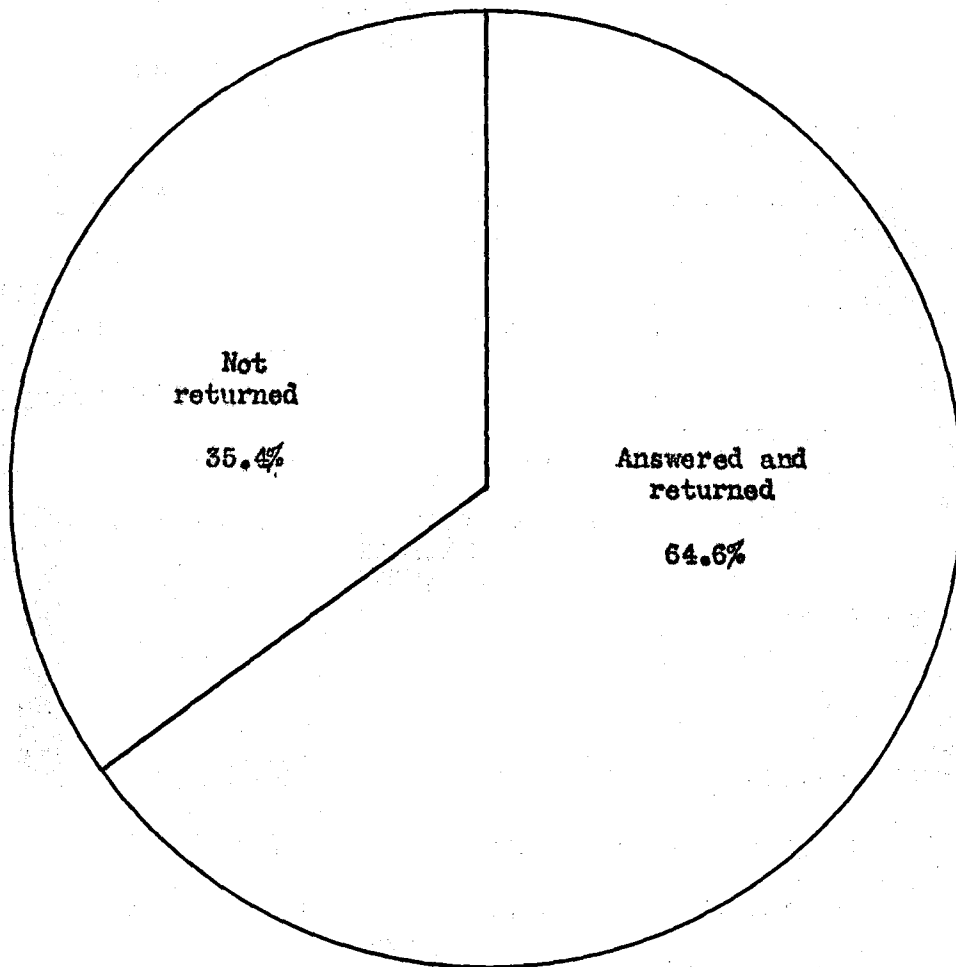


FIGURE 2

**PERCENTAGE OF RETURNS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE
SENT TO 424 VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPALS**

2. There might be a psychological negativism associated with being part of a pilot group.
3. The letter that accompanied the questionnaire to the Richmond group was different from that sent to the state group and might have produced a less co-operative attitude.

A Note on the Scope of the Sample

Throughout the remainder of the thesis, the state group will be considered independently of the Richmond group. This is done because it is felt that the differences in gathering data, while not great, are sufficient to warrant separate treatment.

D. TREATMENT OF THE FINDINGS

Tabulation

The findings were tabulated in accordance with accepted statistical procedures. An attempt was made to present each question on the questionnaire in its clearest possible manner, but naturally all of the answers did not fit each particular case, with the result that some answers were written in, instead of being checked or circled as the case might be. If an answer logically could be interpreted to mean the same as one of the possible answers given, then it was the policy of the tabulator to so indicate. On several occasions, when the answer that was written in did not fit any of the possible answers, it was tabulated in the "Other" column. A few answers were so diffuse as to be of no value and so were omitted.

Presentation

Several methods of statistical presentation are used according to

the nature of the data. Circle graphs are used where applicable. Tabular presentation as a standard statistical procedure is used extensively.

CHAPTER III

THE VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL AS A SUPERVISOR

Some Characteristics of the Virginia Elementary School

To understand the role of the principal as a supervisor, it is first necessary to understand some of the characteristics of his school. Factors such as the enrollment, the number of teachers, the teacher load, and the personnel resources are all important in trying to understand the principal's job.

The median size of 498 pupils in each Virginia elementary school is considerably below the national average of 570 pupils.¹ The size of the 273 schools included in the survey ranges from seven schools with an enrollment below 200 to eleven schools with an enrollment of more than 1,000 pupils. The distribution is skewed toward the larger end, because the survey eliminates the small school with fewer than five teachers or with a teaching principal.

Each principal is responsible for the supervision of nineteen teachers. No school in the survey has fewer than five teachers, but the upper end of the distribution shows seven schools with thirty-five or more teachers. The average teacher has in her class slightly more than thirty-one pupils.

Table I indicates that full-time special teachers are nonexistent in 72.2 per cent of the schools. About sixteen per cent have one full-time

¹National Education Association of the United States. Department of Elementary School Principals. The Elementary-School Principalship - Today and Tomorrow. Twenty-Seventh Yearbook. Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 (Washington: National Education Association, 1948), p. 43.

TABLE I

PER CENT OF VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
HAVING FULL-TIME SPECIAL TEACHERS

Number of full-time special teachers	Per cent of schools
58%
4	1.1
3	5.2
2	4.8
1	15.9
0	72.2
<hr/>	
Total	100.0%

special teacher and the remaining twelve per cent have more than one. Part-time special teachers, as revealed in Table II, are more numerous; about fifty-nine per cent of the elementary schools have one or more of them. One or two part-time special teachers are found in approximately thirty-seven per cent of the schools, with about twenty-two per cent of the schools having three or more.

All of the schools reporting have faculty meetings at least once a month. Three meetings per month is the average, with about twenty-five per cent of the schools reporting a faculty meeting once a week. No estimate is possible, but, according to spontaneous comments on the questionnaire, some schools divide their faculty meetings into the "administrative" and the "supervisory" types, usually alternating the types from week to week.

Some schools have the problem of double shifts. Of the 275 schools, 15.8 per cent have this double shift. Slightly more than five per cent of the schools are affected only in the first grade; about nine per cent in grades one and two, and slightly more than one per cent have the first three grades on the double shift. None reports double shifts extending beyond the third grade.

The principal's supervisory duties are shared. Table III shows that although about thirteen per cent of the schools have no special supervisory services available, many have one or more. Over sixty-five per cent of the schools reported having supervision in music. General supervision, though obviously not a special service in the strict sense, is mentioned as being available by 61.1 per cent. Special services in the

TABLE II
PER CENT OF VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
HAVING PART-TIME SPECIAL TEACHERS

Number of part-time special teachers	Per cent of schools
8	1.1%
7	1.8
6	2.2
5	4.0
4	5.5
3	7.0
2	18.7
1	18.3
0	41.4
Total	100.0%

TABLE III
SPECIAL SUPERVISORY SERVICES AVAILABLE
TO VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Service	Per cent of schools mentioning
Reading	33.7
Language	4.8
Arithmetic	7.0
Speech	34.0
Music	65.2
Physical education	26.4
Social studies	7.0
Art	39.9
General	61.1
No special supervisory service	12.8

TABLE IV
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CLASSROOM VISITATIONS
 MADE PER WEEK BY VIRGINIA
 ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

Number of visitations	Per cent of principals reporting
More than 10	13.6%
10	10.4
9	2.0
8	7.2
7	5.6
6	6.4
5	23.6
4	8.8
3	13.6
2	5.2
1	2.8
08
 Total	 100.0%

Median = 5.75 visits per week.

TABLE V
 TIME SPENT PER WEEK BY VIRGINIA PRINCIPALS
 IN CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Amount of time spent per week	Per cent of principals reporting *
More than seven hours	9.1%
From five to seven hours.	17.8
From three to five hours.	34.0
From one to three hours	28.4
Less than one hour	10.7
Total	100.0%

* Based on 253 replies.

The principal, then, averages about fifteen minutes per teacher per week. He does not, however, visit all of the classrooms each week. He visits about one classroom a day, stays slightly less than one hour, and takes about three weeks or slightly longer to observe the entire faculty. Table VI shows that he sometimes finds occasion to revisit the same classroom during the week, often, as ascertained from comments on the survey, to follow completely the course of a unit of teaching or to help a teacher overcome some specific difficulty.

Conferences after the Visit

According to the data shown in Table VII, the Virginia elementary principal usually has a conference with the teacher after the classroom observation. About one-third of the principals state that they always hold such a conference and about forty per cent do it most of the time. Slightly less than one-fourth use the technique of the follow-up conference only when it is convenient. Less than three per cent seldom or never have such conferences.

When asked about the number of conferences they have, these principals stated that in an average week, they hold 6.2 supervisory conferences. Comparison with the number of visitations per week (5.75 visits) indicates that a supervisory conference does not necessarily follow, nor is it dependent upon, the classroom visit.

The principals were asked which of the following were used in holding the supervisory conference:

1. Notes taken in class.
2. Notes taken immediately after the observation.

TABLE VI

FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO THE SAME CLASSROOM
MORE THAN ONCE DURING THE
SAME WEEK

Frequency of revisit	Per cent of principals reporting *
Always.	1.3%
Frequently.	17.6
Sometimes	69.5
Seldom.	7.7
Never	3.9
Total	100.0%

* Based on 233 replies.

TABLE VII
 FREQUENCY OF FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCES
 AFTER CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Frequency	Per cent of principals reporting *
Always	32.9%
Most of the time	40.6
When convenient	23.5
Seldom	2.4
Never6
Total	100.0%

* Based on 170 replies.

Note: In addition to the above, 117 principals replied that follow-up conferences are held only when warranted.

3. Notes taken just prior to the conference.

4. Recall of events.

As shown in Table VIII, the majority of the principals (52.7 per cent) depend upon their memory only to supply them with the facts upon which to base the supervisory conference. About fourteen per cent use recall plus one of the other methods listed. Other than recall, 41.9 per cent of the principals reporting used notes taken immediately after the visit. Only 8.5 per cent reported taking notes while in class. Naturally, there is some overlapping of these methods, particularly between "Notes taken immediately after the observation" and "Recall of events." A few principals used all of the methods listed.

The typical Virginia elementary principal has a supervisory conference with each teacher about once every three weeks. He usually follows each classroom visit with a conference and depends to a large extent upon his memory to supply him with the needed facts upon which to base the conference.

Helping the Teacher Through Demonstration Teaching

Demonstration teaching as a supervisory technique is not often used among Virginia elementary principals. Table IX shows that slightly more than thirty-seven per cent never use demonstration teaching, and that an additional 32.5 per cent give demonstrations less than once a month. Only 18 per cent use this as often as once a month; 5.9 per cent, about twice a month; and about 6 per cent give demonstrations once or more per week.

In many schools, demonstration teaching is done by someone other

TABLE VIII
 CERTAIN BASES OF THE
 SUPERVISORY
 CONFERENCE

Basis	Per cent using
Recall of events only	52.7%
Recall plus one or more of those below.	14.1
Notes prior to conference	6.5
Notes after observation	41.9
Notes taken in class.	8.5

Because of overlapping, the above does not total 100%

TABLE IX
 FREQUENCY OF DEMONSTRATION TEACHING
 BY VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY
 PRINCIPALS

Frequency	Per cent of principals reporting
More than once a week	1.6%
About once a week	4.7
About twice a month	5.9
About once a month.	18.0
Less than once a month.	32.5
Never	37.3
 Total	 100.0%

than the principal. Most often mentioned by the principals surveyed is the special supervisor, the consultant, or the helping teacher. A few replies indicate that occasionally the textbook publishing company representative gives demonstrations. In spite of the fact that teachers often get help from other teachers in the system, it is significant to note that only three principals mentioned this as a source of demonstrations.

When viewed as a whole, the principals who do demonstration teaching seem to favor certain subject areas. In Table X, it can be seen that these favored fields include arithmetic, reading, social studies, and physical education, with language and science ranking next in frequency of mention. As might be expected from the data concerning special supervisory services available, the highly technical fields of music and art are not even mentioned as a field of demonstration teaching by more than ninety per cent of the principals.

The extent to which the Virginia elementary principal does demonstration teaching is limited. The special supervisor, the consultant, and the helping teacher appear to be the ones most likely to use this technique. The practice of using other teachers in the same system to give demonstrations is almost nonexistent.

The Principal's Work Week

Question six of the questionnaire asked the principals to estimate the amount of time spent per week on six duties. Admittedly, the problem of determining the amount of time spent on certain parts of a job is a difficult one and the answer can be, at best, only a rough estimate; nevertheless, in addition to making an approximation of the principal's

TABLE X
 DEMONSTRATION TEACHING FIELDS
 OF VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY
 PRINCIPALS

Field	Per cent of principals mentioning
Arithmetic.	32.5%
Reading	26.3
Social studies.	26.3
Physical education.	24.0
Science	21.2
Language.	19.3
Music	8.0
Art	7.3
Any field	4.7

time distribution, it is important to note the manner in which he thinks he spends his time. This thought process can give some indication of the importance the principal attaches to the various integrated parts of his job. Then, too, although one person probably cannot give a true estimate of his time distribution, the average of a comparatively large sample (i.e., the principals included in this survey) should result in a reasonably close estimate.

Figure 3 shows the average weekly time distribution of the 219 principals who responded to this part of the questionnaire. Routine administration occupies the largest portion of the principal's time. The 28.4 per cent that is taken up with these administrative matters is undoubtedly a very important part of the principal's job. Supervision, considered by many the most important function of the principal, occupies about one-fifth of the typical week. Conferences, part of which probably can be included under supervision, take eighteen per cent. The most outstanding part of the figure shows the amount of time devoted to clerical and miscellaneous duties. Almost one-third of his time is devoted to these two things.

The questionnaire was not sent to principals who have regularly assigned teaching duties. Despite this fact, Figure 3 shows that the average principal spends 4.1 per cent, or about one hour forty minutes, of the week in teaching. Since he has no regularly assigned teaching duties, it might be presumed that this time is devoted to demonstration teaching; this, however, is not true. Referring back to Table IX, it can be seen that this supervisory technique is used more often than once a

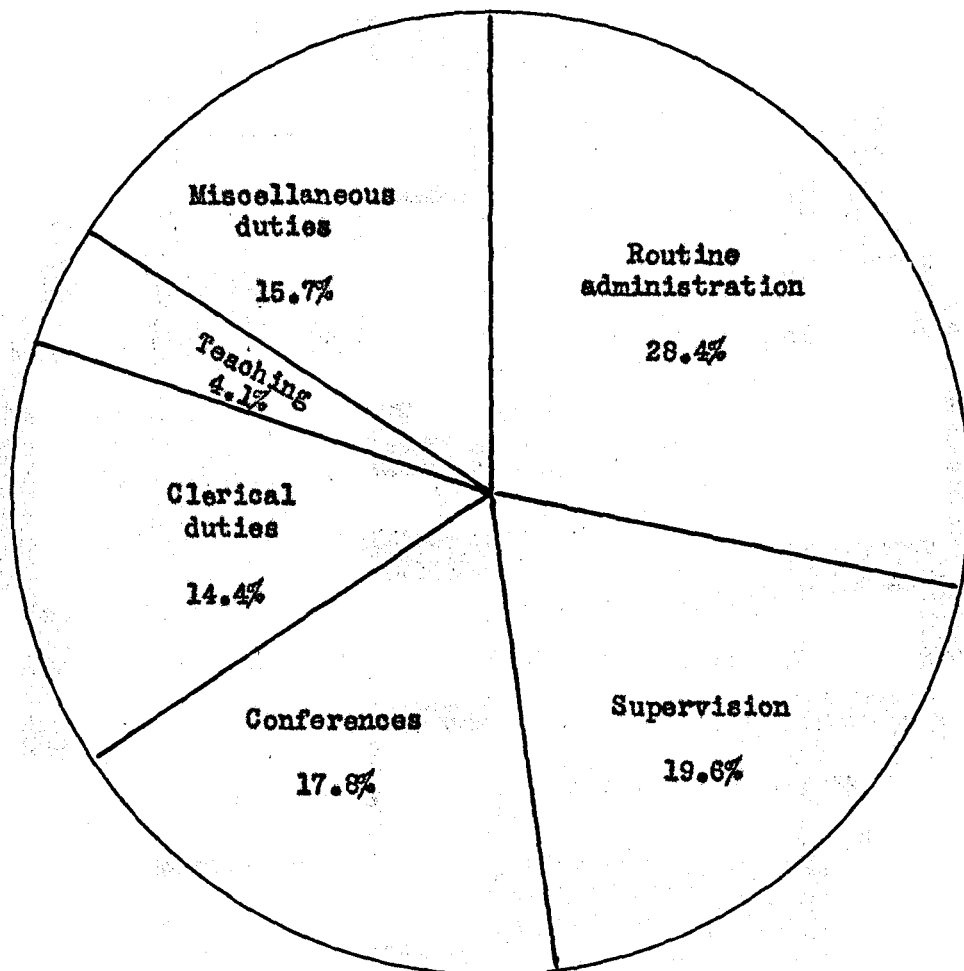


FIGURE 3
AVERAGE WEEKLY TIME DISTRIBUTION IN
THE VIRGINIA PRINCIPAL'S
WORK WEEK

month by only about twelve per cent of the group. This leads to the conclusion that the demonstration lessons must be more than day-long affairs or else that the principal teaches for some reason other than for demonstration.

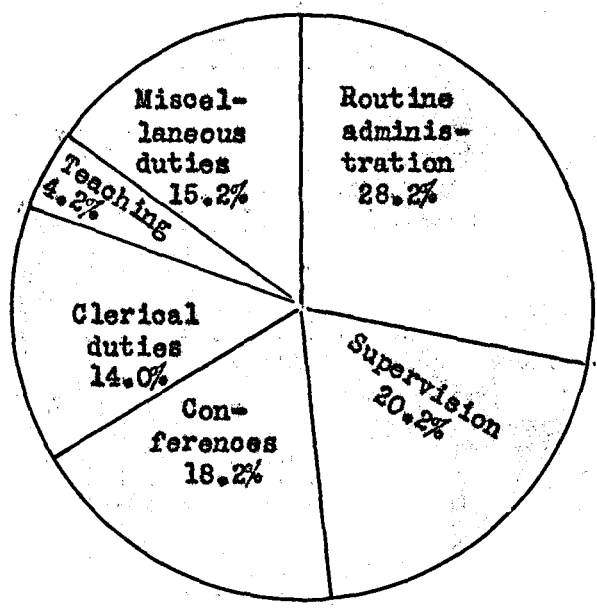
Figure 4 shows the relationship between the principal who has no supervisory assistance available to the school and the principal who does. The most significant part of the figure shows that the average principal who has no assistance available actually does less supervision than the average principal who has available general and special supervisors. The principal who has no help of a supervisory nature must do much more routine administration, clerical duties, and miscellaneous duties.

Table XI shows just how important the principal rates the different components of his job. Of the 254 principals who reported on this item, the supervisory function is rated clearly in first place. One-fourth of the principals rated it in second place. Conferences and routine administration are clearly ranked in second and third places, respectively. Opinion concerning the relative importance of clerical duties and miscellaneous duties is not quite so clear. The principals' ranking of clerical duties is fairly evenly split between fourth and fifth places. Similarly, miscellaneous duties are divided between fifth and sixth places. The relative unimportance of the teaching function is shown by the fact that nearly one-third did not rank it at all.

The Principal's Background and Training

In response to the questions on background and training, 262 principals gave a very concise summary of the jobs held prior to assuming

The Virginia Elementary Principal with Supervisory Assistance



The Virginia Elementary Principal with No Supervisory Assistance

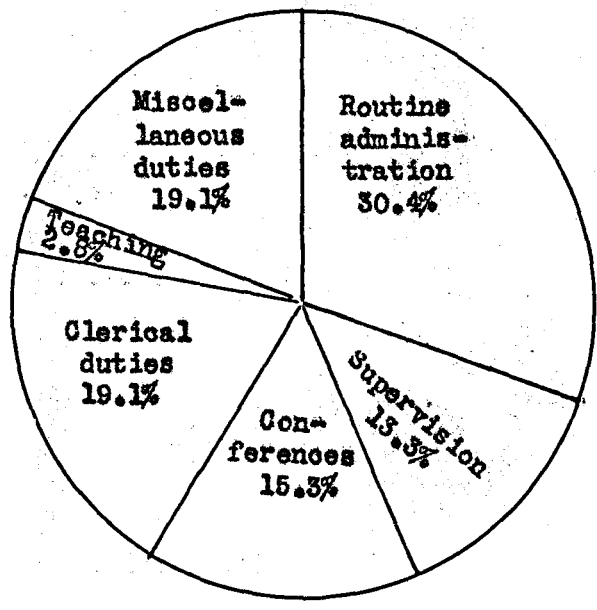


FIGURE 4

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL WITH SUPERVISORY ASSISTANCE AND THE PRINCIPAL WITH NO SUCH ASSISTANCE

TABLE XI

RANK IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN JOB FUNCTIONS AS GIVEN
BY VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

Rank	Per cent frequency of mention by function					
	Super- vision	Confer- ences	Routine adminis- tration	Clerical duties	Miscel- laneous duties	Teach- ing
1	(59.0%)	20.9%	22.0%	0.4%	0.0%	2.0%
2	26.0	(46.0)	14.9	4.7	2.0	2.8
3	8.3	22.8	(44.5)	7.9	6.3	9.4
4	5.1	7.1	14.6	(32.7)	19.7	18.5
5	0.8	2.4	2.8	32.3	(34.2)	18.1
6	0.0	0.4	0.0	14.6	30.3	16.9
Not ranked	0.8	0.4	1.2	7.5	7.5	(32.3)
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note 1: Data is based on 254 replies to this question.

Note 2: Parentheses indicate mode of column.

the principalship and a brief resume of their scholastic training in supervisory techniques. Of these 262, there are 175, or almost seventy per cent, who have had experience at one time or another in elementary teaching. The job of elementary teacher was held by 136 of them just prior to their present job as principal. The secondary school provided in whole or in part the background for 117 of these principals, with 65 of them coming directly from the position of high school teacher to the elementary school principalship.

Other jobs in education, including that of assistant principal, provided experience for 51 principals. Those who came directly from college into the principalship numbered only seven.

Many principals show a background of military service, with a few indicating other jobs, such as housekeeping, banking, and factory work. Fifty-two of the principals queried show a background of college teaching, special teaching, or acting as supervisors or consultants.

The question concerning the number of courses in "supervisory techniques" shows a mixed response. About nine per cent of the principals have taken no courses in supervisory techniques. Sixty-six per cent have taken such courses at the undergraduate level and eighty-four per cent at the graduate level. From the data, it is impossible to analyze the exact number of courses taken, since the range is from one to thirty; apparently, a number of principals used the semester hour as the unit in reporting this, while others were undoubtedly referring to administrative courses as supervisory courses. A 1948 study showed that a considerable amount of overlapping into supervision occurs particularly in administrative

courses.²

The Principal Evaluates the Teacher

Teacher evaluation is a recognized function of the supervisory process. The questionnaire listed twelve means of evaluating the teacher, and the respondents were asked to omit any not used in their school, but to rank the remainder in the order of their importance. Replies from 250 principals form the basis for Table XII. The means of teacher evaluation are listed horizontally on the table according to the per cent of use by the group. It can be seen from this that classroom observation is the most used means, with a use by 92.4 per cent of the principals. At the other end of the horizontal scale are the rating scales and other means with percentages of use below thirty. The vertical listing shows the manner in which the principals who used these means ranked them.

Classroom observation stands out clearly as the most important means of teacher evaluation. The principal-teacher conference is ranked solidly in second place in use, with most principals rating it either second or third in importance. At this point, the other means of evaluation drop off sharply in percentage of use. About half of the principals use "examining lesson plans and tests", "principal-parent conferences", "principal-pupil conferences", "studying unusual pupil successes and failures", and "measured results." The rank importance of these means is fairly evenly divided between second, third, fourth, and fifth places. About one-third of the principals report using

² Ibid, pp. 213-215.

TABLE XII

RANK IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN MEANS OF TEACHER EVALUATION

	Class- room obser- vation	Confer- ence with teach- ers	Examin- ing lesson plans and tests	Confer- ence with par- ents	Confer- ence with pupils	Study- ing un- su- cess and failure	Meas- ured re- sults	Promo- tion/ fail- ure ratio	Pupil attend- ance	Self- rating scales	Rating scales	Other
% of use	92.4	80.8	51.2	50.8	47.6	47.2	46.4	34.4	34.0	28.8	27.2	13.2
Rank												
1	59.6	11.6	3.6	.4	1.6	5.2	2.8	.4	1.2	3.6	2.8	4.0
2	12.4	27.6	14.8	3.6	6.0	4.4	10.8	2.0	1.2	2.4	4.0	1.6
3	8.8	21.2	11.2	9.6	8.8	4.8	8.4	3.2	3.6	6.8	3.2	2.8
4	6.0	9.6	5.6	14.8	9.6	6.8	5.2	2.4	5.2	3.6	2.8	1.2
5	2.4	4.4	4.0	10.8	8.4	4.4	7.2	4.4	6.0	3.2	1.2	1.6
6	0.8	2.8	6.4	4.0	8.4	6.0	3.2	5.6	4.0	.8	3.2	.4
7	2.0	2.0	1.2	3.2	1.6	4.4	2.8	7.2	5.2	.8	2.4	.0
8	0.4	.8	2.4	2.8	.8	4.4	3.6	4.4	2.4	2.8	1.6	.4
9	0.0	.4	1.6	1.2	1.2	4.4	1.2	2.8	3.2	1.6	3.6	.4
10	0.0	.4	.0	.4	.4	.4	1.2	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.2	.8
11	0.0	.0	.4	.0	.8	2.0	.0	.0	.0	1.6	1.2	.0
Not Ranked	7.6	19.2	48.8	49.2	52.4	52.8	53.6	65.6	66.0	71.2	72.8	86.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

"promotion-failure ratio" and "pupil attendance" as a means of evaluation. Those who use these two means do not tend to rank them at either end of the scale, but, instead, tend to spread their importance along the middle range.

"Self rating scales" and "rating scales" are used by slightly more than one-fourth of the sample. As can be seen from the extent of their use, these do not appear to be an important factor in rating teachers, and their rank importance is fairly well distributed along the scale.

The "other" means of evaluation used by 13.2 per cent of the principals consisted of such things as: "conference with the superintendent," "general over-all picture", "personal attributes of living", "spirit", "professional attitude," and so forth.

Although most principals seem to agree on the value of the classroom visitation and the principal-teacher conference as means of evaluating the teacher, the other means of evaluation are not largely used nor is the relative importance of them clear.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY

Background

Providing more effective means of supervision is a recognized educational problem. The process of making anything more effective means that the present status must first be determined. The limited amount of information that could be found concerning the supervisory role of Virginia elementary principals provided the setting for undertaking this study.

The purpose of this study, then, is to provide certain data on the supervisory functions of the Virginia elementary principal. The facets of supervision that were investigated include:

1. The characteristics of the school in terms of size and certain supervisory personnel.
2. A quantitative analysis of certain supervisory functions, such as classroom observation, conferences, demonstration teaching, and teacher evaluation.
3. The time distribution and relative importance of certain factors making up the principal's job.
4. The background and training of the elementary principal.

Method

The investigation of these supervisory factors was carried out in

the following manner:

1. A questionnaire was constructed that would reveal certain data about supervision in an objective manner.
2. A pilot study was conducted by mailing the questionnaire to thirty principals in the city of Richmond.
3. On the basis of the returns from the pilot study, the questionnaire was revised.
4. The questionnaire was then sent to 424 white principals classified as follows:
 - a. Principals of schools with five or more teachers.
 - b. Principals who had no regularly assigned teaching duties.
 - c. Principals who had only elementary grades in the school.
5. Data obtained were reduced, in most cases, to tabular form for ease of reference.

Results

The average Virginia principal administers and supervises a school of almost five hundred pupils and about nineteen teachers. None of the schools has a double shift beyond the third grade, but about fifteen per cent have this shift arrangement in one or more of the first three grades.

More than half of the schools have one or more part-time special teachers. The principal has available some supervisory help, usually a general supervisor or a music supervisor. A minority have special supervisors in art, speech, reading, and/or physical education. There are a few schools with special supervisors in the other subject areas. Only five

of the twenty-one assistant principals in the survey did any supervision at all.

The average principal visits about one classroom a day, stays less than one hour, and takes slightly more than three weeks to visit all of the classrooms. Most of the time, he has a conference with the teacher after the visit. He usually bases his conference on his recall of the events that took place during the visitation, but sometimes uses notes that were taken immediately after the visit.

The principal does not often use demonstration teaching as a supervisory device. About thirty per cent of the principals give demonstrations at least once a month. In some instances, other supervisory personnel give demonstrations. Occasionally, a textbook publishing company representative will do this. In only three instances are other teachers in the system called upon to give demonstration lessons. It is interesting to note that the city of Richmond has recently instituted a plan of using certain outstanding teachers for demonstration and guidance purposes.

When the principal does give demonstrations, he tends to favor certain curriculum fields, such as arithmetic, reading, social studies, and physical education. To a very large extent, he leaves the demonstration teaching of music and art to the specialists.

The principal devotes more than one-fourth of his time to supervision, slightly more than one-sixth to conferences, almost one-third to miscellaneous and clerical duties, and a slight four per cent to teaching. Comments on the questionnaire show that the reason for the imbalance toward clerical and miscellaneous duties is probably the lack of adequate

clerical assistance. The principal with no supervisory assistance gives less of his time to supervision than the principal who has such help.

Although the principal spends more of his time on routine administration than on anything else, he ranks it third in importance. He feels overwhelmingly that supervision is the most important function in his job. Conferences rate a solid second place to supervision. His clerical duties and miscellaneous duties are considered only fairly important, and the teaching aspect of his job is ranked by most principals as unimportant.

The principal most likely has had experience in elementary teaching, but might come from the job of high school teacher to that of the principalship of the elementary school. He usually has had one or more courses in supervisory techniques.

In the evaluation of the teacher, the principal would use and rate most important the classroom visitation and the principal-teacher conference. The chances are about even that he would use the principal-parent conference, the principal-pupil conference, the process of studying unusual pupil success or failure, or the results from achievement tests as a means of teacher evaluation, but he would not consider any of these as being of very great importance. The promotion-failure ratio, pupil attendance, and rating scales as factors in teacher evaluation are not used very much and, if used at all, would generally be considered of minor importance.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The Virginia elementary principal believes overwhelmingly that the supervisory responsibilities of his job are the most important. In theory,

this belief seems to be in line with the expressed opinion of many authorities, but in practice, there is little agreement. The principal spends much more of his time in administrative affairs than he does in his other duties. The time that he devotes to clerical duties and miscellaneous activities far outweighs the amount of importance that he attaches to them.

Contrary to expectation, the principal devotes more of his time to supervision when he has other special supervisory services than he does when no supervisory services are available.

There is currently much discussion related to the problem of merit pay for teachers. A serious obstacle that must be overcome is the lack of an objective means of rating. Where the Virginia elementary principal rates teachers, he uses, to a large degree, the traditional methods of rating. These cannot be considered as purely objective ratings. This thesis emphasizes again the need for more adequate means of evaluating the learning process.

The fact that only certain facets of the supervisory process are discussed should not be construed to mean that other supervisory techniques are not used in Virginia. Undoubtedly, there are principals who use successfully other techniques, but these are not included in the thesis, since they were not reported on the questionnaire. Some of the techniques believed to be used in Virginia are:

1. Action research as a joint effort of the teacher and the principal in meeting the changing needs of the pupils.
2. In-service training as a means of improving the quality of the teaching process.

3. Visitation by the teacher to other classrooms, both within and outside of the building.
4. Supervisory bulletins as a means of communicating ideas and techniques.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the Virginia State Department of Education has not yet adopted a program for the certification of elementary principals, it is urged that strong requirements for the certification of the elementary principal be established as a means of improving the quality of the profession in Virginia.

Many additional ideas for further investigation are suggested by this study. Among these are:

1. The element of rapport between the supervisor and the person supervised.
2. A more satisfactory means of evaluating the teaching staff and the product of the educational environment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Harold P., Frank G. Dickey. Basic Principles of Supervision. New York: American Book Company, 1953.
- Briggs, Thomas H. Improving Instruction. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938.
- Briggs, Thomas H., and Joseph Justman. Improving Instruction Through Supervision. A Revision of Improving Instruction. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952.
- Burton, William H., and Leo J. Brueckner. Supervision. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955.
- Kyte, George C. The Principal at Work. Revised Edition. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1952.
- McNerney, Chester T. Educational Supervision. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1951.
- National Education Association. American Association of School Administrators. American School Curriculum: Thirty-First Yearbook. Washington: National Education Association, 1953.
- National Education Association of the United States. Department of Elementary School Principals. The Elementary-School Principalship - Today and Tomorrow. Twenty-Seventh Yearbook. Vol. XXVIII, No. 1. Washington: National Education Association, 1948.
- Wahlquist, John T., et al. The Administration of Public Education. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952.
- Wiles, Kimball. Supervision for Better Schools. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950.
- Wiles, Kimball. Supervision for Better Schools. Second Edition. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955.

APPEND IX

1731 Rockwood Road
Richmond 26, Virginia
May 8, 1957

Mr. John Doe
Smith Elementary School
Smith, Virginia

Dear Mr. Doe:

About nine minutes of your valuable time will help me a great deal on a thesis I am doing for the Graduate School of the University of Richmond.

Your completing the enclosed form is extremely important to me, since your reply will form the basis for a study of the supervisory practices of Virginia elementary principals. Signing the questionnaire isn't necessary, but it would be helpful if you would sign and mail the postcard when you have completed the form. This will help insure a statistically correct survey.

I know that even a few minutes of a principal's time is a lot to ask at this very busy part of the school year. In return, you can be sure of my appreciation for making possible this study.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

John W. Jordan

P. S. If you would like a summary of the results, just check the appropriate box on the postcard.

APPROVED:

Edward F. Overton, Chairman
Department of Education
University of Richmond

SUPERVISORY PRACTICES
OF
VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

General Information

- a. Enrollment of your school. _____
- b. Number of regular classroom teachers. _____
- c. Number of full time special teachers. _____
- d. Number of part time special teachers. _____
- e. Usual number of faculty meetings per month. _____
- f. Double shifts? Yes. No. In what grades? _____
- g. Please check the special supervisory services that are available to your school.
- Reading. Language. Arithmetic. Speech. Music.
- Physical education. Social studies. Art.
- General. Other. Please specify _____.

Classroom Observation

- a. What is the average amount of time that you spend per week in classroom observation?
- Less than one hour. From one to three hours.
- From three to five hours. From five to seven hours.
- More than seven hours. Please specify. _____ hours.
- b. What is the average number of classroom observations that you make per week? (Please circle) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More? _____
- c. Do you ever observe in the classroom of an individual teacher more than once during the same week?
- Never. Rarely. Sometimes. Frequently. Always.
- Qualifying statement. (Optional)
- _____

Follow-up

- a. Is direct classroom observation followed by a personal conference with the teacher?
- Never. Seldom. When convenient.
- When conditions warrant. Most of the time. Always.
- b. If conferences are conducted after the classroom visit, upon what are the conferences based?
- Notes taken in class. Notes taken just after observation.
- Notes made just prior to conference. Recall of events.
- c. In an average week, what is the total number of conferences made for supervisory purposes that you have with your teachers? Please circle. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

Demonstration Teaching

- a. How often do you do demonstration teaching?
- Never. Less than once a month. About once a month.
- About twice a month. About once a week. More than once a week.

Demonstration Teaching (Continued)

b. In what field(s) do you do demonstration teaching?

- Language. Arithmetic. Reading. Music. Social studies.
 Physical education. Art. Science. Other _____.

c. If you do not do demonstration teaching, please give the title of the person who does, if any.

- Not used. Title _____.

The Assistant Principal

a. If you have no assistant principal, please check here and proceed to question 6.

b. To what extent does the assistant principal participate in the direct supervision of the teaching process in your school?

The assistant principal does:

- No supervision.
 A limited amount of supervision. About half of the supervision.
 Most of the supervision. All of the supervision.

The Principal's Work Week

a. Please estimate how your time is spent during an average week on each of the following duties.

b. Please rank these job functions in the order of their importance giving the number 1 to the one you consider the most important, number 2 to the second most important, etc..

	(a) Hours Spent <u>Per Week</u>	(b) Rank <u>Importance</u>
Conferences	_____	_____
Clerical.	_____	_____
Routine administration.	_____	_____
Supervision	_____	_____
Teaching.	_____	_____
Miscellaneous duties.	_____	_____

Background

a. What was your regular employment during the ten years before you became a principal? List these numerically in reverse chronological order, assigning the number 1 to the job most recently held, the number 2 to the one immediately preceding that, and so on back for ten years.

- ____ Elementary teacher.
 ____ High school teacher.
 ____ Special teacher. (Of what? _____.)
 ____ College Teacher.
 ____ Supervisor or consultant. (Field? _____.)
 ____ Other job in education. (Please specify. _____.)
 ____ Other job not in education. (Specify. _____.)
 ____ Full time student. (Not summer school.)

b. How many courses in supervisory techniques have you taken at the undergraduate level? _____. How many at the graduate level? _____.

8. Teacher Evaluation

What means of teacher evaluation are used in your school? Omit any not used in your school but rank the remainder in order of their importance, assigning the number one to the most important, etc..

Rank

- _____ Attendance records of pupils.
- _____ Classroom observation.
- _____ Examining lesson plans, tests and examinations.
- _____ Measured results. (Standardized tests)
- _____ Promotion-failure ratio.
- _____ Rating scales. (Other than self-rating)
- _____ Results of conferences with parents.
- _____ Results of conferences with pupils.
- _____ Results of conferences with teachers.
- _____ Self-rating scales.
- _____ Studying unusual successes and failures of pupils.
- _____ Other. (Please specify _____.)

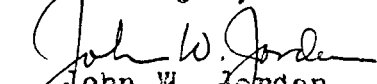
9. Optional Questions

The following are some questions that you have thought about and perhaps answered in your own mind recently. Your time is valuable so please feel free to ignore these if you so desire. Use the back of the questionnaire if you need more space.

- a. What is the most pressing current supervisory problem (other than time) that you face?
- b. What supervisory practices do you think will help solve this problem?

Your help in making this study possible by completing the questionnaire is very much appreciated. The last step is easy - - place it in the enclosed envelope, mail it and you're through.

Thank you,


John W. Jordan
1731 Rockwood Road
Richmond 26, Virginia

VITA

John William Jordan, III, was born in Richmond, Virginia, on November 3, 1925, the son of John William Jordan, Jr., and Agnes Smith Jordan. He attended the Richmond Public Schools and graduated from Richmond Professional Institute in June, 1949, with the degree Bachelor of Science. He began the Graduate program at the University of Richmond in 1952.

He served as a radar mechanic in the Army Air Corps during World War II and in the Air Force during the Korean War.

In 1948, he married Ann Ross Meyberg and has a son, Carter Bradley, and a

From 1949 until 1954 (with the exception of the one year in the Air Force) he was assistant principal and seventh grade teacher in the elementary school at Front Royal, Virginia. Since that time, he has been teaching in the elementary grades of the Richmond Public Schools.