

THE INVOLVEMENT OF NEBRASKA VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
SECONDARY SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS IN THE
PREPARATION OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Roy D. Dillon
Professor

*Agricultural Education
University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

With passage of the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments, PL 94-482, local schools were required to establish an advisory council or councils to enable lay persons to have input into decisions regarding the local secondary vocational education program. This policy was established on the rationale that local citizens have a right and responsibility to assist in the decisions concerning which clientele groups will be served by the local school, and what knowledges these persons should receive.

The State Advisory Council for Vocational Education, in an effort to fulfill one of its responsibilities, asked that a state-wide status study be conducted to evaluate Nebraska's progress in the implementation of this aspect of the law. The resulting data will enable the State Advisory Council to provide accountability to the federal level, and serve as a baseline study for later research on the role of local vocational education advisory councils in Nebraska.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine which vocational teachers and other members of the local school professional staff work directly with the advisory council in the preparation of the local plan for vocational education. These results will show the extent to which vocational teachers and other school staff are involved in deciding which vocational education programs will be offered by the school.
2. To determine the extent to which the local vocational education advisory council is involved in preparing the local plan for vocational education. This objective is

designed to determine the degree of involvement by the local advisory council in the decisions needed for the preparation of the local program plans for vocational education.

Methods and Data Sources

A thirty percent random sample was selected from the population of public secondary schools in Nebraska with reimbursed vocational education programs. This was a total of sixty-one schools, and was judged by the researcher to be an adequate sample size in terms of what could be managed within the project and still be representative of the state.

A questionnaire was developed by a committee representing the vocational areas of agricultural education, business and office education, home economics education, health education, diversified occupations, distributive education, trade and industrial education and special vocational needs. Committee members were either the head teacher educator or a senior staff member in each vocational area at the University of Nebraska. The instrument was validated through jury review by a panel from the State Division of Vocational Education, State Advisory Council for Vocational Education, and the Center for Business and Vocational Teacher Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The panel consisted of two persons from each of the three agencies. The panel included the directors for Agriculture and Business and Office Education from the State Department of Education, the heads of Special Vocational Needs and Diversified Education in the Center for Business and Vocational Teacher Education, and the Executive Director and Assistant Director of the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education.

During October, November and December, 1979, six graduate students personally interviewed both the secondary school staff person who had the responsibility for coordinating vocational advisory council activities (faculty representative), and the advisory council chairperson in each of the sixty-one schools in the sample. The graduate students were given training in the interview procedure and instrument to be used. The training included pilot interviews, for the purpose of building reliability into the procedure. A response was obtained from all the schools in the sample for a 100 percent response.

Results

Table 1 shows the number of persons on the school staff, by job title, who served as faculty representative, and the number who helped prepare the local plan compared to the number of

Table 1

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SCHOOL STAFF, BY JOB TITLE, WHO WERE INVOLVED IN PREPARING THE LOCAL PLAN, COMPARED WITH THE NUMBER OF STAFF WHO SERVE AS FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES, AND NUMBER OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE SAMPLE SCHOOLS

Job Title	Serve as Faculty Representative		Helped Prepare Local Plan		Number of Vocational Programs	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture Teacher	14	22.9	38	62.3	43	70.4
Superintendent or Assoc. Supt.	5	8.1	25	57.4	--	--
Principal or Asst. Prin.	10	16.3	24	39.3	--	--
Home Economics Teacher	10	16.3	37	60.7	50	81.9
T & I or Industrial Arts	0	0	19	31.1	34	55.7
Business & Office Teacher	8	13.1	29	47.5	39	63.9
Counselor	2	3.2	7	11.5	--	--
Vocational Director	9	14.7	18	29.5	--	--
Diversified Occupations	2	3.2	8	12.1	19	31.1
Media Specialist	0	0	1	1.6	--	--
Health Occupations Teacher	0	0	1	1.6	5	8.2
Distributive Education Teacher	1	1.6	0	0	3	4.9
Special Needs	0	0	1	1.6	15	24.6

vocational programs in the sample schools. Agriculture teachers had the faculty representative responsibility in 22 percent of the schools, home economics and secondary principals in 16 percent of the schools, vocational directors in 14 percent, and business and office teachers in 13 percent. Superintendents had this responsibility in eight percent of the sample schools; other vocational teachers filled this position in the remaining eight percent of the schools.

According to faculty representative respondents, superintendents were involved in preparing the local plan in 57 percent of the schools and principals in 39 percent. Specific vocational teachers involved were agriculture, 62.3 percent; home economics, 60.7 percent; business and office, 47.5 percent; trades and industry and industrial arts, 31.1 percent; and vocational directors, 29.5 percent. Diversified occupations teachers were involved in eight schools and counselors in seven schools. It is evident that agriculture, home economics and business and office teachers, and school administrators tended to be the most heavily involved in preparing the local plan.

As shown in Table 2, the majority of local advisory councils were involved in collecting and providing information, making recommendations before the local plan was drafted, reacting to the local plan before final preparation, and evaluating results at the end of the year. There was less involvement in preparing goal statements and reacting to the final copy of the plan before it was sent to the State Department of Education. There was high agreement between faculty representatives and council chairpersons concerning these kinds of input to the local plan.

Table 3 shows that nine different procedures were reported as being used for making annual changes in the local plan. Only four of these procedures involved the local vocational education advisory council.

There was significant disagreement between faculty representatives and council chairpersons, using the chi-square test, about the procedures for making changes in the local plan. Fifteen faculty representatives (24 percent) specified that changes were made by teachers making recommendations to the superintendent or by revisions on their own, while only three council chairpersons (5 percent) reported this procedure was used. Fourteen council chairpersons (24 percent) believed the council discussed possible changes and made recommendations to the school board while only eight faculty representatives (13 percent) reported using this procedure.

Thirteen council chairpersons (22 percent) did not know how changes were made in the local plan while eight (13 percent) of the faculty representatives did not know.

Table 2

NUMBER OF LOCAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCILS THAT PROVIDE
SPECIFIC KINDS OF INPUT TO THE LOCAL PLAN

Kind of Input To Local Plan			Position Title		Percent
			Number		
1. Help in preparing individual program goal statements	FR	61	XX 26	XXXXXXXX	42.6
	CC	58	XX 22	XXXXXX	37.9
2. Assist in collecting and providing information	FR	61	XX 35	XXXXXXXXXXXX	57.4
	CC	58	XX 33	XXXXXXXXXXXX	56.9
3. Make recommendations before Local Plan is drafted	FR	61	XX 42	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	68.9
	CC	58	XX 41	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	70.7
4. React to drafted Local Plan before final preparation	FR	61	XX 38	XXXXXXXX,XXXXXXXX	62.3
	CC	58	XX 29	XXXXXXXXXX	50.0
5. React to final copy prior to being sent to State Dept. of Ed.	FR	61	XX 25	XXXXXX	41.0
	CC	58	XX 21	XXXX	36.2
6. Evaluate results of plan at end of year	FR	61	XX 33	XXXXXXXXXXXX	54.1
	CC	58	XX 35	XXXXXXXXXXXX	60.3
Number of persons interviewed in each job title category	FR	61	FR - Faculty representative		
	CC	58	CC - Council chairperson		

Note: No differences were found between groups on each factor, using chi-square technique.

Table 3

**SPECIFIC PROCEDURES USED FOR MAKING ANNUAL CHANGES
IN THE LOCAL PLAN, BASED ON RESPONSES FROM
FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES AND COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS**

Specific Procedures for Making Annual Changes	Faculty Representative		Council Chairperson	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. Teachers make recommendations to Supt., or make revisions on own.	15*	24.6	3*	5.2
2. Staff obtains parental input, presents changes to council. Changes discussed at council meeting, and council makes recommendations to school board.	10	16.4	11	19.0
3. Recommendations given from council to staff and staff decides on changes to be made.	8	13.1	10	17.2
4. Discuss at council meeting and make recommendations to school board.	8	13.1	14	24.1
5. Do not know.	8	13.1	13	22.4

6. Teachers use community resource people, and make "teacher committee" recommendations to school administration.	7	11.5	3	5.2
7. Council and vocational teacher review last year's plan, and make recommendations to school board.	3	4.9	0	0
8. Recommendation of Council Coordinator to Board of Education	1	1.6	1	1.7
9. Supt. makes recommendation to the School Board.	1	1.6	2	3.4
10. Recommendation of suggestions from the School Board to the Council.	0	0	1	1.7
<hr/>				
TOTALS	61	100.0	58	100.0

*Significant at .05 level on Chi-Square Test.

The second most-used procedure, according to the faculty representatives, was for the staff to obtain parental input and present changes to the council. The changes would be discussed at the council meeting and recommendations made to the school board. Sixteen percent of the faculty representatives and 19 percent of the council chairpersons reported using this procedure.

Table 4 shows that nearly one-half of the faculty representatives and just over one-third of the council chairpersons reported the faculty representative term ended only when that person left the school system. Forty-two percent of the faculty representatives and 62 percent of the council chairpersons did not know the term of assignment for faculty representatives.

Table 4

TERM OF THE LOCAL FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE, BASED ON RESPONSES FROM THE FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES AND COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS

Term of Assignment as Faculty Representative	Faculty Representative		Council Chairperson	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 - 3 Years	3	4.9	1	1.7
4 - 6 Years	1	1.6	1	1.7
7 - 10 Years	0	0	0	0
10 or more years	1	1.6	0	0
When Teacher Changes	30	49.2	20	34.5
Do Not Know	26	42.6	36	62.1
TOTALS	61	100.0	58	100.0

Discussion and Recommendations

1. Vocational teachers in all occupational program areas offered by the school should be involved as faculty representatives in preparing the local plan for vocational education. In particular, there should be increased involvement by teachers in trades and industry,

industrial arts, diversified occupations, distributive education, health occupations, special vocational needs, counselors, and vocational guidance staff.

2. One hundred percent of Nebraska's vocational advisory councils need to become involved in providing input into the local vocational education plan.
3. There is considerable opportunity for improving the understanding of both faculty representatives and council chairpersons regarding appropriate procedures for insuring council input prior to the time that policy decisions are made by the board of education concerning annual vocational education program adjustments. The procedure should enable the advisory council to forward its recommendations through the appropriate school administrator to the board of education. School administrators and faculty representatives should receive inservice orientation concerning the proper time to involve the council for maximum input into program planning.
4. Criteria should be established by the local board of education for selection of the faculty representative for the advisory council.
5. There should be a local policy established to insure that faculty representatives and council members have an opportunity to obtain inservice education concerning advisory council organization and operation.
6. Each local vocational education advisory council should have a set of operating policies which outline the goals and operating procedures for the council and which are approved by the local board of education.

This is the type of status study that can help each state determine the extent of compliance with federal and state legislative intent regarding local citizen participation in vocational program planning decisions. With bench mark data, later studies can accurately evaluate local involvement.

(Camp, continued from page 40)

It would appear that over the next few years vocational education and education in general may be moved by social and political forces back toward a more conservative approach. In fact, the underlying philosophies of the social efficiency doctrine seem more politically viable today than they have been since before the New Deal of the 1930s. The social control and class differentiation functions of the schools may begin to be revived more visibly. But the fact remains that as we look to the future, we must look also to the past. As vocational educators and agricultural educators, we are what has gone into us. We must first reflect on where we have been before we chart a course for where we should go.

References

- Harris, Neil. "Review of The Irony of Early School Reform," by Michael B. Katz. *History, Education, and Public Policy*, Ed. Donald R. Warren. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1978.
- Prosser, Charles A. and Thomas H. Quigley. *Vocational Education in a Democracy*. Chicago: American Technical Society, 1949.
- Wirth, Arthur G. *Education in the Technological Society*. Scranton: Intext Educational Publishers, 1972.
-

AG DIVISION RESEARCH MEETING

The ninth annual Agricultural Education Research meeting is scheduled for December 3, 1982, in St. Louis, Missouri. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Convention of the American Vocational Association. Information about the meeting is available from:

J. Dale Oliver, Program Chairman
National Agricultural Education Research Meeting
Division of Vocational and Technical Education
243 Lane Hall
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061