

Historical Overview of Clovis Unified School District

By Floyd B. Buchanan, Ed.D.

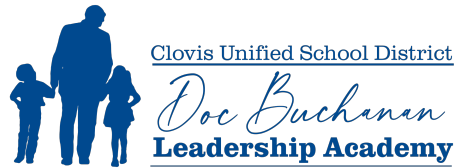
Edited by Nancy McNeil

Role of Administration

Clovis Unified School District's staff has developed an approach to addressing and administering its multi-faceted, multi-cultural community which has resulted in a clear-cut division of responsibilities among its staff. Beginning with the Governing Board and continuing through the superintendent, associate superintendents, district resource teachers, principals, learning directors, and teachers, each job has a description that is complete and precise. Every person knows he is part of the whole program, and he should understand his role, so he is able to describe it, as it affects the education of Clovis' students.

The Governing Board of C.U.S.D. has been committed to the idea of excellence in education from the inception of the district. The original Boards of the early 1960's wanted Clovis children to have the best education of any student, anywhere. In searching for a superintendent for the district, the Governing Board strove to build a superintendency with someone who would furnish leadership; omit all district personnel to the idea that every child is educationally competent; assess teacher effectiveness; create high expectancy levels for teachers; and identify variables and eliminate them as excuses not to teach. With support from the Governing Board to achieve such success, the superintendent and district administrators developed a Motivational Management System, which was designed to pull together diverse strengths within the district's personnel and to meld these individuals into a creative top-notch educational unit. This system has, as a basic tenet, the conviction that "...we must view education as an institution which is to be challenged, reformed, reshaped, and reimplemented by persons with objective perception, rather than subjective preservation." This is not an easy task, but it is more achievable when each individual's responsibility is defined.

The superintendent's office and responsibilities are supported by three associate superintendents and their staff. Their duties govern the areas of finance, instruction, instructional management units, and personnel. The Associate Superintendent of Administration oversees the classified portion of the district program; he is responsible for the budget, buildings and grounds, maintenance and operation, transportation, food service, and legal matters. The Associate Superintendent of Instruction deals with all levels and content of courses offered within the District; he runs all auxiliary services and support for the K-12 program, Vocational Education, Adult Education, Special Education, and federal programs. Inservice, curriculum development and program preparation fall within his purview. The Associate Superintendent of Instructional Management Units oversees the instructional management units (Red Unit; Blue Unit) and all personnel matters within the district; he supervises the independent study program, Gateway High School, and the welfare and attendance officer. These three associate superintendents comprise the "troika" which serves,



with the superintendent, in a team management approach to establish and direct Clovis Unified School District policies.

Principals are the primary site managers of everything that goes on at a school, and a principal's responsibilities are as many as they are varied. Principals must establish budgets for their school sites, assess the attainment of goals, reassess programs and materials needed to make them effective, and individualize district programs to meet the needs of their own unique school populations. To be successful in developing and maintaining a school which meets the needs of all students, the principal must establish an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Once he has set school goals and high expectations for his staff, it is imperative that he communicate them to his staff and to the community at large; only through good communication of these goals can parent and community support of the school be built. Good instructional leadership and organizational communication are fundamental to developing loyalty to and support of school programs. A principal must also coordinate all school activities, direct school support services, manage staffing requirements, and oversee the maintenance of school buildings and capital investments at the school site. This requires sound management of financial resources and an excellent relationship with the district office staff. Above all, a principal acts on the credo, "Plan, implement, evaluate, plan."

The role of a learning director in Clovis Unified is to assist intermediate and high school principals with the overall management of the school and its students. As such, this position is a training spot for future on-site and district administrators. Academic and co-curricular responsibilities at the schools are divided among the learning directors to ease the management assignments of the principal. Similarly, the student body is divided among the learning directors into groups, or clusters, so that academic counselling, course scheduling, and behavioral considerations can be handled more effectively. Each intermediate school learning director advises approximately 450 students, while each high school learning director manages approximately 600 students. Their assignments prepare them well to oversee, in the future, a total school operation as its principal.

The last, but most important link in the district administrative chain to establish and provide a quality education for the community's children is the classroom teacher. In conjunction with the principal, each teacher must furnish leadership and discipline to control his classroom, so learning can occur. Community and District Office expectation of the performance of Clovis Unified's teachers is unqualifiedly high, and teacher's responsibilities are detailed and specific.