THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR AS PERCEIVED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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by
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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR AS PERCEIVED BY ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE DES MOINES INDEPENDENT
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

Bonnie Jones McCrady

Approved by Committee:

[Signatures]

Dean of the Graduate Division
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

One of the most important movements in guidance today is the organized program of guidance in the elementary school. Guidance functions in the elementary schools are receiving strong emphasis in the 1960's. The exciting dimension of the contemporary guidance movement in the elementary school is the role of the school counselor.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This survey was an attempt at collecting data to discover factors associated with the role and function of the elementary school counselor as perceived by the elementary school principals in the Des Moines Independent Community School District. An opinionnaire was mailed to each elementary principal through the district's mail service. Forty-seven were mailed and thirty-seven were returned.

Importance of the study. There is no organized program of guidance in the elementary schools in the Des Moines Independent Community School District. The greatest
single variable in developing a guidance program is the school administrator. The administrators' assistance and support of the guidance services long have been recognized as a central factor in the establishment of an effective program. From their position as leaders in the school, principals play a major part in defining the role of their school counselor. It is highly desirable that those concerned with formulating and establishing an elementary school guidance program be aware of the opinions of these leaders. In this study an attempt was made to discover these opinions.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Guidance is both a concept and a process. As a concept, guidance is concerned with the optimal development of the individual for his and society's benefit. As a process, guidance is the gathering of substantive knowledge of the developing characteristics and patterns of the individual and helping him to use this knowledge for his own growth. Developmental guidance is based on the regular order of progressive change in the dynamic human being.\(^1\)

For the purpose of this study, guidance may be defined as the organized effort of a school to help the individual child develop his maximum potential. The specialized person in the elementary school guidance program is known as the elementary school counselor.

According to Hill, guidance is emphasizing the following goals:

1. To enhance and make more functional all children's understanding of themselves.

2. To help children with their goal-seeking, choice-making, and life-planning.

3. To help children develop socially, to mature in their relations with others.

4. To help children begin early to grow in their understanding of the role of education in their lives and to help them mature in their own life-planning.

III. HISTORY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE

Guidance has arisen out of the environment of American history and education. Guidance is a peculiarly American concept with implications for all free men all over the world. Guidance has not only been accepted by virtually

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all schools; it is recognized as the focus of the effort that can help fulfill the purpose of American education.¹

Guidance helps to express and realize man's hopes for assistance in the basic educational task of creating a free and responsible individual. The histories of freedom and guidance are intertwined, even though guidance is a newcomer to history.²

In the fall of 1907, Frank Parsons established a Vocation Bureau in Boston. The following year a direct connection was established with the Boston schools. Guidance and counseling became allied with education as education used the services of the new bureau. Jesse B. Davis, working in Central High School in Detroit at the same period, initiated a weekly period for "vocational and moral guidance" in 1907. Dozens of other schools were experimenting with guidance concepts. Colleges and universities were faced with the same issues and coming to similar conclusions. Colleges throughout the land were becoming concerned with the individual student.³

²Ibid., p. 25. ³Ibid., p. 28.
A revolutionary report, *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, published in 1918, changed the focus of education on the secondary level and indirectly at all levels. This publication maintained that the whole student is the concern for education. Guidance and education were inextricably bound together from this point.¹

An awakening concern with human behavior—through psychological theory and research, a creative concept of mental health, the professionalization of and concern with sociology, and an exploding interest in individual differences—all paralleled and aided in the growth of guidance within the schools.²

Clifford Beers in his book, *A Mind That Found Itself*, first published in 1914, made a profound impression upon an awakening society and upon guidance. The individual became a concern of community and professional groups. School children were viewed as growing, developing organisms as well as pliable receptacles for rote memory tasks.³

Guidance is a natural development of educational history within a free society. The roots of guidance lie

¹Glanz, op. cit., pp. 28-29.
²Ibid., p. 29. ³Ibid., p. 31.
deep within the philosophical theories which helped to shape the nation. Morality, economics, and classical philosophical thought enter into the past and future of guidance. Guidance has not created itself, but has been created by those who have recognized the need.  

Guidance in the secondary school has been in existence for over half a century, but guidance in the elementary school is a more recent development. The growth of elementary school guidance in the past decade has been rapid.

In 1957, the American School Counselor Association appointed a committee to study elementary school guidance. This committee developed a rationale, a statement of scope and function, and raised pertinent issues relative to qualifications and preparation of elementary school counselors. The report was presented in a meeting at the 1959 American Personnel and Guidance Association convention in Cleveland.  

This committee continued to function as a clearing-house for requests for information until a new committee

1Ibid., pp. 32-41.

was formed in 1962 to develop a statement on the Dimensions of Elementary School Guidance as Phase I of a Special Project under the sponsorship of American Personnel and Guidance Association. Unfortunately, the Special Project was abandoned. The committee continued to meet and a consensus report was prepared and sent to American Personnel and Guidance Association in February, 1965. This historical document was published in June, 1967.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 165-167.}

School administrators, organizations that work with children, the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth, and the National Defense Education Act have all sought to extend guidance services to the elementary school. Public Law 85-864, referred to as the National Defense Education Act of 1958, provided Federal matching monies for expenditures incurred for the development and expansion of Guidance and Counseling, and Testing programs. In December, 1963, the Vocational Education Act (Public Law 88-210) of 1963, was passed which included amendments to the National Defense Education Act and in October 1964, the National Defense Education Act Amendments, 1964 (Public Law
was passed which provided for additional amendments. Title V-A, Public Law 85-864, as amended, opened up the program in the elementary schools. The purpose of Title V-A is to provide funds for reimbursing local educational agencies on a prorated share for monies spent for:

(1) A program of guidance and counseling that will,

a. assist pupils regarding courses of study best suited to their abilities, aptitudes and skills,

b. assist pupils in their decisions as to the type of educational program they may pursue, the vocation they may train for and enter, and the job opportunities in the various fields, and

c. encourage pupils with outstanding aptitudes and abilities to complete their secondary education, take necessary courses for admission to institutions of higher education, and to enter such institutions; and

(2) A testing program to identify pupils with outstanding aptitudes and abilities.

Standards were established for programs in the state of Iowa in Section 3.5 (14) Guidance Services in Elementary Schools. "Effective September 1, 1970, the board shall institute a program of guidance services for its elementary schools. Each pupil shall have access to the minimum amount of guidance service specified by the board and recorded in its minutes." An Elementary Guidance Committee, appointed by the Department of Public Instruction, is currently working on an Elementary Guidance Handbook which is to be made available to school districts.
Guidance has been accepted as the personalization of education both in theory and in practice. The guidance function is a unique aspect of American democracy. The values of American democracy place a charge upon the school to respect the uniqueness of each individual. Broadening concepts of the school's responsibility to both the individual and society make it necessary to provide guidance services in elementary schools. Guidance services are the focus of the school's effort to provide educational experiences appropriate to each child's needs and level of development, thus providing him maximum opportunity to learn. The goals of guidance are inherent in the goals of education in American democracy.¹

IV. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In recent years much of guidance literature has concentrated on the need for guidance and counseling services at the elementary level. The title "elementary school counselor" is most commonly used to refer to the person who will provide these needed services. School systems across the nation are initiating and implementing programs in which persons with this title are being used.

¹Ibid., pp. 164-168.
General acceptance of a need for elementary school guidance services does not mean that issues of role and function have been clarified or understood. This report is concerned with the identification of factors associated with the role and function of the elementary school counselor as perceived by the elementary school principals in the Des Moines Independent Community School District. There is a need to establish guidelines for the development of elementary school guidance services in this school district.

The actual role that counselors play is largely determined by elementary school administrators. The administrator of the school is by virtue of his position responsible for the guidance program in that school. A significant problem in guidance administration is the degree of agreement on the counselor's role between the counselor and the administrator. The understanding and acceptance of the elementary school counselor's role by the counselor and by the administrator and the teacher are of key importance to the proper functioning of the guidance program. Definition and execution of role function by various pupil personnel specialists are becoming operational in many districts.¹ Zeran stated

that the task of the principal is one of planning, organizing, and coordinating efforts of all the staff in order to place the appropriate emphasis on the guidance program. He must maintain a climate which is conducive to guidance. He is responsible for policies, organization, and leadership in the guidance program in his school.¹ The role and function of the elementary school counselor is within a framework of policies of the individual school. The counselor works cooperatively with the principal and the school staff in a team approach.²

An examination of the literature reveals considerable research related to the roles and functions of elementary school guidance personnel. McDougall and Reitan examined the image of the school counselor as perceived by the school administrator. The survey found that the functions rated by the respondents as very important were all concerned with student counseling and parent consultation. Ninety per cent felt that counseling with pupils should occupy much of the time of the elementary school counselor. Also listed by a


²Meeks, op. cit., p. 177.
majority were functions concerned with identification of special talents and problems, assistance to teachers in testing and appraisal techniques, and interpretation to the community of the guidance program.¹

A committee of the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conducted a study of the perceptions of role and functions of the elementary school counselor held by selected elementary school counselors, their principals, counselor educators, and state supervisors. The total group comparisons indicated that counseling activities were of utmost importance as functions of the elementary school counselor. Consultant, guidance, and teacher-type activities were rated next in importance. Elementary principals differed significantly from the other groups in that they viewed consultant activities as being third most important of the functions to be performed by elementary school counselors.²


A group of consultants to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in recommending (fall, 1960) that the National Defense Education Act be extended to the elementary school made this statement:

The elementary schools contain a much larger pool of talent, in proportion to the size of the age group in the total population, than is found elsewhere in this educational system... It should be emphasized that guidance effort must be developed in appropriate ways in the elementary school for the earlier identification and development of talent.1

The Commission on Guidance in American Schools of the American Personnel and Guidance Association defined the elementary school counselor's activities in four primary areas: pupil study; counseling, including the use of planned group situations; consultation with teacher, parents, principal, and other specialists; follow-up studies and evaluative research.2

The Commission also indicated that the elementary school counselor must have at least three specialized capacities which are unique in type or degree from those expected of the secondary school counselor:

He must be able to communicate with the child in a non-verbal manner. He must be able to work skillfully in the area of reading diagnosis and of emotional problems

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2Ibid., p. 150.
that may accompany poor reading. He must be able to work skillfully with parents, both as a counselor and as a small group leader.\textsuperscript{1}

McCreary and Miller studied the functions and duties of elementary school counselors in California. The counselors and principals generally agreed on the rank order of importance of functions of the elementary school counselors and on the important skills and personality characteristics involved. They found that counselors reported that they spent 50 per cent of their time working with pupils, 17 per cent with teachers, 10 per cent with administrators, 12 per cent with parents, and 11 per cent with community agency officials.\textsuperscript{2}

According to Newman, full-time elementary school counselors were added to the school district of Bakersfield, California, in 1954. When counselors were placed in the schools, principals were given wide latitude within a framework to plan the counselors' part in the guidance program of the individual schools. The framework consisted of a short list of counseling assignments given in the district rules and regulations:

Counselors shall have charge of the counseling and guidance of pupils, including both curative and preventive counseling. A minimum of administrative,

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.

managerial, clerical, or other similar activities should be assigned to the counselor. Counseling should be an added service which should result in improved guidance by teachers, not less guidance by teachers. Counselors shall have charge of the following activities:

1. group counseling
2. assisting teachers with pupil behavior as indicated by the principal
3. tests and measurements
4. conferences with parents
5. pupil welfare
6. enrollment
7. orientation of pupils
8. attendance problems

Koepp and Bancroft surveyed elementary school principals and elementary school teachers to determine the role expectations of the elementary school counselor. They found that the role described was that of a professionally trained person whose primary function will be consultation, who will provide this service to some elementary school children through consultation with their teachers and parents, and whose training will need to vary greatly from that now given to secondary school counselors. He will be a specialist trained in identification, diagnosis, and remediation, and finding his skills in learning theory, reading, social work,

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and theories of the exceptional child.¹

A survey was made by the Office of Education of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to study in depth the current practices and preferred practices in elementary school guidance, and to investigate the existence and adequacy of pupil personnel services in public elementary schools (1962-63). The term, child development consultant (CDC), used in the survey included counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers who spent at least an average of one day per week in an elementary school. The report pertains to guidance programs at a local level as reported by principals. Questionnaires were mailed to principals of a random sample of school plants with over one hundred pupils. The sample was stratified by size of enrollment and geographical region. There was a 95 per cent return. The six most important functions of the CDC as ranked by the elementary school principals were the following: consultation with parents, consultation with teachers, counseling with children, giving individual intelligence tests, social casework, and in-service training of teachers. Over three-fourths of the

elementary school principals included consultation with parents and teachers and counseling of children among the six most important functions of the CDC. These three functions ranked far above other CDC functions.¹

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision-American School Counselor Association Joint Committee on the Elementary School Counselor has taken the position that there are three primary functions of the elementary counselor. They are counseling, consultation, and coordination.²

The report of a special committee of the American School Counselor Association on the Dimensions of Elementary School Guidance stated that there are many approaches to providing guidance services in the elementary school. Each school will develop its services in response to recognized needs. The counselor assists the principal and his staff in the organization and development of the program. He cooperates with the principal in evaluation of the existing


program and in the inventory of staff competencies useful in the guidance services and in assessing the community resources for guidance. Neither teacher nor counselor can function effectively in his guidance role unless the school is organized in its effort. The trend is toward a team approach to guidance.¹

The guidance of children can most effectively be accomplished if all aspects of the guidance program are systematically integrated into the total education program. Such coordination does not happen; it must be planned for. There must be a structure specifically stated that will allow coordination of services. A coordinated program will be characterized by clearly defined administrative relationships, carefully delineated functions, and adequate provisions for personnel and physical facilities. The plan of organization must include provisions for the development of staff and community understanding of the guidance program.²

Most of the above writers agreed on a threefold function of the elementary counselor: counseling (individual and group), consulting (with parents, teachers, other pupil personnel specialists, and administrators),

¹Meeks, op. cit., p. 182.
²Ibid., pp. 183-186.
and coordination (liaison) with school staff and with community and school resources. These roles include making comprehensive studies of pupils, counseling, providing pupils with information (personal and environmental), and supplying pupil information to school and community personnel.

V. PROCEDURES

The primary purpose of this survey was to identify factors associated with the role and function of the elementary school counselor as perceived by the elementary school principals in the Des Moines Independent Community School District. At present, there is no person functioning in this school district as an elementary school counselor. Therefore, the results would reflect the principals' perceptions of the expected role of the elementary school counselor and their schools' needs in guidance services.

After reviewing the literature, a questionnaire was constructed to collect data for this study. The McDougall and Reitan study and the Smith and Ackerson survey for the Office of Education strongly influenced the content of the questionnaire items. As the questionnaire was developed, the items were submitted to a counselor educator and several elementary school principals for validation. The
survey was based on a questionnaire entitled, "Elementary School Principals' Questionnaire Concerning the Expected Role of the Elementary School Counselor." Data reported in this paper were collected in the summer of 1967. Questionnaires were mailed to each elementary school principal in the Des Moines Independent Community School District through the district's mail service. Of the forty-seven questionnaires mailed, thirty-seven were returned. There was a 79 per cent return. A copy of the questionnaire is in the Appendix.

VI. LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the Des Moines Independent Community School District of Des Moines, Iowa. The questionnaires were answered by elementary school principals. The answers, therefore, reflect the points of view only of these principals.
CHAPTER II
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

An opinionnaire was mailed to each elementary school principal in the Des Moines Independent Community School District. Forty-seven were mailed and thirty-seven were returned. There was a 79 per cent return. Sixteen female and twenty-one male principals returned completed opinionnaires.

The elementary school principals were asked to indicate their total number of years of employment as an educator. The female principals reported a range of experience of from eleven to forty-three years. The average years of experience as an educator for the female principals was twenty-eight and one-half years. The male principals reported a range of experience from nine to forty years. The average for the male principals was twenty years. The results are shown in Figure 1.

The elementary school principals were asked to indicate the number of elementary schools for which they had administrative responsibility in 1966-67, pupil enrollment, and the type of school program offered in 1966-67: (1) general education only, (2) general and special education, or (3) special education only. As defined in this survey,
Figure 1. Average number of years of educational experience reported by the elementary school principals.
special education was special classes or programs for exceptional children who, because of unique physical, mental, or social-emotional characteristics, do not benefit from standard curriculum and methods of instruction. The thirty-seven principals reported that they had administrative responsibility for a total of fifty-six schools. Twenty-three schools had general education only with an average pupil enrollment of 441. Thirty-two schools had both general and special education programs with an average pupil enrollment of 297. One school reported a special education program only with a pupil enrollment of 156. The results are shown in Figure 2.

The elementary school principals were asked to indicate their preference as to the sex of the elementary school counselor to be assigned to their building. Twenty-seven of the thirty-seven principals (73%) indicated no preference. Ten of the principals (27%) preferred male counselors. Sixteen of the female principals (100%) indicated no preference. Eleven of the male principals (52%) indicated no preference. Ten of the male principals (48%) preferred male counselors. The results are shown in Figure 3.

The elementary school principals were asked to express their opinions as to the socioeconomic status most representative of their pupils' families. The survey included responses
Figure 2. Average pupil enrollment by type of school program reported by elementary school principals.
Figure 3. Principals' preference for male or female elementary school counselors.

- No Preference
- Male
- Female
from all socioeconomic areas in the school district. The principals reported as follows: disadvantaged (13%), below average (10%), average (49%), above average (13%), advantaged (13%). The results are shown in Figure 4.

The elementary school principals were asked to assume that an elementary school counselor was to be assigned to their building and to rate counselor functions as to their importance in regard to what they would expect their counselor to do. The following rating scale was used:

3 Important
2 Limited
1 Not a function

The results were tabulated to determine the image of the school counselor as perceived by the respondents. Over three-fourths of the elementary school principals included counseling of children, conferring with parents, acting as a liaison with community referral agencies, interpreting pupil data to staff members, coordinating efforts of other child specialists, interpreting the guidance program to the community, conducting research on guidance problems, and fostering good mental hygiene among pupils and staff as important functions of the elementary school counselors. Conducting pupil case studies, conducting group guidance activities, acting as consultant to staff members, gathering information on pupils, interpreting pupil data to authorized
Figure 4. Socio-economic areas most representative of their pupils' families as reported by the elementary school principals.
community agencies, to parents and to students, assisting teachers in testing and appraisal techniques, identifying students with special problems and special talents, providing leadership for in-service training programs, and assessing pupil personality were ranked as important functions of the elementary school counselor by more than one-half of the principals. The results are shown in Table I. The image of the elementary school counselor revealed in this survey is consistent with the point of view of the Commission on Guidance in American Schools of the American Personnel and Guidance Association. The Commission defined the elementary school counselor's role in four primary areas: pupil study; counseling, including the use of planned group situations; consultation with teacher, parents, principal, and other specialists; follow-up studies and evaluative research.¹

Counselor functions rated important by 25 to 50 per cent of the elementary school principals included planning the standardized testing program, administering the standardized testing program, organizing and conducting orientation programs, using play therapy, assisting teachers in grouping pupils, assisting principal in grouping of pupils for instructional purposes, and counseling students with health problems. The results are shown in Table II.

The elementary school principals were asked to rank three groups according to the per cent of counselor time

¹Wrenn, op. cit., p. 150.
### TABLE I

COUNSELOR FUNCTIONS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT BY 51 PER CENT OR MORE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counselor Function</th>
<th>Percentage of Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students with personal and social problems</td>
<td>89 8 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students with academic and educational problems</td>
<td>86 14 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting as a liaison with community referral agencies</td>
<td>84 13 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferring with parents about their children's problems</td>
<td>81 14 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting pupil data to staff members</td>
<td>78 19 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students with severe discipline problems</td>
<td>78 19 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting the guidance program to the community</td>
<td>76 22 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research on guidance problems</td>
<td>76 19 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating efforts of other child specialists</td>
<td>76 16 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering good mental hygiene among pupils and staff</td>
<td>76 16 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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TABLE I (continued)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counselor Function</th>
<th>Percentage of Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting pupil case studies</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting as consultant to staff members</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting group guidance activities</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting pupil data to authorized community agencies</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering information on pupils</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting pupil data to parents</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying students with special talents and special problems</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers in testing and appraisal techniques</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting appraisal and test data to students</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing leadership for inservice training programs</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessing pupil personality</td>
<td>51</td>
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that they thought the groups should receive: parents, teachers, and children. The largest number (twenty-three) of the principals reported that they felt that the counselor should spend most of his time with children: 60 to 100 per cent of counselor time. Twelve principals reported that they felt children should receive from 30 to 59 per cent of the counselors' time. Two respondents felt that children should receive the least amount of counselors' time. One principal felt that parents should receive most counselor time. Seven principals felt that parents should receive from 30 to 59 per cent of the counselors' time. Twenty-nine principals reported that parents should receive the least amount of counselors' time. Not one principal felt that teachers should receive the most time. Four principals felt that teachers should receive from 30 to 59 per cent of the counselors' time. Thirty-two principals felt that teachers should receive the least amount of counselors' time. The results are shown in Figure 5.

The elementary school principals were asked to indicate the priority which should be given to the following kinds of problems of children in terms of counselor attention: disadvantaged, gifted or talented, attendance problems, physical problems, poor readers, emotional-social problems, slow learners, and underachievers. A majority of principals (over 70 per cent) indicated the following kinds
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<tr>
<th>Counselor Function</th>
<th>Percentage of Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administering the standardized testing program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning the standardized testing program</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using play therapy</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizing and conducting orientation programs</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers in grouping pupils</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting principal in grouping of pupils for instructional purposes</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students with health problems</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5. Principals ranked the three groups: parents, teachers, and children, according to the amount of counselor attention that they felt the groups should receive.
of problems of children should receive priority: emotional-social problems, underachievers, and disadvantaged. The results are shown in Table III.

**TABLE III**

GROUPS OF CHILDREN TO RECEIVE MAJOR COUNSELOR ATTENTION REPORTED BY THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional-social problems</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underachievers</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance problems</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor readers</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted or talented</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow learners</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical problems</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The elementary school principals were asked to express their opinions concerning the number of school children that could receive adequate service from one counselor working five days a week. The largest number of principals (seventeen) recommended one counselor to 300-599 children.
Thirteen responses fell in the range of one to less than three hundred children. One respondent felt that one counselor could give adequate service to 1200 or more children. The results are shown in Figure 6.
Figure 6. Number of pupils per elementary school counselor recommended by the elementary school principals.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this study to identify factors associated with the role and function of the elementary school counselor as perceived by the elementary school principals in the Des Moines Independent Community School District. At present, there is no person functioning in the school district as an elementary school counselor. The findings of this study reflected the role expectations of the elementary school principals and their points of view concerning their schools' needs in counseling services.

A questionnaire was constructed to collect data for this study, entitled "Elementary School Principals' Questionnaire Concerning the Expected Role of the Elementary School Counselor." Data reported in this paper were collected in the summer of 1967. Questionnaires were mailed to each elementary school principal in the district through the district's mail service. Of the forty-seven mailed, thirty-seven were returned (79 per cent). Sixteen female principals and twenty-one male principals returned completed questionnaires.
A study of the data presented in the figures and tables shows some of the most significant findings reported by the elementary school principals. The following is a summary of the findings:

1. The female principals reported a range of experience as an educator of from eleven to forty-three years, with an average of twenty-eight and one-half years. The male principals reported a range of experience from nine to forty years, with an average of twenty years.

2. The thirty-seven principals reported that they had administrative responsibility for a total of fifty-six schools. Twenty-three schools had general education only with an average pupil enrollment of 441. Thirty-two schools had both general and special education programs with an average pupil enrollment of 297. One school reported a special education program only with a pupil enrollment of 156.

3. Almost three-fourths of the elementary school principals expressed no preference as to sex of their elementary school counselor. The male respondents who did, indicated a preference for a counselor of their own sex.
4. The survey included responses from all the socio-economic areas in the school district. The principals reported as follows: disadvantaged (13 per cent), below average (10 per cent), average (49 per cent), above average (13 per cent), advantaged (13 per cent).

5. The largest number of elementary school principals expressed the opinion that the elementary school counselors should work more with children than with parents or teachers. They also reported that teachers should receive the least amount of the counselors' time. These data do not support the judgment of some leaders in the elementary school guidance field who believe that counselors should spend more time with teachers and parents than with children. This emphasis on work with children may imply a problem-centered approach rather than a program to help all children.

6. Almost 100 per cent of the elementary school principals reported that elementary school counselors should give priority to children with emotional-social problems. In addition, about three-fourths of the principals reported that underachievers and the disadvantaged should receive major attention.
from the counselors. This may indicate that emotional-social problems were the most numerous problems. Also, principals may prefer a problem-centered approach to guidance services instead of a developmental approach for all children.

7. Combining the responses of all elementary school principals, the most frequent counselor-pupil ratio fell in the range of 1 to 300-599; this response was given by almost half of the principals. The next largest group (35 per cent) recommended one counselor to less than three hundred pupils. These findings fell roughly within the ratios recommended by leaders in the field of elementary school guidance; ranging from one to three hundred to one to six hundred pupils. It is difficult to set a specific counselor-pupil ratio for adequate service because much depends upon the relationship between the counselor and other members of the school staff and the definition of the term "adequate" in relation to guidance services.

8. Counselor functions considered important by a majority of elementary school principals were:
   a. Counseling students with personal and social problems, academic and educational problems,
severe discipline problems, and conferring with parents about their children's problems.

b. Identifying students with special talents and special problems, conducting pupil case studies, assessing pupil personality, gathering information on pupils, conducting group guidance activities, and conducting research on guidance problems.

c. Interpreting pupil data to staff members, to authorized community agencies, to parents, and to students.

d. Acting as consultant to staff members, assisting teachers in testing and appraisal techniques, providing leadership for inservice training programs, and fostering good mental hygiene among pupils and staff.

e. Coordinating efforts of other child specialists, acting as a liaison with community referral agencies, and interpreting the guidance program to the community.

These data support most of the research related to the role and functions of the elementary school counselor as revealed in the literature. Most writers defined the functions as counseling, consultation, and coordination.
II. CONCLUSIONS

From the responses on the returned questionnaires, the following conclusions seem to be justified:

1. The elementary school principals expressed a recognition of need and a desire for guidance services in their respective schools.

2. The expected role and function of the elementary school counselor revealed in this survey is consistent with the view of most writers in the field.

3. The results strongly imply that the respondents believe guidance services will have a significant impact on the development of children.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey findings may be of use to those concerned with formulating and establishing an elementary school guidance program in the Des Moines Independent Community School District.

The findings reflect the points of view of elementary school principals. It is recommended that additional research be conducted to study perceptions of role and function of the elementary school counselors as held by elementary school teachers and by guidance personnel. The results would be helpful in formulating an effective guidance program.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


B. PUBLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, LEARNED SOCIETIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS


C. PERIODICALS


D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS


1. Total number of years of employment as an educator. __________

2. Sex of school principal. __________

3. Number of elementary schools for which you had administrative responsibility in 1966-67. __________

4. What program did your school offer in 1966-67? Special education: special classes or programs for exceptional children who, because of unique physical, mental, or social-emotional characteristics, do not benefit from standard curriculum and methods of instruction.
   a. general education only __________
   b. general and special education __________
   c. special education only __________

5. Pupil enrollment minus kindergarten, as of February, 1967. __________

6. Number of classes minus kindergarten, as of February, 1967. __________

7. Pupil enrollment of kindergarten classes, as of February, 1967. __________

8. Number of kindergarten classes, as of February, 1967. __________

9. What do you think was the socioeconomic status most representative of your pupils' families? As a rough guide, consider income, occupation, and education of parents.
   a. advantaged __________
   b. above average __________
   c. average __________
   d. below average __________
   e. disadvantaged __________
10. Assuming that an elementary school counselor is to be assigned to your building, how important do you feel each of the following functions would be in regard to what you would expect the counselor to do in your school? Use the rating scale given to indicate your expectations of the counselor's role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizing and conducting orientation programs</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting in planning curriculum</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning the standardized testing program</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administering the standardized testing program</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting appraisal and test data to students</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers in testing and appraisal techniques</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting pupil data to parents</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferring with parents about their children's problems</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting as a liaison with community referral agencies</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating efforts of other child specialists (visiting teachers, nurses, psychologists, etc.)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting pupil data to authorized community agencies</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting the guidance program to the community</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research on guidance problems</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering information on pupils</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting pupil case studies</td>
<td>(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing pupil personality</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using play therapy</td>
<td>(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying students with special talents and special problems</td>
<td>(18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting pupil data to staff members</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting principal in grouping of pupils for instructional purposes</td>
<td>(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers in grouping of pupils</td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing leadership for in-service training programs</td>
<td>(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting group guidance activities</td>
<td>(23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting as consultant to staff members</td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students with personal and social problems</td>
<td>(25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling students with academic and educational problems</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Counseling students with health problems (27) __
Counseling students with severe discipline problems (28) __
Fostering good mental hygiene among pupils and staff (29) __

11. Rank the groups according to the per cent of counselor time you think they should receive.

Parents ___ Teachers ___ Children ___

12. Indicate the priority which should be given to the following types of pupils in terms of counselor attention. Use the rating scale given.

3 Major
2 Secondary
1 Minor

a. disadvantaged ___ e. poor readers ___
b. gifted or talented ___ f. emotional-social problems ___
c. attendance problems ___ g. slow learners ___
d. physical problems ___ h. underachievers ___

13. What is your preference concerning the sex of the counselor?

Male ___ Female ___ No Preference ___

14. In your opinion, one counselor working five days a week could provide adequate service to how many school children?

a. Less than 300 ___ d. 900-1199 ___
b. 300-599 ___ e. 1200 or more ___
c. 600-899 ___