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Abstract

The National Education Association (NEA) National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEES), believing that the differentiated staffing concept is a promising idea worthy of development and testing, encourages (1) development of a wide variety of model plans for differentiation of school staffs; (2) the full partnership of teachers and local education associations in developing designs and carrying on experimentation, evaluation, and (if determined appropriate) full implementation; (3) well-planned and controlled tryouts of models in a limited number of school settings; (4) rigorous evaluation of experiments employing a variety of appropriate criteria; (5) dissemination of information about models, experimentation, and objective interpretation of the findings from evaluation; and (6) development of means of implementing or adapting whatever successful techniques result. (Included in the paper are a section on "Rationale for Change in School Staffing Patterns," which lists circumstances indicating that present roles of teachers and other personnel require further refinement and differentiation, and a series of "Discussion Paragraphs" on definition of the differentiated staffing concept, evaluation to be employed in giving the concept an objective trial, career patterns in teaching, the generalist teacher, and the "centrality of functions.") (JS)

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*National Education Association*

*NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TEACHER EDUCATION  
AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
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A POSITION STATEMENT ON THE CONCEPT OF  
DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING

The NEA National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEPS) believes that the *differentiated staffing* concept is a promising idea worthy of development and testing and that it should receive the opportunity of an objective trial.

This position is consistent with the Commission's established posture of encouraging and supporting a broad range of experimentation with new ideas in preservice and continuing education and professional development in the teaching profession. The major purposes of the NCTEPS include the generation of ideas, the development of models for try-out, and the support of evaluation leading to policy recommendations.

Illustrative of the range of its activities in promoting experimentation

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are such areas as student teaching, the induction of new teachers, and school-university cooperation in programs of teacher education.

#### Arriving at a Definition

There is no precise definition for the term *differentiated staffing*. A tentative definition for present purposes might be as follows: a plan for recruitment, preparation, induction, and continuing education of staff personnel for the schools that would bring a much broader range of manpower to education than is now available. Such arrangements might facilitate individual professional development to prepare for increased expertise and responsibility as teachers, which would lead to increased satisfaction, status, and material reward. (See Discussion Paragraph I, p. 6.)

#### Encouraging Experimentation

The differentiated staff idea is yet to be fully developed in experimental design. Only a few models have been proposed and most of these are not complete. And no plans have been implemented long enough for reliable generalizations to be made about any operational aspect of the differentiated staffing concept. Development of the idea will also require increased attention to defining specific teaching tasks, to identifying relevant curriculum content, to appropriate materials and technology, and to time allocation and flexibility.

Therefore, the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards encourages and proposes to support:

1. The development of a wide variety of model plans for differentiation of school staffs.

2. The full partnership of teachers, and especially local education associations, in developing designs and carrying on experimentation, evaluation, and (if determined appropriate) full implementation. Tests and try-outs and dissemination should involve only those professionals who are willing to try, with alternative opportunities for those who choose to opt out.
3. Well-planned and controlled try-outs of models in a limited number of school settings.
4. Rigorous evaluation of experiments, employing a variety of appropriate criteria--evaluation that is carefully controlled and periodically conducted over several years. (See Discussion Paragraph II, p. 6.)
5. The dissemination of information about models, experimentation, and objective interpretation of the findings from evaluation.
6. The development of means for implementing or adapting whatever successful techniques result.

#### A Rationale for Change in School Staffing Patterns

*Individualization of programs for pupils based on their needs, interests, and talents has become a number-one priority in American education.* Almost no one, in or out of the profession, denies the value of concern for individual differences. It is becoming patently clear that to accomplish this important task, those who are responsible for individualizing programs for pupils require the opportunity to develop their own individual interests and talents. If individualized learning for pupils is to be achieved to its fullest, teachers can no longer be expected to be jacks-of-all-trades.

*The education profession has not achieved career patterns on a par with other senior professions. The lack of career pattern and holding power in education is illustrated by the high percentage of trained teachers who never teach, the considerable number who pass through the profession on the way to motherhood or other careers, and the acceptance of the situation that advancement, prestige, and high material reward come only through promotion out of the classroom. Differentiated staffing promises to increase the range of career patterns available to those engaged in the education profession. (See Discussion Paragraph III, p. 7.)*

*Fuller cooperation of school districts and universities in programs of teacher education is acknowledged as essential by both institutions. Through differentiation on the basis of a career ladder, induction to the profession might become more natural and gradual, moving back and forth from college campus to school district, theory and practice might be more realistically related, and continuing career-long education and reeducation might be built in from the beginning. Experiments with differentiated staffing might thus result in more practical programs for educating teachers.*

*Teachers are increasingly coming to recognize that their roles as generalists are unmanageable. Witness an elementary teacher teaching remedial reading, safety, sex education, science, music, geography. Even at the secondary level, a social studies teacher might be expected to be equally conversant with political geography, economics, and history. (See Discussion Paragraph IV, p. 7.)*

*The curriculum development function of classroom teachers needs to be expanded. In small teams where several areas of expertise are*

present, teachers could interrelate intensively and directly in curriculum building that would more fully develop the interrelationship of the subject matter areas.

*Teachers have for too long been involved in tasks that diminish their professional stature and time and deplete their energies for interacting directly and intensively with pupils, for example, child-accounting, test-scoring, fund-collecting, hall-monitoring, typing, mimeographing, and the like. (See Discussion Paragraph IV, p. 7.)*

*The evaluation of teaching is fragmentary and superficial, and where operative, it has frequently been a threatening activity, imposed from without. An arrangement for closely supervised induction by senior teachers and for intensive team cooperation could place the evaluation process more directly in the hands of teachers themselves and result in greater emphasis on self-evaluation.*



All these circumstances, and others, lead the NCTEPS to reflect that present roles of teachers and other personnel require further refinement and differentiation. New roles need to be created and new types of personnel recruited and trained to occupy the needed roles. The Commission is impressed that such role differentiation, refinement, and redefinition are common in other professions, for example, the draftsman in architecture, the junior partner and the law clerk in the legal profession, the intern and resident (and more recently the associate) in medicine, the chemical analyst in science.

## DISCUSSION PARAGRAPHS

### I. Definition

The definition implies that under a differentiated staffing arrangement education personnel would be selected, educated, and deployed in ways that would make optimum use of interests, abilities, and commitments and afford them greater autonomy in determining their own professional development.

A differentiated staff would include teachers and a variety of special service personnel, subject matter specialists, administrators, student teachers, interns, persons from other professions, craftsmen, volunteers, and several categories of paraprofessionals and teacher aides. Within the classroom-teaching ranks, some professionals might serve as leaders, responsible for induction of new teachers, coordination of teams of associates and assistants, and the general management of the learning setting. Others might function mainly as diagnosticians of learning difficulties, constructors of individualized programs for pupils, developers of interpersonal attitudes and behaviors, and the like.

Status and financial reward would be based on the complexity and intensity of the task the teacher chose to prepare for and assume. The traditional merit pay issue would be avoided in that teachers would be paid *differently* for assuming *different* responsibilities, as compared to being paid differently because they were judged to be performing *similar* tasks at *different* levels of quality.

### II. Evaluation

The Commission is firm in the belief that research and development designs should be planned carefully over a long enough period and with the full involvement of those to be affected.

Publicity, promotion, and broad dissemination based on flimsy data and premature judgments by those with loyalties to specific projects should be avoided. Nor are plans likely to serve the profession well that will result in the reduction of numbers of staff responsible for the education of pupils or that will cut costs. The use of teacher aides in the schools, now approaching rapid diffusion, may have been set back for a decade or more because such cautions were not exercised.

The kinds of evaluation employed should be determined by the objectives of individual experiments, be based on local conditions, and be worked out through full involvement of those to be evaluated. Evaluation plans should be built in as experimental models are designed, not tacked on as an afterthought or put together after the project is under way.

### III. Career Patterns

For the classroom teacher who seeks promotion and greater prestige there is almost no place to go but out of teaching -- to administration, supervision, research. Great numbers of teachers might be prevented from becoming dropouts from the teaching ranks if they were provided opportunities for greater professional satisfaction and recognition. This might be accomplished through their inducting new teachers, coordinating the teaching acts of teams of colleagues, diagnosing and prescribing for learning difficulties, and the like.

In addition, new exploratory, developmental, and transitional careers might be provided for disadvantaged youth, housewives, retirees, and others through differentiation. Not only would this provide much needed new careers for several segments of the society; it would also broaden the range of human resources for the schools and make available new manpower pools to contribute toward alleviating present shortages.

### IV. The Generalist Teacher

The knowledge explosion alone has made it virtually impossible for the teacher to be highly conversant with several subject fields. This is not to argue against professional educators' receiving a broad liberal arts education. It is rather that teaching fields have become proliferated and highly complex, and for performing the teaching act, it becomes important that teachers have the opportunity to develop their greatest interests and highest talents in a fewer rather than a greater number of areas. Nor should this necessarily result in greater departmentalization and fractionalization of content and process. As teachers perfect their collaborative effort they might find themselves leading in some activities, working as peers in others, and assisting or following in yet others. Such arrangements might make it possible for teachers to learn much more from their colleagues than under present patterns of operation.

### V. Centrality of Functions

All functions performed in the learning situation have their value; otherwise, they have no reason for being. But some, important as they are to assuring optimum learning conditions, are less central than others. Highly professional teachers require and deserve to spend the greatest proportion of their time performing those tasks requiring the greatest expertise and for which they are particularly qualified. Not only should a range of specializations and levels of preparation within the teaching ranks be explored, but a variety of technical, clerical, and support services from other professions and from technology and crafts need to be developed.

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