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ABSTRACT

Annotations of 12 articles and a research report discuss procedures for selecting principals and other school administrators and examine the hiring process from the viewpoints of both the candidates and those doing the hiring. Three articles describe model selection processes and note the problems involved in job interviews, letters of recommendation, and impulsive hiring decisions. Two articles and a special journal issue report on assessment centers, including that of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and look at the simulation techniques used in the centers. Principal selection from the candidate's viewpoint is presented in three further articles, one narrating a day of interviewing for a fictitious applicant and the others raising questions about "hidden agendas" and "old boy networks" in the hiring process. One article describes how a British Columbia (Canada) school system develops administrators from within the district, and an article and the research report review the factors and characteristics of candidates emphasized by administrators in selecting principals. (RW)

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THE BEST OF ERIC

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The Best of ERIC presents a selection of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give educators easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative rather than exhaustive of literature meeting these criteria.

Materials were selected for articles from the ERIC catalogs Resources in Education, ERIC and Current Index to Journals in Education.



Clearinghouse on Educational Management

Principal Selection

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Principal Selection

Bowser, John D. A Study of the Needs of New York Principals. The Council on Educational Administration, 1979. 54 p. Available from ERIC, ED 189 974.

The author, who has worked as a principal, discusses a study of the needs of principals in this state. He discusses the role of the principal, the characteristics of principals, the needs of principals, and the role of the principal in the school. He also discusses the role of the principal in the school and the role of the principal in the school.

New York is the only state in the United States that has a principal's union. This is because of the high quality of the principal's profession in New York. The author discusses the role of the principal in the school and the role of the principal in the school.

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Bruce, C. A. A Study of the Needs of Principals. The Council on Educational Administration, 1979. 54 p. Available from ERIC, ED 189 974.

New school districts seem to be going to a search for the best person for the job. The author discusses the role of the principal in the school and the role of the principal in the school.

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Each January, nominations for the executive development program are sought from teachers, principals, and central administrators.

Some of these questions are answered in this study. The author discusses the role of the principal in the school and the role of the principal in the school. He also discusses the role of the principal in the school and the role of the principal in the school.

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Bryant, B. J., Lawlis, Parker, Nicholson, Everett, and Maher, Batt P. Improving Instructional Performance: A Study of the Needs of Principals. The Council on Educational Administration, 1979. 54 p. Available from ERIC, ED 189 974.

What qualities describe principals who are important in improving instructional performance? What kinds of characteristics describe principals who are important in improving instructional performance? And what are the most important factors that make the difference in decisions?

These questions and many others were answered by a study of 100 principals in 10 school systems. The results are reported in this document. The authors detail the

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two-day program at the district assessment center. Before helping district administrators identify candidates with the skill needed to be successful principals, the assessors of center give candidates and the district's administrators a chance to get to know each other, and provide candidates with an opportunity to judge their own performance and improve their job skills.

During the two-day program, four mini-exercises are conducted to solve the principal's problem: a group of six candidates analyze a typical problem facing school principals, and then draft an outline of their proposed solution. Evaluators judge candidates on their problem-solving, decision-making, and communication skills.

In another exercise, candidates view a fifteen-minute videotape of a teacher's lesson, analyze the lesson, prepare a strategy for a teacher conference, and then meet with the teacher. During the process, say the authors, assessors note a candidate's specific skills in lesson plan and analysis and judge the candidate's ability to conduct a teacher conference. The other main exercises are a ten-minute oral presentation on an assigned topic, and an in-basket exercise, in which candidates are given a packet of materials and are asked to assign priorities, make recommendations, and supply a rationale for each suggested action.

Meese, Mary Lou "Superintendents Who Shoot from the Hip on Hiring Decisions Sometimes Blow Off Their Own Toes." *American School Board Journal* 168:9 (September 1981), pp. 40-41. EJ 251 024

Superintendents who hire administrators impulsively, without consulting important others in the district, sometimes make brilliant choices. Just as often, though, says Meese, they hire "smooth-talking, savvy but incompetent opportunists" whose presence is felt, and regretted, long after their departure from the school system.

A promising alternative to this unilateral and thus unpredictable method of hiring administrators is to spread the responsibility for hiring among a group of district personnel and clients. Meese here describes one such committee-based system, which has been successfully utilized in the Bedford (New York) public school district.

Once the application deadline for a position has passed, a small group of administrators screens the candidates' application materials to make sure they meet the basic requirements of the job. Remaining applicants are then interviewed by a thirteen- to seven-member committee. Included in the committee are administrators, parents, representatives of various academic disciplines

and other interested parties, and the committee makes a recommendation to the superintendent.

The authors note that the committee-based system is not a magic wand that can solve all the district's hiring problems. The authors state that the application process is not a simple one, and explore the importance of the superintendent's role in the process. They also note that the superintendent's role is not to make the final hiring decision, but to make sure that the committee's recommendations are followed.

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Van der Ven, A. J. "The Assessment Center: A New Approach to Hiring School Administrators." *Journal of Educational Administration* 19:3 (1981), pp. 11-14. EJ 251 024

The authors propose that the quality of the school administrator they know in fact if they know.

The authors describe the assessment center, a new method of hiring principals, which is based on the concept of a "center" approach as described by the authors in the journal of NASSP *Bulletin*. The authors say that the assessment center and evaluation can be replaced by a system for conducting objective evaluation of specific administrative skill.

The introductory article of the group describes the NASSP Assessment Center Project, and the use of assessment centers. The next four articles, written by participants who were trained by the NASSP and by participants in the center, describe the experiences of participants of four of the districts that have set up their own assessment centers. A final article describes preliminary research aimed at validating the effectiveness of assessment centers.

In a working assessment center, twelve participants (often a spring administrator) are observed for two days by assessors as they perform a variety of specially designed activities. Performance in the activities is used to assess skills in twelve areas such as problem analysis, organizational ability, leadership, personal motivation, educational values, and written communication skills. The assessors, after discussing and rating each participant's skills, write a comprehensive report and then share their findings with each participant in a private feedback session.

The evaluations developed by the assessment centers have already been used to help make hiring decisions, with the district reporting "great satisfaction with the quality of the school administrator selected as a result of superior performance in the center. Ancillary benefits of the centers have also been noted. Assessors uniformly report that they are better administrators because of their involvement; districts can be more honest with potential candidates because of their objective appraisal; and participants often for the first time receive candid and direct appraisal of their performance and potential.

Newberry, Alan J. H. "What Not to Look for in an Elementary School Principal." *National Elementary Principal* 36:4 (March-April 1977), pp. 41-43. EJ 15 047

Currently used practices for selecting elementary school principals says Newberry are often unsystematic, based on myths, and unsupported by research. Together, these irrational approaches have created no less than a crisis in the selection of elementary school principals.

Numerous studies have been conducted, however, to determine reliable practices and criteria for selecting quality principals. Newberry here reviews the findings of these studies and suggests that school districts use them as the basis for a rational, research-based

