The Role of the Hawaii Curriculum Center in the State's Educational Planning and Development Effort

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Hawaii's newly appointed superintendent of schools, Mr. Ralph Kiyosaki, has recently begun a major new educational planning effort. In an administrative directive issued to top level administrators he has announced that "planning and development shall be the theme for the year." His act reflects an awareness of the fact that the public school system of the State of Hawaii has reached a critical point in its development. Like many others across the nation, the system has grown by accretion because planning has not been systematic. The rise in public aspirations for education and substantial changes in the world of knowledge have exerted intense pressure on a growing but largely unplanned educational system. Unless a deliberately planned and carefully coordinated effort is made to cope with the complex factors involved, the school system may falter under the increasing strains.

Education is a vital and dynamic enterprise. Because of its importance, scope, and complexity, change within it can not be left to chance, or chaos will result. On the one hand, change must be fostered; on the other, controlled. A dynamic equilibrium is needed — a steady state of planned but flexible change in which goals and directions are clear and realistic. The sheer size of the educational establishment requires a certain division of labor to accomplish the necessary planning and development work.

What then is the role of the Hawaii Curriculum Center, the State's major effort under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, in bringing about vital and desirable educational change? This role cannot be considered apart from the roles and functions of all other participants in the planning process. The word *planning* is used here in its broadest sense. For example, the Board of Education has responsibility for planning at the most general level: it is the body charged with determining the general nature, shape, quality, and tone of the educational system. It exercises this responsibility mainly through its policy adoption function. The responsibility for planning in the formal sense is exercised by the superintendent and his staff, largely through the program formulation and recommendation function. This function is so large, however, that the assistance and participation of other agencies are needed. For example, research as a speculative aspect of planning is properly lodged with the University and the Office of Research within the Department of Education. The Office of Research also is charged with the collection and projection of data and information which are, in a sense, grist for the planning mill. Similarly, the other staff offices of the Department of Education have specialized planning functions.

Educational planning as it has been conducted in the past has too often been concerned with single element solutions when complex, often

difficult, solutions were called for. No educational problem of any consequence today can be solved without careful and imaginative attention to planning in the related spheres of library services, educational media and technology, in-service and preservice training of teachers, administrative relationships, budget and finance, record-keeping systems, logistic support, personnel, and community relations. In short, the approach must be total, and planning in the ancillary or supporting areas must be conducted with its focus upon the curriculum and instructional programs.

The first step in any major educational planning effort is the delineation of programs: the writing of one set of descriptions which is an accurate statement of where we are and another set which clearly outlines where we want to go. The word *program*, used here in its current budget-management sense, means a set of unified plans and activities designed and operated to accomplish certain specifiable educational goals and objectives. In a sense programs are the building blocks of an educational system. They may be large or small but they have a certain inherent and planned unity which gives them identity. (An example of a small, specific program is the education of blind children at Diamond Head School. An example of a large, general program having several subprograms is the general English language arts program for the whole state.) If a program does not display an overall unity it probably ought to be more than one program. This unity is manifested in a specific approach or specifically related kinds of approaches to common problems of a definable, and, by at least one criterion, generally homogeneous population. A necessary characteristic is that the entire program have a common goal and common objectives. Finally, there are different orders of programs. The ordering is from the general to the specific, and a taxonomy can be drawn to illustrate the relationships.

The Department of Education has embarked upon an effort to draft taxonomies of all existing programs. One of the results has been the pointing up of certain relationships, or the lack thereof, between programs. Such information is invaluable for the planning function. After taxonomies of related programs are delineated the programs themselves will be described according to a seven-part format. The *Program Title* will be generally descriptive. The *Program Description Summary* will tell in general terms what the program is about, what area of study or service is involved; the population to which it is addressed will be specified, and the general approaches will be described. The *Statement of Need* will describe the target population, its condition with respect to the concern of the program, and the importance of the concern of the program. The *Program Goal* will be stated in general but clear terms. The goal must have a time dimension, must be specifiable, attainable, and reasonable. The *Program Objectives*, more specific than the goal, will be stated in behavioral terms and must be specifiable. If possible they should be quantifiable; however, false, trivial, or inadvisable quantification is to be avoided. The goal and objectives, while the most difficult to write, are the most critical parts of the program description. The *General Description of Activities* tells what will actually be done; alternative activities will be described if they are feasible. Finally, a *General Plan for Evaluation* will be described. This plan must relate directly to the goal and objectives and must provide the information needed to determine to what extent the goal is being achieved.

The program description document need not be long; indeed, it may be relatively short, but it ought to be profound. It should be the distillation of the best thinking on the subject. Its congruence with the real world is a necessary and specific condition of the success of the program.

The examination of the taxonomies of programs and the program descriptions is already yielding an awareness of the need for substantial development work as well as planning. Educational program development may be compared with product engineering and testing as it is conducted in an industrial setting. It is not enough to have a good educational idea. That idea (or set of ideas, i.e., program) must be developed, refined, tested, and refined further in order for it to be of maximum utility in the classroom. Relatively little development work has been done in educational systems, and this lack has probably contributed substantially to their problems.

By far the most important planning and development efforts revolve around curriculum and instruction. It is in this area that the widest participation and assistance are needed. Planning a curriculum and instructional program is not a one-man task, nor can it be accomplished efficiently and effectively by an individual school staff. A substantial team effort is required. Academic scholars, classroom teachers, informed lay citizens, technicians, curriculum specialists, artists, and others need to have a part in the process. The primary responsibility for curriculum and instruction planning is with the Office of Instructional Services of the Department of Education. However, the problems inherent in bringing about fundamental and important changes in

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