

## TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: WHAT STATUS DOES IT HAVE?

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Curriculum development is usually performed by committees of educators working together at school, district, and state or provincial levels. For the committees to function effectively, many kinds of expertise are needed. Some participants, for example, may be knowledgeable about recent changes in subject matter. Others may be well versed in learning theories that can be used to teach that subject matter.

Teachers, on their part, have practical knowledge based on their daily work with students.<sup>1</sup> This knowledge is useful to curriculum committees because teachers can assess whether the ideas being developed will work in the classroom. Therefore, when the curriculum materials produced by committees are disseminated throughout a school district, other teachers may be encouraged to use the new materials. Doyle and Ponder have pointed out, for example, that teachers' use of new materials depends on their perceived practicality,<sup>2</sup> and Fullan and Pomfret have reported that teachers are more likely to use clear, easily understood materials.<sup>3</sup> In addition, teachers are already accustomed to turning to other teachers for useful, reliable ideas.<sup>4</sup>

Teachers also grow professionally from participating in curriculum committees. Research on employee participation in decision making shows that participation results in greater job satisfaction, work achievement, and per-

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<sup>1</sup>A. S. Carson, "Control of the Curriculum: A Case for Teachers," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 16 (January-March 1984): 19-28; Freema Elbaz, "The Teacher's 'Practical Knowledge': Report of a Case Study," *Curriculum Inquiry* 11 (Spring 1981): 43-71

<sup>2</sup>Walter Doyle and Gerald A. Ponder, "The Practicality Ethic in Teacher Decision-Making," *Interchange* 8 (No. 3, 1977-78): 1-12.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Fullan and Alan Pomfret, "Research on Curriculum and Instruction Implementation," *Review of Educational Research* 47 (Spring 1977): 335-397

<sup>4</sup>John E. Davis, "More Effective Curriculum Development and Implementation" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, London, Ontario, May 1978), Kenneth A. Leithwood, John A. Ross, and Deborah J. Montgomery, "An Investigation of Teachers' Curriculum Decision Making," in *Studies in Curriculum Decision Making*, ed. Kenneth A. Leithwood (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press, 1982), pp. 14-26

sonal integration into the organization.<sup>5</sup> Teachers involved in curriculum development have reported increased self-confidence and morale<sup>6</sup> as well as new ideas and the rethinking of their own ideas.<sup>7</sup> These personal gains translate into such desirable organizational outcomes as commitment to the decisions that are made.<sup>8</sup>

Further impetus for teacher participation in curriculum development comes from recent reports on the state of American schools. *A Nation at Risk*<sup>9</sup> calls for increased standards of excellence in American schools, and the Carnegie report, *A Nation Prepared*, explores in greater depth the crucial role teachers must play in the achievement of that goal. "It will mean genuine teacher involvement in and responsibility for educational decisions."<sup>10</sup>

But various factors now work against teachers' participation in curriculum committees. Lortie, for example, has written at length about teachers' close affiliation with their own classrooms. Teachers, he writes, gain primary satisfaction from their *teaching* duties, stressing instructional outcomes and relationships with students. He cites research showing that "teachers prefer classroom tasks over organizational tasks and classroom claims over organizational initiations."<sup>11</sup>

Teachers' isolation from other teachers strengthens this tendency to focus solely on the classroom. Boyan, for example, has discussed the professional norm in favor of teacher autonomy.<sup>12</sup> Schmuck and Miles have commented on "the isolated, individuated character of the teacher's role, which encourages an 'acollaborative' stance."<sup>13</sup> As a result, says Hargreaves, teachers have little continuing access to educational theory or comparative knowledge of

<sup>5</sup>Joseph A. Alutto and James A. Belasco, "Patterns of Teacher Participation in School System Decision Making," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 9 (Winter 1972): 27-41.

<sup>6</sup>Ronald J. B. Carswell, "Teacher Development as an Outcome of Canadian Studies Curriculum Development," *Canadian Journal of Education* 2 (No. 1, 1977): 35-42; Jean Helen Young, "Participation in Curriculum Development. An Inquiry into the Responses of Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry* 15 (Winter 1985): 387-414.

<sup>7</sup>Jean Helen Young, "Participation in Curriculum Development. An Inquiry into the Responses of Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry* 15 (Winter 1985): 387-414.

<sup>8</sup>Walter I. Garms, James W. Guthrie, and Lawrence C. Pierce, *School Finance* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978).

<sup>9</sup>*A Nation at Risk. The Imperative for Educational Reform*, Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

<sup>10</sup>*A Nation Prepared. Teachers for the 21st Century*, Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (New York: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986), p. 112.

<sup>11</sup>Dan C. Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 164.

<sup>12</sup>Norman J. Boyan, "The Emergent Role of the Teacher in the Authority Structure of the School," in *Organizations and Human Behavior: Focus on Schools*, ed. Fred D. Carver and Thomas J. Sergiovanni (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), pp. 200-211.

<sup>13</sup>Richard A. Schmuck and Matthew B. Miles, eds., *Organization Development in Schools* (Palo Alto, Calif.: National Press Books, 1971), p. 17.

other schools and practices.<sup>14</sup> Morrison, Osborne, and McDonald have pointed out that teachers have little opportunity to forge regular contacts with a range of different educators: "This is not a situation which lends itself to obtaining and reflecting upon new ideas."<sup>15</sup>

The basic conservatism of teachers may also work against their participation in curriculum committees. Lortie, for example, has identified several factors related to teachers' conservatism, such as the uncertainty underlying a teacher's work.<sup>16</sup> Waller points out that a teacher's routine becomes a shelter; it is safe.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, if teachers have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, they will have little incentive to participate in curriculum committees, for curriculum development is synonymous with change.

The situation, then, is problematical. There are convincing arguments in favor of teacher participation in curriculum committees, but various factors work together to keep teachers' attention focused on their own classrooms. An important question is whether curriculum committees now have sufficient status to draw teachers' attention away from their own classrooms, at least temporarily.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The data presented in this article were drawn from a recent study of teacher participation in curriculum development. The major purpose of the study was to identify teachers' motivations for participating in curriculum development committees as well as the satisfactions and dissatisfactions they derived from the experience.

Thirty-one full-time classroom teachers participated in the study. An in-depth interview was conducted with each teacher. There were four categories of questions: (1) a description of the committee and how it functioned, (2) the background the teacher brought to the committee, (3) the teacher's reasons for joining the committee, and (4) the teacher's reactions to working on the committee.

Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. Data analysis proceeded in three steps. First, the teachers' responses were collated for each interview question. Second, because the responses ranged from a sentence to many paragraphs, the meaning of each response was summarized to make

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<sup>14</sup>Andy Hargreaves, *Contrastive Rhetoric and Extremist Talk*, in *Classrooms and Staffrooms*, ed. Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1984), pp. 215-231.

<sup>15</sup>T. R. Morrison, K. W. Osborne, and N. G. McDonald, "Whose Canada? The Assumptions of Canadian Studies," *Canadian Journal of Education* 2 (No. 1, 1977) 77.

<sup>16</sup>Dan C. Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), Chapter 6.

<sup>17</sup>W. Waller, "What Teaching Does to Teachers. Determinants of the Occupational Type," in *Classrooms and Staffrooms*, ed. Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1984), pp. 160-173.

compiling the data easier. Third, responses with similar meanings were grouped into the same category. The data were then set aside for several months. When the process was repeated, the differences in the categories of responses were minor, attesting to the reliability of the analysis (reliability, in this case, meaning "consistency of interpretation").

All 31 teachers were employed in the province of Alberta, Canada, where curriculum development begins at the provincial level and proceeds to the local level. The brief descriptions of the two levels that appear below are fairly typical throughout Canada, where, in spite of occasional forays into grass roots curriculum development, a hierarchical model of curriculum development still predominates.

### *Provincial Level*

Under the auspices of a branch of government called Alberta Education, 15 of the 31 teachers were participating in curriculum committees at the provincial level. Eight of the committees were coordinating committees with a mandate to establish a sense of direction for the subject areas taught in the province's schools. The participating teachers were chosen by Alberta Education personnel from a list provided by The Alberta Teachers' Association. These committees were ongoing, although specific committee members changed over time.

The other seven committees at the provincial level were ad hoc committees formed by the coordinating committees to perform specific tasks, such as sequencing objectives across grade levels, developing units of study, and creating inservice packages for teachers. These teachers were selected more informally, usually on the basis of their known interest in the particular subject area. When an ad hoc committee completed its task, it was disbanded.

The goals, objectives, and content developed by the provincial curriculum committees were published in a *Program of Studies* for each level of schooling (elementary, junior high, and senior high), and the use of these documents was mandatory throughout the province. Suggested instructional and evaluation strategies were published in a curriculum guide for each subject area, and teachers could use those documents or not as they chose.

### *Local Level*

Sixteen of the teachers served on curriculum committees at the local level. These committees were primarily concerned with implementing provincial curriculums, and their specific tasks depended on the work already done by provincial committees. For example, some local committees developed a more specific sequence of objectives for a subject area, others created units of study, and still others collected and organized specific teaching materials.

Eight of the committees operated at the district level and were formed by central office personnel. The central office sponsored these committees expecting that the materials produced would be useful throughout the school district. Some of the teachers were asked to serve on these committees, others volunteered. In one case, participation was mandatory.

The other eight committees were formed in individual schools in response to teachers' complaints about difficulties they were having carrying out provincial curriculums. When a committee included a representative from each grade level, teachers volunteered to participate. However, when a grade level committee was formed, the teachers felt obligated to become involved. Curriculum development at this level was tailor-made to the community served by the particular school.

## FINDINGS

The focus of this article, the status of teacher participation in curriculum committees, was not directly addressed in the interviews. In the course of discussion, however, the teachers said many things that alluded to this topic. Their comments were drawn from the transcripts and grouped in categories under four headings: (1) release time for committee meetings, (2) colleagues' reactions to a teacher's participation, (3) rewards received for participation, and (4) the potential use of the materials produced. The findings presented here are organized around these four headings. Whenever appropriate, the teachers' own words are used to exemplify the points that were made.

### *Release Time for Committee Meetings*

This item refers to the time given to teachers during the school day to meet with their committees. The findings were clear. As curriculum development moved from province to district to school, administrators gave less and less release time to teachers serving on curriculum committees.

At the provincial level, teachers normally received release time for committee meetings. District level committees met on their own time or on release time or, more commonly, on a combination of the two. Teachers serving on committees in their own schools rarely received release time for their work, and finding time to meet was clearly a major problem.

Two major factors accounted for the decrease in release time as curriculum development moved down through the educational hierarchy. Distance from the meeting site was the first factor. A primary consideration at the provincial level was to obtain geographic representation across the province. Therefore, committee members were ordinarily drawn from many parts of Alberta to the city of Edmonton for one- to two-day meetings. Teachers could not participate in those committees unless they were released from their classrooms. However, teachers working in the same school district were not usually required to travel great distances to committee meetings (although

teachers in rural areas might disagree), and teachers serving on school level committees had no distance to travel at all, since they were all working in the same administrative unit.

Another consideration was money. The province had more financial resources than did the school districts or schools. One teacher, discussing local committees, explained, "To have 25 teachers call in a substitute for one day gets expensive." Another teacher agreed. "That, to me, is a very important factor when you have got a decreasing school budget. It's an expensive undertaking." District offices paid for release time only when they believed the materials produced by the committees would be applicable throughout the district.

However, the failure of administrators, for whatever reason, to give teachers release time for local curriculum committees had negative repercussions. The teachers perceived their participation in curriculum committees as an addition to their already heavy load. A typical remark was, "I was very busy, and I thought this was just something added to the whole array of things that I was doing, and sometimes I found that it was just a bit too much. I think that was the problem with most people."

The frustration of adding curriculum work to their busy schedules caused some teachers to question the necessity of the work their committees were doing. One teacher explained, "I guess there were times when people got frustrated as to why can't we just do it the other way? Why do we have to develop all this?"

The quality of committee work suffered by "squeezing in the meetings when you could rather than saying 'OK, when can we all meet, let's do it' and giving it some kind of priority." Another teacher said, "It's the same old story. You work on something, and you never have enough time, and you know that you would like to do a better product."

Also, the teachers harbored some feelings of exploitation. One teacher remarked, "Apparently Alberta Education doesn't put much money into implementation, and the school board feels they shouldn't, so they don't either, and so it's just another thing that's pushed down to the teacher level."

Would teachers be more favorably disposed toward participating in curriculum committees if they received release time? Some teachers thought so. One said, "I think there are a lot of people that would be interested, but it's just so time-consuming." Other teachers agreed. "Teachers are a very overworked group of people. . . . You'd find far more teachers who would be willing to do it if they were given time off." One teacher whose committee had received release time from the central office remarked, "I liked the opportunity to do some of it on company time, you know, having the release time. I thought that was good because sometimes you burn yourself out on your own time."

Did the teachers connect release time to the importance the administrators placed on curriculum development? One teacher whose committee was

given a small amount of release time for its work said, "It's something the board values."

### *Colleagues' Reactions to a Teacher's Participation*

In the course of the interviews, the teachers were asked how the other teachers in their school felt about their working on the curriculum committees. Almost half of the teachers reported that other teachers had made little or no comment. One teacher remarked, "Well, I don't know if I ever really heard any comments." Another said, "There wasn't really much attention paid to it."

In some cases, other teachers in the school seemed unaware of their colleague's participation in provincial or district level curriculum committees. In junior and senior high schools, particularly, awareness of a teacher's participation was apparently confined to the teacher's department, and the other teachers in the school did not even know that the committee existed.

When teachers were aware of a colleague's participation on a committee, the reaction was often neutral. One teacher said, "Generally speaking, I wouldn't say that there was much reaction one way or the other. Most of them knew that we were doing it, and they may casually say, 'How's it going?' but not really an extreme reaction one way or the other. Not great enthusiasm in anticipation waiting for it and not, you know, a negative attitude."

Sometimes, however, the teachers' reaction was negative. Several teachers, for example, reported that their colleagues questioned the value of the committee work. One teacher working at the district level said, "Lots of them thought it was a big waste of time, particularly when they have been around a little while and seen other people go out and write units and know that the units weren't used in the school." A teacher working on a provincial committee reported, "They think it's a plus that I've been asked. But they say, 'Why do you want to go to all that work?' You know, this is the comment. 'Why do you want to bother?'"

Two other teachers reported that their colleagues approved of their participation but would not care to do the work themselves. One teacher explained, "The feeling within our department was, 'Well, Thomas, you go ahead, sure glad you are doing it. I'd just as soon you sit there from 3.00 to 5.00 than us.'"

At the same time, six teachers indicated that their colleagues were pleased that they had been asked to serve on the committees and were encouraging and supportive. One teacher remarked, "The ones that know think it's a good opportunity for me . . . a valuable experience." Another said, "Most of them are supportive." These six teachers were all serving on provincial committees. The implication is, if curriculum committees have status at all, it is at the provincial level.

*Rewards Received for Participation*

The teachers discussed two types of reward for participating in the curriculum committees: extra pay and recognition. Both types of reward were in short supply. Extra pay followed the same pattern as the release time, stipends became less frequent as curriculum development moved down through the hierarchy.

Teachers working on provincial curriculum committees always received a stipend. At the district level, the rule of thumb seemed to be that a committee working during the school year received either release time or a stipend, but not both. (One committee received neither.) At the school level, teachers received no pay for committee work during the school year. But when local committees met during the summer, the teachers always received extra pay for their time.

The lack of extra pay at the local level received considerable attention. For example, when asked why some teachers are not interested in doing curriculum work, one teacher replied, "I would say one of the biggest responses would be because you are not being paid for it. And not only are you not being paid for it, but a lot of people feel they are not being paid enough for what they are doing in the first place."

Even when teachers were paid for their work, however, the amount of money did not compensate them for their time. One teacher remarked, "It was nice when we started. We thought we were getting paid for this, but it took us three meetings, and we realized that the amount of work that we had set out for ourselves was definitely not going to be covered by what we were being paid." Still, this teacher appreciated that "someone is at least making a gesture."

The teachers also discussed the reward of recognition, saying that they received little attention for participating in the curriculum committees. For example, the teachers' colleagues were often unaware, neutral, or even negative about the teachers' participation. Recognition, therefore, was usually limited to the approval expressed by administrators and consultants. One teacher remarked, "I would say that, in terms of warmth and recognition from the superintendent or the language arts consultant when he would come in, you could see that he was pleased that you were putting all this effort into it, and the principal would come in and give you a little nod of the head, so things like that were rewarding."

This type of recognition occurred on a one-to-one basis. Administrators offered the teachers no public recognition. This point was discussed by a teacher who was asked what kinds of recognition she thought teachers would prefer. "Well," she said, "their names on publications and, in the board newsletters and such, the names and the nature of the activity described very briefly. For example, 'Mr. X and Miss Y and Mrs. Q have been involved in a curriculum writing workshop and have produced such and such a unit for



the bilingual program' . . . so that other teachers are aware of what their colleagues are doing, and I think that that kind of information should also be passed along to parents in the school community in school newsletters "

Other teachers questioned whether recognition and money are crucial factors. One teacher was thinking of extra rewards for teaching when she said, "I think the good ones are going to do it anyway They don't need to be given the extra bonus or the brownie points or the pay increase or whatever." Another teacher said the members of his committee were paid for their work, but he downplayed that factor. "I was going to mention the financial reward," he said, "but I honestly believe that usually it's insignificant for teachers, otherwise they wouldn't be teaching. They have given up on monetary aspirations."

The teachers perceived that the lack of rewards for curriculum development points to the paucity of rewards for teaching in general. One teacher explained, "I just think that all teachers are rated the same. You all get the same pay, you all get the same everything, whether or not you dedicate yourself more than the next person, and I don't think that's fair I think that superior teachers should be recognized." Another said, "You can work yourself to the bone, you can be absolutely outstanding in teaching, and nobody recognizes that. I think if people were recognized for doing things, they might be more stimulated."

#### *Potential Use of the Materials Produced*

With one exception, the teachers believed that the work of their committees was worthwhile. However, when the teachers were asked what effect they thought the work of their committees would have on the province (or district or school), there was a tentative flavor to their responses. Words that appeared again and again were *hopefully* and *hope*. For example, teachers said, "I would hope that the teachers would have a very positive attitude toward it," or "I hope it has a good and a far-flung effect I hope that. I don't know."

The teachers did not always know what became of the materials their committees developed. It was almost as if, when the materials were completed, they were cast into limbo. One teacher, commenting on whether the work of his committee would affect education in his school district, said, "I would have to be honest and say I don't have an idea in the world. No clue."

Particularly at the provincial level, the teachers expressed serious doubt that the materials would be used by the teachers of the province. This response is interesting, considering that at least the guidelines produced by the committees for the various subject areas were mandatory throughout the province. The teachers' doubts stemmed from two sources. First, they perceived a lack of commitment to implementation on the part of Alberta Education. One teacher said, "If somehow proper inservicing of the teacher can be accom-

plished, then I think the new curriculum is going to address itself to some of the problems that the public perceived. . . . What I'm told at this time is that there isn't the money, and there is a very slim likelihood of that happening. That's the one part that bothers me." A contributing problem, according to some teachers, was that the province and school districts had never worked out their respective responsibilities for implementation.

Another major problem was thought to be resistance from teachers themselves. One teacher said, "We're also aware of the fact that with the large number of teachers, it is not going to make one little particle of difference. They're going to still go on the way they've always done it, and there's always going to be teachers, no matter even if you stood over them with a stick, they're going to say, 'The hell with you guys,' and 'I'm going to teach it my way.'"

Three reasons were given for teacher resistance: (1) teachers' enjoyment of the current curriculum even though they may realize that changes are needed; (2) the frequency of curriculum changes which discourages teachers; (3) the current climate of criticism rather than praise, which gives teachers little motivation to implement new curriculums.

Curriculum materials produced by district-level committees were usually optional throughout the district. Therefore, one teacher explained, "There will be some teachers who will pick it up, and I think it will be an incentive for them, but I personally believe that that percentage is going to be small." The teachers were usually rather philosophical about this situation. Some teachers would probably not be particularly interested in the subject area. One teacher pointed out, "I think there are people that their interests just don't lie in this direction." Also, "There are other sources. . . . I don't think there is any one given book that you can hand out to an English teacher and say, 'Somewhere in here you will find everything you want.'" Teaching styles also differ. "Not everybody can teach using the same materials."

Even if the materials were used, the teachers sometimes thought that the effect would be short-lived. One teacher commented, "It may have had some effect the immediate year following completion. Now I would suspect, very very little." The teachers ascribed the limited durability of the materials to several sources: (1) the materials were not being revised to any great extent as a result of pilot-testing, (2) interest was shifting away from the subject area, (3) grants were drying up at the end of a specified period, and (4) the subject area was being reconceptualized at the provincial level.

Although the teachers generally agreed that optional use of curriculum materials was reasonable, they sometimes felt that inadequate dissemination of the materials inhibited teacher choice. They identified four problems in particular. First, teachers were not always reminded that the materials were available. Second, when teachers were contacted about the materials, it was often by letter, and, as one teacher remarked, "It's the same old thing. The paper, you get so much of it, you know." Third, the curriculum materials were

usually sent to schools rather than to individual teachers, which may have been economical, but, as one teacher pointed out, "I think it would almost have to go to the teachers themselves in order for it to be effective." Fourth, although many comments suggested that the new materials should be presented to teachers in person, inservices were not necessarily popular. One teacher described the reaction as "Oh, no! Here is another thing they are loading on us."

Only the teachers participating in curriculum committees in their own schools were optimistic about the effect of their committee work. Three reasons emerged from the data. The impetus for the work came primarily from the teachers themselves. The teachers knew they were having problems, and committees were formed to solve those problems. The work of the committees also had immediate applicability to the teachers' classrooms. Peer pressure may encourage teachers to use the materials developed by a school-level committee. For example, when a sequence of skills is worked out for a series of grade levels in a school, a teacher cannot ignore that sequence without impinging on the work of other teachers.

## DISCUSSION

It appears from the data that participation in curriculum committees lacks status in the work lives of classroom teachers. The curriculum committees themselves received little attention. The teachers' colleagues were often unaware that the committees were operating, suggesting that administrators did not find the committee work worth mentioning in newsletters or discussing in staff meetings. Nor were steps taken to follow through on implementing the materials produced by the committees.

Colleagues' neutral or even negative reactions to a teacher's participation on a curriculum committee indicate that curriculum work has a poor reputation among teachers. There seems to be little point in working on a curriculum committee when the work itself does not receive public recognition, when the materials are not necessarily used, and when participation adds to an already heavy teaching load. No wonder other teachers responded with the attitude of "Why do you want to bother?"

This conclusion is dismaying because the literature speaks highly of teacher participation in curriculum development as a means of professional growth. Of the 31 teachers in this study, 28 (90 percent) reported that participation had a positive effect on their classroom teaching. However, if participation in curriculum committees lacks status, it is unlikely that other teachers will take advantage of this opportunity for professional growth.

Why is participation in curriculum development committees accorded such low status? A clue came from the teachers themselves. Administrators,

they pointed out, often harbor a narrow view of a teacher's role. Principals reacted differently when they were asked to release teachers for participation in provincial curriculum committees (which usually involved two consecutive days of release time, four or five times a year.) Some principals were positive about teachers' membership on the committees and, therefore, accepted the need for release time. One teacher said about her principal, "He's really keen on people getting as involved as they can in different things and sort of broadening themselves." But other principals were reluctant to let their teachers go to committee meetings during school time. One teacher explained, for example, that in her school "the principal really is a great believer that you're paid to be in the classroom, and that's where you should be." Other principals took a middle-of-the-road position, which one teacher described as "this is really not what we want you to do, but if you want to do it, OK."

The teachers agreed that their major role was in the classroom. For example, when one teacher was asked if his work on the committee was affecting his teaching in any way, he replied, "I don't believe it is. Otherwise I don't think I'd be here. But in my mind if it ever does affect the results in the classroom for the kids, I'll withdraw or resign or whatever it is from the committee. . . . If it gets to the point where it's seriously hurting the students, you know, I'd place them before I'd place the committee."

But the teachers in this study wanted to expand their role to include curriculum development, primarily because it enhanced their classroom teaching. They believed their committee work had a positive effect on their teaching because it introduced them to new ideas and materials and generally stimulated their thinking. One teacher explained, "It definitely is a learning experience. You contribute, but you also absorb so much, and I think it is such terrific work because it's just so stimulating, it's so exciting, and so refreshing, because I can go back to my classroom with all these wonderful new ideas of things I can do."

In other words, the teachers perceived participation in curriculum development as a way to grow professionally. However, some of the teachers believed that administrators at both district and school levels were not seriously interested in the professional growth of teachers. Or at least they were not sufficiently interested to pay for it. Referring to participation in curriculum committees, one teacher said, "It's a problem. It's a professional thing, and yet they don't like to release you. And yet they want it done. It needs to be done. It's sort of a vicious circle." Speaking more generally, another teacher said, "That's always a problem in education . . . the reluctance to actually give time or recognize professional development. There is very much a need to upgrade skills, but if nobody is going to give you that time and opportunity to upgrade those skills (exterior to your own time, for example, going to night school or taking a year off, which most people really can't), I think that only adds to the burnout." These comments confirm Champlin's view that "most

teachers receive little encouragement to seek and inquire or grow professionally."<sup>18</sup>

Although these comments were made about administrators in general, further research might focus on school principals, since they are in a key position to give participation in curriculum development the status it deserves. As Ross points out, principals exercise control over rewards, recognition, and the revised scheduling that permits joint planning by teachers.<sup>19</sup> Further research, then, might begin with three questions:

1. To what extent do principals perceive the teacher's role as confined to the classroom or as extending beyond it?
2. Do principals perceive participation in curriculum development as a desirable way for teachers to grow professionally?
3. In what ways do principals' attitudes toward teacher participation in curriculum development affect the feasibility and quality of participation?

These questions matter, if administrators wish to engage teachers in activities that will enhance their classroom teaching. One teacher concluded, "If people are going to be made to feel important and capable and a little bit different from the general stream of their colleagues because they have chosen to do this type of work, and in consequence their teaching load is lessened, they are going to be more favorable."

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McKnight, C. C., F. J. Crosswhite, J. A. Dossey, E. Kifer, J. O. Swafford, K. J. Travers, and T. J. Cooney. *The Underachieving Curriculum. Assessing U.S. School Mathematics from an International Perspective*. Champaign, Ill.: Stipes Publishing, 1987. 127 pp. \$8.00.

This report highlights conclusions about U.S. school mathematics curriculum based on data from the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS). SIMS was a cooperative effort of about 20 countries aimed at describing attitudes and achievement as well as the content and methods of instruction in 8th and 12th-grade mathematics. Data are presented that contradict commonly held beliefs about reasons for international differences in performance. The report concludes with an analysis of international differences in curricular emphases in school mathematics.

—Kathleen Heid and Glen Blume

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<sup>18</sup>John Champlin, "Leadership: A Change Agent's View," in *Leadership. Examining the Elusive*, ed. Linda T. Shreve and Marian B. Schoenheit (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1987), p. 50.

<sup>19</sup>John A. Ross, "The Influence of the Principal," in *Studies in Curriculum Decision Making*, ed. Kenneth A. Leithwood (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press, 1982), pp. 54-67.

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