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STAFF RELATIONS

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1. WALTON'S NEW HEAD

At the beginning of the current academic year, Mr Harmon W. Harmonsworth was appointed head of Walton Comprehensive School. Walton Comprehensive is a five-year old school in a semi-rural setting, and has a roll of 1,250 students - 680 girls and 570 boys and a staff of 55 teachers.

The existing administrative structure at the time of his assumption of duty was:

- Head
- Deputy Head - Curriculum
- Deputy Head - Discipline
- 5 Senior Teachers in charge of year groups
- 11 Heads of Department
 - English & Drama
 - Mathematics
 - Physics
 - Chemistry
 - Biology
 - Geography
 - History
 - General Studies
 - Home Economics
 - Scripture
 - Music
 - Economics
 - Commercial Subjects
 - Modern Languages
 - Industrial Arts
 - Physical Education

Prefects - selected by staff

Mr Harmonsworth was thirty-five years old, well-qualified and considered very progressive. He was great on community involvement, related well to young people and was known to be one who actively supported women's rights' movements. He tended to exude confidence (some would describe him as cocky) and to trust in his own judgement. He felt, however, that this structure did not make the best use of the available human resources and militated against creative use of funds. He allowed himself a term to settle in and then issued the following memorandum to staff.

MEMORANDUM

From: Harmon W. Harmonsworth, Headmaster

To: All members of Academic Staff

Date: 1981-01-13

Subject: Upcoming Changes in Administrative Structure of
Walton Comprehensive

As you are all aware, my position as headmaster enjoins upon me the duty of providing the best educational services for the students of

Walton Comprehensive school. In keeping with this duty, therefore, I am planning to re-organize the administrative structure of the school along the following lines:

Head

Deputy Head - Curriculum

Deputy Head - Female Pupils

5 House Masters/Mistresses in charge of the House System
which will be instituted.

10 Heads of Department

English & Drama

Science

Mathematics

Social Studies

Home Economics

Music

Physical Education

General Studies

Modern Languages

Industrial Arts

Student Council and Prefects - elected by students and involved in the running of the school.

You will notice that I have abolished the separate departments in the sciences, and have merged them into one department. I believe that the modern world requires an integrated approach to Science. I am therefore proposing that we move towards an 'Integrated Science' curriculum, and away from the separate subject disciplines which reinforces the fragmentation we so frequently see around us. In this regard, I have brought History and Geography together, and have removed Economics from the General Studies Department and added it to the History and Geography to form the Social Studies Department. This will permit students to get a more rounded picture of man and his environment, and will leave scope for the addition of such subjects as Sociology and Psychology at a later date.

In keeping with my philosophy of co-operation of home and school, I have removed Home Economics from the General Studies Department, and given it the status of a department in its own right. In this regard, Home Economics and Industrial Arts will now be open to both boys and girls. Music also becomes a full department and will include Band. In case you are wondering how the Band will be financed, I've calculated that money saved by streamlining and combining departments in the way outlined will be enough to purchase basic instruments. However, I will also be contacting parents to get them to pay part of the cost for the instrument their child wants to play. Remember that Band is highly visible and can bring much needed prestige to Walton. All other subjects will remain with the General Studies Department which will now be much smaller, reduced from the vast meaningless amalgam which it was before. I believe that in this way we can streamline our curriculum and provide a better and more meaningful education package for our children.

You will note that we will have a deputy head to look after the female pupils. I firmly believe that we will be able to deal more effectively with female student problems if we make it part of our operational policy. In this regard, Mrs X will now take charge of such

affairs. Discipline will be handled by myself, both vice-principals and, of course, all staff members as this is part of our professional responsibility. I believe that early staff attention to problems will greatly reduce the need for administrator involvement, hence the removal of discipline as the major function of a vice-principal.

Of equal significance is the introduction of the house system under the direction of House Master/Mistresses. Pastoral care ought to be a major concern of any school. In the past, it seemed to me that this was missing from our philosophy. While it is true that we had year heads who in my opinion did an excellent job, yet they were limited in their efforts in this regard by the very nature of the job as year head. The House Master/Mistress concept along with the proposed Student Council should provide us with a framework for better pastoral care, and will help students to develop responsible leadership since I propose to have the Student Council and prefects elected by students, and to have them actively involved in the governance of student affairs and the running of the school.

Of these changes the house system will take effect immediately. Mr Johnson, Miss Pinder, Mr Aileyne, Mrs St John and Mr Brown will take charge of the houses after the positions of year head which they held have been formally abolished. Details will be worked out within the next few days.

All other changes will go into effect at the beginning of the new academic year, and all relevant positions will be advertised accordingly. Finally, let me add that change creates problems. I am, however, expecting staff to contact me about any problems they anticipate.

Harmon W. Harmonsworth
Headmaster

Two days after this memorandum was sent, Mr. Harmonsworth received a note signed by the five year heads indicating that under the circumstances, they were not willing to serve as house masters and that Mr Harmonsworth should look elsewhere. This was accompanied by another note which simply said "YOU ARE NUTS" and was signed by every member of the staff.

Discussion

1. What are the concepts in administration which the case illustrates?
2. Outline the administrative blunders made by Mr Harmonsworth. Given Mr Harmonsworth's philosophical position and the changes he desires, how might you have brought about these changes?
3. Indicate how he might now retrieve and resolve the situation.

2. MR EVANS

Main Points

1. The appointment of a new headteacher is often seen as a threat by other members of staff.
2. The new head has to take control from the start by gaining the support and confidence of staff members.
3. A staff member who is resistant to change in accepting a new head may be a source of embarrassment to the administration particularly when other teachers support such behaviour.
4. How a new head deals with certain matters could indicate how effective he would be in all areas of school administration both internally and externally.

Mr Evans was recently appointed to the post of headteacher of Crossland secondary school following the retirement of Mr Mandeville. Crossland was one of the largest newer secondary schools in the island and it came as a surprise to many teachers there when Mr Charles Winston did not obtain the appointment, for after all he had been on the staff for the past 12 years both as teacher and as deputy head. There was nothing they could do, however, but to accept the decision of the board of managers.

If Mr Evans had any idea of the feelings of certain teachers towards his appointment he would most likely not have accepted the post but have remained headteacher of a small but prominent grammar school in the city. However, he accepted the challenge that a new situation had to offer - after all he was a strict, authoritative and methodical administrator. He looked forward to the co-operation of the staff at Crossland, including his deputy, on whom he realised he had to depend a great deal during the initial stages.

Mr Winston was obviously upset and disappointed, but he recognized that he had no choice in the selection. The least he could do now was to continue his role as a deputy and perform his duties as well as he could under the circumstances. He knew that the majority of teachers favoured him. What he hoped for was that the staff would eventually settle down and accept Mr Evans as head. How he could assist in bringing about this unity was not fully worked out. What he did know was that he wanted the staff to respect Mr Evans and at the same time continue their loyalty for him. This situation would eventually get out of control, but for the time being Mr Winston played it safe.

One teacher who went a step further was Miss Pinder, an English specialist. She not only openly spoke of her preference for Mr Winston as head of Crossland, but she also demonstrated her negative attitude by often visiting his office with matters which she normally should have brought to Mr Evans' attention.

In addition, she would encourage other staff members to treat the deputy as the most senior administrator which some of them actually began to do. She was an English teacher whom many of her colleagues admired and whose influence was felt beyond her own department.

It was to be expected that sooner rather than later Mr. Evans would have cause to react to Miss Pinder's open resentment, but he more than anything else did not want a confrontation. As far as the deputy was concerned, the last thing he wanted was to be accused of causing a division among the staff at Crossland; for it would not only adversely effect staff administration relationships, but could involve the students as well. The latter would be dangerous, since it would definitely affect the parents of 1,250 students and the community at large.

From his position Mr Winston neither encouraged nor discouraged Miss Pinder or others from bringing certain matters to his attention. What he did fear was losing their confidence in him, while at the same time he wanted them to appreciate where the full authority for Crossland rested. He wanted to play the game safely, but Miss Pinder's persistence in recognizing him as their 'head' did little to maintain the balance Mr Winston hoped for.

Jean was sitting her qualifying examination all week. As an average student in the fifth form, she was hoping to qualify in five subjects so that she would be eligible to sit them at ordinary level in the overseas Cambridge examination in June. During the English examination, she answered a student who had asked her a question. This caught Miss Pinder's attention and immediately she was sent out of the room and debarred from completing the qualifying examination in English. According to Miss Pinder, this meant that Jean could not enter for English in June, since she did not qualify.

An explanation to the headteacher could have made Miss Pinder change her mind and so off Jean went to Mr Evans' office and knocked at the door. After explaining the problem to him, Mr Evans asked that Miss Pinder discuss the matter from both sides. At the end of the morning session, Miss Pinder strolled down to Mr Evans' office where she met him working at his desk. He invited her to take a seat which she reluctantly did after making a mental note of inventory in this room. She tried to hide her feelings but appeared agitated at the question which Mr Evans began to ask. When he actually reached the main point, Miss Pinder stood on her feet and abruptly told him that she had planned to deal with the problem after consulting with the deputy who knew Jean's parents well. She started to leave the room but sat down when Mr Evans told her that she should use her judgement in taking appropriate action when dealing with the matter.

Later in the day Miss Pinder met with the deputy and told him what had happened. She asked him to send for Jean's mother so that she could explain to her why Jean would not be allowed to sit English in June. Mr Evans was not aware of this planned conference and was taken by surprise when Mrs Thomas appeared at his office early the next morning accompanied by Jean. According to the arrangement, Mrs Thomas should have reported directly to the deputy and Miss Pinder, but was inadvertently taken to the head's office by her daughter.

He sent for Miss Pinder who had not yet commenced classes for the morning. On arriving at his door and seeing both mother and daughter there, Miss Pinder's eyes took on a solemn gaze. She did not expect Mrs Thomas to be in consultation with the head but rather expected to meet with her in Mr Winston's office. She managed to control her feelings and quietly told the headteacher that she would deal with the matter. The head asked Mrs Thomas and daughter to accompany Miss Pinder.

Miss Pinder reported to the head that she did not change her mind from disqualifying Jean. Mrs Thomas left the school a disappointed parent sensing that somehow there seemed to be some friction between the head and Miss Pinder, but could not tell why. She held out hope that somehow her daughter would be allowed to sit English in June. Meanwhile Jean continued to sit her qualifying examination in the other subjects.

The headteacher was exasperated and reminded his deputy that serious matters relating to students should be first brought to his attention especially when parents are to be involved. Of course the deputy knew this as well as Miss Pinder who was an experienced but influential teacher at Crossland High.

Discussion

1. Do you support the view that the deputy was the best man to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the headteacher, Mr Mandeville?
2. As a new head, how would you go about ensuring that you immediately gain the support and co-operation of all members of staff?
3. How authoritarian and methodical was Mr Evans in running Crossland High?
4. Was the deputy justified in giving the head the kind of support he did?
5. How would you deal with a teacher like Miss Pinder?
6. Suggest ways in which the case of the student could have been handled differently.
7. Do you think that Miss Pinder set out to show Mr Evans that she was an influential member of staff?
8. Did Mr Evans help to make the students' cause more humane?
9. Why do you suppose Mr Evans did not put the deputy 'in his place' knowing that he, the deputy, was trying to gain support of the staff?
10. Do you think that the parent should accept the decision of Miss Pinder?
11. What administrative qualities of Mr Evans do you admire?
12. Did he adjust well to the leadership of the new school?
13. Assess the attitude of Miss Pinder in the light of staff/administration relationship? What changes were necessary?

14. Did the board of managers err in appointing a completely new head to such a large school? Give reasons.
15. As administrators which theory would you develop from Mr Evans' manner or style of leadership?

3. A ZEALOUS COLLEAGUE

Mrs Tan, the Maths teacher, and Mrs Ang, the English teacher of Sec. 3 and 4, came into the principal's office with two students from the class.

Mrs Tan (Maths teacher). "Mrs Ang (the English teacher) scolded these girls for cheating during the monthly maths test I set them when I had already dealt with them. (To students) Tell the principal what you did."

Student. "My friend in the next class gave me the Maths paper during recess. I showed it to my class-mate. I am sorry I had a look at the paper. Mrs Tan told us not to get help from the other class. I will not do this again."

Mrs Ang. "I scolded them because we have to teach good morals. I was doing my duty."

Mrs Tan (shouting). "You should not interfere. I had already scolded the girls and punished them. It had nothing to do with you."

Principal (interrupting, to students). "Girls, you see what trouble you cause by your behaviour. Now go back to class and don't let this happen again. (To Mrs Tan) You should not lose your temper before the students. Now tell me calmly what happened."

Mrs Ang. "I heard Mrs Tan complaining about the girls in the staff-room."

Mrs Tan (interrupting). "You eavesdropped. You had no right to listen. I was talking to Mrs D'Souza, their form mistress, not to you."

Mrs Ang. "But you were speaking loudly enough to be heard by everybody."

Mrs Tan. "You had no business to scold the girls again. They will never trust me again. I told them that it was over after I had punished them and that I would not tell the principal or anybody else what they had done."

Mrs Ang. "I had to correct them."

Mrs Tan (Shouting). "You made them stand up in class and own up. You humiliated them."

Principal. "That's enough. I won't have you two quarrelling in my office. Get out of my office! I am not going to discuss this with you till you learn to be calm. Out, please!"

Later in the day the senior assistant reports to the principal that feelings are festering dangerously between the two teachers. She advises that the principal should see them before matters get worse. The principal agrees but first calls in the form mistress for her views.

Mrs D'Souza (form mistress). "Mrs Tan did tell me about the Maths test but she asked me not to mention the incident again with the girls as she had already dealt with the situation. Mrs Ang nags at the girls. My girls are afraid of her. Mrs Tan is hard on the girls but the girls take her scolding as they know once they have been scolded the incident will be treated as over and done with."

Principal. "All right. Please be present when I send for the two teachers. I just want you to speak for your girls."

The senior assistant sends for the two teachers.

Discussion

1. What happened in the principal's office?
2. Stage the incident as a role play.

4. NATURE TAKES ITS COURSE

Margaret du Pont, the principal of Roseworthy School, found that owing to the sudden death of one of her teachers at the beginning of the year, an emergency situation had arisen. She notified the Ministry and Mrs Simons, a young married teacher was appointed. It soon transpired that Mrs Simons was seven months pregnant.

Margaret posted her new teacher to a class in Standard III. Bearing in mind the pregnancy she provided Renee with teaching materials, plan and record books and paid frequent visits to the class. Mrs Simons adapted well and all went smoothly until the new baby arrived and the mother went on leave for two months.

The second term had just begun. The only alternative to seeking another short term appointment was to squeeze the 3 sections of Standard I into two classes and to use one of the Standard I teachers in Standard III. When this was put to the staff they agreed to the change and the school continued to run smoothly with Mrs Simons' class now in charge of Mrs Alovin - an experienced and devoted teacher.

The second term was drawing to its end and the second term tests were about to be held when Mrs Simons resumed duty. By that time Mrs Alovin had already covered the programme and had even prepared the test papers. As it was not a normal teaching week, the principal requested Mrs Simons to wait till the end of the tests before taking back her class. However Mrs Simons insisted that she should set her own test papers arguing that this was her privilege and duty. When the principal failed to agree with this Mrs Simons called on the union delegate for support as she was afraid the results might entail an adverse report. Although she was assured that no such actions would be taken but still she showed a negative attitude and she was not open to persuasion. The more Margaret du Pont tried to persuade her the more defiant she became while the union delegate supported the teacher rather than the principal.

Discussion

1. How would you assess the principal's actions?
2. What should the principal do next?

5. STUDENT RIGHTS

When the Student Council of Roahann Secondary School was set up the constitution was drafted by a recent university graduate in discussion with senior students. This was then ratified by the principal. The constitution bore a remarkable resemblance to that of a University Students' Union. It placed total control in the hands of students from the senior school.

A new principal was appointed at the beginning of the following year. He became dissatisfied with certain activities of the Students' Council and decided to introduce some changes. He set aside the old constitution and introduced a new one which gave each class a representative on Council. This had the effect of depriving the seniors of their lop-sided majority and prominence.

There was immediate dissatisfaction amongst the seniors, a dissatisfaction fomented by the publicly expressed opinions of an expatriate staff member who interpreted the change as a breach of the students' democratic rights and liberties. In this he was vociferously supported by the original author of the constitution. It was not long before conflict developed in the staffroom to a degree that challenged the well-being of the school.

Discussion

What advice could you give to this principal?

6. A MATTER OF PRIORITIES

The Jalan Arratoon Girls Secondary School is located in a city area. Though well staffed it is very cramped for non-classroom space. Sports lessons are taken in nearby parkland, 10 minutes walk from the school but the arrangement of physical education lessons is less easy.

Miss Tuck, the physical education senior teacher has successfully demanded an additional lesson for each class as is normal in all other schools. She insists also that (a) lessons should be taken in the school's only quadrangle, and (b) that she should be free to conduct classes as she sees fit, including the use of music, shouting etc.

In support of her attitude she says that her demands are just and that should she be denied the opportunity to work in this way it would be inevitable that physical education would be regarded as a Cinderella subject and that this would be detrimental to the children.

Teachers who are taking humanities subjects in classrooms bordering the quadrangle are very unhappy. They hold a private meeting and depute Mr Tso Choon Choy, the senior history teacher to seek an interview with the principal (Mr Howard Racket).

Mr Racket learns in this way that the humanities staff claims that, because of Miss Tuck's lessons they are unable to make themselves heard in their adjoining classrooms. Further they are now being denied the use of the quadrangle for certain outside lessons and discussions they have planned.

Mr Racket listens to the complaint and tells Mr Tso that he will look into the matter.

7. AGE AND YOUTH

There is conflict in Nautona staff room. The situation has been created by what appears to be a different set of values between the older teachers of more conservative outlook and the younger teachers (of whom the headmaster is one).

Certain senior teachers have expressed their disturbance at what they see as familiarity and unwise fraternization between students and some members of staff. They feel that since most of the children come from homes where the traditional values of respect for age and politeness are still cherished the school should actively encourage those 'virtues'.

It seems that the headmaster is in a 'no win' situation. The senior teachers, and, he suspects, many members of the community, expect him to uphold the traditional values. His own inclinations and the sentiments of the younger staff members pull him towards what he sees as a more modern and acceptable view.

Discussion

How can the situation be resolved?

8. THE SYCOPHANT

Mr Lee has been a Secondary School principal for the past nine years. His peculiarity is that he is keen to put into practice any recommendation made by any inspector or advisor. He will not take suggestions from his teachers, not even his senior teachers. Instead he manages by decree.

Mrs Tan is a Science specialist in Mr Lee's school. She is very much interested in her work and the staff know her as a hard-working and dedicated teacher. She also comes from a musical family.

In the beginning of the year, it so happened, the Music Inspector came to Mr Lee's school and requested Mr Lee to have music lessons for the Secondary 3 and 4 students. When Mr Lee promised the Music Inspector that the Secondary 3 and 4 students would have music lessons, he presumed Mrs Tan would be able to help out. But, unfortunately, Mrs Tan was not a musician herself and so felt unable to teach the subject.

Mr Lee had committed himself. He felt that he had no alternative but to introduce music in the Secondary 3 and 4 levels. So he ordered his senior assistant to incorporate music in the Secondary 3 and 4 time-tables.

The senior assistant has accordingly drawn up the time-table but he cannot find the teacher. He has spoken to his staff but there is no one competent enough to take on the job. Mr Lee has intervened and has ordered Mrs Tan to teach the music lessons but she has declined.

Discussion

What should Mr Lee do next?

9. GOSSIP

In a school a good deal of gossiping takes place during the day. It is common for a teacher to leave his class and go to his neighbour's class for a chat.

Discussion

What steps should be taken to minimise this practice without disturbing the friendly relationships that exist between teachers and between the teachers and the headteacher?

10. HANDICAP

Characters: Francis Ram, headteacher of Tuperi School
Agnes Fiala, headteacher of Tuperi School for the Handicapped.

Tuperi School is a large government school containing 18 classrooms and situated on the outskirts of a substantial town.

Six years ago Francis Ram and the Parents' Committee of the school had responded to a request from the Ministry that two vacant rooms in the school should be used to house Tuperi School for the Handicapped. At that time no alternative accommodation was available and Agnes Fiala and her assistant teacher thankfully settled in with a group of mentally handicapped children.

The arrangement was supposed to have been a temporary one but something went wrong with Ministry planning. Now Francis Ram feels that he needs the two rooms but the Ministry has found itself in an embarrassing position and it is unwilling to press Tuperi School for the Handicapped to vacate.

Tuperi School Parents' Association has sent written submissions to the Government asking for it to clear the rooms on two grounds:

1. The school needs the rooms to expand its facilities, particularly for a library and a science room.
2. The parents feel that the intellectually handicapped children have an adverse effect on their own children who are normal.

Francis and his staff are also not happy about the situation. They have made frequent complaints about noise, littering and messing of the toilets by the intellectually handicapped children. On the other hand Agnes and her assistant have fiercely defended their pupils. Ill feeling between the two staffs has grown to such an extent that they are barely on speaking terms.

Nobody has the authority to ask Tuperi School for the Handicapped to move out except the Government and, so far, it has given no indication that it will do so.

Before taking the next step Francis Ram retires to his office to sort out what the real issues might be.