

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The Internal Advocacy System: An Alternative Strategy for Teacher and Child

W. N. Creekmore and Nancy N. Creekmore

Passage of PL 94-142 in 1975 provided for greatly expanded public school services for handicapped children. At the same time, the law placed tremendous responsibilities on professionals who were unprepared to deal with its effects (Creekmore & Creekmore, 1980; Stedman, 1974). Efforts to comply with the content of the law have led to some unfortunate circumstances. Compliance, in many cases, has been reduced to meeting the letter of the law, but not its intent. Individualized education plans (IEPs) are often being "mass-produced" through the use of computerized information, or simply "rubber-stamped" from the past year's forms. Special service committees are frequently forced into recommending inappropriate services for a given child because they are the only services available. Thus, the intent of the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act has been lost in the legal milieu of providing services. In reality, many handicapped children still suffer from a lack of appropriate educational services although the letter of the law may be fulfilled.

As a result, advocacy is vitally necessary for handicapped children, as well as those who provide services to them. The concept of advocacy, having grown out of the civil rights struggle of the past 20 years, takes into consideration that many people lack the knowledge or ability to successfully change situations that affect their daily lives (Priddy, 1973). Whether they be teachers, administrators, or handicapped students, they need someone — an advocate — to assist and guide in making needed changes.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The negative impact of often ill-equipped school administrations in the realm of serving handicapped students clearly points toward a need for advocacy at the service delivery level, as well as for the handicapped child. In that context, a discussion of the prevailing service delivery system model and a suggested alternative to it will precede a discussion of various types of advocacy and the functions of an advocate in the proposed Internal Advocacy System.

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The Hurder Model of Service Delivery

Although every administrative unit in public education sports a unique administrative model, commonalities are found within all. Hurder (1973) conceptualized a service delivery system, including education in its scope, as a hierarchical series of producer/consumer interfaces. The function of the service system is accomplished by a division of labor. A higher echelon function interfaces largely with the administrative-programmatic concerns of the organization, and a lower echelon function is responsible for delivery of direct services to the "target individuals." The focus of the service delivered would be toward satisfying the clinical or prescriptive needs of the service receiver. Table I depicts the service delivery model proposed by Hurder.

Hurder stipulated that the organizational and administrative objectives of the system must be satisfied before developing the capacity to meet individual client needs at Level II. Satisfying the direct service provider role (Level II), however, is essential to meeting the overall organizational goals. In the Hurder model, guidelines that effect overall operation of the agency are made at a high level, removed from the service consumers. These

guidelines flow toward the consumers through a series of intermediate and lower echelon personnel.

In the case of public education, Level I personnel would be considered the "central office staff" that interfaces most often with other policy makers in the community, including boards of education and allied agencies. Decisions made are far removed from the chalk dust and echoing halls of the students' environments. Intermediate positions would be occupied by elementary, secondary, and special education supervisors acting as interface personnel between direct service providers (teachers) and administrators. Level II personnel essentially carry out orders of the administration. Through an appropriate division of labor, each group presumably can more efficiently perform its tasks and contribute toward a better functioning school. This structure is typically seen across the nation.

Arguments Against the Prevailing Model

Unfortunately, administrative, financial, policy, political, and unknown pressures that continually besiege administrative units can lead to policy decisions that are not in the best interest of the school organization; its teachers, or the students (Priddy, 1973). For example, PL 94-142 provided expanded educational opportunities for thousands of handicapped individuals but produced nearly unbearable regulations for some local school systems. Attempts to minimally comply with the law have resulted in less than appropriate educations to handicapped students in many cases.

These types of administrative level decisions have been made in the face of difficult mandates, from federal or state levels, that have had to be "handled" by local administrative personnel. Interpreting the administrative policy statements to teachers carries the high risk of producing stress, anger, a feeling of helplessness, and loss of pride — which can potentially erode relationships along the hierarchical continuum. Teacher morale, effectiveness, and relationships with students may be negatively influenced. Furthermore, erroneous conclusions are frequently derived, which may lay the entire blame for a policy decision on a personal decision of one administrator or the central office administrative staff.

The literature on educational administration confirms the notion that success of an activity, program, idea, or strategy is directly related to the "height" of its administrative support. The higher up the ladder an idea is

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN (ISSN 0015-511X) (USPS 203-360) is published monthly except June, July, and August as a service to teachers, special educators, curriculum specialists, administrators, and those concerned with the special education of exceptional children. This journal is abstracted and indexed in *Exceptional Child Education Resources*, and is also available in microform from Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Subscription rates, \$15.00 per year. Copyright 1981, Love Publishing Company. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission is prohibited. Printed in the United States of America. Second class postage is paid at Denver, Colorado. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Love Publishing Company
Executive and Editorial Office
1777 South Bellaire Street
Denver, Colorado 80222
Telephone (303) 757-2579

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Table 1
Hurder's Service Delivery Model

Division of Labor	Function
Echelon Level I Administrative/Programmatic (Policy Orientation)	Deals with the delivery of a general class of services to a general class of recipients, or "target population" (e.g., provision of appropriate educational services to mentally retarded students as stipulated in PL 94-142)
Echelon Level II Clinical/Prescriptive (Treatment Orientation)	Deals with delivery of direct services to individual consumers ("target individuals") for the purpose of meeting clinical and educational needs of the specific child (e.g., provision of appropriate services to mentally retarded students as stipulated by the individualized education plan)

endorsed, the greater is the likelihood for its implementation and ultimate success. In decisions concerning correct and efficient educations of handicapped youngsters, specifically, this holds true.

Because of the present organizational structure of most public schools, many innovative, student-centered, theoretically sound, rejuvenating ideas for the teacher in the classroom die in committee for lack of a second. People who have the greatest authority over and the most effect on programs are physically and programmatically far removed from student populations and their teachers.

The Inverse Organizational Model

The Inverse Organizational Model (Creekmore, 1981) suggests that a potentially negative relationship exists between the level of commitment of an individual within the educational hierarchy and the amount of authority and endorsable power that person or group holds. Because of the movement away from the classroom toward the boardroom, responsibilities have shifted, decisions now tend to rest on deliberations about "classes" of children rather than individual children, and authority and administrative persuasiveness continue to increase.

Applying Hurder's model to the education of exceptional children, commitment to the individual child and his or her complete, appropriate education is represented at the bottom of the Level II hierarchy. The continuum ranges from this level of educational needs of individual students to the opposite pole of responsibility

for and interest in the overall agency or service-providing "system," with a concomitant deemphasis on individual students. Table 2 portrays this negative relationship.

Creekmore's model suggests an inverse relationship between the power to create policy and effect change in public education and the commitment to a child's specific needs in the classroom. The division-of-labor construct presented by Hurder is satisfied by the decision-making hierarchy prevalent in education. Principals and higher administrators have dominion over school operations and over the direct service providers — those who know the service recipient most thoroughly. Thus, policy is dictated by those who, because of the organizational structure, may know the clientele less well; and policy has virtually no input from those who know the classroom situation the best — the teachers.

Implications for Delivery of Services

The service delivery model described by Hurder suggests a managerially sound way to operate a business, with specific cadres of the work force being held exclusively responsible for specific functions of the overall agency. When producing ball bearings for roller skates, it seems to work well. In human service agencies such as education, however, the variability of unique human need muddies the organizational water. The needs of exceptional children (not unlike the needs of all children) require that their education be planned, monitored, and facilitated based on the most accurate information available to the decision maker. The Hurder

Table 2
Inverse Organizational Model

ADVOCATE	PERSPECTIVE*	COMMITMENT**
<p>Superintendent of Schools <i>Decision Type: Policy</i></p>	<p>Major emphasis on performing in a responsible manner for all students and faculty under his/her jurisdiction. Global commitment to policy and total program-limited commitment to any specific service or child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth operation of the educational agency. • Maintenance of an overall system that will provide adequate educational services to students in general. • Compliance with state and federal statutes/mandates pertaining to specific educational goals for which federal/state monies are received locally.
<p>Directors/Coordinators of Service Components (e.g., Director of Special Education) <i>Decision Type: Policy; Administrative</i></p>	<p>Major focus of each director or coordinator on the efficient management of a particular component of the overall educational agency (staff and student type served by that staff).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with rules that relate to the education of special education populations. • Availability of support services recommended generally by individual campuses. • Inservice training for personnel in his/her dominion. • Certification and credentialing of teaching staff through state licensure authority.
<p>Supervisors of Service Components <i>Decision Type: Policy/Programmatic/General Clinical</i></p>	<p>Major focus of each supervisor on management of a limited and discrete number of faculty. Problems dealing with extreme cases involving students within his/her jurisdiction addressed at this level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of aid, support, direction to a specific educational catchment area within the local education agency (responsibilities similar to those of the director, but for a particular staff and student type for which the supervisor is responsible).
<p>Building Principal <i>Decision Type: Administrative; Policy</i></p>	<p>Responsible for directing the operation of entire facility. Global commitment to all programs and children — limited commitment to any specific service or child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth operation of school building and its programs (organizational). • Satisfaction of state mandates/rules that govern the school.

**Perspective* = an individual's justification for the level of commitment.

***Commitment* = the rationale for pursuing goals of an appropriate education.

(continued)

Table 2
Inverse Organizational Model (continued)

ADVOCATE	PERSPECTIVE*	COMMITMENT**
Building Principal (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the appropriate education for <i>all</i> students within his/her school.
Regular Classroom Teacher <i>Decision Type: Clinical/ Prescriptive; Policy or Rule Confirmation</i>	Responsible for providing an appropriate education to each child in the class while furthering both social and cognitive growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of best possible education to each child in his/her class. • Provision of accurate scope-and-sequence approaches in the education of each child (case-specific concerns are more diffuse because of typical class size (N = 26-28) and limited knowledge of effective strategies to aid exceptional children).
Guidance Counselor <i>Decision Type: Clinical/ Prescriptive; Rules</i>	In charge of providing and procuring specific adjustive or supportive services under quite specific circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An educational advocacy role affecting a limited portion of the student body — children with specific needs or wants. • Commitment to class adjustment to achieve better "fit" for the student; psychological and remedial services.
Itinerant Teacher <i>Decision Type: Clinical/ Prescriptive</i>	Responsible for providing specialized services directly to child on a "visiting" basis (case loads often quite large, discouraging intensive commitment to a given child).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention in speech, motor, academic life of a specific child — one-to-one or small-group situations.
Special Education Teacher <i>Decision Type: Clinical/ Prescriptive</i>	Teacher responsible for providing specific educational programs for limited number of students, as contrasted with general programming for large group of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting specific educational needs of students assigned. • Generating IEPs and fulfilling their requirements. • Familiarity with student population (specific planning and teaching opportunities more prevalent than for regular teacher, because of smaller class size).

(continued)

Table 2
Inverse Organizational Model (continued)

ADVOCATE	PERSPECTIVE*	COMMITMENT**
<p>Parents</p> <p><i>Decision Type: Clinical/Prescriptive (IEP meeting)</i></p>	<p>Responsible for an exceptional student and his/her educational and social needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the child receives training and education based specifically on his/her articulated educational needs. • Involved in a working relationship between direct service provider and parent(s).
<p>Student</p> <p><i>Decision Type: Approval of Clinical/Prescriptive</i></p>	<p>Need for an appropriate education that will provide lifetime problem-solving skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern with an education to meet individual needs of the child.

model seems to work in direct opposition to these expressed needs. This observation gains support when the Inverse Organizational Model (Creekmore, 1981) is contemplated. Simply speaking, the prevailing administrative decision-making system has major flaws that are beginning to produce a large casualty list of teachers, parents, and exceptional children.

There is a dire need to *modify* the existing system — not destroy or discard it — so that it will satisfy the following functions:

1. To allow administrative officials to be informed of critical issues pertaining to the operation of their particular units.
2. To respond to needs of and mandates issued by the higher administrative units without losing sight of the need to educate individual children.
3. To establish a communication system whereby members of educational teams may express concerns and needs to the policy-making officers.
4. To be responsive to the educationally relevant needs of individual teachers within the system.
5. To foster interaction with and encourage participation of the community in enhancing education for exceptional children.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE LAW

The early 1970s marked initiation of numerous class action lawsuits dealing with the principle of the right of every child to a free appropriate education (*Mills v. D.C. Board of Education* (1972); *Pennsylvania Associa-*

tion for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1971). Such cases created awareness of the needs and rights of handicapped children, both in the public eye and in the eyes of state and federal agencies, leading to enactment of PL 94-142 as well as state legislation. By 1975, 48 of 50 states had instituted laws to provide for the educational needs of their handicapped populations.

Although progress toward the goal of free appropriate education for handicapped children appeared to be satisfactory, child advocacy groups placed the statistics into perspective (Roddy, 1979). Federal reports revealed that in 1975 over 1,750,000 handicapped students were excluded from public education because of their handicaps, over half of the school-aged handicapped children in the nation were without appropriate educational services, and many handicapped children were inappropriately placed as a result of misdiagnosis or violation of their rights.

Instigation of the federal law failed to solve the problem. Educators were mandated to provide specific services to all handicapped children but were not given the training, support, or financial assistance to do so. For example, the concept of accountability has been redefined to include specific learning by handicapped children as stated on their IEPs, but the criterion set for meeting these learning goals may not be completely under the teacher's control. Further, the creation of IEPs, along with increased parent involvement and other specific mandates of PL 94-142, coupled with taxpayer revolt, have had detrimental effects on special education. Uncertainty about job performance, role clarity and responsibility, role changes due to federal

laws, and poor division of labor have placed excessive stress on special educators.

Because of this myriad of internal and external stresses, the intent of PL 94-142 has become hidden under mandates of the law. Educators are attempting to meet legal requirements without attempting to use them for the good of the child. Thus, while IEPs are being written, they are not always followed (Bensky, Shaw, Gouse, Bates, Dixon, and Beane, 1980). This act of omission is adding to the heavy stress load of special educators.

STRESS IN SPECIAL EDUCATORS

The task of providing special services to exceptional children often entails a large number of specialists, each fulfilling roles that require a variety of technical skills (Robson, 1981). This isolated knowledge and specialization place special educators in what Brook (1978) has described as a vulnerable role, in which the interrelationships are unclear, accountability is confused, and expectations on the teacher are too great for the time allotted. No one seems to want to assume clear responsibility for a handicapped child's volatile, unpredictable behavior or movement toward an elusive social or academic goal as stated on the IEP. Another characteristic of a vulnerable role is that one is expected to reconcile pressures from above and below for the initiation of change. For the special education teacher, pressures from the principal for behavior control of the children are often in direct opposition to pressures for learning and behavior management from the parents and the IEP team.

These and other sources of stress are affecting teachers of special children, and the children themselves, daily. Bensky et al. (1980) reported that 50 percent of the teachers in their study used avoidance behaviors to deal with stress. This type of approach results in loss of effectiveness of that teacher in the classroom. High levels of stress have been cited as the cause of physical and emotional illness, low job satisfaction, and a decrease in effective performance for teachers (Creekmore, 1981; Daley, 1979a,b; Landsmann, 1978; Miller, 1979; Sylwester, 1977a, 1977b). Perhaps even more importantly, high stress levels have been cited as causing teachers to become detached from their students (poor rapport, less verbal support), to behave in extreme ways (harshness or overindulgence), and to lose creativity. Students of highly stressed teachers are often highly anxious themselves (Doyal & Forsyth, 1973), lacking in motivation (Keavney & Sinclair, 1978), and more disruptive in behavior than students of less anxious teachers.

Although relationships between teacher stress and student achievement are not clearly understood, these studies indicate that high levels of stress in classroom teachers may be harmful to both teacher and students. Youngs (1978) reminded readers that what a teacher is sometimes speaks so loudly that students cannot hear what the teacher says. Thus, behaviors of a highly anxious teacher can interfere with the children's ability to learn from the materials that the teacher has prepared.

In attempting to alleviate excessive stress, teachers sometimes expend more effort and time at their jobs, but they generally accomplish less (Daley 1979a, b; Lefingwell, 1979). If the excessive stress continues, teacher absentee rates tend to rise. These days of absence may be enough to provide a respite and temporarily lessen the stress, but "sick days" may not be enough. Then the teacher attrition rate begins to rise (Daley, 1979a, b; Dixon, Shaw & Bensky, 1980; Dunham, 1976; Moracco & McFadden, 1979; Payne, 1974; Pines & Kafry, 1978), at times culminating in teachers leaving education entirely. Teacher turnover has frequently been cited as being influenced by stress (Bloch, 1978; Dunham, 1976; Krasno, 1972; Payne, 1974; Reed, 1979a; Seiderman, 1978; Sylwester, 1977a). Thus, the field of education appears to be losing educators at a rapid rate, perhaps as a result in part of increasing teacher stress (Landsmann, 1978; Walsh, 1979; Yuenger, 1981).

To reverse this troubling trend, help must be made available to teachers in the form of support personnel, materials, and consultation. Various attempts at successfully procuring these necessities have largely failed. The proposed model of internal advocacy is designed to provide for these needs and to lessen teacher stress.

ELEMENTS OF ADVOCACY

Because the word "advocate" has become a catch phrase carrying virtually dozens of different meanings, a functional definition is in order. Wolfensberger (1970) defined an advocate as "a mature, competent citizen representing, as if they were his own, the interests of another citizen who is impaired in his instrumental capacity, or who has major expressive needs which are unmet without special intervention" (p. 20). Further, the advocate is charged with the responsibility to ensure those who are perceived as inferior a chance to advance "... and defend their interests by providing that measure of power, wealth and/or expertise needed to bring about change" (p. 44) (Guskin & Ross, 1971).

The literature on stress and anxiety paints a portion of the total canvas relative to the need for advocacy in

the public schools. Teachers are experiencing tremendous personal and professional conflicts stemming from: 1) the lack of control dealt them by the educational system, and 2) the coercion to provide less than adequate education to children under their charge. Clearly, for teachers, the system is not working. The inability to cope with administrative ineffectiveness carries over symptomatically into the classroom. Paul (in Paul, Neufeld, & Pelosi, 1977) stated that:

Some of our most basic institutions, including family and school, are threatened by divorce, delinquency, dropouts, run-aways and violence at a time when there is increased "participation" in those institutions whose social functions are to contain, repress, and remedy. While our understanding of the psychobiological needs of children increases, so does the awareness of childhood disabilities despite the fact that we have more . . . special education services than ever before. While we have the best trained teacher corps in the schools in the history of public education, a constant exodus of children . . . continues (p. 1).

In short, there is a strongly documented need for specific, intense, well-designed advocacy models that can begin to alleviate the destructive element neutralizing the motion of education. Accountability may be the key.

Two distinct and different forms of advocacy exist in the educational arena. *Adversarial advocacy* is most widely exemplified by the attorney as the advocate. The term implies involvement of antagonistic parties or interests. Many lawsuits have posed the lawyer as the defender for "classes" of individuals. Adversarial advocacy involves trying to secure rights due the protege by the constitution or other legal mandates. At times, those rights must be delivered under threat of legal duress for noncompliance. Implicit in the adversarial form of advocacy is the proposition that the system is inherently defective and that the solution to existing problems lies in abolishing the present system and creating a replacement specifically designed to eliminate the inadequacies. The problem-ridden special education service delivery system was reconstructed through the vehicle of PL 94-142. Fulfillment of the mandates of this pervasive law is a compliance-based example of the adversarial thrust of advocacy.

A second major form of advocacy is *ombudsmanship*. Contrary to the perceptions generally held by "absolute" adversarial advocates, the ombudsman performs an advocacy role by attempting to retain that which is justified and programmatically stable within the already existing system while eliminating, modifying, or replacing components that fail to get the job done or that produce significant problems. The focus of this type of

advocacy is on overall "goodness of fit" between the present system and its clients but the need to modify or streamline the system in specific areas.

Simply, the major difference between the adversarial and ombudsman advocacy approach is one of locus: The adversary works for reform or demolition from *outside* the system, and the ombudsman performs *within* the system in attempting to correct existing weaknesses as he or she perceives them. Times and situations may demand one or the other approach almost exclusively but "thought before the torch is a wise pause."

Concepts of Internal and External Advocacy

Already in existence are "external" advocacy groups like the National Association for Retarded Citizens, which began by providing treatment to children the public school systems refused to serve. Other external advocacy groups of national and international reputation include Easter Seal, United Cerebral Palsy, and the Council for Exceptional Children, to name but a few. The work of these groups is to improve services, from the outside, to and for the exceptional child, the child's family, and, indirectly, the professional educator. By forcing change through suggestion, donations, study groups, and litigation, much has been done, primarily from the adversarial thrust. Great strides have been made in requiring, under threat of reprisal, improvement in conditions for exceptional children.

Of more importance to our central theme than external advocacy is *internal advocacy*. The within-system advocacy notion for educators has particular merit because:

1. The system and its strengths are well known to the internal advocate, who is a member of the staff within the school.
2. Weaknesses can be more easily identified because of familiarity of the internal advocate with the school.
3. The system evaluator is a member of the in-house work force and not hired simply to find weaknesses within a school.
4. The probability of acceptance and understanding of the positive efforts being made is much greater for an internal advocate than for an external evaluator.
5. The internal advocate is in a position to provide an arsenal of alternatives to improve, overhaul, or discard a portion or portions of the system and,

therefore, is not necessarily viewed as the "grim reaper."

6. The internal advocate may provide both "cold prickles" (as may be the case with the adversarial posture) and "warm fuzzies," reinforcing the system for work well done.

Advocacy enables versatile, multifaceted strategies to be used to ensure appropriate education for exceptional children. Further, through creative use of internal advocacy, the likelihood increases that appropriate educational settings can be created for the professional educator as well as the child in the classroom.

The Internal Advocacy System: A Model

Conceptually, the reader would be able to find widespread support for improvements to the organizational structure of public education. The signs of malfunction are too numerous for any insightful person to ignore. Many of the characteristics of decay have already been discussed. Various attempts have been made to rearrange the priorities of the educational machine in an effort to get it working more efficiently once again, and these have been largely futile. In the case of educating exceptional children, the failures have been dramatic. IEPs, intended to arrange educational experiences with accuracy, are being hurriedly composed, mass produced, and rarely well implemented. Students are being given a token education with the net result being a bastardization of the intent as well as the letter of the law. Additionally, highly trained teachers are leaving the field of special education because of the cognitive and emotional conflict they see between appropriate education for exceptional children and the reality of educational services that often exist in the public schools (Paul, Neufeld, & Pelosi, 1977).

Taking into consideration the managerial, decision-making, professional pressure, and student needs information discussed earlier, design of a practical student and teacher advocacy system appears necessary and possible. Such a system has been created and is presented in the following pages. It was designed specifically to:

1. Maintain compliance with federal, state, and local regulations relative to services for exceptional children, youth, and adults.
2. Build and maintain appropriate educational services at the building and LEA levels.

3. Expand expertise of professional staff serving the children directly (Level II in Hurder model).
4. Expand knowledge of, interest in, and involvement of administrative personnel and school board members (Level I in Hurder model) with exceptional children and their teachers and parents.
5. Build a liaison between special education and regular classroom personnel.
6. Open lines of active, positive communication between parents, teachers, and administrators relative to exceptional education.
7. Stimulate cooperative interchange between community-based volunteer and advocacy groups (external advocates) and the individual educational units (school, classroom, child, family) needing their help.
8. Spread public awareness of the attempts to thoroughly serve *all* children of the community, especially exceptional children.
9. Regenerate within the profession a feeling of pride in and by teachers, thereby reducing some of the associated stresses.

Pre-Conditions

For the internal advocacy system to be effective, several conditions should be present prior to its initiation:

1. Identified need — For any advocacy program to be successful, identification of specific problems is essential.
2. Open-mindedness — Planned change tends to produce anxiety, defensiveness, denial. Diplomacy is necessary in change, and open-mindedness is a crucial ingredient in diplomacy.
3. Intelligent, energetic professional staff — Involvement of teachers as well as the administrative arm of the school is crucial to success.
4. Concerned parents and citizens.
5. Endorsement of the Internal Advocacy System by faculty of the individual unit.
6. Identification of an internal advocate for each site into which the system is to be introduced.
7. Definition of levels of advocacy within the system.

Level I Advocacy: efforts on the advocate's part to secure appropriate educational services in the least restrictive environment and the "best fit"

IEP for the child. At this level, the advocate performs an adversarial role by protecting the constitutional rights of the child under his or her charge.

Level II Advocacy: efforts on the advocate's part to provide strength, consultation, relief, and resources (both in-house and from the community) toward educating the child, his or her teacher, and the administration. At this level, the advocate performs an ombudsman role focused on improving the already existing structure and procedures. Specific elements of this advocacy include monitoring the IEP, providing in-class consultation, securing helpful materials, and disseminating in-service information.

Level I Advocate (Adversary). When attempting to provide the most appropriate education for an exceptional child, primary consideration (following accurate behavioral, academic, and intellectual assessment) centers first on two critical issues: student placement and IEP generation and approval. At this entry level, the advocate serves as the adversarial member of the special services or school-based committee. Responsibilities include assurance from the committee as a whole that the recommended placement has complied with the mandated civil rights protection elements found in PL 94-142, including education in as normal a setting as feasible and provisions for support services needed for the child's continued educational progress.

Additionally, the advocate assumes an intermediary role between the placement committee and the building principal, communicating to the senior administrative officer extraordinary happenings during the decision-making process. The advocate's role here is that of compliance officer for the child and family. Knowledge of the law, the school, its resources, and the community allows the advocate to function well and to ensure a proper placement and program.

Following acceptance of the drafted IEP, which contains directive information as to program content, type, frequency, and duration of support services and a recommendation of specific teacher(s) whenever possible, school begins for the exceptional child.

At this point, contracts have been made stipulating the specific type of educational and/or therapeutic service to be afforded the exceptional child. Figure 1 exemplifies the internal advocate's role with a hypothetical case. The placement committee plus parents arrived at an appropriate plan to mainstream the student — placing him for 10% of his day in a resource room; 5% in

contact with the remedial reading personnel; 5% with speech therapists and the remaining 80% of his academic day in a regular first grade classroom.

Level II Advocate (Ombudsman). The role of the advocate is far from over. Appropriate placement, the first step, has been completed. Now the internal advocate dons the Level II ombudsman role. Within Level II, the needs of the direct service providers — the teachers — become critical for the advocate. Simple but effective case management techniques are developed for each addition to the case load, and needed services for the teacher (and ultimately the exceptional child) are identified and prioritized.

- Within-school services/materials: needed items not available in the classroom (e.g., Language Master and cards).
- Within the school system: items available, not in use, but located at another school (e.g., articulation mirror, VTR).
- Within the community but not available through or owned by the public schools: items needed but not available. The service or materials may be available in the local community or by purchase (e.g., wheelchair, physical therapy).

The internal advocate's access to and use of resources external to the school might include:

adaptive equipment,
therapies,
community-sponsored activities,
counseling, and
support services.

through agencies, associations, and groups such as:

social services,
the health department,
mental health services,
Easter Seal Society,
United Cerebral Palsy,
Association for Retarded Citizens, and
local church groups.

Immunity Components

Two necessary immunity components must be built into the internal advocate's position. The first is direct access to the administrative head of the school. Second, the advocate must be an employee of the local education agency exclusively, with assignment to a particular unit.

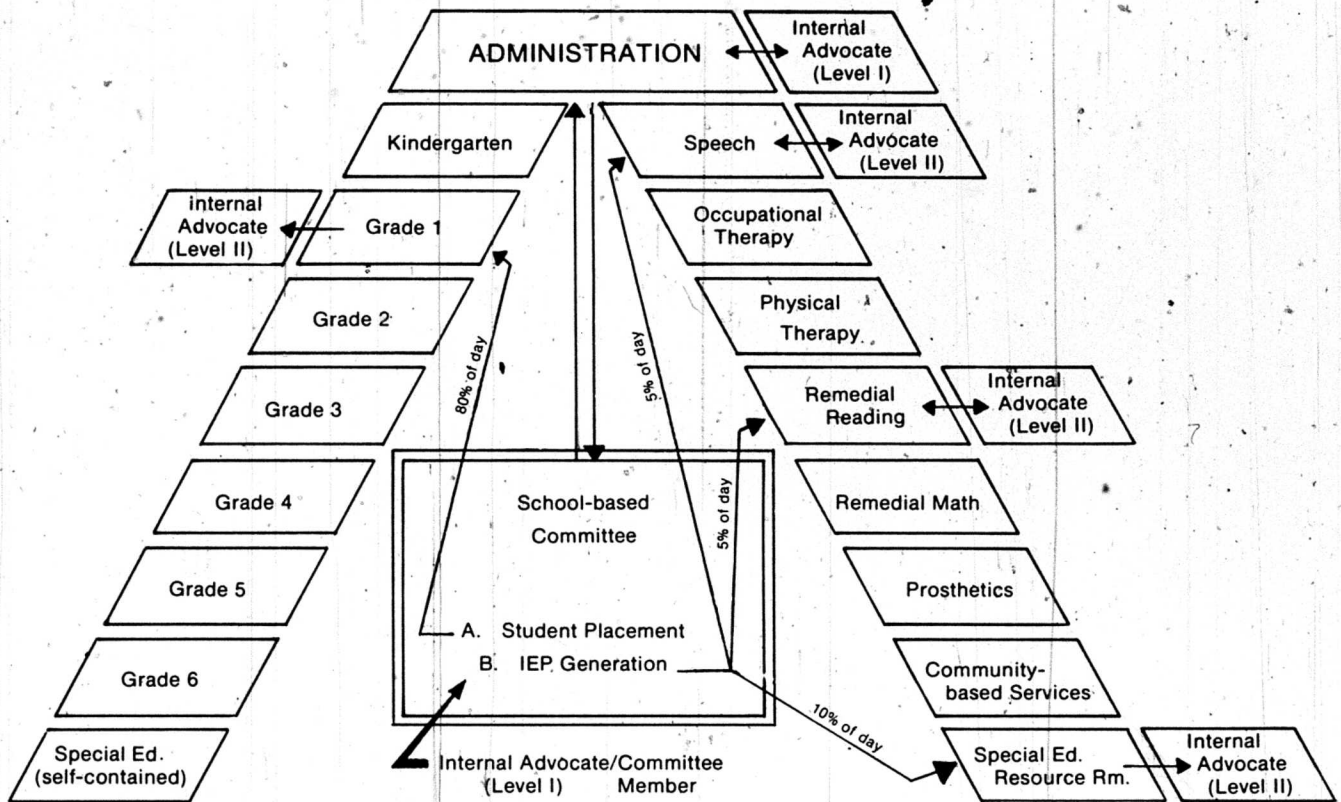


Figure 1
The Roles of An Internal Advocate
In a Hypothetical Case

By setting up the advocate's position in such a way, petty politics affecting local schools, as well as policy statements that may limit the number and variety of resources available, are avoided. The advocate is permitted to secure needed supplies (not available as standard ware through the LEA) from another school that is not using the materials or to make contact with and ask for help from community-based volunteer or professional advocacy agencies. These services and commodities might include:

- volunteer help,
- home economics supplies,
- transportation,
- wheelchairs,
- adaptive equipment,
- speech screening,
- specific applied in-service training, and
- professional materials.

Professional Development Role

The advocate also plays a role from the professional development vantage point. For a specific problem with a specific child, the advocate should be able to direct the teacher to a source of professional help. On a larger scale, skill workshops or inservice sessions for several or a large number of special and regular teachers may be designed or arranged by the advocate and led by the advocate or other qualified professional. Inservice training can serve to meet some of the teacher's professional needs while leading to solutions to child-related problems. Guiding teachers to advantageous college credit courses is another of the advocate's possible roles. The range and variety of potential resource help is virtually limitless and creates exciting possibilities for an innovative, sensitive advocate.

Monitoring Function

Throughout the year, an advocate performs the "consultation/procurer" and "monitoring" roles simultaneously, to provide formal protection of the child's rights and those of the teacher. The advocate also gives feedback to the principal whenever appropriate, to keep him or her aware of the children, their teachers, and relevant aspects of the system.

Periodically, subcomponents of the IEP require modification because they become inappropriate or obsolete. This typically occurs annually but sometimes takes place more often. Here, the internal advocate takes on the role of school-based committee member as an adversarial advocate and ombudsman for the child and his or her educators.

Communication/Public Relations

To ensure that decision makers are aware of the efforts of the school, its principal, and the classroom teachers toward educating exceptional children, public relations activities are vital. The advocate should make himself or herself available to significant school and community groups, informing them of activities being implemented and gaining their feedback. Data-based reports should be coupled with observational and discursive presentations. Target groups would include the school community (faculty and school board), parents and parent groups (e.g., PTA), citizen groups, and the general public. Efforts to keep parents, school personnel, and the larger community informed will bear fruit when their support is needed in the future.

Finally, recognition for jobs well done will enhance cooperation and participant enthusiasm. Good public relations always includes "pats on the back" and credit where credit is due.

Advocacy Within the Community

For programs to develop, strong advocates are needed. The model that has been presented thus far outlines a system through which an advocate internal to the school system can orchestrate and unite the necessary elements within a school administrative unit to bring about change. This change, to be most effective, must benefit both handicapped children and those who provide services to them. Successful incorporation of the advocacy concept additionally must capitalize on services and resources existing in the community (House

& Hoke, 1976). Thus, the advocate must incite public interest and concern for the needs of special children and their teachers and motivate the community to take an active part in the educational process. The advocate must know what actions to pursue and which community agencies to contact to gain support for the amelioration of any recognized problem or inequity (Schilit, 1977).

The thrust of the internal advocacy model is similar to that of all other advocacy attempts on behalf of the handicapped: the normalization of their lives. Advocates for the handicapped attempt to help them participate in patterns and conditions of daily life that are as close as possible to those of the mainstream of society. For this to occur, advocacy must reach outside of the school into the community. A handicapped child's adjustment in the community can be successful only if it is facilitated by citizen advocates within that setting (Danker-Brown, Singleman, & Bensberg, 1979).

The internal advocate must assume the role of coordinator of this component of the entire advocacy concept. For example, the internal advocate should be in contact with community support individuals within local churches, recreation programs, and social agencies — people who would be willing to work toward meeting the individual needs of a given child within the community setting. Legal services may be needed, or support from social services could be necessary so that a handicapped child can come to function at an independent level. The internal advocate should be able to procure and monitor these services.

External advocacy groups such as Associations for Retarded Citizens or United Cerebral Palsy are willing and able to provide community support for a handicapped person, but they must be made aware of that need. This, too, enters into the role of the internal advocate. The following list of suggestions and examples of advocacy exemplifies the role of advocates in the community (National Association for Retarded Citizens, 1973; Paul & Pelosi, 1973; Tompkins, 1973):

1. Assisting parental involvement in recreation activities.
2. Assisting in the method of and delivery of health services (medical, dental, psychiatric).
3. Monitoring agency accountability for the delivery of social services.
4. Getting children involved in meaningful after-school activities.*
5. Getting information to teachers about an acute crisis in a child's life.

6. Finding special tutorial help for a child who needs it.
7. Assuring that existing community services assist the individual when he or she needs it, rather than referring the individual to a waiting list of a more appropriate agency.
8. Making sure the handicapped person in court has an advocate if appropriate.
9. Arranging with serving agencies commitments for respective responsibility and accountability on behalf of individuals they purport to serve.
10. Protecting against dehumanization and lack of human rights.

Parental Roles

The success of any advocacy program can be traced to parental support. As history has revealed, actions by parents of handicapped children have always provided the initial impetus for change. The Internal Advocacy Model relies heavily on parental and family support. Though the parents are not responsible for carrying the entire burden of their children's education, they must have a concern for it and be willing to support and promote efforts of the advocacy system. This support should be evidenced directly, as in being accountable for the child's attendance in school or presence at counseling sessions, and, indirectly, through letters of support to school boards, state education agencies, and community groups.

The channels of communication must remain completely open in all directions between the child, parents, internal advocate, teachers, service providers, and citizen advocates. Together, through the coordination efforts of the internal advocate, the model can successfully extend from school into home and community, working toward normalization for the handicapped child.

Advocacy Skills

Wolfensberger's (1970) definition of an advocate included the qualification that he or she must be a mature adult. For purposes of an advocacy program, the person must also have skills in case management, teaching exceptional children, and communicating, as well as knowledge of laws affecting the education of exceptional children and an enthusiasm for education. Paul, Neufeld, & Pelosi (1977) have suggested a number of skills required of an effective advocate — some of which are formally trained, and others of which are learned by

experience with exceptional children, parents, fellow educators, and the system. No one can possess the full array of skills listed below but, ideally, these skills would be targeted for training and expertise whenever possible.

ability to communicate with:
the handicapped student
parents
teachers/therapists
community people

understanding of:
human, legal rights
principle of normalization

knowledge of:
within-system procedures
negotiation procedures
data collection methods

training in:
special education
education of more significantly handicapped

facility in:
monitoring
use of media.

Economics as an Issue

One of the critical issues to be considered when adopting an advocacy model is its cost. With the 25% reduction in spending for education appearing more likely, sober decisions must be made. The Internal Advocacy Model is a cost-efficient enterprise providing a compliance officer, case manager, classroom consultant, and public relations professional in one (or two) position(s), and with a program-wide critical eye. In most cases, the role of advocate can be filled by one person at each school.

STRENGTH OF THE MODEL

In the prototype advocacy model initiated by the authors, the internal advocate came from within the school. Literature in the field, as well as data gathered from the experimental school, clearly indicated the desire of teachers for direct help with problems and areas of weakness. In this particular circumstance, the advocate was chosen from a pool of 15 volunteers at an

elementary school. The teacher chosen was an experienced special educator, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. The LEA may decide to select the advocate from a pool created by advertising the position or by approaching individuals who appear to have the qualifications sought. Regardless of the selection method, local personnel should not be overlooked when selecting an appropriate person.

It appears that the rights of our exceptional students may be in jeopardy once again. Now, more than ever before, those rights must be protected by special and regular educators. The Internal Advocacy Model presented here possesses components that address very real issues in education, with effective alternatives. The model has been implemented, modified, and retested. It embodies the potential for improved education for exceptional children, expanded communication with the administration, and appropriate support for educators.

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CLASSROOM FORUM

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At a recent college reunion I was amazed to discover that after only five years, very few of us have remained in the field of education. My younger sister, a special education major who is now doing her student teaching, is also reflecting this trend. Just the other day she told me that if she survived her student teaching, she would never have anything to do with public schools or teaching again. She is a bright student, but demands of the classroom are overwhelming to her now. Is this really the national trend? How can we recruit high quality teachers if education is receiving this kind of publicity?

What you have discovered with your former classmates and your sister is commonly known as "teacher burn-out," a disease that has become epidemic among classroom teachers in recent years. It has been stated that pressures placed on a classroom teacher are second only to those placed upon an air traffic controller. Such a distinction is not exactly going to entice people into the field of education, especially when one looks at the demands in comparison to the extrinsic reward of teacher salaries. Being low on the payroll totem pole is hardly an incentive for most people, no matter what their field of endeavor.

Several theories have been developed concerning the current "burn-out" epidemic among teachers — all of which are viable to varying degrees. But one important factor frequently overlooked in these theories is the teacher himself or herself. Does a certain personality type accommodate to the field of teaching better than other types? Does a certain intrinsic motivational characteristic in some persons help them cope with the classroom situation better than others? Or is the answer even less complicated, more basic?

Let's take a closer look at the situation of the young student teacher who professes that she will never enter the field of teaching *if* she survives the practicum situation. She has been a brilliant student throughout her academic career, with only a few Bs on her transcript. On outside assignments, she always went above and beyond the call of duty. To say the least, she was an ideal student, a joy to her instructors. Her only obvious fault was that of being too much a perfectionist in everything she did. This was a fault because of the effects it had on her teaching skills. She had much difficulty coming to the realization that just because she "taught" a student something, it did not guarantee that the student had actually "learned" it. Thus, she became easily discouraged when a student was unable to go immediately on to step two after having been presented step one in a teaching sequence.

She had in her mind a picture of the "ideal" classroom, according to *her* standards. When the students were unable to meet these standards consistently, she became frustrated. Part of her problem stemmed from the fact that her students had not read and studied the same texts and journal articles that she had focused on during her preparation at the university. She tended to overlook the boundaries of the real world, which often require divergence and flexibility in one's approach to and methods of teaching. She did not accept the reality that some students simply cannot sit still and concentrate on academics for 30- or 45-minute periods.

She also had much difficulty in presenting small sequential learning activities to the children. When she had to repeat her instruction, she felt she was a "failure" because her ideal teacher should teach a skill once, then move on to bigger and better tasks. To her, the necessary repetition became boring, and this revealed itself in her attitude toward the children while she was teaching.

Her body language came across loud and clear to even the most casual observer — so you can imagine how this was interpreted by the children! As might be expected, the students soon became negative toward her and refused to do their work. She made threats, which usually were met by both physical and verbal abuse by the students. The overall classroom atmosphere became one of almost out-and-out warfare. Instead of teaching or learning going on in this classroom, the battlefield tactics of both sides caused each day to become a struggle for survival for the student teacher. Thus, her comment about not wanting to become a teacher *if* she survived her student teaching experience should not be surprising.

When such an atmosphere prevails over a period of years, the results are even more devastating. Not only is the teacher's body language negative, but the whole classroom atmosphere takes on a negative or apathetic tone. A specific situation comes to mind, in which the teacher had obviously given up although it was only mid-year. The first impression one had when walking into the classroom was of total despair. The room was in complete disarray, to put it mildly. Worksheets and scraps of paper were in little piles everywhere. Torn corners of papers stuck out from partially-closed cabinet doors. Other materials were scattered around the room, many of them covered with accumulated dust. The floor was grimy, with balls of dust floating around under desks and tables. Several seats were marred by muddy footprints.

Naturally, this was a depressing sight, and I couldn't help but wonder how anyone could possibly want to learn in such an environment. There seemed to be no respect for personal or school property, and no concern for trying to remedy this lack of respect. No apologies were made for the conditions that prevailed, and the teacher even appeared oblivious to them. The students, however, seemed to be aware of the mess and confusion when I appeared in the room. One student tried to clear a place for my coat among the piles of torn and discarded art projects on a work-table, and another attempted to wipe several weeks' worth of accumulated mud from a chair for me to sit on. To watch that youngster using his shirt sleeve to try to make a clean place for me to sit, while his teacher all but ignored him, was rather pathetic. I hadn't intended to spend much time sitting in that classroom, but after he went to all that trouble, I felt obligated to use the chair for a few minutes while I surveyed the overall scene.

My initial reaction was to pinch myself to make sure I was not having a nightmare. When I realized that indeed

this was *real*, I could understand why the teacher had so many "teaching problems" in her classroom. In no uncertain terms the teacher had conveyed her defeatist attitude to the students. She had given up trying to keep the room under control, and when she gave up, so did her students. The entire class experienced "burn-out."

Stories or even rumors about stories like these two real-life experiences float around teachers' lounges and the public domain more frequently than anyone in the field of education would like to admit. Such talk makes all facets of education vulnerable to public disdain, recruitment notwithstanding.

Luckily, a lot of bright, energetic future and current teachers are still out there spreading good news about the field of teaching. These people aren't preaching about "the joys of teaching." Instead, they are living examples of the real world of teaching. They admit to days when they aren't "up" for teaching a roomful of kids who would rather be anywhere else than in a classroom. And they are aware of what the public calls the "hazards" of teaching. They also know the excitement of watching a young mind develop and mature. They can relate to cartoons that show a light bulb over someone's head, flashing the signal that an idea has been created or understood. These teachers receive the intrinsic rewards of teaching, rewards that are difficult to put into words or evaluate. These teachers — not the personal administrators, education supervisors, or university program directors — are the true recruiters for education.

How can we recruit more qualified teachers into the field of education? By becoming recruiters ourselves. If we live the role of a qualified teacher, we will be setting an example for incoming teachers to model. We can reach current teachers through this same approach. As trite as it seems, educators must strive to put their ideals into practice, to practice what they preach.

ALERT

October 25-28, 1981

National Association of Pupil Personnel
Administrators
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November 11-14, 1981

National Association for Gifted Children
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