

EVALUATION OF LOCAL DEPARTMENTS THROUGH ADVISORY COUNCILS

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In order to be effective as an advisory council member of any organized educational program, the individual serving should be knowledgeable of the field in question. Many advisory council members are lay people with no formal training in the various educational areas, and therefore, have little knowledge of the criterion that can be used to evaluate a local program. A very simple and meaningful method of informing an advisory council of what qualities a good vocational program should have and also serve as an evaluation that would be helpful to the local instructor and school administration is described in this article.

The first step in the evaluation procedure is for the local instructor to obtain an evaluation check sheet suitable for his local area. Most states have evaluation check sheets available for the various vocational programs which, with perhaps some revision, can be used very effectively. Idaho has an evaluation guide designed for vocational agriculture which is divided into five major areas and are as follows: organization, instruction, summer programs, F.F.A. and permanent facilities. Each area contains about twenty-five items that can be checked either yes, to some extent, or no. The local teacher then rates his vocational department according to the listed statements and duplicates the forms with his ratings recorded. The first five statements of each of the five major areas in the Idaho form have been included in this article.¹

The second step is the actual evaluation meeting with the advisory council, school board members, if possible, and certainly school administrators present at the meeting. Each person attending the meeting is provided with one of

¹The entire Evaluation Guide can be obtained by writing to Dr. Kindschy at the University of Idaho, Boise, Idaho.

the duplicated evaluation forms with all items rated by the local instructor. An individual other than the local instructor should act as chairman of the meeting, either the local principal or the chairman of the advisory council could conduct the discussion. The group would then consider each of the major areas in turn. For example, the chairman would ask the participants to skim through the area of organization and note the ratings provided by the instructor. This procedure provides a quick learning situation for both the advisory council and the school board members as to what criterion are important in regard to each area. The members of the group are then urged to ask questions about the evaluation ratings that have been recorded by the instructor. All items may not be discussed but usually the items rated exceptionally high or very low may be questioned. This questioning will give the local teacher an opportunity to explain the reasons for his ratings which in turn will emphasize the strong points and weak points of the vocational program.

The personal experience this writer has had with this method of evaluation has been exceptionally productive without exception. Advisory council members, school board members, and school administrators learn very quickly what can be considered a good program and in this respect their opinion of the local program is often improved considerably. The weaknesses of the program are also brought to light and those weaknesses that can be corrected by additional finances or administrative policy are very often immediately corrected. The major value of the total procedure, is that each participant is more fully informed as to what constitutes a good vocational program.

EVALUATION GUIDE FOR A DEPARTMENT OF
VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE IN IDAHO

High School _____ Instructor _____

Scoring guide -- place a check in indicated place.

YES -- first section to left.

TO SOME EXTENT -- center section.

NO -- first section to right.

ORGANIZATION

- ___ ___ ___ 1. An effort is made to give prospective vocational agriculture students and their parents a clear understanding of the purposes and nature of the program before they are enrolled.
- ___ ___ ___ 2. A complete course of study is on record and used as a guide for material presented in the classroom.
- ___ ___ ___ 3. A complete course of study is on record and used as a guide for material presented in the farm shop.
- ___ ___ ___ 4. An up-to-date inventory is kept in regard to reference books, film strips, and other instructional supplies and equipment for classroom work.
- ___ ___ ___ 5. An up-to-date inventory is kept of shop equipment, tools, and supplies for farm mechanics instruction.

INSTRUCTION

- ___ ___ ___ 1. An analysis of pupil and community needs was considered in planning the course of study.
- ___ ___ ___ 2. Planned course program includes opportunities available in both farming and non-farming agricultural occupations.

- ___ ___ ___ 3. Instruction is provided in a variety of agricultural livestock products adaptable to the local area.
- ___ ___ ___ 4. Instruction is provided in a variety of agricultural crop products adaptable to the local are.
- ___ ___ ___ 5. Instruction is provided in marketing agricultural products.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

- ___ ___ ___ 1. The home farm of each student is visited at least twice each summer to provide on-farm instruction, develop farm mechanics programs for the school year, and develop farming or occupational experience programs.
- ___ ___ ___ 2. Weekly summer reports are kept up-to-date with copies sent to the local administration and state office.
- ___ ___ ___ 3. Periodic conferences are scheduled with the administrator and/or administrators during the summer months.
- ___ ___ ___ 4. The administrator and/or administrators are asked to accompany the instructor at least once during the summer to observe some farming programs.
- ___ ___ ___ 5. Farm visits are made with prospective students and parents to explain the vocational agriculture and FFA programs.

FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA

- ___ ___ ___ 1. The chapter holds at least one regular meeting per month, including summer, with full ceremonies and a previously planned program of business.

- ___ ___ ___ 2. Chapter officers are screened by a nominating committee before elections.
- ___ ___ ___ 3. At least ninety percent of the students taking vocational agriculture are in the FFA.
- ___ ___ ___ 4. Every member of the chapter is a member of at least one committee, or has a definite responsibility in regard to the operation of the chapter.
- ___ ___ ___ 5. An annual written program of work devised by the chapter members, is duplicated and in the hands of each member.

PERMANENT FACILITIES

General Plans

- ___ ___ ___ 1. The agriculture building is located conveniently near the main school building so that students can pass from the main building without overshoes or coats.
- ___ ___ ___ 2. There is sufficient site for expansion such as additional classroom, machinery court, green house or hot bed plot.
- ___ ___ ___ 3. The shop is located so that noise will not disturb the rest of the school.
- ___ ___ ___ 4. There is sufficient insulation between the agriculture classroom and music room or gym to prevent disturbance.
- ___ ___ ___ 5. The agricultural department can be heated independently from the main building.

Classroom Area

- ___ ___ ___ 1. The classroom provides 35 sq. feet of floor space for each student in the largest class.
- ___ ___ ___ 2. The classroom is large enough to seat all the day school students for FFA meetings.
- ___ ___ ___ 3. The classroom floor is resilient, light colored, durable and easily cleaned.
- ___ ___ ___ 4. Direct sunlight can be controlled in the classroom.
- ___ ___ ___ 5. The classroom can be darkened for projection purposes.

Shop Area

- ___ ___ ___ 1. The shop floor is smooth, fire proof, and durable.
- ___ ___ ___ 2. Water will drain from the parts of the floor where vehicles enter.
- ___ ___ ___ 3. The shop has a ceiling at least fourteen feet above the floor.
- ___ ___ ___ 4. The shop heating system can be regulated separately from the classroom heating system.
- ___ ___ ___ 5. The windows are located so there is wall space for tool cabinets.

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