

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
6<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL, 39<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 4-39**

**TABLED ON JUNE 17, 1969**

June 17, 1969

Mr. H. J. Macpherson,

Regional Supt. of Schools,

Yellowknife, N.W.T.

Dear Mr. Macpherson;

Re: Report on Teacher's Assistant Programs;

The following views and recommendations on the programs I've formed during the past two years of being involved in it both as principal and classroom teacher. Perhaps they will be of some value to you.

Selection; this crucial point should demand much attention. Initial choice(s) made by the principal in consultation with the teacher(s) involved if this is possible, Approval, after interview, to be given by the Regional Supt. or someone appointed by him. Factors involving personality should be carefully considered. Dependability above all else.

Supervision; directly by the classroom teacher. It seems best for all others to deal through the classroom teacher to avoid confusion. However, in cases of conflict of personality, for the principal to have the right to intervene would be advisable, if used with great care.

Age; only important if we insist that all continue their own education, otherwise of little matter, as to maximum age. As maturity and willingness to accept responsibility are of greatest importance perhaps a minimum of sixteen years would be best.

Payment; amount, method etc.; service contracts for perhaps the first year, then a "semi-permanent" position at an annual rate of pay on a twelve month basis. Recommendation for this second level would not be automatic but, rather would hinge upon satisfactory service, and final approval by the Regional Supt. upon the recommendation of both the teacher and principal. Removal from the position would follow the same pattern.

The pay scale should be allocated as 3/5 for morning work only, for those who continuing their own studies. I do not feel that many would benefit by being expected to continue their studies past their first two or three years of employment. Needless to say they can be used for the entire day.

I suggest the following scale for full-time work. While under contract 200.00 per month for those worked. First year in position \$200.00 per month for 12 months going to \$300.00 per month at the end 5 years.

Such a salary would I feel allow a person a reasonable standard of living in most of the smaller settlements at the present time, even though it is not up to the usual rates of Gov. pay.

Further education: Grade six should be the minimum I feel, since for some additional study will be required. For those with more than the minimum it would depend upon the interest of the individual. One important point is that one person should be responsible for supervision of any courses taken. This need not be the classroom teacher but to avoid discouragement it must be on a regular basis. Some thought should be given to providing a quiet area for the assistant to study; not always an easy task.

Training outside the community: annual courses such as those operated last summer, I feel they would be of most benefit if they were in a city rather than a small town. These girls on the yearly salary could be expected to assist in the training of new ones. ( I refer to girls as I feel that the nature of the work and the salary is unlikely to attract any boys on a long term basis at any rate). People who have used assistants in their classrooms should conduct these courses. The length of time involved should be about one month, with as much "touring" to build-up "outside" experience as possible. While these courses should have some training in teaching methods the emphasis should be on the girls own understanding of English and command of it.

Where to use: any class in the lower elementary area and any one roomed school. Especially useful at the beginners level. Thus many of our schools in this region would be able to employ two or more. Positions would be assigned upon the application of the principal and the approval of the regional Supt. (needless to say there would be little point in the principal requesting positions if he did not have suitable candidates).

Influence on the Community: aside from the direct educational benefits, this point alone would justify the programme. For the first time <sup>to</sup> the people of the community is part of it rather than a foreign element, <sup>the school</sup> they speak of the assistant as a teacher, a person to be respected, someone of the community who understands the workings of that rather difficult to understand place, by association making it more understandable to all. Thus it is important that all "outsiders" treat the assistant as a person filling a most worthwhile role and ensure that the role is in fact a valuable one.

Definition of term "Teacher's Assistant": The term 'aid in all "non-professional" duties', has been used to describe the role. Perhaps the main point should be that in whatever work the assistant is doing she is under the direction, supervision and control of the classroom teacher. I feel this would be the best way of putting it without getting lost in arguments over what is "non-professional".

Use in the classroom and school: Such duties as the following; conducting; reviews of material; play periods; machine teaching periods; basic English drill; song and story time; explanations in the native language when needed; bathroom routines; writing periods; vocab. drill and review of reading. As well as the above aid can be given in supervision, preparation of material, marking, and other related activities.

Training within the class: the teacher who will be having one of these girls in the class should be given as much information as possible before the beginning of the term; perhaps by those who conduct the training course. Ample time should be allotted to this.

The girl should be expected to be punctual at all times. Dress should be in keeping with the standard of the other female members of the staff.

Each teacher will have his own methods of teaching and these should be explained in detail to the assistant. The teacher should expect the girl to carry out assigned duties but not expect the assistant to initiate new ones regardless of how "obvious" they may appear to the teacher. Probably the best method is to assume that each so called simple task assigned will need instruction, in this way much grief will be avoided.

Most of the girls will need additional work on their own spoken English. Perhaps a series of tapes could be provided for this purpose, or one of the better spoken English record courses made available.

Attitude of regular staff: despite the valuable function that an assistant can provide in a school, there still seems to be attitude on the part of some people that they are definitely "second class" and thus not to be accorded the respect and consideration due other staff members. One can only hope that this attitude will be guarded against and eventually disappear.

In conclusion; it will be obvious to you that I'm convinced that the Teacher's Assistant programme is a most valuable one that should be refined and expanded once definite policies are established. I hope this report will be of some value to you.