



# PANC

Personnel Administrators of North Carolina

## **Human Resources Management in North Carolina**

During the early 1970's a group of trailblazing administrators, sought to form a professional organization that would address the needs of the school employee community throughout the state of North Carolina. Initially, local superintendents made up this group, since they originally served as their system's personnel officer. Moreover, this reliance on loose coalitions of superintendents coming together to solve problems of mutual interest was characteristic of the leadership style of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, A. Craig Phillips. Phillips was aware of the need to balance the requirements imposed on DPI by the General Assembly with the local and regional variations of resources, values, and needs of local school districts and communities. Creation of an organization of professional human resources administrators was seen as especially important because the laws and policies governing conditions of employment, leave, certification and other personnel issues were increasing in number and in complexity. Most school districts did not have any trained human resources professionals, preferring rather to promote school or district administrators into these positions.

### **PANC: The Early Years**

This group held regional meetings as a means of networking and providing professional development opportunities for district personnel directors. While some school systems were able to hire personnel directors, most of these individuals had been trained as school principals. While they possessed many of the necessary skills for administration, decision-making, and managing complex systems, they often lacked the specific knowledge of policies and regulations associated with personnel administration. The regional meetings of personnel administrators were held mainly in the Triad and Triangle areas: Asheboro, Greensboro, Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh. Across the state, there were only fifteen to twenty professionals initially working in personnel administration. Thus, the opportunity for networking provided by these regional meetings was especially important as these personnel officers traded ideas, shared experiences, and discussed the specific issues related to their specific roles.

The need for personnel administration expertise for school districts became an increasingly important issue throughout the mid 1970s. A Personnel Advisory Committee for North Carolina public schools was established by the General Assembly. This committee was comprised of personnel administrators from business and industry across the state. This committee was headed by Bob Lincks of Burlington Industries. The purpose of the group was to advise public school personnel administrators on good personnel practices, policies and to assist in solving problems in public school personnel administration. They helped the trailblazing administrators learn the ropes of personnel administration, and included personnel administrators in many of their training sessions.



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As the need for and service demand of quality personnel services increased, the dollars generated by the General Assembly to support personnel offices in the districts decreased. The increased importance of the need for skilled human resources professionals in the districts became especially evident in 1972 when the Fair Employment and Dismissal Act was passed, which, to this day, is thought of as the "Tenure Act." Prior to this time, teachers in North Carolina were at-will employees with very few professional benefits and privileges. It was also during this time that the General Assembly instituted annual leave for teachers, creating an employment benefit enjoyed by teachers in very few other states. As the demands for administrators versed in the intricacies of law and policies governing employee benefits and conditions of employment grew, the trailblazing administrators wanted and needed to be able to expand and deliver a variety of knowledge services -- technical assistance, consultation, and training -- through a professional organization. Personnel Administrators of North Carolina -- PANC -- was born January 1, 1973.

The General Assembly had established the Department of Personnel Services within the Department of Public Instruction. Mr. Bob Boyd was selected to head that department in early 1973, beginning first as director of the Division of Personnel Relations, and, after 1980, as assistant state superintendent in the personnel services area. For a while, Mr. Boyd was the only person employed in his newly-minted department. Over the next several years, as the responsibilities grew, Mr. Boyd hired a series of knowledgeable and dedicated employees: J. Arthur Taylor, Brock Murray, Audrey Wagoner, Juanita Floyd, Lee Grier, Ione Perry, and David Holdzkom among them. From the earliest days of the Division of Personnel Services, Mr. Boyd and Ms. Wagoner proved to be an excellent team and began designing and developing comprehensive and high-quality personnel services for the state's school systems. Eventually, the Personnel Services Area of DPI, headed by Mr. Boyd, grew to encompass four large divisions:

**Certification Division:** this group was responsible for the granting of certificates required by all professional educators. Additionally, they interpreted reciprocity regulations for teachers from out-of-state, and were responsible for coordinating with salary administrators, to ensure that all educators were paid the correct salary.

**Personnel Services Division:** the staff of this division provided front-line consulting services for LEA personnel administrators on a variety of laws and policies, interpreted employee leave policies, developed and disseminated employee performance evaluation standards and processes, and provided staff support for the PANC organization.

**Staff Development:** this group was primarily responsible for approving staff development offerings and granting continuing education credits, as well as providing training for principals and sponsoring Effective Schools training throughout the state. The



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Leadership Institute for Principals grew out of this area and later evolved into the Principals Executive Program.

**Program Approval:** this division worked with colleges and universities throughout the state to ensure that standards of excellence were maintained so that a uniform system of teacher certification and quality control of entry-level teachers could be maintained. During Mr. Boyd's tenure, the responsibilities of the Personnel Services Area grew exponentially. As certification of school employees became more important and more complex, several staff members, including J. Arthur Taylor and Brock Murray, became pioneers, and nationally renowned experts, in matters of educator certification and licensure. Similarly, when the Quality Assurance Process, which accompanied the Basic Education Program (BEP), was implemented, the work of the Personnel Services Area staff, especially in Program Approval and Personnel Services grew, through the development, testing, and implementation of the Teacher Performance Appraisal System (TPAS) and related performance evaluation systems. David Holdzkom served as the primary architect and champion for the NC Teacher Performance Appraisal System.

It must be noted that, at the same time that the DPI Personnel Services Area was growing in complexity and staff, most LEAs were still conducting the same functions at the local level with one or two staff members. Thus, not only did the local district have responsibility for providing the services to their employees that the state and federal governments required, but the local district had ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the necessary coordination between DPI and the LEA occurred. The knowledge demands being placed on local human resources professionals were increasing at a furious pace.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, it became clear that some kind of conference for personnel administrators would be a useful and efficient way to disseminate information related to personnel administration. With the General Assembly taking an increasing role in the development of laws governing personnel actions, it was simply not feasible for personnel administrators in each LEA to keep abreast of changes on an individual basis. Therefore, the notion of a PANC conference was born. During the late 1970s, these conferences were initiated. Often, two meetings were held each year. One coincided with the sitting of the long session of the state General Assembly and the other often was held in late spring, just before the teacher-hiring season.

PANC's primary focus was on staff development and training of personnel officers. At each conference, PANC always had a representative from the Attorney General's office or the Institute of Government to give legal updates. Those in the field needed considerable information about performance evaluations and new teacher induction programs because of the complexity of issues related to tenure. Personnel professionals, at this juncture, could not afford to be wrong due to the probability of lawsuits and the continued "newness" of having such a program. Having personnel directors come together from across the state was an integral part of ensuring accurate information was disseminated. At that time, communications technology was restricted to the telephone,



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the fax machine, and the photo-copier. Hence, information dissemination required much time and the likelihood of multiple (and differing) interpretations were great.

Attending the PANC conference was a primary way to find out what the legislators had already done to expand, modify, or enact legislation concerning personnel administration. Leadership of the Personnel Services area of DPI felt a need to be proactive in ensuring that LEAs across the state had the information necessary to implement laws and policies being enacted in Raleigh. The manual *What Personnel Management is About* was developed and shared throughout the state. It became a prototype for other manuals that would be developed and disseminated throughout the state. It provided a common referent for administrators working on a variety of issues, including certification requirements, performance evaluation processes, leave policies and so on. In addition to these publications, staff of the Personnel Services Area also published articles in a variety of professional publications for nation-wide audiences, including *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Educational Leadership*, and the *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*. Thus, a nation-wide contribution to issues of personnel administration was made by the North Carolina experience and ensured that North Carolina's reputation as a leader in personnel management was maintained.

Critical issues continued to take center stage as PANC became a viable organization within the state and as the focus of personnel administration shifted. Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Titles VII and IX, Fair Labor Standards Act all became "hot button" topics, requiring personnel directors to stay on the cutting edge. The annual (and sometimes semi-annual) PANC conferences became an important venue for presentation of legal ideas and interpretations and to share best practices from across the state.

In the 1970s, the Department of Public Instruction, recognizing that conditions varied across parts of the state, created regional centers. These centers were intended to bring expertise in a variety of areas -- curriculum, personnel administration, and resources management -- to LEAs in a specific geographic region of the state. New developments in law, educational research, and practice all had the potential to improve the performance of schools and districts. But the dissemination and training in these areas would be difficult without the network structure that PANC had created and fostered and that the regional centers could tap into. In 1982 Personnel Services coordinators were added to the regional centers. These regional personnel services experts provided leadership to the regional PANC groups and to the local units in the eight educational regions of the state.

The effective schools program, the Career Development Program Pilot (CDP), the Outside Evaluator Project, the new teacher induction and mentors program, university program approval initiatives -- all required both the state and region to keep the personnel professionals up to date with key program and policy changes. The requirements of the performance appraisal system, for example, required continuing training for principals and others engaged in these activities, but had the potential to greatly increase student



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achievement. Similarly, during this time, the Principal Assessment Center was developed to assist local school districts in identifying the training needs of aspiring principals, and the Career Development Program pilot study was launched in sixteen districts across the state. Joe Parry-Hill served as an analyst with the Assessment Center, and later, Assistant Director. While the Career Development Program was eventually abandoned by the General Assembly, educators were given opportunities to learn about research associated with effective teaching and administrators were provided with resources, through the CDP, to make efforts to differentiate staff responsibilities. While the CDP was never fully implemented, a vision for how teachers and principals, working together to improve school experiences, was created and would continue to influence school improvement efforts to the present day. This work led to the ABC bonuses that teachers receive today.

As technology advanced, PANC played a leadership role in dissemination of and use of new systems for communicating and storing data. Linda Suggs started the e-mail distribution list. Jennifer Bennett and Gary Jarrett merged Finance and Business Services as another interdisciplinary scaffold toward effective and participatory communication.

These communications systems and other tools and structures that helped LEAs manage the personnel services function evolved both as new advances were made in technology and as new personnel-related issues developed. Mr. Boyd started the New Personnel Directors orientation as a means to train and develop new administrators in the new issues of personnel. He recognized the potential of many laws and programs to impact -- adversely or positively -- the school system's viability. The Americans with Disabilities Act, Family Medical Leave Act, Disability Income Plans and much more could adversely affect a school system's viability if not handled correctly. Senate Bill 2, which provided the possibility for differentiated pay and which granted districts the opportunity to abandon some state laws and policies and which was the precursor of the current school improvement structure, created both possibilities and hazards, if not correctly administered. Through Mr. Boyd's office, the Benefits Manual was developed. Another key development under Mr. Boyd's direction was the statewide application of a computer-based human resources monitoring and tracking system, HRMS.

As part of the Quality Assurance Program mentioned earlier, standardized job descriptions for a number of school and district personnel had been developed. Perhaps ironically, efforts to construct such a job description and certification process for Personnel Administrators were launched but ultimately abandoned. As the need for more teachers and principals became apparent, certification/licensure requirements were changed, with significant impact on local personnel directors. Lateral entry teachers became a necessary part of school families. Defining, preparing, and assessing their skills became another facet of the personnel director's responsibility. In fact, the first lateral entry superintendent was Reeves McGlohon, superintendent of Gaston County Schools.



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There is still no statewide evaluation for teacher assistants, although a uniform job description and suggested evaluation plan was provided by DPI's Personnel Services Division as early as 1985.

NCLB, teacher shortage, alternative certification, Homeland Security, drug testing, Basic Pilot Plan are currently the critical issues facing PANC and its constituents. Erskine Bowles, President of the University of North Carolina System, is focused on ensuring Institutions of Higher Education play a pivotal role in increasing the quality and quantity of students in teacher education programs statewide.

PANC, with its critical stance in the state, has continued to grow and advance the relevant and timely issues for the 21st century Human Resource Director. Through the wisdom of the trailblazers both in DPI and in the LEAs—people like Johnny Presson, Joe Sinclair, John Guard, Hazel Gibbs, Linda Suggs, Joe Parry Hill, Lyn Bradshaw, Brenda Jones, Annie Laurie Pickett, Worth Hatley, Bill Anderson, Gayle Davis and many more—PANC continues to stand on their strong shoulders, meeting the needs of an ever-evolving Human Resource Administrator.

## **Operational PANC**

The organization's current mission is to serve the needs of human resources professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive training and resources available. PANC promotes the HR profession to ensure it is recognized as a quintessential partner in developing and administering all tenets of the total school program. The organization does not require dues of its members, yet believes it is a state-wide investment for its membership to remain on the cutting edge of human resource issues.

The challenges facing LEA personnel administrators have never been more daunting than they are today. The personnel provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, High Quality Teachers, school law, finance, employment benefits, retirement, employee assistance programs, hiring procedures, issues of licensure all pose challenges for which the district personnel administrators are responsible. These men and women are assisted by PANC, which binds its mission statement and goals with that of its partner organization, NCASA. As one of twelve affiliate organizations under NCASA, PANC, also is aligned with AASPA (American Association of School Personnel Administrators). Additionally, PANC works alongside the State Board of Education and legislators to ensure a continuing dialog and presence in matters regarding public schools human capital. PANC's current membership numbers over 200 professionals, encompassing the state's 115 school districts. In addition, public and private university personnel often participate in its multi-dimensional professional development opportunities. Other agencies and organizations such as the state's Department of Juvenile Justice and Social Services regularly send representatives to PANC's annual conferences.



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PANC is currently governed by an Executive Board, which includes a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and immediate past president. The Department of Public Instruction's School Personnel Support Section lead by veteran HR Administrator, Mr. Larry Simmons, acts as an advising body. PANC hosts a professional development conference twice yearly. Through utilization of many of the state's personnel experts, the organization remains a viable organization in influencing systemic changes in education for the citizens of North Carolina and improvement of educational outcomes for children. The fair treatment of the men and women who teach and serve them continues to be just as important.

### **PANC Oral History Contributors**

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