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# educational considerations

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# An Editorial Statement

by David R. Byrne and Alfred P. Wilson

Will Rogers, the famous American humanist and social critic, once said, "the schools are not as good as they used to be and they never were." Rogers' statement is as apropos in the early 1980s as it was in the 1920s. It is an important point because it cuts to the heart of social reality for American public schooling. That is, the schools reflect the ideology and social agenda of the political group which has most recently controlled the essence of public policy. The schools provide the best vehicle for building attitudes and values which support an ideological prescription for the "good society." Equally, the schools offer the most vulnerable target for those who wish to challenge the social course charted by those in power. In the middle and late 1950s, the schools' failure became the explanation for Russia's ability to beat the U.S. into outer space. In the middle '60s and early '70s, the schools stood as the symbol of what countercultural zealots labeled "the system" and/or "the establishment." The schools perpetuated the values of racism, bigotry, sexism, and economic elitism. In the early '80s, critics castigated the schools for failing to build a cadre of intellectually elite graduates who could fuel our drive for economic, technological, and military world dominance. Doubtless you will not find it surprising that little public praise for the schools accompanies the facts that since the early '60s the U.S. has led the world in space exploration, or that by the late '70s and early '80s the basic skill achievement scores of ethnic minority students had significantly improved.

Will Rogers' insight into public perception of the schools fits nicely with the analytic conclusions of Max Lerner on American culture. That is, we are a country caught on the nub of a paradoxical doctrine, the commitment to individual pursuit of liberty and the guarantee of social equality. Public political debate in this country tends to focus on one point of the paradox or the other as the first order of policy priority. The public schools are a major prize for the side which persuades the most votes and they will be a prime area of attack for the "loyal opposition." All of this seems reasonably obvious. Yet the media characterizes our nation as in shock with the findings of "A Nation at Risk." The case seems to be that the ideology and concomitant values and beliefs of those who lose an election are always at risk. We would argue that the motive for characterizing the educational situation as shocking rests in selling political candidates and media services. Apparently, to sell news or candidates you must create a sense of uniqueness rather than regularity, regardless of the facts and lessons of history.

Any person who regularly reads or listens to the news must note a disparity in the pre-election 1984 and post-election 1985 attention to matters educational. A president and Congress concerned with national survival based upon performance of the schools in 1983 and 1984 seem far less concerned in 1985.

This issue of **Educational Considerations** focuses upon the future nature of the principalship and principals cast against the backdrop of what has been named the "era of educational reforms." We hope the ideas and activities reported in the following pages serve as catalysts for sensible and sane thinking for schools and universities. The sort of thinking that will arm school leaders with the tenacity and ability to extend schooling practice to the direct educational advantage of students and beyond the satisfaction of narrow political egos.

As a final note of editorial license, we offer a caveat to consideration of the points in this journal. These articles are written in the shadow of "A Nation at Risk" and other major works.\* They speak to the topic of "quality schools." One needs to be mindful that quality exists as a matter of definition relative to a set of values and beliefs. As we have argued in this statement, one person's idea of good schools may well be another person's example of what is wrong with the schools.

\* Among the recent "must" reading for the principal, aspiring principal, or those working with principals are:

**Against Mediocrity: The Humanities in America's High Schools** by Chester E. Finn, Diane Ravitch and Robert T. Fancher, editors, Holmes and Meier Inc., 1984;

**Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School** by Theodore R.Sizer, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984;

**Necessary Lessons: Decline and Renewal in American Schools** by Gilbert T. Sewall, The Free Press, 1984;

**The Persistent Problems of Education**, by Paul Woodring, Phi Delta Kappa, 1984;

**Schooling in America: Scapegoat and Salvation** by Seymour B. Sarason, The Free Press, 1984;

**High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America** by Ernest L. Boyer, Harper and Row, 1984;

**A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future** by John I. Goodlad, McGraw Hill, 1983;

**In Search of Excellence: Lessons for America's Best-Run Companies** by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr., Harper and Row, 1982;

**A Passion For Excellence: The Leadership Difference** by Tom Peters and Nancy Austin, Random House, 1985.

The last two books are not directly written for the educator audience.



# educational considerations



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Over the years, the principalship has become increasingly specialized with diverse organizational arrangements.

# The Principalship—A Look to the Past and Projections for the Future

by Kenneth E. McIntyre

When I was asked to write an article on the past and future of the principalship, I accepted the invitation, albeit with some trepidation. After having wrestled with the challenge, I developed McIntyre's 35th Law: "Anyone who is smart enough to describe the past of anything as complex as the principalship is too smart to project its future."<sup>1</sup> Having thus established my credentials, I shall plunge ahead with my assignment.

I assume that one reason I was selected to write this article was that, having arrived at a somewhat advanced stage of senior citizenship, I can look back on several decades of association with and observation of school principals, and can thereby draw on personal experience as well as the scholarship of others in looking to the past. Unfortunately, the use of personal experience exacerbates an already serious problem—that of generalizing about highly diverse matters that are subject to the impacts of time, place, and circumstance. As Lady Mary Wortley Montagu so succinctly put it, "General notions are generally wrong." The reader should thus keep in mind that regardless of what is said about things in general, one can always identify a wide variety of exceptions.

## A Look to the Past

The following comments on the past will highlight only a few of the recent trends that I consider to have important influences on the school principalship in the United States. I shall make no attempt to complicate matters further by extending my look to the past beyond the 1940s. Most writers agree that even if we were to go back to the 1920s and earlier, the schools haven't changed as drastically as it might seem. (Humorist Will Rogers made a cogent observation when he said, many years ago, "The schools ain't like they used to be, and they probably never was." The point is that most of us tend to assume that "the good ole days" were better than they really were. Whether referring to schools or

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to other important organizations or institutions, we seem to remember more pleasant aspects of those "good ole" days and compare them with the not-so-pleasant features of the current scene. However, stability has been a more persistent characteristic of our past than change has been.

## The People in the Principalship

Despite all the evidence indicating stability, some important changes do appear to have occurred that have made a significant impact on the school principalship. First, the *people* in the job are different in some fundamental ways. Women, although seldom occupying positions as principals in secondary schools, held more than half of the elementary principalships in the late 1920s; currently, only about 20 percent of the elementary school principals are women, despite the evidence that women tend to do as well as men if given the opportunity. Minorities, too, have not appeared in principalships in proportion to their numbers in teaching. With regard to educational preparation for the job, principals have much more graduate training today than they had a half-century ago; however, neither teachers nor principals have done well, in comparison with people going into other fields, in either academic work or performance on standardized tests, and the picture has not improved in recent years.

## Organizational Changes

It is obvious that, over the years, the principalship has become increasingly specialized, with diverse organizational arrangements. Since its beginnings back in the "principal teacher" era, usually in very small schools, the job has evolved predominantly into a full-time position adding one or more assistants and other staff members as the schools increased in enrollment. Although not widespread, organizational variations such as "house" principalships are not unusual, and administrative team arrangements exist in various forms in many schools. Recently, an increasing number of principals serve two schools, especially where declining enrollments and budget problems combine to produce economic pressures. Despite all of these ramifications, however, the typical principal would still be recognizable by a modern-day Rip Van Winkle who had been asleep for 20 (or more) years.

## Increasing Difficulties

Undoubtedly the most obvious change, almost universally agreed upon by principals is the increasing difficulty of the job. This has many features and causes, some of which will be cited here.

A major factor contributing to school principals' difficulties has been the devastating effects of out-of-school impacts on young people. Many elements combine to produce a bad scene, including widespread use of drugs and alcohol; the inordinate amount of time spent watching TV pro-

<sup>1</sup>Anticipating an eagerness on the part of my readers to know some of the other McIntyre Laws, I hereby share a few of them:

Everything is more complicated than it seems.

(ref. "Other things being equal . . .") Other things are never equal.

Any good thing, carried too far, becomes a bad thing.

The higher you are in an organization, the more you have to deal with people who are crazy.



grams—many of which are trashy, at best; and the influence—in the rock culture, in the movies and TV, in athletics, and even in government—of “heroes” whose behavior is disappointing if not shocking. The most obvious disaster has been the breakup of the nuclear family, which was once considered to be taken for granted. Now, almost half of the students nationwide live with a single parent, without the encouragement, support, and financial security that young people need. Recent evidence also indicates that children who live with stepparents tend to have more problems than those whose parents have not been divorced.

Another shocking trend has been the litigiousness that is tying up our judicial system and encouraging people to resort to frivolous suits that are amusing to read about, but tragic in effect. Not surprisingly, a word has been coined (hyperlexis) to use for this tendency to sue over grievances previously ignored. About three years ago, I wrote a song titled “We’ll All Sue Each Other for a Living.” It was obviously a satire, but since I wrote it many of the seemingly ridiculous examples that I had used in order to exaggerate a real problem were actually taking place. For example, one stanza in the song proclaimed:

We can sue for each presumed offense, regardless of its gravity—The dentist, when a tooth develops any tiny cavity—The preacher who has failed to come to grips with our depravity—We’ll all sue each other for a living!

The line about suing preachers was intended to be satirical, but in recent years malpractice insurance for members of the clergy has been a rapidly growing reality. The suing of school principals and teachers has been an all-too-common and growing phenomenon, for such outrageous wrongs as a student’s receiving a *B* instead of an *A* in a course.\* The upshot of it is that principals must devote increasing amounts of time and energy to defending themselves against lawsuits as well as grievances, complaints, and even threats that would not have been expressed a few years ago.

Declining test scores over an almost 20-year period, at the same time that school costs were mounting, along with reports of student crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and assaults on teachers and fellow students, created an atmosphere in which schools and their leaders have been the targets of much more criticism in recent years than was the case previously—from students, parents, and the public at large. Many of us who grew up in “the good ole days” can remember the admonition, “If you get a licking at school, you’ll get another one at home.” And, although individual teachers were sometimes considered to be unpopular with students and their parents, the responsibility for academic failure was generally placed on the shoulders of the students rather than the schools. There is a far greater tendency now to blame the schools rather than the students themselves or the homes that have let them down.

\*Yes, Virginia, there have already been several lawsuits of this type. Perhaps the most ridiculous example (so far) involving a school came out of Redding, Calif., recently. According to San Francisco’s well known columnist, Herb Caen, “a burglar was paralyzed after falling through a skylight of a school he was breaking into. He sued for \$3 million, charging that the school failed to warn him that the skylight was unsafe. He got \$260,000 in an out-of-court settlement plus \$1,200 a month for life.”

## Reform Movements

Out of all of the bad news generated from the problems cited above has come an avalanche of reform movements and laws, involving most of the 50 states. Although thoughtful educators admit that reforms were needed, the specifics of the legislation have been attacked by many because of what was regarded as gross over-simplification of extremely complex matters. Career ladders and merit pay are two of the remedies, common to many of the reform programs, which affect school principals most. Evaluation of teacher performance has been a red-hot topic at principals’ conferences and training programs in recent years, as they struggle with the tasks involved in making important decisions concerning teachers. University preparation programs have also been affected by requests for more emphasis on school law, curriculum and program development, school management, and supervision of instruction.

## The Instructional Leadership Role

Even with all of the foregoing developments in mind, one must conclude once again that there has been much stability in the role of principals. The principal is still the top person in the administrative hierarchy at the school level, devoting a great deal of time to the management of the school, handling problems that arise from day to day, and responding to the needs and pressures that arise from above and below in the organization. However, one interesting development that has surfaced in recent years has been the increasing recognition of the importance of the principal in determining the school’s effectiveness. Along with this recognition has come the acceptance, by more and more principals, of the “instructional leader” as well as the manager role. This growing acceptance of the role of instructional leader as an *ideal* does not mean that *actual* performance has changed significantly, however.

A common complaint of school principals is: “I would like to spend more time on instructional leadership, but there are too many other demands on my time.” I am never quite sure that I know what is meant by statements like this, though. One problem with our perceptions of instructional leadership is that we tend to define the term too narrowly. For example, when I developed a set of 32 instructional leadership competencies as part of the UCEA “Atlanta Project” several years ago, I discovered that many of the competencies—found to be significantly related to principal-effectiveness measures—were the type of thing usually thought of as “management.” In other words, I discovered that much of the instructional leadership impact that a principal makes is determined by the way in which management tasks are accomplished. This is not to question the importance of skillful observation of teaching, planning growth activities with individual teachers, conducting helpful in-service training sessions, and the like—the type of thing we usually associate with the term “instructional leadership.” It does, however, raise a question concerning the identification of trends in role performance of principals, when so much depends on how we define terms.

## Summary: The Recent Past

A look back at the past few decades, then, suggests that there has probably been more stability than change in the principalship in the United States; that women and minorities have not been employed as principals as much as their numbers in teaching would indicate—in fact, women especially have lost ground drastically over the past 50 to



60 years, as far as elementary school principalships are concerned (and they never did occupy secondary school principalships in significant numbers); that the job of the principal has become more specialized as schools have grown in size and organizational complexity; that the job has become more difficult and pressure-ridden, with more conflict and criticism from all directions; and that there is growing acceptance of the "instructional leader" role, at least as an ideal.

#### Projections for the Future

As I acknowledged earlier, attempting to forecast the future is a tricky business, and I admit that I have never been noted for my prescience. When I first started reading Genesis, I predicted that the people would experience a long dry spell, only to read a few pages later that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. Another one of my failures to predict the future haunts me whenever I watch "The Tonight Show" on television. When I was a high school teacher in the early 1940s in Norfolk, Neb., one of my students was Johnny Carson. We got along fine, but I have often lamented my lack of foresight in not predicting his success and making him "teacher's pet"! I take comfort, though, in the fact that my ineptitude in looking ahead is not unique with me—some futurists in the 1960s were projecting a huge surplus in the national treasury of the United States!

Before making my predictions, I feel obliged to confess that the general tone of my comments will probably appear to be pessimistic. I am reminded of H. L. Mencken's definition of a cynic: "A cynic is a man who, when he smells flowers, looks around for a coffin." If my pessimism seems to suggest that I am looking around for a coffin as I project the future of the principalship, I plead almost guilty.

#### The People in Principalships

It seems unlikely that the current situation with regard to the people in school principalships will change much, at least in the near future. There should be a slight improvement in the number of minorities holding the job, partly because the competition will continue to be attracted to other positions; however, I see no indication that the rapidly increasing proportion of minorities in our population will be reflected in their proportions holding school principalships. Competency testing could have an adverse effect on minorities, since they tend to do less well on tests. Partly because of this, however, I doubt that competency or literacy testing will be taken very seriously in the long run, even though it should be—at the point of entry into both teaching and administration.

As far as women in principalships are concerned, their numbers will probably grow, although slowly. University preparation programs are enrolling a far larger proportion of women these days, and this will make an impact, at least in the short run.

The quality of the people in school administration compared with other business and professional fields, as measured by standardized tests and academic performance, has long been an embarrassment to educators. This will certainly not change very soon, because more and more capable people who once would have become teachers and eventually principals are going into other work that is more lucrative and less stressful. At the same time, many people who entered the teaching profession a few years ago—especially the more able teachers—are leaving. Whether this gloomy picture will change in the long run is possible,

but I see no signs that the situation will improve much in the near future. The implications for the principalship are obvious—not only for the job of the principal but also for the talent pool from which principals are drawn. To make matters even worse, surveys indicate that when young people are asked what they want to do when they finish school, school administration is almost never mentioned.

#### School-age Population

School-age population is not difficult to predict, especially into the short-range future, but school enrollments are less predictable. Overall trends and projections are misleading, because of wave patterns that forecast growth at one school level simultaneous with decline at another level. For example, over the next five years (1985-1990) the population of age group 5-9 will rise sharply, for age group 14-17 the population will drop sharply, and for age group 10-13 the population will remain fairly stable and then start an upward movement. Over the long run, however, there will be a downward trend in the age 5-9 group after 1995, whereas the numbers in the 10-13 age bracket will increase after 1986, and in the 14-17 age bracket after 1990. These figures deal only with potential enrollments, however. Should substantial movement toward vouchers or tuition tax credits occur, or should confidence in the public schools decline markedly, then enrollments in public schools could decline regardless of school-age population figures, with corresponding increases in private school enrollments, home-based schooling, and ventures by entrepreneurs who can utilize resources better—especially technology, which will be discussed later.

In addition to predicting enrollments, we can now look forward to a time in the very near future when we must consider the effects of certain capabilities in the field of medical science that could dramatically affect the educability of the enrollees. For example, the genetic and/or chemical alteration of human intelligence is certainly just around the corner.

#### Technology

Perhaps the least risky prediction of all is that technology is going to make some major differences in our lives in general, and that schools and principals will not escape the effects. It is easy to write off the current evidences of an incipient technological revolution with references to the negligible impact of previous experiences with teaching machines and educational television. However, this one seems real, and the effects on schools will almost certainly be tremendous. We are told, for example, that millions of people will be linked to electronic work stations as early as 1990, permitting people to "communicate to work" rather than having to live near the job. We are told that technology will make home-based education much more feasible—at least in the basic skills—with two-way computer-based systems fully in operation by 1995. The job market will be greatly affected, with millions of current jobs being obsolete by the year 2000, and with a sharp increase in human service jobs. School principals will certainly have to stay on top of these developments, or non-public-school alternatives will be utilized.

The good news about all of this is that the utilization of technology will permit teachers to individualize instruction more effectively, to concentrate on higher-order thinking skills, to diagnose problems and plan remediation better, and to be more efficient in many ways. Technology will per-



mit principals to plan, organize, schedule, and manage activities and programs more effectively, and to analyze data much more completely and efficiently. Many school management tasks will be centralized via automation, relieving principals of some of the "chores" of the past, although the technology itself will introduce some new ones.

### Societal Factors

What about some of the societal factors that have had such deleterious effects on the schools in recent years—what lies ahead? As Mark Antony said, as he spoke at Caesar's funeral: "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." I do not foresee a major change in the devastating societal problems affecting our schools. Although divorce rates fluctuate slightly from a short-run perspective, the long-term prospects for one-parent homes are hard to refute, and the consequences for children—the trauma, the anxiety, the malnutrition and even hunger—are heartbreakingly real. Even a slight downturn in divorce rates, such as appears to be the case at the time of this writing, is probably due more to the growing acceptance of "living together relationships"—a euphemism for what we used to call shacking up—than it is to an upturn in happy marriages. Whatever we call this whole dismal picture, its effects on schools are not likely to make the principal's lot a happy one.

### Global Problems

Looking at our situation globally, there is even more reason for concern. The spoliation of the environment and the atmosphere, the exploitation of resources, the uncontrolled growth of population—all of these problems are with us now and will surely increase in severity. Although school principals have no special burdens to bear with regard to these global problems, in the long run the schools and everyone connected with them will be affected. We surely cannot continue as a nation to squander our resources while growing millions of people throughout the world are starving to death.

### The Aging of America

A quite different—and more optimistic—perspective on our destiny comes from the research on aging. A headline in our local newspaper recently proclaimed "Average American Growing Older," which surprised me, because I thought that *all* Americans were growing older. Unquestionably, the average age of Americans is increasing rapidly and will continue to do so, barring some cataclysmic influence that we shudder to contemplate. This relatively rapid aging process will have many effects on our society in general and on schools and principals in particular. Obviously, given the tendency of older people to become more conservative, it is not unreasonable to expect that impact to be felt on our entire social and political system. We are already beginning to feel the effects of having an increasingly larger proportion of our people receiving old-age assistance, retirement benefits, and medical/hospital care, with a smaller proportion of working people to pay the costs. This growing conservatism, together with the increasing competition for scarce resources, is bound to create serious challenges for schools. On the other hand, principals have always had many unused opportunities to bring older people into the educational process in productive ways, and those opportunities will grow in the future. The benefits would be mutual—to the schools and to the older people who have something to offer and need something to do.

### The Lawsuit Phenomenon

The future with regard to the lawsuit mania is especially difficult to predict. On the one hand, given the growing impatience of the American people—including Chief Justice Warren Burger of the U. S. Supreme Court—with the crushing burden of frivolous lawsuits, one might well anticipate a pendulum swing back toward sanity and responsibility. On the other hand, the number of people coming out of our law schools, who need to make a living, creates a built-in impediment to change. Perhaps the "me generation" influence will gradually fade away and people will tend to be less inclined to blame somebody else for every problem that arises and to sue the person(s) or organization(s) with the most money—if they were even remotely connected with the grievance. My inclination, however, is to foresee little or no abatement in this deplorable condition in the near future. School principals will be well advised to take courses in school law, to be sure that their actions are both legal and ethical, and to be sure that their malpractice insurance is adequate.

### The School Reforms

It is likely that there will be a slackening of the current "school reform" legislation and activity, due to the inching up of achievement test scores since the early 1980s, as well as the inevitable disillusionment with results of most of the quick-fix remedies. I am in no way suggesting that the criticism will stop or even diminish very much; I am predicting that there will be considerable disenchantment with some of the reforms or disappointment in the results. This might provide a bit of temporary relief to principals and teachers, at least with respect to some of the specific reforms, although I doubt that the slippage of control from local school districts to state boards and legislatures will be reversed.

### Personnel and School Evaluation

The evaluation of effectiveness—whether at the school, principal, or teacher level—has always been a tough problem to solve. We have heard the word or the idea of accountability increasingly of late, in reference to teachers in particular, and it is implied whenever a pitch is made for merit pay, career ladders, or the need to "get rid of the deadwood" in schools. In the future there will be increasing emphasis on *products* of schooling rather than *processes*. Although the layman tends to think only in terms of outcomes such as test scores (effectiveness), such a focus must be matched with a concern for how well one's given resources are used to produce the desired outcomes (efficiency). In times of increasingly limited resources relative to needs, it becomes imperative that schools utilize efficiently whatever raw materials they have.

An exciting and potentially highly productive development that originated in the field of business and has recently been applied in an improved manner in schools is Constrained Facet Analysis (CFA), which utilizes an input-output model to measure the efficiency of schools and to compare only those schools having like inputs. CFA provides an equitable way of measuring school efficiency, but also suggests ways in which inefficient schools can better utilize their resources to improve their efficiency.

I am now involved in a project, through the Educational Productivity Council at the University of Texas, that applies the input-output model at the classroom level. Efficiency scores are being generated for individual teachers, using



combinations of multiple input and output variables to indicate whether the teacher is doing as well with his/her raw material as other teachers are with the same level of inputs. We are now studying the classroom behavior of teachers, in terms of their efficiency scores, to learn what efficient teachers (score of 1.0) do that is different from the behavior of less efficient teachers (score of .99 or less). Keep in mind that only teachers with the same input levels are compared, using quantifiable data for both inputs and outputs, which makes the process infinitely more fair than the usual teacher evaluation process. To compare achievement test scores of students from inner-city slums with those of students from upper-middle-class neighborhoods, and to blame or credit the teachers on a basis of the outcomes, is like having heavyweights box featherweights and then judging the managers in terms of who wins the fights. I rather confidently predict that school principals in the future will be increasingly involved in school and teacher evaluation based on this model.

#### **Summary: A Look to the Future**

In summary, I have projected a future for the principalship that includes a wide range of general trends that must accommodate many situational and individual differences, especially where long-range predictions are concerned. I do not foresee any rapid changes in the personnel involved in principalships, in terms of quality, quantity, or race, but I do think that a somewhat larger proportion of women will be holding principalships. In the short run, at least, it will be difficult to maintain even the relatively low levels of performance of those entering school administration, in terms of test scores and scholarship. Student population will in-

crease or decrease, depending on the location, the grade level, and the number of years into the future that the projections include. The average age of our population in general will surely continue to increase, with consequent impacts on economics, government, and quality of life. Globally, a host of problems are increasing in severity and portend a disastrous future for all of us if they are not dealt with. Problems in our own country that involve principals most directly include the growing tendency toward "suing each other for a living" and the terrible consequences of the breakup of the nuclear family. Although the current wave of school reforms will probably produce much less real change than some critics expect, the pressures on schools to improve will no doubt continue. Technology will rapidly provide new capabilities and challenges to school principals and teachers, and at-home or at-work education will grow, partly as a result of the new technology. For public schools to prosper, there will have to be more interdependence and collaboration among organizations, institutions, and agencies. Finally, improved methods of evaluating schools and school personnel will be perfected, taking some of the guesswork out of the process for school principals.

Admittedly, some of my predictions have been on the gloomy side, and I cannot argue with the statement of the English economist, John Maynard Keynes: "In the long run, we are all dead." However, I think that the school principalship will survive, even if some of the mid-management positions between the principalship and the superintendency do not. Perhaps it is best that in the long run, as Keynes promised, I won't be around to find out whether my predictions are right or wrong.



With knowledge about leadership, the selection of leaders can be improved.

# Locating Principals Who Are Leaders: The Assessment Center Concept

by Lloyd E. McCleary and Rodney T. Ogawa

Leadership is a major, at times dominant, interest in applied fields such as management and public and educational administration. The more foundational fields of social psychology, sociology and political science give leadership an important place as well. This attention to leadership is in large part rooted in the assumption that leadership bears a direct and casual relationship to organizational effectiveness (Pfeffer, 1973). People, practitioners and scholars alike, hold to this assumption despite the existence of a vast literature that has yet to reveal much that is definitive in terms of a concept of leadership or its dimensions (see for example Smith, Mazarella and Piele, 1981; Stogdill, 1974). Given the assumption regarding leader influence the syllogistic reasoning follows that with knowledge about leadership, the selection of leaders (and potential leaders) can be improved which, in turn, will lead to more effective organizations.

Thus, it is not surprising that applied fields, including educational administration, have invested research and development capital in attempts to clarify the essential meaning of leadership and to measure leadership in those terms. A most significant effort to develop means to measure leadership has resulted in the assessment center concept. In this paper, we will examine knowledge about leadership as it relates to the assessment center concept and describe the development of assessment centers per se. We will then turn our attention to an application of the assessment center concept to education, the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Principal Assessment Center Project.

## Arriving at a Working Definition of Leadership

Definitions of leadership that seek the highest level of generality have not been found to be useful as a basis for designing assessment instruments and methods (Yukl, 1981). The task and maintenance, initiating structure and consideration and concern for people and concern for pro-

duction dichotomies are at too high a level of abstraction to be of practical use in assessing leadership in individuals. The same is true of highly specific job analyses. This is because job analyses are employed to describe specific positions in specific situations and at specific points of time. This level of specificity does not lend itself to the identification of skills or attributes that will apply to positions other than ones for which they are intended.

Intermediate level analyses have proven to be more useful in creating a working definition of leadership. They typically take the form of taxonomies that are broad enough to capture most relevant leader behaviors and yet are useful in specific situations. In addition, there exists some theoretical and empirical foundation to the dimensions now in use in assessment centers. Although far from adequate, evidence does establish two important points. First, some commonality of leadership functions is shown across types of organizations; business, public-political, military and educational. Second, discriminate and convergent validity has been established for the dimensions of leadership as measured in a variety of assessment centers. Discriminate validity establishes the extent to which a given (leader) behavior is differentiated from measures of other behaviors, and this is a necessary condition to the determination of construct validity. Convergent validity is the confirmation of the presence of a trait or a behavior through use of independent measures (Thompson, 1970).

By using an intermediate level of analysis, the matter of arriving at dimensions to be measured as predictors of leader behavior is resolved by use of a phenomenological approach. That is, measures based upon performance in simulated situations become the bases for predicting leader behavior in the actual work setting. The simulated situations are designed and validated based upon predetermined dimensions that have been agreed upon as being critical to effective functioning in a given position, such as the principalship. Examples of simulated situations are: in-basket exercises, case analysis, problem solving exercises, leaderless group situations and the like. The *predetermined dimensions* represent what is meant by leadership in an assessment center.

## Some Predetermined Dimensions of Leadership and Their Adequacy

Dimensions of leadership that are being measured in assessment centers can best be classified as traits and skills. Researchers who are seeking an integrated theory of leadership, largely avoided traits and skills (Hoy and Miskel, 1983; Stogdill, 1974). They focused upon leader behavior, leadership styles and the relationship of characteristics of these to organizational variables. Industrial psychologists, evaluation specialists and scholars involved with personnel management problems continued to conduct trait research relating to managers and administrators. Their concern was with the relation of leader traits to *effective performance* rather than upon comparisons of leaders and nonleaders. This distinction led to the identification of specific traits and skills that could be shown to affect performance in an administrative role.

Stogdill (1974) reviewed 163 trait studies and identified the following traits as characteristics of organization leaders (p. 81):

- self-confidence and personal identity
- strong drive for responsibility and task completion
- persistence in pursuit of goals

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- venturesome and originality in problem solving
- initiative in social situations
- acceptance of consequences of decisions and actions
- high tolerance of stress
- ability to influence the behavior of others
- ability to structure interaction to the purpose at hand

Modern trait researchers avoid the claim that certain traits or skills are essential but rather argue that the possession of certain traits greatly improves the likelihood that the leader will be effective. In the assessment center concept, the reality that contingencies of specific organizational settings may require certain combinations of traits and skills is not denied. The matching of the individual leader to the specific position is left to the judgment of those who select and place the administrator. In this sense the contribution of the assessment center is to increase the information available in the selection process.

The first comprehensive study of assessment center procedures was begun in 1956 by AT&T and named the Management Process Study (Byham, 1970). This was a longitudinal study involving 422 managers and was conducted over a four-year period. All information was retained for research purposes; none has ever been made available to company officials. In this way, predictive validity could be determined and related research undertaken (Huck, 1973). A factor analysis of assessment variables produced the factors listed below along with the variables loading most highly in each:

- General Effectiveness: Overall Staff Prediction, Decision Making, Organization and Planning, Creativity, Need for Advancement, Resistance to Stress, and Human Relations Skills
- Administrative Skills: Organizing and Planning, and Decision Making.
- Interpersonal Skills: Human Relations Skills, Behavior Flexibility, and Personal Impact.
- Control of Feelings: Tolerance of Uncertainty and Resistance to Stress.
- Intellectual Ability: Scholastic Aptitude and Range of Interests
- Work-Oriented Motivation: Primacy of Work and Inner Work Standards.
- Passivity: Ability to Delay Gratification, Need for Security, and Need for Advancement (negative).
- Dependency: Need for Superior Approval, Need for Peer Approval, and Goal Flexibility (p. 203).

This study has become the basis for most, if not all, of the subsequent development work related to assessment centers.

An assessment center employed by the city of Philadelphia to select administrative interns, following from the AT&T model, and adding later refinements, contains procedures for assigning candidates upon the following dimensions (Strausbaugh and Wagman, 1977, pp. 264-265).

- Oral communication
- Written communication
- Perceptivity
- Leadership
- Stress tolerance
- Initiative
- Analytical ability
- Decision making

- Organizing and planning
- Use of delegation
- Management and control
- Cooperativeness
- Originality
- Judgment
- Receptivity
- Accuracy
- Perseverance
- General intelligence

The designers of Philadelphia's assessment center have expressed the belief, albeit an empirically untested one, that the assessment center concept promises to be an improvement over previous methods for selecting interns. They cite the fairness and job relatedness of the assessment center process (Strausbaugh and Wagman, 1977).

#### Assessment Center Concept of Leadership

Some reasons for ambiguity in the definition of leadership have been noted. A clarification of the concept of leadership as employed in assessment centers can now be attempted. Note first that in the list of the city of Philadelphia's assessment center leadership is given as only one dimension out of eighteen that are rated. This arises from a highly restrictive definition which equates leadership with special acts that directly influence the behavior of others. Examples of this definition of leadership can be cited such as "leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive for goals (Terry, 1960, p. 21); "The natural and learned ability, skills, and personal characteristics to influence people to take desired actions (Wette, 1978, p. 30); and "leadership is that behavior which initiates changes in goals, objectives, configurations, procedures, input, process, and ultimately the outputs" (Lipham, 1974, p. 182). These three definitions (from management, industrial psychology, and educational administration) emphasize influencing others toward desired actions or goals. These definitions square most closely with the single dimension of leadership in the Philadelphia assessment center list.

The assessment center concept of leadership, however, is holistic. It assumes that ability, as measured by the skill dimensions taken together, provided an assessment of potential leaders. The skill dimensions and the exercises that measure them in a center are derived through phenomenologic analyses. Validity studies give a strong indication that the exercises do, in fact, measure competence which is related to performance in the role assessed. An analogy can be made with the concept of intelligence. What is measured by intelligence tests is highly correlated with what observers conclude to be intelligence behavior. In a given instance, intelligence may not be employed to guide action, or the circumstances in a specific situation may negate what would, *a priori*, be considered to be an intelligent course of action. Predictive validity studies indicate that the skill dimensions are those which make a difference in performance as a leader and that the exercises in a properly constructed assessment center does measure these skills.

#### The NASSP Principals Assessment Center

A prime example of the application of the assessment center concept in the selection of school administrators is the Principals Assessment Center of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). In this section, we will describe NASSP's Assessment Center and discuss its potential for selecting leaders. We will show that



this assessment center measures skills that are related to the work of school principals and, therefore, shows promise for identifying individuals who can function effectively in that role. We will also discuss the advantages that the assessment center provides to school districts that employ it in the selection of principals.

**Assessment center operations.** As its name suggests, the NASSP Principals Assessment Center is aimed at determining the extent to which participants possess skills needed to succeed as a principal. At last count, 25 projects were operating Assessment Centers under the auspices of NASSP. These projects are scattered across the United States, reaching from Maine to California. In addition, one project was recently begun in Canada.

The NASSP Assessment Center is comprised of six exercises: two leaderless group exercises, two in-basket simulations, a fact-finding exercise and a personal interview. Six trained assessors observe 12 participants as they complete these exercises over a two-day period. After compiling written reports on the performance of each participant in each exercise the assessors discuss and rate the performance of the candidates. They rate each candidate's performance on 12 skill dimensions, as well as his/her overall performance. A profile is written for each candidate. Profiles contain ratings and descriptions of the evidence considered by assessors in making the ratings. The final element of an Assessment Center is an individual debriefing interview usually conducted by the project director.

The 12 skill dimensions that are evaluated in the Assessment Center and definitions of each dimension are listed below. The definitions are taken from NASSP's Assessor's Manual.

#### Administrative Skills

- Problem Analysis: Ability to seek out relevant data and analyze complex information to determine the important elements of a problem situation; searching for information with a purpose.
- Judgment: Ability to reach logical conclusions and make high quality decisions based on available information; skill in identifying educational needs and setting priorities; ability to critically evaluate written communications.
- Organizational Ability: Ability to plan, schedule, and control the work of others; skill in using resources in an optimal fashion; ability to deal with a volume of paperwork and heavy demands on one's time.
- Decisiveness: Ability to recognize when a decision is required (disregarding the quality of the decision) and to act quickly.

#### Interpersonal Skills

- Leadership: Ability to get others involved in solving problems; ability to recognize when a group requires direction, to effectively interact with a group to guide them to accomplish a task.
- Sensitivity: Ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others; skill in resolving conflicts; tact in dealing with persons from different backgrounds; ability to deal effectively with people concerning emotional issues; knowing what information to communicate and to whom.

- Stress Tolerance: Ability to perform under pressure and during opposition; ability to think on one's feet.

#### Communication

- Oral Communication: Ability to make a clear oral presentation of facts or ideas.
- Written Communication: Ability to express ideas clearly in writing; to write appropriately for different audiences—students, teachers, parents, et al.

#### Other Dimensions

- Range of Interests: Competence to discuss a variety of subjects—educational, political, current events, economic, etc.; desire to actively participate in events.
- Personal Motivation: Need to achieve in all activities attempted; evidence that work is important in personal satisfaction; ability to be self-policing.
- Educational Values: Possession of a well-reasoned educational philosophy; receptiveness to new ideas and change.

**Validity and Reliability.** The characteristics of the NASSP Assessment Center as a measurement instrument have been examined in some detail. One characteristic that is readily apparent is the similarity of NASSP's list of skill dimensions to those used in other assessment centers. For instance, both the NASSP and Philadelphia Assessment Centers evaluate oral and written communication, leadership, stress tolerance, problem analysis, organizational ability, and judgment. This is consistent with the general notion that the skills and attributes of successful managers are fairly consistent across types of organizations.

A study commissioned by NASSP determined the validity and reliability of its Assessment Center (Schmitt, Noe, Meritt, Fitzgerald and Jorgensen, 1983). With regard to internal validity, the team of researchers found high levels of interrater reliability and that significant differences existed between the 12 skill dimensions. Further, they found that non-white participants fared less well than their white counterparts, men performed less well than women, and that participants serving in non-teaching roles (e.g., counselors and specialists) performed better than teachers.

The research team also examined the criterion-related validity (the extent to which assessment center ratings correspond to ratings of on-the-job performance on the same skills) of the Assessment Center. Generally, they found that the ratings of superiors corresponded to those obtained in the Assessment Center, but that the ratings of teachers and support staff were not as highly related to Assessment Center ratings. In general, then, the results of the study showed that the NASSP Assessment Center is a valid and reliable instrument.

**Relationship to the work of principals.** Beyond confirming the internal and criterion-related validity of the NASSP Assessment Center, the research team also found that students' perceptions of school climate were significantly related to ratings of the following skills: problem analysis, judgment, decisiveness, sensitivity, written communication and the overall placement recommendation. Although teachers' and other staff members' perceptions of climate were not found to be significantly correlated to Assessment Center ratings, the finding on students' perceptions remains intriguing. It suggests that, as we asserted earlier, assessment centers can provide a holistic rendering of a can-



didate's competence to perform as a principal.

An examination of the findings of research on the work done by principals reveals that many of the skills included in the NASSP Assessment Center would be useful to incumbents of the principalship. Several researchers have employed structured observational techniques to study the behavior of principals (O'Dempsey, 1976; Peterson, 1977; Willis, 1980; Martin and Willower, 1981; Kmetz and Willower, 1982). At least three themes are common to all of these studies. First, it is clear that principals work long hours. Estimates range from 50 to 60 hours per week.

Second, the work of principals is characterized by variety, brevity and fragmentation. Principals are called upon to do everything from managing budgets, to evaluating teachers and responding to concerned parents. What's more, the typical activities in which principals find themselves involved are brief, averaging about five minutes. And, the activities are fragmented. Many are interrupted; there is little consistency from one activity to another. A principal might have a conversation with the custodian about setting up chairs for an assembly interrupted by a phone call from a parent concerned about a student's performance on an achievement test.

The third characteristic of the work of principals uncovered by research is that principals work by talking. In fact, various studies have found that principals spend anywhere from 67 percent to 83 percent of their time talking with individuals or groups. Most of this time is spent in face-to-face encounters, but also includes telephone conversations and announcements over the P.A. system. Principals use talk to both inform others and to gain information.

Some skills evaluated in the NASSP Assessment Center seem to be reflected in each of the three characteristics of principals' work. The ability to work effectively over the course of a 50- to 60-hour work week would seem to require both stress tolerance and personal motivation. Fatigue certainly accompanies long hours on the job and can produce a type of stress familiar to managers. Thus, a lack of tolerance to stress would make it difficult for an individual to work effectively as a principal. Personal motivation, which includes the qualities of receiving satisfaction from work and being self-policing, also seems to be a necessary quality for working successfully on a job that requires long hours. Since principals are not compensated on an hourly basis, it is reasonable to expect that implicit rewards of the job are a factor in explaining the willingness of principals to work on evenings and weekends. Moreover, since principals are rarely supervised, self-policing is clearly at work.

Assessment Center skills are also apparently related to the ability of principals to handle the variety, brevity and fragmentation which characterizes their work. For example, organizational ability and judgment, the latter of which includes the ability to set priorities, would be enhance the ability of principals to manage the variety and volume of the activities they encounter. Similarly, decisiveness, which includes the ability to act quickly, and stress tolerance would be required to respond adequately to the occasional crisis that punctuates the work of principals.

Finally, the tendency of principals to spend so much of their time communicating directly with individuals and groups indicates that two additional Assessment Center skills, oral communication and sensitivity, are skills that can enhance the effectiveness of principals. The necessity of possessing oral communication skills seems obvious. Further, sensitivity, as defined by NASSP, seems no less im-

portant. Sensitivity includes the "ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others . . . tact in dealing with persons from different backgrounds . . . knowing what information to communicate and to whom." Since principals communicate as much to receive information as to transmit it, sensitivity would seem to be an important attribute. Similarly, the ability to work with people of varied backgrounds and a sense for how to appropriately communicate with different audiences would enhance the ability of principals to communicate with the diverse communities served by many public schools.

This suggests that the NASSP Assessment Center does focus on skills related to the work of principals and, thus, could serve as a useful tool in the selection and assignment of principals.

### How Assessment Center Profiles Are Used

To fully understand the contribution that NASSP's Assessment Center can make to the process of selecting principals we must look beyond the Assessment Center, itself, and consider how it is employed by school districts. Since research on the use of the Assessment Center has yet to be published, we will draw upon our experiences with the InterMountain-NASSP Assessment Center Project of the University of Utah in the following discussion.

We currently hold contracts with nine school districts in Utah. Each of these districts sends participants to be assessed. The process by which Assessment Center participants are selected varies from district to district. For example, one district employs conventional methods to screen applicants for vacant principalships. After narrowing the field, the district sends the finalists to the Assessment Center. Other districts use formal, conventional screening techniques to select from individuals who have applied to participate in the Assessment Center. Finally, some districts refer individuals to the Assessment Center who have been identified as prospective administrators through informal means.

The manner in which districts use Assessment Center profiles is typically related to the process by which they select participants. The district that refers finalists for principalships, weighs the information in the profiles with other available information (e.g., interviews, letters of recommendation) in making its final selections and appointments. The districts that either formally screen applicants for participation in the Assessment Center or informally select and refer prospective administrators typically place the profiles of participants in the participants' personnel files. When Assessment Center participants become candidates for principalships, their profiles are considered along with other data in selecting and assigning principals. When the profile is used in this latter fashion, pools of candidates for principalships usually include both individuals who have participated in the Assessment Center and those who have not.

In all cases the districts use Assessment Center profiles as just one source of information in making personnel decisions. They also consider candidates' work records, interviews and letters of recommendation. As a result, districts typically appoint individuals who both have good work records and performed well in the Assessment Center to principalships. However, some individuals have been appointed to principalships largely due to their outstanding performance in the Assessment Center, while others have been appointed on the strength of their work records and despite lackluster Assessment Center performances.



### Advantages Offered by the Assessment Center

The NASSP Assessment Center offers two related advantages to districts in the selection of principals: a source of objective data on candidates and a basis for selection on merit. It is well documented that the selection of principals is often guided by the personal impressions that administrators have of subordinates (Baltzell and Dentler, 1983). Moreover, data gathered through conventional means are of questionable value. For example, personal interviews often fail to gather comparable information from different candidates. Similarly, letters of reference come from sources with whom those making the selections are unfamiliar and often provide incomplete or inaccurate information. The Assessment Center, on the other hand, provides information about job candidates that is reasonably objective and related, as we argued earlier, to the work of principals.

If the Assessment Center provides objective information about the extent to which candidates possess job related skills and attributes, then it might be assumed that it could be used to select principals on the basis of merit. That is, those candidates who proved themselves to be most able through their superior performance in the Assessment Center would be selected to become principals. There are two problems with this use of the Assessment Center. First, more is involved in the assignment of principals than whether or not candidates possess particular skills. Many contingencies must be considered when a principal is assigned. For example, there are the norms of the community served by a school, the superintendent's preferences regarding administrative style and conditions in the school (e.g., a perceived need for change versus the desire to maintain the status quo). To simply select the candidate with the highest Assessment Center rating would fail to recognize the importance of situational factors.

A second problem with using the Assessment Center to select principals on the basis of "merit" involves the point in the selection process at which the Assessment Center is employed. As we noted above, the school districts with which we work employ conventional formal and informal processes to select individuals for participation in the Assessment Center. Thus, the extent to which merit, even as narrowly defined by the Assessment Center, determines selection and appointment to a principalship is greatly compromised. For, it is possible that other, more meritorious individuals are eliminated from the pool by the conventional, often subjective means employed to screen candidates and never have the opportunity to exhibit their skills.

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If instruction is to improve in American schools, the principal's role must change.

# The Principal as an Instructional Leader: Myth or Reality?

by William Georgiades

American school systems have been the recipient of both considerable praise and criticism by their publics. Forty years ago, as the United States emerged as a prime victor in World War II, the success of the American society was strongly attributed to the influence and contribution of its school systems. However, the "Toynbee-like" rise and fall of civilizations seems also to be characteristic of the popularity, and lack of popularity, which American school systems experience. Today, instead of finding themselves in the role of T.S. Eliot's aristocratic "Bustopher Jones," most American school systems find themselves in the role of the impoverished "Gus." The gap between glory and honor, disdain and poverty, is indeed a short one.

There is a plethora of information which supports the argument that students fail in school primarily for reasons that have little to do with what happens in schools. Coleman's work, and that of others, have supported this position. In some cases, such conclusions naturally result from an improper interpretation of studies on school populations. In other cases, such conclusions may be a direct expression of the researcher's biases or assumptions. For many years our teachers have been taught that certain children are deprived of "culture," and consequently are unable to profit from school experiences for which "culture" is a prerequisite. The research by H. Ginsberg in *The Myth of the Deprived Child: Poor Children's Intellect and Education*, discusses this position. Other researchers, such as A. Jensen in *Bias and Mental Testing*, have concluded that failing learners are intellectually deficient. And still others have argued that a learner's low socioeconomic level explains a low school achievement level.

Obviously, "culture," "intellect," and "socioeconomic status," are factors that do intervene in the school learning process. They are global, pervasive, stable, contextual, for genetic factors, and do influence what the student learns in school. However, the position that educators can do little to adopt the school to address such variables is increasingly challenged.

In recent years, the work of Edmonds, Lezotte,

Brookover and others have shown that schools can alter the product outcomes of their students by introducing significantly different variables within the school climate. Currently, the mainstream of educational interests and activities among researchers and policy-makers seems to concentrate on analyzing schools that have failed, and in particular, those that have been successful. It has taken the educational profession a number of years to look at significant examples of high student achievement in schools where such achievement would not ordinarily be expected.

In the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES), initiated at the request of the California Teacher Preparation and Licensing Committee, and conducted first by the Educational Testing Service, and later by the Far West Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, "successful" schools were compared to "unsuccessful" schools. This data has been further elaborated on by the work of Jane Stallings and others. Among the findings which have emerged impacting directly on the role of the principal, is that faculty and principals in productive schools believe all students are capable of mastering basic skills objectives. A second significant summation from the research is that in productive schools, the principal acts as an instructional leader, is assertive, is a disciplinarian, and assumes responsibility for the evaluation of achievement.

The historical position maintained by J. Lloyd Trump throughout his illustrious career that the principal makes the difference and must be the instructional leader of the school is a hypothesis which is now being validated by the preceding thinking and research.

## The Principal Makes the Difference

Changing educational practice is much too complex for simplistic explanations, yet one thing seems clear. Schools must opt for significant and meaningful change during the remaining 15 years of this century, or schools as we know them today will lose their impact in the education of American children and youth. **When a school implements a new program, or changes an existing one, the principal is the key to the success or failure of that effort.** As an instructional leader, the principal's job is to help the people in the school make educational programs work. There is no program that a school can buy or create that will increase achievement in a school unless the people who work there want to make the program work. Improving achievement often requires different instructional methods or new materials. Changing educational practice is intrinsically disruptive. Change threatens people; it upsets established routines; it takes extra energy and time; it challenges the status quo.

How do successful principals become curriculum specialists and provide significant leadership for change in their schools? What leadership styles do they employ? What roles do they play? What administrative behaviors work best? Obviously, there is no one answer to these questions. However, three things are crucial for principals.

First, the principal is the person who must be the school's instructional leader and provide leadership for school improvement. If the principal fails to recognize that a problem exists, and that instructional improvement is necessary, little is likely to happen.

Second, the principal must recognize that he or she will be most effective when leadership behaviors match staff expectations. In fact, the principal's ability as an instructional leader to selectively use a variety of leadership

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styles to match the situation, the task, and the expectations of subordinates is a key to success. Determining the type of curriculum leadership that is appropriate for any given situation is a skill. It involves recognizing the conditions inherent in varying situations and consciously deciding how goals might be best achieved in those circumstances. In order to do this, curriculum-oriented principals must recognize available options, and apply them to varying circumstances.

Third, the principal must play a variety of roles and realize that those roles will change as the process of improving a program evolves. In studying principals who successfully implemented new programs in their schools, one group of researchers found that the successful principal was many things:

...he or she was a *believer*, feeling a genuine commitment to the project; an *advocate* who promoted and defended the project before a variety of audiences; a *linker* who connected the project with other parts of the system; a *resources acquirer* who obtained and allocated tangible and intangible resources for the project; an *employer* who hired project staff or assigned teachers to it; a *manager* who provided problem-solving assistance and support; a *delegator* who "moved backstage" when teachers assumed leadership; a *supporter* with words of encouragement and acts of assistance; and an *information source* who gave feedback to teachers and project staff.<sup>1</sup>

#### A Matter of Style

When a principal chooses a leadership style, there is always the question of how much authority and responsibility he or she will give to others. Tannenbaum and Schmidt suggest that there are six leadership styles that fall on a continuum from high authority and responsibility vested in the principal to high authority and responsibility vested in the staff, as shown in Figure 1.<sup>2</sup>

When *telling*, the principal chooses a course of action and tells the staff what they are expected to do. The staff does not participate in decisions. When *selling*, the principal usually makes a decision and then attempts to persuade the staff to accept it. When *testing*, the principal proposes a solution and asks the staff to react to it. When *consulting*, the principal gives the staff a chance to influence a decision from the beginning. The principal may present the problem and related information, but the staff is asked to offer solutions. The principal then selects the solution he or she believes will be most effective. When *delegating*, the principal gives the decision-making responsibility to the staff with or without reserving veto power or modification rights. When *joining*, the principal is an equal participant in the decision-making process, and has no more or no less power than other members of the staff.

**Figure 1. Continuum of Authority and Responsibility Vested in the Principal and the Staff**

Principal maximum	Staff maximum
Staff minimum	Principal minimum

Telling	Selling	Testing	Consulting	Delegating	Joining
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Each of these leadership styles can be effective, and there are other models that provide sound conceptualizations of behaviors to guide administrative action. Two points in particular should be kept in mind. Effective admin-

istrators acknowledge their limitations and recognize the roles they do not perform well. Also, it is not a principal's intention that determines whether a particular style will be effective; it is how that style affects other people. In other words, the staff's response and reaction to a principal's actions determines whether the choice of a particular style was a wise one.

#### The Context

Improvements in educational practice occur in the context of a school setting. That context always has two dimensions—the job to be done, the *task*, and the people involved, the *process*. Both of these dimensions require the principal's attention. Successful principals understand the difference between the two and use appropriate administrative behaviors in both dimensions.

In dealing with the task of improving curricular programs, the most important responsibilities of the principal are: (1) to understand what is being done; (2) to demonstrate commitment to the project and visualize its intended outcomes; (3) to negotiate competing pressures within and outside the school; and (4) to allocate and use resources effectively.

A principal's knowledge of a project is critical to the staff's feeling that they can depend on administrative understanding and support for their work. The principal is not necessarily expected to know everything about the project, or to be an "expert" on every school task. But the staff expects the principal to have sufficient understanding to work effectively with them and to communicate the school's efforts eloquently. When teachers are doing something new, they are taking more risks than they normally would. They expect the principal to understand the demands placed on them, to value their mistakes as well as their failures, and to communicate to others what they are attempting and why they are attempting it.

Principals must demonstrate a strong commitment to curriculum programs in their schools. Nothing kills an improvement effort faster than a staff who believes the principal does not care about the project. Thus, the principal's visible commitment is critical to success. Teachers are quick to recognize superficial commitment. Principals must "practice what they preach." They cannot expect teachers to change if they are unwilling to accommodate needed changes in their own roles.

Schools are political. Competition for resources is keen and special interests vie constantly for control. The political implications of any effort to change the school must be understood by the principal, who must competently explain, defend, protect, and run interference for the project. Often, only the principal is in a position to negotiate competing pressures. There are criticisms and misunderstandings whenever a school changes unless the principal provides effective liaison and communication linkages within the school district and into the community.

Resources are the ingredients that improve curricular programs. They are tangible and intangible; they include money, people, materials, equipment, and influence. The principal is expected to acquire resources and allocate them in ways that assure success. Resource needs for successful curriculum implementation may be as diverse as an "opening" in the school schedule, space in the building, or the use of influence and leadership to obtain regulatory waivers or community and school volunteers.

The other dimension of the school setting that con-



cerns principals is the people who bring about the improvements. The principal who works effectively with people in the school and community employs behaviors that: (1) clarify roles to be performed; (2) encourage involvement and participation; (3) communicate support and personal commitment; and (4) provide staff with feedback that facilitates growth in skills and confidence.

Managing the task (job to be done) and managing the process (dealing with the people involved) simultaneously may seem dichotomous. The principal may feel caught between the management demands of both dimensions. Yet, knowing when to handle the people problems and when to attend to task concerns is one of the most important skills an administrator can develop.

Change threatens some people. In fact, having to depart from established routines and ways of thinking and doing things can create serious psychological trauma. Hall and others found that teachers go through predictable stages of concern in their efforts to create new programs.<sup>2</sup> Initially, teachers may have little concern about becoming involved in a new program, but they begin to seek more information as their awareness of an innovation increases. Personal concerns mount as teachers realize they may become personally involved with an innovation. Questions regarding professional and personal adequacy to meet new demands surface, and status issues emerge. At the point of initial program implementation, teachers' concerns about day-to-day processes and tasks increase. This stage, called management concerns, continues until teachers develop a smooth and routine procedure. In the next stage, teachers' concerns are likely to shift to program consequences for students. Finally, teachers may also experience concerns about collaborating with others and about exploring ways to modify the innovation to increase student achievement.

Hall and his colleagues also found that as people change from one set of educational practices to another, they experience predictable difficulties. Normally, teachers go through several levels of use as an innovation is implemented. From a state of non-use, teachers begin to learn more about a new program and enter an orientation stage and a preparation stage. At the point that implementation begins, teachers are mechanical users; that is, they direct their efforts primarily to managing the day-to-day, short-term demands a new program usually presents. As routine patterns for using the innovation develop, teachers' usage patterns stabilize. Changes in program use proceed from formal or informal evaluation data, rather than from attempts to overcome difficulties. Finally, teachers reach the refinement level when program modifications affect both short- and long-term consequences for students.

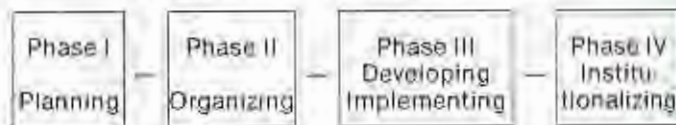
Knowledge of an individual staff member's "stages of concern" and "levels of use" allows the principal to provide assistance and support when needed. For example, a teacher who is experiencing frustration and difficulties getting something new to work in the classroom does not need a sermon on the long-term benefits of the new program. What that teacher needs is someone to illustrate how to make the program work in the classroom.

#### The Principal's Role in Managing Programs to Improve Curriculum

Most programs for educational improvement go through similar cycles or stages in their development. Each cycle requires the principal to play a somewhat different role and to choose administrative behaviors appropriate for

varying situations. A simple way of thinking about project cycles is to consider the major phases of a program's growth, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Phases of Program Growth



#### Phase I: Planning

The major activities associated with Phase I, planning, involve (1) developing awareness that change is needed; (2) defining the problem to be solved; (3) assessing the school's readiness for change; (4) identifying and evaluating alternative solutions; and (5) deciding on a course of action.

The principal's commitment is absolutely essential to launching and planning an effort to improve curriculum programs. He or she is usually in the best position to recognize that change is needed. The principal has access to a wide range of information including student achievement records, observations, and reactions from staff and parents. He or she can also underscore the importance of responding affirmatively to existing needs. It is most appropriate, therefore, that the principal present information about the problem and possible procedures for solving it after gathering faculty ideas. Diagnostic and consulting leadership styles are likely to be effective for this phase.

As awareness of a need for change in the school is established, the principal must involve faculty in deciding what course of action to follow. Those who are expected to implement the change should join the program planning effort as early as possible. Without joint planning, problems may arise later in operating the program according to original intentions. People also like to participate in making decisions that affect them; it generates a feeling of control and contributes to a sense of trust in collaborative relationships.

Schools, like people, vary in their capacity to accommodate change. It is important that the principal take time to assess the school's readiness for change, which can be done by studying existing conditions and asking the following questions:

1. How strongly is the staff committed to the need for curriculum improvement? Do they believe achievement can be strengthened?
2. How stable is the staff? Will those who plan new curricular directions implement them?
3. Does the faculty work collaboratively? Do they need to develop new collaborative skills?
4. What technical skills will be needed to implement the new program? Does the faculty have those skills? Can they be developed quickly through in-service programs or other means?
5. Does the school climate encourage cooperation and collaborative efforts?
6. Is the faculty willing to take risks? Will they try something new? How do they handle frustration and failure?

During another important aspect of the planning phase, the planners analyze proposed program alternatives to determine their likelihood of success. Each option has a



potential impact on the school and its personnel. It is necessary to recognize and understand this impact at the outset. Some programs require major changes in role and teaching behaviors and some are harder to implement successfully than others. Some programs necessitate expensive equipment acquisition or facility modifications. Further, a school can become overloaded with new programs and innovations. As a result, the faculty may be unable to adjust to the many new demands placed on them. When this occurs, efforts to improve education are usually aborted.

During the planning phase of the program, the principal's major roles are as a *leader*, providing the initiative and motivation for addressing the problems; as an *information source*, assisting in the delineation of the problem's parameters and in the identification of possible acceptable solutions; as an *advocate*, expressing commitment to the appropriate solution; and as a *linker*, uniting the school, the central administration, and the community to ensure support and needed resources.

### Phase II: Organizing

In the second phase of the program, organizing, the people and resources needed to implement the program are acquired and organized. Effective leadership styles for this phase involve selling, testing, consulting, and delegating.

Personnel to operate the program will most likely be obtained in one of two ways: if resources are available, new personnel might be hired; otherwise existing staff roles will need to be redefined. When selecting personnel, the principal should seek individuals who have needed technical skills and who display an ability to work effectively with others. They should be highly motivated and committed to the project. In some cases, special interests may need to be protected and represented. Such factors as grade level, department representation, and sex and ethnic differences may need to be considered.

In some schools, it may be difficult to "bring everybody along" in a new effort to improve curriculum. However, it is important that *all* faculty know what is being proposed and how the new program might affect them. While some faculty may never choose to join the new program, they should be encouraged to remain neutral and not actively resist program efforts.

After staff selection and program organization, the principal's key role is to *delegate* appropriate responsibility and authority for program implementation. This may be especially difficult for some principals, particularly if they are authoritative in style or if they had great personal involvement in the program's design. Delegating is not abdicating, however, and the principal should remember that ultimate responsibility and accountability will remain in his or her office. The principal should also carefully examine program management responsibility and consciously decide how much authority to share with the program staff.

Effective delegation of responsibility gives the staff a clear charge. This charge communicates expectations and achieves agreement on roles and outcomes. The principal's charge to the staff states in detail the task to be accomplished, sets deadlines, identifies constraints and non-negotiables (such as policies, regulations, and the like), establishes limits of authority, and announces the principal's personal preferences for program operation. During this phase, the principal's chief roles are as *employer*, selecting and assigning staff; and as *delegator*, setting forth the task to be accomplished.

### Phase III: Developing and Implementing

During Phase III, developing and implementing the program, the principal's role usually shifts from leader to manager. Principals generally assume a much less directive role and use more relationship-oriented administrative behaviors. Appropriate leadership styles include delegating and joining.

During this phase, instructional materials are acquired or developed, new teaching methods are tried, staff training is provided, and the program is put "on line." This is the most likely time for unanticipated problems to arise. Procedures won't work as planned, or resources are inadequate, or the program generates critical reactions from parents, students, or the school board. This phase can be especially frustrating for the principal for he or she must patiently allow the staff sufficient latitude to do the job. "Patiently" means taking a back seat even when the "I-can-do-it-better-by-myself" urge becomes strong.

Effective principals remember that their ultimate goal is to remove themselves from the program; that is, to have the staff so fully committed and competent in operating the program that they forget the principal was ever substantially involved in providing initiative and leadership for the effort.

Formal program evaluation should begin during this phase. Information about student achievement and student-teacher satisfaction with the program should be gathered. The principal also should constantly seek information on program staff morale and student and community attitudes toward the new instructional program. Is it receiving "bouquets or brickbats" from the central administration and the community? It is especially important that those who are not directly involved with the program perceive that they are getting their fair share of the principal's attention and the school's resources. The perception that the program provides "special favors" to a select few should be especially avoided.

It is crucial that the principal provide a high degree of support to staff during this phase. Recognizing achievement, working collaboratively to resolve problems, listening, extending empathy, expressing thanks, providing feedback, offering assistance, checking with staff to find out how they are doing and what they are feeling, going to in-service meetings, and attending program staff conferences are ways a principal says, "I care; we can make it together for it is important to our school and our students."

During Phase III, the principal's major roles are as *advocate*, selling, protecting and defending the program; as *linker*, connecting the project to other parts of the school system and the community; and as *resource acquirer*, using skill and influence to obtain and to allocate needed resources.

### Phase IV: Institutionalizing

In the final phase of the program cycle, overall success is judged, and decisions on continuation are made. If deemed worthy, the program moves from an experimental form into an institutionalized routine. During this time, the principal assumes consulting, evaluative, and selling styles of leadership.

If accurate data on program outcomes have been systematically collected, and if the principal has taken the temperature of the faculty and students along the way, it would seem fairly simple to determine whether the program merits continuation. It is important, however, that principals in-



clude the faculty in deciding whether to retain an experimental program. Two advantages accrue from faculty collaboration: key program modifications may be suggested that could salvage a potentially sound program from the scrap heap; and the staff will likely maintain or even increase their commitment to the program.

If a program merits continuation, it probably has been cost effective. However, resource availability on a long-term basis is an important issue in institutionalization.

During this final phase, the principal's roles are as an *information source*, providing data for continuation decisions; as a *leader*, providing direction for future efforts; as an *advocate*, selling the program if results merit continuation; and as a *resource acquirer*, obtaining long-term commitments for institutionalization.

### What of Tomorrow?

The preceding discussion may be perceived to be complex beyond the resources of the typical secondary and elementary school principal. Indeed, there is little question that the single most complex position in the spectrum of responsibility in American education is probably that of the principalship. This individual is expected to provide leadership in an institution which has become all things to all people. The principal is perceived as a curriculum specialist, a manager of monies, a placater of diverse community points of view, a counselor to competent and incompetent students, a balanced, "Rotarian" type citizen. Principals do have a significant and irreversible role to exercise in bringing about the instructional improvement of schools.

More pointedly, leadership at the local building level is a key factor in the improvement of the quality of instruction. A school is but a reflection of its principal. As I discussed earlier, if instruction is to improve in American schools, the principal's role must change. Unfortunately, preparation programs for most administrators have emphasized school law, schoolhouse planning, school finance, etc. While some knowledge of these is essential for functioning and survival, it is far more significant that the principal focus on program, curriculum and evaluation. The basic commitment of the principal must be to the teaching staff and students. The fundamental responsibility of the principal is not just to maintain programs, but to insure that the process of education in the school goes forward positively and appropriately. The principal must delegate routine matters in order to preserve energies and talents for his primary responsibility—instructional leadership. The findings of the Ford Foundation in its report, **A Foundation Goes to School**, are paralleled by the findings of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in the Model Schools Project, supported by the Danforth Foundation, published under the title, **How Good is Your School?** (Georgiades, 1978). One of the key findings of the Model Schools Project was that the most significant person in the change process is the building principal. While collective

district efforts may assist in support, instructional improvement is still basically a process to be undertaken by a local faculty, its school management team, its pupils and its supporting community.

Throughout this great nation, there are many principals and teachers who have sought to improve instruction. Their efforts have not always been neat and orderly, and cannot always be made so. But idealism and concern run strong among principals whose dedication has led to improved instruction and achievement. There are an increasing number of principals today who wish not only to fit in with the future, but also to participate in the choosing of it.

We will continue to see many starts and stops as principals assume increased responsibility as instructional leaders. We have emerged from an era, where principals were perceived primarily as managers, bookkeepers, custodians, into an era where the principal is seen increasingly as an instructional leader. The tasks which such new responsibility and such new perceptions impose are complex. The growth which is essential, if experienced principals are to assume such increased responsibility will not come easily. Many university programs will become increasingly ineffective, for they will not adjust to a new reality. Many persons, and many school systems, that do not possess the stamina of the high altitude porter, will not climb this emerging "Mount Everest" of education. Such persons will continue to argue that the principal need not be an instructional leader. They will become critics of a process which they are unable to master. Their intellectual stamina will falter, and they will write popular books criticizing schools and the leadership of the principal.

Nevertheless, the direction for the future is clear. Gradually, but inevitably, with determination, strong principals in strong schools with strong public support will move toward an increasingly significant role as instructional leaders. The results of such quality leadership will be improved instruction, a society in which larger numbers of schools will produce higher levels of achievement, a society in which the principalship will receive more of its well-deserved recognition and status. Principals as day-to-day managers will continue to exist, but in fewer numbers, and will receive little recognition. But principals as instructional leaders will become increasingly the focal point of both controversy and praise as American schools achieve new levels of excellence.

### Notes

1. Spencer H. Wyant, **Of Projects and Principals** (Reston, Va.: Association of Teacher Educators, 1980).
2. Robert Tannenbaum and Warren H. Schmidt, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern," *Harvard Business Review* 51 (May-June 1973).
3. G.E. Hall and S.F. Loucks, "Teacher Concerns as a Basis for Facilitating and Personalizing Staff Development," **Teacher College Record** 80 (1978): 36-53.



Educators must be involved in a program of growth that enhances their contribution to students.

# The Principles of Principals Helping Principals

by James D. Singer and Robert D. Anderson

Nobody is an effective island in the sea of professional development. It is imperative that educators be involved in a program of growth that constantly enhances their contributions to students. The building principal helps establish the importance of this process by being personally committed to such a program. Although geographic barriers sometimes prevent Kansas principals from engaging in a higher education program with a major university, several professional organizations provide opportunities for growth.

The Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals (KAESP) makes many in-service opportunities available to elementary principals. The annual fall workshop provides an opportunity for participating principals to hear three speakers of national prominence address total group gatherings. Two rounds of mini-session workshops are also available at this meeting, and principals may choose to attend two of these 14 presentations. Most are presented by Kansas principals, superintendents, professors of education and classroom teachers. All programs are selected for and by practicing elementary principals, and input regarding selection of topics is solicited from KAESP members.

KAESP also offers a summer workshop session on the campus of a state university. A featured speaker makes a daily presentation that is coupled with sessions presented by practicing Kansas educators and members of the business sector.

Six professional publications are sent to member principals annually. Timely educational articles are included which are written by a host of practicing Kansas educators. The first yearly publication of this magazine is sent to all practicing Kansas elementary principals and superintendents.

Professional development days are sponsored on an annual basis for principals, other educational personnel, and parents. During the past year, a training session for "Assertive Discipline For Parents" was sponsored by KAESP.

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Drive-in conferences are sponsored by KAESP in each of the six membership districts twice yearly. These late afternoon and evening conferences are within easy driving distance. They are developed by Kansas principals and are attended by members and non-members of KAESP.

Publications and training sessions for beginning principals and retired principals have reached many.

The United School Administrators is nationally unique in composition and in efforts to provide training for all Kansas school administrators. Members include superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, special education directors, curriculum directors, professors of educational administration, transportation directors, food service directors, library/media directors, and business office directors. A board of directors represents each of the associations and is responsible for the educational planning for the organization.

Regular publications are prepared by the organization and sent to members. Information regarding Kansas and national legislation, educational news are included.

An annual conference is held in Wichita and features three speakers of national prominence. Several mini-session workshops are also presented by Kansas educators. Meetings including the entire membership are held with time allotted for member associations to meet to provide in-service for their members. Last year, KAESP presented a session regarding "Standards For Quality Elementary Schools."

The United School Administrators takes an active role with the state Legislature in the development of educational legislation.

Several smaller in-service sessions for all educational administrators are made available throughout the school year at many locations throughout the state. These are planned and developed by representatives of each member association of the umbrella group.

Phi Delta Kappa currently has 16 local chapters in Kansas with each chapter providing educational opportunities through programming for educators throughout the state. Many local chapters also provide research grants to members to encourage research.

Through the Phi Delta Kappa foundation, many national speakers come to Kansas and speak to members and non-members of the organization. Education-oriented travel opportunities are partially underwritten by the international organization for individual chapter members.

Their monthly publication, "The Kappan," is considered one of the most prestigious educational journals. It is sent to all members in addition to community members designated by local chapters.

The NAESP provides a multiplicity of opportunities to members. To equalize representation of members in the governance of the NAESP, the country is divided into nine zones. Each zone is comprised of a group of states with similar total membership to assure equalization. It also provides another opportunity for elementary and middle school principals to make various in-service opportunities available to members of the association.

These zone association groups meet annually. The theme of the conferences vary. The efforts to provide members the opportunity to hear recognized educators and participate in workshops and small group sessions have proved invaluable.

Meetings in regional efforts of this kind help participants define and discuss common problems. They present



opportunities to share in the expertise of fellow principals by sharing concerns or problems indicative of local schools for respected colleagues to critique and discuss. From the experience of others, many principals avoid certain problems. They also use this effort as a means to recover from problems already existing in their schools.

The NAESP presents many opportunities for members to participate and to contribute in-service actions to fellow principals.

The annual convention is an involved operation. It is designed to be of maximum assistance and professional renewal for principals throughout the country. Input by members help develop the content of the convention program, and contributes to making it a valuable and personal professional opportunity.

General sessions bring outstanding and recognized speakers to address the group on various issues. These speakers bring national and international perspectives to topics of interest to those attending.

Accompanying these general sessions are many individualized efforts to bring assistance and problem-solving skills to principals. Leaders of the majority of these efforts are practicing principals who not only know how to initiate these various techniques but have done so in their own schools with positive and productive results. The results of these principals helping principals efforts are meaningful and valid techniques for participants to take back home and incorporate in their own professional activities.

The "Principal Speaks" are sessions designed to make it possible for those who have experienced success in certain areas to share and provide leadership and expertise with colleagues from throughout the country. These opportunities for in-service bring integrity to the profession with leadership provided to principals active in the daily operation of schools.

Discussion leaders at tables designated to cover certain areas of school administration leave a potpourri for principals seeking assistance. These seminar activities are led by discussion leaders who seek to bring out the broadest coverage with the greatest depth of help for interested principals.

Outstanding speaker sessions bring widely known educators to the convention to share their expertise. Good speaker selection by those charged with convention plan-

ning have made these activities standing-room-only sessions in most instances.

The "Principal," a prize-winning and recognized magazine, has also proven to be a source of personal in-service for principals. It brings articles, studies, and reports to principals on a regular basis. The material is written by a wide variety of active professionals in the field of elementary education. Many of these people are elementary and middle school principals. They cover a wide range of topics and are designed to help answer and provide insight into various aspects of elementary education that confront principals each day.

A fairly recent addition to the communications division of NAESP is the "Here's How" publication. This one-page monograph deals with one specific part of the principalship. These are designed to give building administrators an opportunity to have a quick to read publication for enhancing their effectiveness. This comprehensive sheet gives the principal a quick lesson in areas such as dealing with the media, how to hold effective parent-teacher conferences, discipline, drugs and alcohol, and many other titles.

For the past two years, principals from throughout the country have met in June for a NAESP "Fellows" program. This effort has been held in cooperation with the Disney Corporation and has been an excellent corporate education effort for the in-service of principals to assist in developing more effective management skills. It has also helped bridge any gaps of communication efforts that might have existed between these two entities.

Local and state associations continually strive to meet the needs of principals in their area by providing a multitude of in-service activities. These sessions reflect a continuing feeling and responsibility on the part of principals to help themselves develop the skills needed to be more effective educational leaders.

Through all levels of these professional organizations a thread of education is woven to enhance the abilities and techniques of elementary and middle school principals by the use of meaningful in-service efforts.

In-service of principals by principals strives to meet current demands made on these administrators. The involvement of skilled leaders from the ranks of the principals makes the results of these efforts more meaningful, effective, and with the greatest possible help possible.

Quality schools demand and deserve no less.



The development of quality education depends on the dedication of the principal.

# Improving the Leadership of K-8 Principals—An NAESP Priority

by James L. Doud

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), founded in 1921, is a professional organization serving more than 22,000 elementary and middle school principals and other educators throughout the United States and overseas. As a national organization, it operates through a network of affiliated associations in every state and the District of Columbia. In addition, NAESP has members in 11 of Canada's 12 provinces and in many countries overseas. The Association believes that the progress and well-being of the child must be at the forefront of all elementary and middle school planning and operations. Further, NAESP members accept the challenge inherent in research findings that the development of quality education in each elementary and middle school depends on the expertise, dedication, and leadership of the principal.

In keeping with these two primary goals of the Association, the Board of Directors approved in January 1983, a Standards Project which had two major goals: 1) to identify the characteristics found in a quality elementary (K-8) school program, and 2) to identify the proficiencies which the elementary and middle school principal must have in order to establish, maintain or improve the quality of the school program.

What is the rationale for NAESP undertaking this Standards Project? What products have resulted from this effort? And where do we believe this project will take our association in the next few years? This article attempts to answer these and related questions.

## Why A Standards Project?

Several factors external to the association contributed to the development of the NAESP Standards Project. Elementary teachers and principals have long recognized the crucial role which parents must play in the early education and preparation of their children for school. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that our association was the first to conduct and report a thorough study of the educational impact upon children of the changing status of the American family. (See *The National Elementary Principal*, May/

June 1976, July/August 1976, and October 1979 and *Principal*, September 1982.)

Confronted with a society in which there are two divorces for every three marriages, NAESP recognizes that principals must become increasingly aware of how such changes impact upon the child's education. Statistics also show that 48 percent of married women, 65 percent of divorcees with children under 6, and 85 percent of divorced men of school-aged children are employed outside the home (*Principal*, March 1985, p. 64). Table 1 indicates that the percent of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs has increased nearly 16 percent since 1970, while kindergarten enrollment has jumped 14 percent in this same time period (*Principal*, May 1985, p. 16).

TABLE 1  
Per school Enrollment Rate by Age:  
1970 to 1982

	3 and		Total
	4 years old	5 years old	
1970	20.5%	69.3%	37.5%
1972	24.4	76.1	41.6
1974	28.8	78.6	45.2
1976	31.3	81.4	49.2
1978	34.2	82.1	50.3
1980	36.7	84.7	52.5
1982	36.4	83.4	52.1

The project increase in some type of school program for children ages 3, 4, and 5 in the next five to seven years has clear implications for the need to focus attention on preparing principals for leadership in the area of early childhood education (see Table 2).

Elementary schools have long been vehicles for attempts by the educational community to react positively to societal changes. When comparing achievement levels of schools, homogeneity of neighborhood elementary schools emphasized the impact of economic deprivation and heightened the awareness of decision-makers that the quality of the leadership of the building principal was directly tied to the success of the individual school program. Such factors contributed to the initiation of busing plans to achieve racial and economic balance so that children might enjoy greater equity and equality in their educational opportunities. The fluctuations of birth rates within the past 15 years caused elementary schools to be the first to experience reduction of staff and closing of schools. Elementary schools were frequently reorganized using a variety of age groupings as a way to accomplish both school integration and reduction in force.

Within the Association, the need was recognized for development of position papers which would respond to two basic questions: 1) What does NAESP mean when we talk about quality elementary schools? and 2) What does NAESP believe to be the essential components of preparation and in-service education programs for elementary school principals? The strategic planning process for the Association called for answers to such questions so that we might focus our attention and resources on programs and activities that would have the greatest payoff for children and principals. The Standards Project seemed a fortuitous way to provide answers which help the Association move toward this objective.

James L. Doud is president of the National Association of Elementary School Principals.



TABLE 2  
Projected Trends in Preschool Enrollment by Age: 1985 to 1993  
(in thousands)

Year	Public Schools (Age)					Private Schools (Age)				
	Total	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	Total	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years
1985	3,865	352	728	2,490	295	2,339	721	1,069	508	41
1986	3,931	364	754	2,514	299	2,404	745	1,106	510	43
1987	4,007	376	779	2,550	302	2,468	770	1,142	512	44
1988	4,079	388	805	2,580	306	2,533	794	1,180	515	44
1989	4,152	399	830	2,614	309	2,599	816	1,217	522	44
1990	4,220	409	853	2,644	314	2,664	838	1,251	529	46
1991	4,279	419	875	2,667	318	2,719	857	1,283	533	46
1992	4,324	426	894	2,683	321	2,766	872	1,311	537	46
1993	4,358	432	910	2,693	323	2,802	884	1,335	538	46

### What Products Have Resulted From the Standards Project?

The task of the Standards Project was an enormous one, and the Standards Committee quickly decided that the top priority for its initial efforts should be given to the development of standards for quality elementary schools. This decision was reinforced by the release of *A Nation at Risk*, the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education which focused nearly all of its recommendations upon secondary schools while ignoring the crucial importance of the elementary school years.

In October 1984, NAESP released *Standards for Quality Elementary Schools: Kindergarten through Eighth Grade*. The *Standards* were developed with input from parents, teachers, principals, other school administrators, and a carefully selected panel of experts in elementary school education. This publication has rapidly gained attention and reputation as a comprehensive description of the common characteristics found in all quality elementary schools. These commonalities are defined as 21 specific "standards" which all quality schools should meet, and 167 "quality indicators" which help identify the extent to which each standard is met within the school. The standards and quality indicators are based on current research on effective schools and effective teaching and on the practical knowledge and experience of principals working with elementary students and teachers. Two instruments are included in the appendix of the *Standards*. The first is a checklist designed to help the principal, staff and/or community to assess the extent to which each of the quality indicators and standards are being met within the school. The second instrument provides a useful guide for development of a plan of action for school improvement.

Two particularly salient points are made by the *Standards*: 1) the elementary school experience is crucial for providing the basic foundation essential to success in later school years; and 2) the building level principal is the key figure in providing leadership for the development and management of a quality school program. In addition to defining the conditions which exist in a quality elementary school, the *Standards* also clearly imply the skills which a principal should have in order to sustain and improve the school program. Therefore, they provide the basis for the efforts of Phase II of the Standards Project—the identification of proficiencies (defined as the practical application of skills) which are required of principals in quality elementary schools.

The proficiencies are being developed by a subcommit-

tee of the original Standards Committee with additional insight provided by professional colleagues, professors of elementary school administration, and a panel of prominent educators associated with the preparation and inservice education of elementary school principals. The initial plan was to group the proficiencies under the seven categories found in the *Standards* document: Organization, Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Training and Development, School Climate, and Evaluation and Assessment. When it became evident that many of the proficiencies overlapped, they were regrouped into four major strands: Background/General Knowledge, Leadership Proficiencies, Supervisory Proficiencies, and Administrative Proficiencies. Each strand will contain a number of recommended proficiencies stated as desirable outcomes of preparation and inservice education programs. A report tentatively titled "Proficiency Standards for Elementary School Principals: Kindergarten through Eighth Grade" is expected to be released early in 1986.

### Where is NAESP Headed in the Next Few Years?

Since the release of the *Standards* report last October, NAESP has been involved in actively promoting its use. One primary focus for such efforts has been the wide distribution to key individuals such as governors, legislators, chief state school officers, superintendents, school board members, and regional accreditation associations. These efforts have achieved greatly increased recognition for the importance of both the elementary school years and the role of the principal, and are expected to provide even higher visibility as state affiliates initiate further actions designed to promote use of the *Standards* within their states.

Similar efforts will be made by NAESP to promote awareness of the *Proficiency Standards* upon their release early in 1986. We believe that the identification of proficiencies will be helpful to persons specializing in the preparation of elementary school principals as well as those whose primary focus is the continuing inservice education of principals. The professional development activities of the national association will place special focus on the proficiencies which have been identified through the Standards Project.

NAESP will launch cooperative efforts with state and local affiliates to utilize the proficiencies as a primary resource for planning of professional development activities. We hope that the involvement of professors of elementary school administration in the development of these profi-



iciencies will strengthen the "communication bridge" necessary to improve both preservice and in-service education programs for elementary and middle school principals. Such cooperative efforts should help minimize discrepancies between current preparation programs and actual practice in quality elementary schools. NAESP plans to identify "specialists" who will develop the content modules for each proficiency area to be used in professional development programs. NAESP recognizes the value of more supervised practicum experiences as a part of principal preparation programs, and will join with higher education in seeking necessary funding to support such experiences.

The need for the association emphasis on professional development programs described above is further justified by data reported in "Polling the Principals" in the March 1985, issue of *Principal*. It is possible that we will experience as much as a 50 percent turnover in the principalship within the next decade. More than 40 percent of the elementary and intermediate level principals are 50 or more years of age (see Table 3) and many will have the option to retire at age 55 if they have at least 30 years of service. In addition to the obvious "aging" of the principalship, another 15 percent to 16 percent of elementary and intermediate level principals indicate dissatisfaction with or CON consideration of other career alternatives besides the principalship (see Table 4).

**TABLE 3**  
**WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CAREER PLANS?**

	Total	Elem.	Inter- mediate	Senior High
Educational administration my career	81.6	82.1	84.7	83.9
Undecided: considering other career opportunities	15.9	15.9	14.8	13.5
Educational administration not my career	.9	.4	.6	2.1
No response	1.6	1.5	..	.5

**TABLE 4**  
**WHAT IS YOUR AGE?**

	Total	Elem.	Inter- mediate	Senior High
Less than 30	.4	.7	.6	..
30 to 34	5.3	7.4	1.7	2.1
35 to 39	18.9	16.6	17.6	20.7
40 to 44	18.4	14.4	16.5	20.7
45 to 49	19.8	19.9	22.7	18.7
50 to 54	20.3	20.7	26.7	18.1
55 to 59	12.8	14.2	9.7	14.6
60 or more	4.9	5.5	4.0	5.2
No response	1.0	.7	.6	..
Mean	46	47	47	47

Such data justify the need for preparation programs which focus upon the instructional and leadership proficiencies demanded in the operation of quality elementary schools. School boards and principals must recognize the dual obligation to maintain the highest possible proficiency levels. This can be accomplished only through a yearly program of total staff development efforts provided by the

school district which are supplemented by professional (personal) development—including membership at local, state, and national principals associations. To assist such efforts, NAESP will focus efforts to help state legislatures and local boards of education recognize the crucial importance of committing greater allocations of time and financial support to annual staff development programs aimed specifically at the individual school level.

The data about the American family presented earlier in this article also justify the greatly increased effort of NAESP to support the development of sound pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs. We are gearing up for increased legislative lobbying and advocacy for the early (K-8) learning years, including such areas as parenting education, inclusion of 4-year-old programs in the public schools, full-day kindergartens, and smaller class size. Through a new NAESP publication titled **Research Roundup** principals are provided with research and background information necessary to support appropriate program decisions. To more effectively impact state and federal legislation NAESP initiated a process to translate the association platform (governance resolutions adopted by the Delegate Assembly) into an "action agenda." This provides a legislative action plan which enables both state and national associations to work cooperatively toward similar goals—thus unifying and multiplying the impact of our efforts.

All of these actions were reflected in the five-year Strategic Long-Range Plan adopted by NAESP in 1981-82. Initial discussion leading to the next five-year plan began with the 1985 summer board meeting, and will eventually provide the framework for governance and program direction for the years 1987-1992. None of our program directions are cast in concrete—but all are part of a comprehensive plan which assures that we continue to focus upon priorities that yield visible, tangible results.

Has such planning paid off? The evidence is clearly "yes." Organization of an NAESP Foundation has resulted in expanded professional development opportunities for our membership. The NAESP National Fellows program includes two one-week summer workshops—one at the University of Houston and the other at the Florida Institute of Technology. Plans currently being developed would enable NAESP to offer a Scholars Program which would provide an opportunity for distinguished educational researchers and practicing school principals to share ideas and information for the improvement of education. Planning for the convention now utilizes the seven categories from the **Standards for Quality Elementary Schools** as a primary consideration for the selection of sectional programs. Our first pre-convention workshop at Denver was such a success that we hope to offer at least two such workshops at the 1986 convention in Las Vegas. The addition of publications such as **Research Roundup**, **Here's How**, and **Streamlined Seminar** to the always popular *Principal* magazine provide the building principal with ideas and information for personal growth as well as practical suggestions for improved instructional leadership. At the 1985 convention in Denver NAESP organized our first overseas affiliate (Germany) and formed an Organization of Professors of Elementary School Administration to help build channels of communication and cooperation with these colleagues. I believe that these professional development efforts are primarily responsible for membership growth which exceeded 1,000 principals in 1985-86.



Strategic long-range planning has resulted in other benefits for the Association. Careful control of spending, wise investments of available assets, and securing of Industrial Revenue Bonds has enabled NAESP to purchase our first headquarters building which is now under construction in Alexandria, Va. Improvements have been made in legal assistance and other related benefits each year since 1981. Expanded legislative lobbying and consistent testimony on behalf of children has helped NAESP build a reputation as a professional association that advocates more than selfish interests. The initiation of the National Distinguished Principals Program in the fall of 1984 generated a

great deal of press coverage and contributed to heightened awareness and image of the principalship. The mood of the NAESP membership has become so positive that when confronted with a Board of Directors' recommendation for a \$25 dues increase, the Delegate Assembly at the Denver convention unanimously approved the recommendation.

One indicator of quality is that individuals involved are never satisfied; that things can be improved. Elementary and middle school principals have become aware that NAESP is involved in planning and program activities designed to increase their leadership skills and effectiveness as building administrators. The success of NAESP in these efforts will benefit both children and principals.



A unified administrative effort is necessary at both the local and state levels.

# Legislative Strategies Used by United School Administrators

by M.D. McKinney

The United School Administrators of Kansas (USA) was established in the early 1970s for the purpose of developing a strong coalition of school administrators who would have an influence on educational issues and government decision-making at all levels.

United School Administrators is an association of eight Kansas administrator groups. The impetus for its establishment came from school superintendents who realized that administration required a strong team approach through unified administrative effort at both the local and the state levels. By 1975 the association had expanded to eight member groups and included, in addition to Kansas Association of School Administrators (central office administrators), Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals, Kansas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals, Kansas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Kansas Association of School Business Officials, Kansas Association of Secondary Schools Principals, Kansas School Public Relations Association, Kansas Council of Vocational Administrators and Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators.

In addition to the purposes stated above, the association endeavors to establish better communication networks between the members and other education agencies and organizations and to provide high quality staff development opportunities as well as legal support and counsel to its members.

Of all these services, the top priority item, determined by periodic needs assessment, is the need for association participation in legislative activities. Therefore, one of the most important duties of the executive director and the associate is to serve the membership as registered lobbyists and coordinate efforts made by the association and its membership.

While there are many common elements in the roles played by the eight administrative groups comprising USA, there is diversity among them in the details of their jobs and the scope of their responsibilities. Each of the eight affiliate

groups is totally autonomous but has joined with the others to work together in areas of common concern. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to arrive at true consensus on all legislative issues.

In order to influence education-related legislation, USA has established a legislative committee which deals exclusively with surveying the membership, identifying the issues and positions USA will take, keeping the membership informed, and coordinating USA's lobbying efforts both at home and in the Statehouse. The process is further decentralized in order to encourage member participation and to seek out those with expertise in legislative matters. Special task forces deal with the more complex areas of legislation which require detailed, ongoing study, such as school finance, administrator due process, home schools and performance pay systems.

Approximately 1,250 of the 2,160 eligible Kansas administrators are a part of USA. From the outset, USA recognized that the number of its members, either actual or potential, does not provide the same "political clout" present with the two other major education organizations in the state—the Kansas National Education Association with its several thousand members, all of whom are eligible voters, and the Kansas Association of School Boards, backed by the thousands of voters who elected them. For this reason, USA plays a different role in the state legislative effort from that of those with greater political muscle.

School administrators, because of their professional preparation and experience, are obligated to share their knowledge with, and try to influence the decisions of, lay person board members. However, once a decision is made or a position taken, the administrator must then support and carry out the decision or promote the position. Because there are diverse elements influencing a board's philosophical, historical and practical views, it is impossible for administrators to reach total consensus on all legislative issues.

Since administration is an extension of teaching, the effective administrator must maintain a loyalty that runs both directions: to the board and electorate and to the districts' teachers. This is the basis for the generalization that school administrators are those in the middle, often between two major groups with differing opinions and goals.

The role of United School Administrators has evolved into one of merely providing to the lobbying process factual information central to legislative decisions. Seldom do the staff or members of the association use hard-sell tactics.

Because of the need for timely and accurate information in the legislative process, there is no one more sought after or influential in affecting education legislation than Dale Dennis, assistant commissioner of education. The information his office can supply is a compilation of data from all state school districts and is used at every level of legislative decision making. To a lesser degree, individual school administrators must be available to legislators to relate how certain issues will impact their districts.

USA staff members have been told repeatedly by legislators that in addition to the information supplied by Assistant Commissioner Dennis—often consisting of computer printouts showing the financial impact of the various alternatives being considered—they listen first and foremost to their "back-home" constituencies. District board members and school administrators are an important part of that group. Failure to hear from the administrators "back home" has often negated testimony given before legislative committees by those testifying on behalf of the association.

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This is particularly true of those issues where teachers, administrators and boards are on different sides.

Legislators consistently make an additional point. Frequently, an issue has divided educators and laymen. In those cases, the three major education associations have been told that their position will have credence if it is a joint position of K-NEA, KASB and USA. Such joint positions often prevail even in opposition to other expressions from "back home."

Following the release of the major reports on education in 1983, Kansas and many other states seem to have done more adjusting and tinkering with standards than making an in-depth study to determine if and what kind of reform should take place education. If the systems engineering approach were to be applied, a thorough needs assessment would be able to determine what the whole should consist of. We could then set about designing the individual parts rather than tinkering with those now in place, many of which may be obsolete.

One who follows the legislative process closely can have little doubt that education is a political football in all states. Since educators and school board members have asked state government for the funding needed to equalize educational opportunities in Kansas, local option given historically to boards of education has declined. The same has been true as state and local governments have accepted equalization funding from the federal government. The federal guidelines to be followed have diluted the autonomy of state and local boards of education.

The state of Kansas provides, through state income and sales tax rebates, approximately 45 percent of the costs of public elementary and secondary education, and few areas of the state budget approach the amount allocated to education. Such amounts of money are not appropriated without a great deal of public debate. The amount money to be spent on public education is related to the taxes legislators are willing to impose on Kansans, and this will always be a political issue.

In the recent legislative sessions, this observer has consistently seen most educational issues, especially those involving money, decided along party lines. The votes on all the major issues have been controlled by the leadership of the parties.

For the past two years, Governor Carlin has met with his advisory council on education on a monthly basis during the legislative session. The membership has included the chief executive officer and the president of each of the three associations already named plus the commissioner of education and his associate commissioner for school finance, and representatives from the Board of Regents. In meetings of that panel during the 1985 legislative session, the discussions often centered upon the prevailing legislative goal of not permitting any increase in taxes to support the governor's program.

Toward the end of the session the Board of Directors of the United School Administrators authorized their acting executive director to propose to the governor a plan which would attempt to remove education from the political arena. In an effort to find a new and independent voice to speak in behalf of the educational needs of Kansas, it was sug-

gested that the governor consider the appointment of a "blue ribbon panel" similar to ones which had produced excellent results in the states of Georgia, Kentucky, New Hampshire and South Carolina, to assess the needs of Kansas education as related to its economic and social well-being. By establishing a non-partisan group of highly respected citizens from business, industry and government, as well as educators and board members, the expectation would be that political overtones could be removed, and Kansas citizens can look upon schools and the necessary funding as an investment in their future, rather than a cost to be borne.

USA members have little hope for any significant change in the amount of money made available by the Legislature for the equalization formula without a dramatic improvement in the Kansas economy. Neither legislator nor gubernatorial candidates are likely to run for election with a platform of tax increases. There are those who believe many incumbents will use the large ending balances left in the state treasury along with their resistance to any tax increases as very important issues in their re-election campaigns. However, as a result of that action, or inaction, Kansans will resist efforts to increase local property taxes, even though surveys indicated they were willing to pay an added one-half of 1 percent increase in the sales tax to support education. This will surely result in Kansas falling further below the average of teachers salaries, the major factor in attracting and retaining good teachers. As a result, dramatic improvement in Kansas education is not likely. It appears there can be no successful attempt to increase the level of education funding for at least two legislative sessions.

All this is happening at a time when the federal government is passing the responsibility for equalizing educational opportunity back to the states. In those states recovering from the economic slump, the money for school improvement seems to be available, and several states have enacted large school reform packages. Because of our dependence on the declining farm economy, increased expenditures for education do not seem likely for the future without a significant shift in perceived need and changed priorities.

USA's efforts to affect legislative decisions have only been minimally successful in the past using paid lobbyists to present the needs of education to committees of legislators and individual legislators. Using the legislators' suggestions stated above, educators will need to commit themselves to individual lobbying of all legislators in order to have a significant effect on the process. In addition, administrators will need to lead the effort to establish the same kinds of coalitions at the local level as have been established at the state level. When there has been consensus on education issues, K-NEA, KASB, USA and, on occasions, the Kansas State Board of Education have all spoken as one voice to influence legislative decisions.

These groups will also need to add to their coalition any and all who can assist in endeavors to make Kansas a better place to live because of its superior educational opportunities.



Things can go better when a skilled management team is in place.

# I Want To Be Alone, But Not When It's Time to Make Decisions!

by Herman R. Goldberg

## Come with Me to the Board Room!

Come with me to the board conference room at the Education Building in one of the nation's largest school districts. An urban superintendent of schools is being interviewed by the school board for a similar position in this city. After about two hours of grilling the candidate in the areas of administration, instruction, finance, procurement, staff relationships, personnel, and federal-state-local relationships, the president of the board surprised the candidate with the final question of the interview.

"How soon can you come and how many of your administrative team will you bring with you?" The candidate was aghast. He had not yet decided that that was the position he wanted and was taken aback by what seemed to be a genuine offer tied to a strong suggestion that his administrative team quit as a unit and join him in the new district. To the candidate, the board president's questions presupposed that the administrative team in the hiring school district was about to face a housecleaning. The candidate replied that he was not sure of when or if he could come but, speaking rather sharply to the board said, "Your second question bothers me. Why would an incoming superintendent be willing to be party to sweeping out the existing team before he becomes acquainted with them, assessed their skills and strengths, and their working relationships with the schools, the community, and the board?"

Upon reflection, it was clear that the board was talking about their strong belief in administrative team management even at the expense of local chaos and upheaval. That was more than a decade ago. The superintendent did not accept the offer.

## Still Alive and Well

The concept of the administrative team first emerged in the late '60s when there was a great deal of study and discussion about shared decision-making. While it wasn't called team management at that time, the concept grew rapidly. Administrative staff and groups of teachers and principals were going through some type of process of sharing in

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decision-making about the procedures and operation of a school system. After an early spurt leading to mixed results and varying degrees of acceptance, it went into limbo for a few years. The concept reappeared in education under the banner "team management," after it hit in industry. Articles about team management in the automobile industry, in other manufacturing and business enterprises appeared regularly. Bringing people in, listening to and sharing their ideas and eventual decisions formed a solid basis for developing a real team concept.

Some say that the rise of collective bargaining by teacher groups, whereby they sought opportunity for input in decision-making in many areas had an off-shoot influence on the development of the administrative team management concept.

A number of superintendents have faced a situation where a group of central office supervisory and administrative staff formed a bargaining unit, just as teachers and principals had previously done. After relying on these people a great deal for information, and loyal, yet independent, professional advice, the superintendents' teams were being divided. While some feelings of betrayal initially set in, superintendents persisted in getting the very best thinking from their central office staffs and principals by skillful personnel handling and strengthening two-way trust.

This trust developed more firmly when the superintendent demonstrated a willingness to let go and to delegate certain responsibilities and roles. It seems that no matter what kind of climate is present or team ideas are generated, it gets down to the degree to which the superintendent seeks genuine input from the team or behaves in a way that overshadows the thoughts and contributions of the members of the team.

Since superintendents hold the ultimate responsibility for the administration of a school district, they may be reluctant to give up the last opportunity to check out a group decision and decide whether they can go with it or not. While valuing the opinions of all team members, some superintendents get into hot water because their loyalty to the team is so strong that they cannot make the final judgment of deciding against a team decision when hunches, intuition, or impressions suggest a different course of action. Some superintendents have been dismissed when they failed to recognize that the advice being given was not good or that the timing for implementation was just plain bad. Some major decisions can shatter the serenity of a district and a community if they go wrong. Yet administrative team management is alive and well, although new labels have appeared describing the process and serving as new models of executive power and leadership. The process has become more sophisticated, and broad-based community members have been added as have representatives of business and industry, additional central office staff, principals, and teachers. The concept is still there although the terminology and the lineup may have changed in some locations. Some other words have been used to describe this newer process: e.g., Two Heads Are Better Than One, Collaborative Team Management, Keeping Your Management Team on the Right Track, Increasing Executive Power Through Shared Leadership, The Administrative Grid For Management Teams, King Arthur and the Round Table, Are You Tired Carrying The World on Your Shoulders: Try Team Management, and We All Have Our Say If Not Always Our Way.

As boards of education observe team management operations, they still have as their basic question, Are the Chil-



children Learning? They want assurance that better productivity by staff and students in teaching and learning are resulting from the new group administrative process. Team management, based on the psychological principle about how people learn and grow in and about the workplace, how people feel about their workplace, and when they are the most productive, usually brings the best results. Studies on school climate revealed that one of the factors that came out very strong was that people were more apt to put themselves out and make a commitment to a decision if they had some say in that decision.

### The Successful Team

Dr. I. Carl Candoli, superintendent of the Fort Worth, Texas, Independent School District, has developed a format in which he predicts how a management team can be successful. He calls for a merging of administrative strength with personal leadership qualities in concert with a well formulated organizational scheme based upon the needs and goals of the school system.

Technical proficiency of the team specialists without the personal traits that must accompany the administrative skills may mean failure of the team effort. These personal traits include the ability to understand the human behavior of others, not to be impatient, not to belittle, not to stereotype, not to jump to conclusions, and not to diminish the importance of the ideas of the other members of the team. "True cooperation among members of an administrative management team is possible only if a mutual-influence system prevails," Dr. Candoli points out. If a climate exists that rewards cooperation, and if people are helped to appreciate the benefits of collaboration, the ways in which cooperation is attained may turn out to be more important than the decision reached. According to Dr. Candoli, empathy means thinking with people, not for or about them; feeling with people, not becoming emotionally involved; moving with people, not rushing ahead or lagging behind; working with people, not doing things for them; accepting people, not judging or evaluating them; and seeing situations from other people's viewpoints, not merely from one's own.

Thus, it becomes apparent that the superintendent-leader of the management team, in order to be successful, must avoid paternalistic, bureaucratic, autocratic, and authoritative style, attitude, and performance in working with the team. If such traits persist, the management team doesn't really function in the proper fashion but may merely go through the steps, which gives the appearance of a team in action, but which in reality turns out to be a group of administrators accepting, in a sort of dependency and subordinate fashion, whatever directives or subtle manipulation is forthcoming from the leader.

### The Team Stabilizer: The Superintendent

When superintendents of schools change jobs frequently, the management team loses its power. Hit and run superintendents can destroy a management team. Superintendents should hit hard, but not run! The charged atmosphere in which superintendents live and work is stridently calling for continuing and increasing change. Change, for some, is interpreted as movement—from plan to plan, peak to peak, job to job. Almost lost in the prevailing tendency to equate relocation with progress is the greater potential for growth and development which comes from continuity of service, stability, and cooperative efforts of a strong man-

agement team leading to action-packed performance within a school system.

In most cases, the advanced training of a superintendent begins in his/her university. If the major role of the university is the pursuit of truth, then is the practice of the university to program such administrative personnel during their training to plan to work for a relatively short time in one district, e.g., two to four years, consistent with that basic goal? The formulation of a rigidly pre-determined career plan by a superintendent and/or his or her mentors that charts how many districts should be his or her place of employment—of what size and for how many years—is questionable practice. Such a plan leaves insufficient time for developing a smoothly functioning district team. While the furtherance of an individual career may be enhanced by such a timetable, delays along the way may bring impatient superintendents and disappointed staff and school boards into conflict. A board, sensing that it has hired a transient superintendent, may understandably be extremely cautious in offering the superintendent the degree of support to which a superintendent and the administrative team are entitled.

Since the superintendent, in the most effective arrangement, does not operate alone but frequently as a member of the management team, stability is important to the team. Through continuity of service, the superintendent gets to know the really productive workers on the staff and sees to it that their services are properly recognized, utilized and rewarded. On the other hand, the staff of a peripatetic superintendent soon senses frustration. The board feels insecure. Teachers, students, parents, the entire community feel short-changed.

There are those who argue that a place-bound superintendent becomes an easy victim to traditional procedures and lacks the skills and temperament of a change agent. When objectives are properly set and supported by a staff team with skill and a board with insight, then the superintendent who stays in one district for a reasonable portion of his or her career can be an effective change agent as well as a stabilizer. In contrast, there are those who say that a career-bound superintendent who assumes responsibilities in new districts at frequent intervals, highlights a district's need for a change agent. Yet, in many cases, the best a change-agent-in-a-hurry can do is to set up a small prototype of an idea. Like a salesman packing up his sample case, he may be off wooing the next district before proving that a change was feasible, both instructionally and financially, and worthy of adoption by the entire school system.

Admittedly, the superintendency is a high-risk post. At times, reality dictates change. Professional separation and divorce may be the forerunner of a more *simpatico* environment for both the community and the superintendent. In many businesses and in industry, stability seems to have paid consistently high dividends in those instances where corporate management through consistent team leadership has enjoyed a long tenure. Familiarity not only with the overt power structure, but more importantly, the covert structure of a community, does not come on hurried demand; the solid skipper earns his/her passage. The hit-and-run superintendent cannot relate to effective, long range planning. Such a superintendent does not stay long enough either to see projects through or to leave the right kinds of patterns for others.

A superintendent is believable when he/she suggests, initiates, develops, nurtures, evaluates, and extends new ideas with the help of the administrative management team



including principals, teachers, parents, and students. Our country is demanding that we find out how best to improve our schools and to provide a higher level of excellence and to find out what works and then to disseminate it. Dissemination of sensible, mature, and tested programs, most often the product of successfully run management teams, will help our nation more than the spread of program changes coming from spurts and promises. Frenetic activism, even when designed by a bright, articulate administrator, may attract more attention from the media, but sequential successful steps based on a coherent team plan are more likely to produce the constructive changes a school system so desperately needs.

### Team Time

One of the most difficult problems in operating an administrative team is scheduling time for the team members to meet frequently enough to work on the issues and options that they are to consider. Since each member of the team has to meet time-consuming day-to-day responsibilities, the full team may not always be available to give full attention to the team's agenda.

For undertaking major issues, one-shot meetings lead to team frustration. If an extensive overhaul and reorganization of a system is on the agenda, sufficient time must be allotted to do the overhaul. Frustration sets in when there is not sufficient time to deal with such important matters. Here I'd like to coin a new word—*frustility*—a combination of frustration and hostility. These feelings can develop when progress is delayed because the agenda is too heavy for the time allotted.

Problem-solving through collaboration requires the leaders to relate to and communicate honestly and openly with members of the team. The quality of the solutions coming from the team will vary depending upon the quality of the collaborative reflection and work effort, bringing a sense of family working together for common goals.

When the members of a team begin to perceive that a consensus is being reached, there is an optimistic view that successful outcomes will emerge. Decisions are more potent when the group is involved in the formulation of the changes rather than making the leader personally responsible for the final decisions.

### Count the Principal and the Teacher In

To the general public, there are three people who are important in the progress of students at school. These three form sort of a tripod for student support. They are the child's teacher, the principal of the school the child attends, and the superintendent of the district. While the superintendent gets most of the publicity and attention from the media, there is broad agreement that the teacher and the principal are the keys to the excellence of the educational program. The leadership ability of building principals and effective teachers is needed along with central office specialists when the administrative management team is being selected.

### Don't Forget Listening

In the monograph published by the Educational Research Service, Inc. titled, **School Management Teams: Their Structure, Function and Operation**, Kenneth A. Erickson and Walter H. Gmelch list these essential characteristics that they believe management team members must have in order to form an effective team:

1. Be able to invest significant amounts of time,
2. Be able to work cooperatively rather than competitively toward common goals or purposes,
3. Have open and clear lines of communication,
4. Have trust in the integrity of their colleagues,
5. Encourage and work to understand the full explanation of minority opinions, and
6. Have an acute skill in listening (versus hearing) to the opinions of others.

And picking up on the sixth characteristic, listening is really the composite process by which oral language is received and interpreted in terms of past personal experience and expectation for the future. One of the most frustrating parts of discussions in team management situations is the failure to recognize that a common weakness of many administrators is their belief that talking is equal in importance to listening. When this happens, some team members become reticent to contribute, and good ideas can sometimes be submerged or lost.

### Arriving at a Decision

There are several different types of action which can result from a team management experience. The first is when the team leader makes decisions without consultation, second, with consultation, third, when it is predetermined that the decision shall be by majority vote, and fourth, when it is planned to seek a consensus decision by the team. Consensus decision-making, Erickson and Gmelch point out, does not mean that all team members must agree before action may be taken. It is, however, a process by which all team members collaboratively participate in reaching the final decision. In order to implement this type of decision, team members should have certain skills. They must learn to cope with conflict, give and receive feedback, check the perceptions of others, and be ever ready to communicate without rancor when major differences of opinion emerge.

### The Educational Impact Statement

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has for many years called for the development of an educational impact statement when administrative changes are under consideration. This is advice which reveals to the decision-makers the probable consequences of the decision about to be recommended. AASA also believes that boards of education should require that educational impact statements be presented to them when changes in policy are proposed.

Dr. Paul Salmon, executive director emeritus of AASA, has said that, "For a long time some superintendents and boards have sought ways to involve principals and other middle managers in the development of policies and regulations. They sought some sort of adhesive that would hold the administrative team together.

"The educational impact statement is a concept which promises to provide the glue that will hold the administrative team together. The impact statement is an instrument which reveals to the decision-maker the probable consequences of the decision under consideration. Since policies impact different elements of a school district in different ways, it is important that every administrator in the district be involved in the development of an impact statement. When such information has been gathered, collated and synthesized, the decision-maker is in a position to



make a much better decision than could be made without the process.

"In gathering material for the impact statement, all administrators in the district must have an opportunity to know precisely what the proposed policy change is. They must also have sufficient time to study the matter and to record their judgment about the probable impact on their school or department."

AASA and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) have jointly published a series on the administrative team which offers many helpful suggestions to those contemplating such an effort.

### Fluidity of Structure

I think that there needs to be in any team management situation the fluidity of structure in the organization that will allow members of the team to generate information, to give advice, and to help make certain decisions. From time to time, some school leaders conclude, "I am not sure I want to get involved with a team. I don't have time. I worked long and hard to get the power that I have today, and I am not going to give it up now. And, what's more, I am concerned that if I bring a team together they may not agree with my conclusions."

But most superintendents have sufficient confidence in themselves and enough confidence left over to start a team and to be sure to treat with respect the contributions made by other members of the team, allowing all viewpoints to be aired.

One additional factor to be guarded against is that team sessions sometimes provide a forum for vocal "ax grinders" who dominate the discussions and try to dominate the decisions and "put down" other members of the team.

### House Rules

Administrative teams need to settle on certain "house rules" which would include place of the meeting, the recording function, and how agendas are developed and priorities established. At times, team members may be asked to assume some responsibility to prepare for the meeting, and to be assigned some responsibilities during and after the meeting. These would include carrying out whatever assignments each group member may be given by the group or the leader and honoring a call for confidentiality when required. There is no ideal team structure. Each local school system must form the team in a way that best fits the needs of the district. The team, after gathering information and proposing solutions, may sense the need for a task force from the team to do further work on an issue and report at the next session of the full team. Sometimes, a task force from without the team or an outside consultant is needed to clarify the issue.

To be successful, team members must bring their personal enthusiasm and loyalty to sessions so that no longer can they point their fingers at those "up in the central office as the cause of it all." Cooperative team work really begins when each member of the team accepts decisions that were made as a result of the process, whether he/she is in full agreement with them or not and tries sincerely to make them work. Dr. James E. Cole, director of secondary education for the Anoka-Hennepin School District, Coon Rapids, Minn., discusses, in his paper published in the *Executive Educator* in July 1983, the role principals and assistant principals need to play. Dr. Cole indicates that the management

team concept does not work when individual members resort to "bad mouthing" because they disagree with the decision, whether it's a group decision or a decision by the superintendent. Dr. Cole points out that some principals at times can torpedo the work of the management team when, in conveying the team decision to teachers on the school staff, introduce it by saying, "I don't agree with this, but the superintendent wants us to . . ." This type of action erodes both the effectiveness of the superintendent as the leader and the effectiveness of the management team. Dr. Cole concludes by stating, "The management team can be a magnificent machine or a miserable flop. It can have something in it for everyone, or little in it for anyone. Its destiny rests with each member's willingness to work for the welfare of every other team member as well as for the goals of the entire school system."

### "Calling An Audible"

No matter how successful the deliberations of an administrative management team may be and how clearly right the decisions of the team seem to be as they conclude their deliberations on a single or a series of issues, the superintendent remains in his or her office alone after deliberations have been completed. However, the antennae of the superintendent remain in place, reaching out to all segments of the community, and signals come to the superintendent which the complete management team may not be party to, either because of the timing of these signals or the fact that it is not possible for the team to be reassembled on short notice. This is somewhat like the quarterback on a football team who has been calling the plays in the huddle and offering encouragement to his team. But then, there are times when the quarterback reads the formation of the defense and concludes that he needs to change strategy and switch signals.

There is a fair analogy here to the superintendent who, having reached a conclusion with the management team, must now switch strategy because of late-breaking developments and a last-minute reappraisal of the probably negative impact of the previously-arrived-at decision.

### Concluding Comment

In the final analysis, it is not the purpose of the administrative management team to alter the formal power structure of a district. The school board remains the primary policy making and governing body of the district. The superintendent remains the single person responsible to the board for the proper functioning of the district and has the authority for making administrative decisions. Principals retain the function of managing their schools. There are, nevertheless, some changes that do take place in the informal nature of the relationship among the superintendent, central office administrators, and building principals in the matter of sharing their powers as a result of an administrative team management process.

Things can go better when a skilled management team is in place.

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There are important ways that secondary principals can affect their schools.

# The Effective High School Principal: Sketches for A Portrait

by Jo Ann Mazzarella

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Most researchers agree that the role of the principal is essential to the success of a school. The effective schools research points again and again to the primacy of the principal's role in the creation of an outstanding school. As Ronald Edmonds once said, "There are some bad schools with good principals, but there are no good schools with bad principals."

Analysts like Pitner and Charters (1984) and Gersten and Camine (1981) propose that many of the principal's duties as instructional leader could be performed just as well, or better, by others, yet the fact remains that in most schools there is no one but the principal both able and willing to perform these critical duties.

In spite of some writers' insistence that leadership of the principal is important, it is unclear exactly what this leadership consists of. What is it that principals do to improve their schools? Moreover, if what principals in general do to make their schools better is unclear, even more unclear are the functions of high school principals in particular. **What does an effective secondary principal look like?** This topic has been of great interest for a number of years among researchers affiliated with the Center for Educational Policy and Management.

After a brief review of what past research has to say about effective secondary principals, these pages contain an outline of theories and research that have emerged from CEPM in recent years on important ways that secondary principals can affect their schools. The result is a portrait, or more precisely, preliminary sketches for a portrait, of an effective high school principal.

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## Beginning with a Blank Canvas

According to a 1983 review by Mark Martinko, Gary Yukl, and Michele Marshall, "There is a deficiency in the literature with respect to a review of effective principal behaviors in secondary schools." Martinko, Yukl, and Marshall, in an exhaustive review of the literature done for a 1983 CEPM workshop, found that few studies of the principalship concentrated on secondary school principals or even differentiated between secondary and elementary principals. Yet such differentiation is necessary, the authors argue, because the principalship at the two levels is very different.

Citing a study done by Martinko and Garner, the authors maintain that secondary principals spend more time in interactions with administrative staff; in mutually initiated interactions; in activities related to staffing, decision making, and fiscal management; in management of relations with external entities; and in duties related to controlling than elementary principals do. Other studies they cite found that secondary principals have more duties associated with extracurricular activities, more interruptions, and more correspondence to handle than do elementary principals, while elementary principals spend more time with superiors and parents (Kmetz and Willower 1982, Martin and Willower 1981).

While Martinko, Yukl, and Marshall did uncover some findings related to the duties and behaviors of all secondary principals, they found little on *effective* secondary principals. They concluded that "no single set of behaviors, traits, or characteristics is clearly related to effective secondary school principal behavior."

These findings appear to be just as true today as they were in 1983 when Martinko, Yukl, and Marshall looked at the literature. In a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in April 1985, Daresh and Liu concluded that in research on the instructional role of the principal only limited attention has been given to high schools. In addition they found that little information has yet been uncovered regarding the *specific* behaviors of principals who serve as instructional leaders at any level.

In the view of Martinko, Yukl, and Marshall, effective leadership behavior is, in part, a function of the environment. They recommend "ethnoscience" as an approach to studying the secondary principal in order "to develop more specific understanding of how particular principals behave in their unique environments." They stress that "effective performance is the result of extremely complex relationships between leader behavior and environmental variables."

## Influencing High Schools by Using Linkages

In the context of such sketchy information on the behavior of secondary school principals, researchers William Firestone and Bruce Wilson set out to examine how secondary principals influence the instructional work of their schools. In 1983 the authors, both researchers at Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia, put together a report on the topic for CEPM.

Firestone and Wilson ingeniously tie together the work of many diverse researchers, including their own, to fashion a coherent theoretical paper maintaining that **a high school principal may best be able to influence the school through bureaucratic and culture linkages.**

Firestone and Wilson begin by setting forth Rosenblum and Louis's definition of linkages as "mechanisms



in schools that coordinate the activities of people who work there." Bureaucratic linkages are those "formal enduring arrangements within an organization that allow it to operate," including roles, rules, procedures, and authority relationships. Such linkages control the behavior of organizational members.

Cultural linkages are less formal and less apparent to an outsider. Firestone and Wilson identifying them as "publicly and collectively accepted meanings, beliefs, values, and assumptions in a school or other organization."

According to the authors, there is general consensus that individuals or activities in schools are "loosely coupled" or linked together. The authors report on several previous studies done in conjunction with their colleague R. E. Herriott, in which they concluded that both individuals and activities in secondary schools are more loosely linked both bureaucratically and culturally than are elementary schools. They found that each teacher in the secondary school independently makes major decisions about how to manage his or her students, how to present material, and even about what to teach. The principal must somehow influence the way teachers make these decisions in spite of weak linkages between principals and teachers.

### Bureaucratic Linkages

In spite of the fact that teacher supervision is often cited as an important bureaucratic linkage between principals and teachers, the authors dismiss it because it is utilized infrequently, has a low priority in schools, and usually lacks necessary followup. Instead, they go to the work of Bossert and his colleagues, who contend that there are some "crucial bureaucratic linkages" through which the principal can influence instruction. These are the control of teacher instructional time through setting schedules and minimizing classroom interruptions; the determination of class size and makeup; and the assignment of students and teachers to particular groups or tracks. To this list Firestone and Wilson add two more. The first is allocation of resources (including money, new instructional materials, and facilities). The second is encouragement of both the acquisition and practice of new skills and knowledge by prompting teachers to use their untapped skills and urging them to attend training sessions. All of these activities can influence learning in the school.

Firestone and Wilson are careful to add, however, that such "crucial bureaucratic linkages" can also be strongly influenced by forces besides the principal. They mention district policies, state policies, court decisions, resource scarcity, and other staff as outside agents that can diminish a principal's control in all these areas (instructional time, class size and makeup, student and teacher assignment, resource allocation, and inservice education).

In the wake of the 1984 report by Goldschmidt, Bowers, Riley, and Stuart on "The Extent and Nature of Educational Policy Bargaining," one could almost certainly add the labor contract as yet another perhaps even stronger constraint on principals' decisions in these areas. Goldschmidt and his colleagues found that in many districts, many of these bureaucratic linkages (schedules, class size, resource allocation, inservice training) are tightly controlled by the collective bargaining agreement. Furthermore, they found that the influence of unions continued to increase steadily at least up to 1981, when their data were collected. These constraints cast some doubts on the principal's ability to take advantage of bureaucratic linkages, but they do

not affect the principal's influence on the linkages that are at the heart of Firestone and Wilson's theories: cultural linkages.

### Cultural Linkages

Cultural linkages, the collectively accepted meanings, beliefs, values, and assumptions in the school, are part of what the authors call the "key to productivity" in an organization. Focusing on these cultural linkages raises three questions:

1. What is the content of the culture that promotes successful instruction?
2. How is culture denoted? By what symbols?
3. How can the principal influence culture?

To answer the first question, Firestone and Wilson examined studies on the content of culture in successful business organizations. By distilling the findings from several studies, they determined that such cultures may have the following qualities in common:

- commitment to high quality service
- willingness to take risks
- a setting where individuals can experiment
- close ties to the outside world

Although they fully recognize that the components of successful teaching are missing from the list, Firestone and Wilson nevertheless suggest that these qualities might also describe part of the content of culture in successful high schools.

How are the components of a culture expressed or denoted? How do we know what they are for any given culture? For this, Firestone and Wilson, like anthropologists observing a foreign culture, look to the symbols used to express the values and beliefs of the people being studied.

Symbols are found in stories, icons, and rituals. Stories, explain Firestone and Wilson, include myths and legends, as well as true accounts. Icons can be logos, mottos, and trophies; in schools, rituals might be evidenced in assemblies, teacher or community meetings, and awards ceremonies.

After identifying cultural linkages in schools, Firestone and Wilson ask, "How can cultural linkages be influenced by the principal?" They suggest, first, that the principal can manage the flow of stories that communicate cultural content. From the work of Metz (1978), they offer an example of a principal who fostered a widely held belief that discipline problems at his school were usually easily manageable by patient, skillful teachers. This principal successfully countered the view then current that discipline problems were reflections of deep and perhaps unsolvable problems in the country as a whole by repeating stories of the skillful handling of discipline problems by teachers who were able to keep order and still avoid confrontation with students. During other periods of crisis in the school, this principal actually went so far as to suppress true stories of student walkouts or other incidents to minimize their disruptive effects. In addition, Firestone and Wilson suggest that principals can manipulate teaching schedules to facilitate or limit teacher communications. In these ways, principals shape and control the stories that communicate a school's cultural content.

Principals also are in a position to create icons and rituals, such as awards, mottos, or academic pep assemblies. The authors even suggest that principals can become sym-



boils themselves by, for instance, letting it be known that they worked their way up from a poor background.

Firestone and Wilson further suggest that principals, in their hundreds of short interactions with teachers, can be communicators of the values and beliefs that make up the common school culture. To fill this role well, they maintain, principals need high energy levels and a conscious commitment to the task.

The authors do not overstate the control that the principal has over cultural linkages. They emphasize that this control is inherently weak but can be exercised over and over again in the "countless interactions" principals engage in during the school year. As Firestone and Wilson put it, "the task for the principal is to consistently employ the full range of linkages through a multitude of major and minor actions to generate a common purpose and effect in the school."

### Effective Behaviors

Taking another approach to creating a portrait of the effective secondary principal, researchers James Russell, Thomas White, and Steven Maurer have set out to depict not effective administrators but effective behaviors of high school principals. The behaviors they have focused on are those they believe contribute to the characteristics of effective schools.

Russell, White, and Maurer first reviewed the literature on organizational and school dynamics and the literature on school effectiveness. From the former they constructed a model of secondary school dynamics, and from the latter they gleaned characteristics of effective secondary schools. They integrated these characteristics into their model in a way that illustrates the general administrative processes (agenda setting, network building, and agenda implementing) that produce them and the effects and outcomes (student outcomes, teacher work, and school-wide effects) that they bring about.

Relying heavily on the analyses of Purkey and Smith, the authors selected from the literature on effective schools eight characteristics of effective schools that could be directly affected by principal behaviors:

1. School-wide measurement and recognition of academic success
2. An orderly and studious school environment
3. A high emphasis on curriculum articulation
4. Support for staff instructional tasks
5. High expectations and clear goals for the performance of students
6. Collaborative planning with staff
7. Instructional leadership for teachers
8. Parental support for the education of students

Working within the theoretical context of their model, the authors then set out to search for specific principal behaviors that appeared to be effective in fostering these characteristics. They wanted to find out very specifically what it is that principals might do to create effective schools. At the same time, they were interested in the opposite kinds of behaviors. What is it that principals do that is ineffective or even counterproductive? What weakens schools and makes them less effective?

To uncover these behaviors, Russell, White, and Maurer used the critical incident technique. They gave their list of characteristics of effective schools to a group of observers (including administrators, teachers, and students)

who had a lot of experience in schools and asked these observers to name examples of effective and ineffective behaviors related to each characteristic that they had actually observed high school principals perform. The researchers defined effective behaviors as those that the observers wished all principals would perform under similar circumstances. Those behaviors that would make one doubt the competence of anyone who performed them repeatedly (or even once in some cases) they considered ineffective. The observers generated a list of 1,038 behaviors.

To verify all these behaviors, the researchers reclassified them by characteristic and by their effectiveness or ineffectiveness. To further ensure that the behaviors indeed logically fit under a particular characteristic, they were sorted once more by a panel of experts who judged once again which characteristics each behavior was related to and whether that behavior was effective or ineffective. When the process was completed, each behavior had been classified at least six and as many as seven separate times. When six of the experts and researchers agreed on a behavior's classification by characteristic and effectiveness, it was retained.

### The Behaviors

The final result of the verification process was a list of 335 behaviors on which observers agreed very strongly. What were they? Obviously it is not possible to discuss or even list all 335 behaviors here. Instead, some of the most interesting will be mentioned to give an idea of the wealth of behaviors generated.

There were four general ways that principals were thought to promote "school-wide measurement and recognition of academic success": (1) undertaking unique or at least unusual efforts to recognize academic success; (2) setting up ongoing systems to recognize academic success; (3) encouraging the use of standardized testing; and (4) giving personal recognition to individual students for specific academic achievements.

One important way principals were seen to promote this characteristic was through efforts that are unusual or exceed those usually expected. Such efforts include bringing in outstanding speakers for the National Honor Society, displaying academic awards in the school trophy case, or attending a function of a local organization held to honor students. Displaying academic awards in the trophy case (and to a lesser extent all the above actions) is an excellent example of what Firestone and Wilson would call creating or manipulating the symbols that express the school's cultural linkages.

The second way to promote school-wide recognition of academic success, setting up ongoing systems to recognize success, includes such behaviors as arranging for regular publication of academic success stories in the community newspaper. Here again is an echo of Firestone and Wilson in that the principal controls the flow of "stories" that express school culture. Other such behaviors are arranging for an annual presentation of scholarship awards at Rotary Club meetings, or instituting an annual insert in the graduation program listing high achievers.

The third group of behaviors centers on the acceptance, usage, promotion, and dissemination of standardized testing data. This includes behaviors like convincing staff that general ability tests are important and encouraging standardized testing in each subject. This area represents an opportunity for principals to demonstrate that they



place a high priority on academic success and that they believe the use of test data is an important way to promote academic success.

The final cluster of behaviors, giving personal recognition to individuals for academic performance, includes such activities as personally presenting award certificates to students at the end of each grading period. Such behavior is yet another example of how principals can manipulate awards, which are expressions of the school's cultural linkages, according to Firestone and Wilson.

There were only nine behaviors recognized as particularly ineffective in promoting the characteristic of school-wide recognition of academic success. (It should be remembered that for Russell, White, and Mauer "ineffective" means something more harmful than the usual meaning connotes.) These behaviors are divided into two categories: mishandling student recognition and ignoring or misusing standardized tests. Among examples of the first category are displaying uncertainty during an award ceremony about how an award was achieved or refusing to recognize outstanding academic performance because of a belief that high achievers are "no better than anyone else." Example of the second category are ignoring standardized test results because of a belief that they "don't predict," or even having no testing program at all. The ineffective behaviors are virtually the opposite of those behaviors listed as effective in two of the other categories identified under this characteristic.

### Promoting Order

The second characteristic of an effective school in the researchers' list, "promoting an orderly and studious school environment," is surely one of the most important to fostering high student achievement. Of the four general groups of behaviors seen as promoting this characteristic, the largest contained those associated with the principal becoming personally involved in student discipline. These behaviors included such actions as personally presenting rules at an orientation convocation, personally confronting students who are "goofing off" in a study hall, and being frequently visible in all parts of the high school campus.

Other behaviors believed to promote an orderly school environment are those that establish or enforce a clear code of conduct. These would include using a microcomputer to tabulate and report attendance for each class period or creating a few comprehensive, easily understood rules.

Several more behaviors deal with the support of disciplinary policies or actions. Making suspensions "stick" or providing a suspension room are ways that principals can provide disciplinary back-up.

It is not enough, however, to establish, enforce, and support a discipline system. Important behaviors were identified that had to do with organizing staff and resources to implement the discipline policy. These behaviors include calling in police when necessary, designating counselors for problem students, and assigning staff to problem areas.

The sixteen ineffective behaviors the researchers identified could be roughly divided into four general groups: (1) permitting behavior that creates a disorderly environment and disrupts classroom time, (2) enforcing discipline in a weak or inappropriate manner, (3) failing to establish or enforce a clear code of attendance and absence policies, and (4) being unwilling to enforce discipline.

Those principal behaviors deemed ineffective appeared to be not only different from but directly opposite to

behaviors the researchers considered effective. The most numerous behaviors were those that allowed disruptive behavior to go undisciplined, such as excusing students to go shopping or allowing students to write graffiti on walls. Only one of the permitted behaviors violated an actual rule or policy (swearing at a teacher), but the rest offended the sensibilities of the observers, researchers, and experts. There appeared to be a shared recognition among them that it is ineffective for principals to permit certain behaviors that, although not officially designated as misbehaviors, seem clearly undesirable.

The behaviors summarized by enforcing discipline weakly or inappropriately include not expelling frequently suspended students or saying merely "Nobody talks like that," when a student uses a four-letter word.

Such actions as developing a code of conduct that is nothing more than a laundry list of "dos" and "don'ts" and claiming a rule exists that does not, indicate failure to establish a clear code of conduct. Neglecting to establish behavioral norms in the minds of students and staff appears to be ineffective.

The final type of behavior ineffective for promoting school order is the unwillingness of principals to enforce discipline. Behaviors that were identified here include walking out unruly assemblies or disregarding rowdy students in a lunchroom. It appears ineffective for principals to avoid confronting misbehavior.

These examples from the researchers' extensive list of behaviors merely suggest the myriad of behaviors observers linked to the characteristics of an effective high school. Because the authors consider this a pilot study, they did not make an attempt to correlate each behavior with the achievement levels of the high schools in which they occurred. One hopes that they will choose to carry the study one step further by pursuing this line of inquiry. Until then, however, this list of behaviors is an important contribution to school effectiveness research. It offers, for the first time perhaps, a suggestion of the many specific and concrete behaviors that are performed by that elusive being, the effective high school principal.

### Teaching Principals Effective Behaviors

Researcher Kathleen Fitzpatrick is now introducing effective administrator behaviors as part of a training project she is undertaking in high schools in six suburban Chicago-area districts. One of the major thrusts of Fitzpatrick's project is training teachers in mastery learning techniques. In a related session she teaches high school principals and other building administrators ways they can help their teachers implement the new techniques through administrative support functions drawn from the literature on effective schools.

In particular, Fitzpatrick highlights these characteristics of effective schools: instructional leadership, particularly the component of evaluative feedback (Russell and colleagues' characteristic 7), and cooperative work and planning by teachers (Russell and colleagues' characteristics 4 and 6) Fitzpatrick makes the participating principals aware of structures that can be set up in the school to promote collegial teamwork, such as providing opportunities for teachers to meet during the day and allowing sufficient time for planning courses. She also emphasizes the importance of giving sincere feedback to teachers and how to do this. Not just a lecture, Fitzpatrick's session includes role playing of the behaviors involved and a lot of time for discus-



sion. Response to Fitzpatrick's program from administrators has been enthusiastic. Many have requested a continuation of the training sessions through the summer, and two districts have highlighted the program in presentations to their school boards.

### Conclusion

These pages are an attempt to outline the portrait of an effective secondary principal. We began with highlights from a research review on the topic by Martinko, Yuki, and Marshall, but because previous research was found to offer little in the way of a likeness, we began with a canvas that was virtually empty.

We then examined two different ways of looking at the high school principalship. By examining cultural and bureaucratic linkages in the school, Firestone and Wilson built an intriguing and persuasive case for the notion that effective administrators might be those who try to influence such linkages, particularly the cultural ones. In contrast, Russell, White, and Mauer created a model of secondary school functioning and then used observations of experts to create a long list of specific and concrete principal behaviors that observers linked to school effectiveness. Finally, we touched on a CEPM-sponsored program in which trainers attempted to familiarize principals with some of the important functions of effective secondary administrators.

The result is not so much a completed portrait but a series of working sketches for a portrait of an effective high school principal. The antithesis of a still life or the usual static portrait, each sketch in this series is lively, full of motion, film-like in its depiction of action. It is not what high school principals are but what they do that is of interest here and that will continue to be of interest. For what high school principals do now and in the near future will be a powerful influence over whether we have a nation of effective or ineffective secondary schools.

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# Summing Up

by Alfred P. Wilson and David R. Byrne

This edition of **Educational Considerations** focuses on the principalship. Concern about the principalship is not new. In the early 1900s, educators were writing that the principal needed to be a highly skilled individual with the ability to make sound, often meritorious, decisions. At times with success and other times inadequately, educational associations and universities have attempted to prepare principals for such judgments. From the first decade of this century to the present, more than 350 universities and colleges have developed training programs in educational leadership. In more recent years, educational associations have entered the in-service training field with puissant vigor.

The direction of training efforts for prospective principals, assistant principals and principals has begun to change. The introspective pressure is building with crescendo after crescendo being sounded. Writers of notable reputation have entered the probe. They have sounded alarms for educational changes ranging from tuneups to overhauls. The critics of influence most often have called for closer collaboration between practicing administrators and university faculty. This volume of **Educational Considerations** is, in part, a statement of implied agreement with such a position. Each writer is either an outstanding practitioner or skilled professor. The journal is a collaborative work showing cooperation, respect, value for each professional's contribution.



# BOOK REVIEWS

**Schools of the Future: How American Business and Education Can Cooperate to Save Our Schools**, by Marvin Cetron with Barbara Soriano and Margaret E. Gayle, McGraw-Hill, 1985, \$12.95.

At a time when organizations, commissions, foundations and specially appointed task forces are carefully scrutinizing the state of America's public school systems, Dr. Marvin Cetron, with the assistance of Barbara Soriano and Margaret E. Gayle, is casting a critical eye toward the future. **Schools of the Future: How American Business and Education Can Cooperate to Save Our Schools** is the result of a study sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators and conducted by Forecasting, International, Ltd., of which Cetron is president.

In his futuristic overview of education in the 21st century, Cetron envisions a high-tech instructional regime in which computers and cable television in the classroom will play a major role. Ideally, computer software would be written by teachers in an effort to support and expand the prescribed curriculum and would be individualized to meet the educational needs of students at various stages of learning. The authors assert these disks would be easier and less expensive to update than traditional textbooks and would enable students to learn at home as well as in the school environment.

Also anticipated is an active and cohesive partnership between schools and business in which the latter would advise schools concerning the ever-changing career market of the technological industry. As the result of this newly formed alliance, schools of the future would provide career training for students commencing as early as eighth grade. Part of this training would likely take place within a business and would afford the student the opportunity to utilize skills currently being taught in the classroom. Performance would be observed and analyzed by an on-location trainer or by means of telecommunications equipment installed in the workplace. To further incorporate job training skills into the classroom, it is proposed that industry and business not only supply personnel to teach in the public schools on a full-time or part-time basis, but that they support education with equipment and funds.

Career training would not exclude the post-school-aged citizenry; training and retraining programs would be conducted in the school during evening and nighttime hours in an effort to keep workers abreast of the ever-changing technological industry.

Cetron further proposes to incorporate a community service facet into the burgeoning responsibilities of the school system by introducing video libraries, counseling centers and/or recreational centers to aid those families facing stress situations.

The authors of this book, like a multitude of other educational theorists, are concerned with "fixing" the American public school system. While their goal—a return to educational excellence in which the United States again assumes the role of technological leader—is sound, their proposed computer-based panacea may well fall short of its

projected mark. What education needs is not another experimental program devised to save our schools, but a careful, although thorough, weeding out of existing programs. It is the belief of this reviewer that our public school systems would serve our students best by teaching them to think, reason, analyze and evaluate and leave the computer sciences and job training skills to colleges, universities and vocational training institutions.

—by Susan Day Harmison

**The Great School Debate: Which Way for American Education?** Edited by Beatrice and Ronald Gross. Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1985 Hardback \$17.95, Paper \$9.95

American education is under the microscope and the entire nation is peering down the lens. Questions concerning every facet of education are being asked by educators, administrators, parents, concerned citizens, business leaders, government officials at local, state and federal levels and, yes, even students themselves.

How is American education faring under such close observation? According to the plethora of studies conducted in recent years, not well.

The Great School Debate was ushered in with the National Commission on Excellence in Education report of April 1983, **A Nation at Risk**. Spearheaded by Secretary of Education T. H. Bell, the report highlighted an overwhelming state of mediocrity which was crippling this nation's schools. Amid an outcry for immediate educational reform, commissions, task forces and concerned agencies from every conceivable sector began their own in-depth analyses of American education in an effort to pinpoint when and how education began its course of non-success, who or what was responsible for the decline of excellence and what action should be taken to remedy the efficacy.

**The Great School Debate: Which Way for American Education** is a compilation of 64 of the nearly 400 reports on education written since April 1983. Edited by Beatrice and Ronald Gross, this anthology serves as an expansive study of current educational theory, debate and recommendation.

The reports are divided into nine categories, the first beginning appropriately with **A Nation at Risk**. Following is a summary of eight other nationally sponsored reports which include Ernest L. Boyer's **High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America**, a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching-sponsored study and **A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future**, by John I. Goodland.

Subsequent selections offer provocative observations and proposals concerning virtually every segment of academia as well as national responses to the Great Debate and governmental concerns regarding funding.

Although no anthology can adequately detail and summarize all that has been written in the last three years concerning the state of public education, Beatrice and Ronald Gross have presented a collection of perhaps the most persuasive, controversial and authoritative reports. Their text is an excellent source of reference for anyone interested in the current status of American education.

—by Susan Day Harmison