

# Educational Administration: The Roles of Leadership and Management

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# Educational Administration: The Roles of Leadership and Management

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    - Shape: Two-dimensional area
    - Form: Three-dimensional structure or shape; geometric or free form.
    - Space: Area around, between, above, below, or within an object
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# Chapter 1. FORWARD: The Roles of Leadership and Management



This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

## Solutions

# Chapter 2. The Changing Roles of Leadership and Management in Educational Administration



This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration

How the pendulum swings! The purpose of this introductory chapter is to discuss the dynamic roles of leadership, management, and administration as they relate to educational organizations. There has been much debate on this topic, particularly regarding the roles of leadership and management, and usually management comes out the worse for it. Typically, when education field practitioners or professors are asked about leadership and management, leadership will be thought of in a positive sense and management will likely be viewed negatively. It seems that no educational administrator wants to be seen as being a manager. Educational administration preparation programs are now usually housed in departments of educational leadership. When seeking a new principal or superintendent, the position description will very likely seek “a strong leader with vision.” Historically, in the early phases of this dialogue, the focus was on administration (see Wilson [1887] who noted that the study of administration was being added to the curriculum of universities). Then the focus was on management in school administration, as noted in Callahan’s work (Cult of Efficiency). Next, and continuing until the present, the focus was on leadership. Many volumes have been written on these topics. Currently, a number of scholars and field practitioners have again been talking about the importance of management and the need for balance between leadership and management. There are a number of reasons for these “paradigm shifts” as will be discussed in later sections.

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**Solutions**

# Chapter 3. Theories of Educational Management



This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

The process of deciding on the aims of the organization is at the heart of educational management. In some settings, aims are decided by the principal, often working in association with senior colleagues and perhaps a small group of lay stakeholders. In many schools, however, goal setting is a corporate activity undertaken by formal bodies or informal groups.

School aims are strongly influenced by pressures from the external environment. Many countries have a national curriculum and these often leave little scope for schools to decide their own educational aims. Institutions may be left with the residual task of interpreting external imperatives rather than determining aims on the basis of their own assessment of student need. The key issue here is the extent to which school managers are able to modify government policy and develop alternative approaches based on school-level values and vision. Do they have to follow the script, or can they ad lib?

## Distinguishing Educational Leadership and Management

The concept of management overlaps with two similar terms, leadership and administration. “Management” is widely used in Britain, Europe, and Africa, for example, while “administration” is preferred in the United States, Canada, and Australia. “Leadership” is of great contemporary interest in most countries in the developed World. Dimmock (1999) differentiates these concepts whilst also acknowledging that there are competing definitions:

School leaders [experience] tensions between competing elements of leadership, management and administration. Irrespective of how these terms are defined, school leaders experience difficulty in deciding the balance between higher order tasks designed to improve staff, student and school performance (leadership), routine maintenance of present operations (management) and lower order duties (administration). (p. 442)

Administration is not associated with “lower order duties” in the U.S. but may be seen as the

overarching term, which embraces both leadership and management. Cuban (1988) provides one of the clearest distinctions between leadership and management.

By leadership, I mean influencing others actions in achieving desirable ends . . . . Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organisational arrangements . . . . I prize both managing and leading and attach no special value to either since different settings and times call for varied responses. (p. xx)

Leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. “Leading and managing are distinct, but both are important . . . . The challenge of modern organisations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. xiii-xiv).

The English National College for School Leadership.

The contemporary emphasis on leadership rather than management is illustrated starkly by the opening of the English National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in November 2000. NCSL’s stress on leadership has led to a neglect of management. Visionary and inspirational leadership are advocated but much less attention is given to the structures and processes required to implement these ideas successfully. A fuller discussion of the NCSL may be found in Bush (2006).

## **The Significance of the Educational Context**

Educational management as a field of study and practice was derived from management principles first applied to industry and commerce, mainly in the United States. Theory development largely involved the application of industrial models to educational settings. As the subject became established as an academic field in its own right, its theorists and practitioners began to develop alternative models based on their observation of, and experience in, schools and colleges. By the 21st century the main theories, featured in this chapter, have either been developed in the educational context or have been adapted from industrial models to meet the specific requirements of schools and colleges. Educational management has progressed from being a new field dependent upon ideas developed in other settings to become an established field with its own theories and research.

## **Conceptualising Educational Management**

Leadership and management are often regarded as essentially practical activities. Practitioners and policy-makers tend to be dismissive of theories and concepts for their alleged remoteness from the “real” school situation. Willower (1980, p. 2), for example, asserts that “the application of theories by practicing administrators [is] a difficult and problematic undertaking. Indeed, it is clear that theories are simply not used very much in the realm of practice.” This comment



suggests that theory and practice are regarded as separate aspects of educational leadership and management. Academics develop and refine theory while managers engage in practice. In short, there is a theory/ practice divide, or “gap” (English, 2002):

The theory-practice gap stands as the Gordian Knot of educational administration. Rather than be cut, it has become a permanent fixture of the landscape because it is embedded in the way we construct theories for use . . . The theory-practice gap will be removed when we construct different and better theories that predict the effects of practice. (p. 1, 3)

## **The Relevance of Theory to Good Practice**

If practitioners shun theory then they must rely on experience as a guide to action. In deciding on their response to a problem they draw on a range of options suggested by previous experience with that type of issue. However, “it is wishful thinking to assume that experience alone will teach leaders everything they need to know” (Copland et al, 2002, p. 75).

Teachers sometimes explain their decisions as just “common sense.” However, such apparently pragmatic decisions are often based on implicit theories. When a teacher or a manager takes a decision it reflects in part that person’s view of the organization. Such views or preconceptions are coloured by experience and by the attitudes engendered by that experience. These attitudes take on the character of frames of reference or theories, which inevitably influence the decision-making process.

Theory serves to provide a rationale for decision-making. Managerial activity is enhanced by an explicit awareness of the theoretical framework underpinning practice in educational institutions. There are three main arguments to support the view that managers have much to learn from an appreciation of theory, providing that it is grounded firmly (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in the realities of practice:

1. Reliance on facts as the sole guide to action is unsatisfactory because all evidence requires interpretation. Theory provides “mental models” (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 75) to help in understanding the nature and effects of practice.
2. Dependence on personal experience in interpreting facts and making decisions is narrow because it discards the knowledge of others. Familiarity with the arguments and insights of theorists enables the practitioner to deploy a wide range of experience and understanding in resolving the problems of today. An understanding of theory also helps reduce the likelihood of mistakes occurring while experience is being acquired.
3. Experience may be particularly unhelpful as the sole guide to action when the practitioner begins to operate in a different context. Organizational variables may mean that practice in one school or college has little relevance in the new environment. A broader awareness of theory and practice may be valuable as the manager attempts to interpret behaviour in the fresh situation.

Of course, theory is useful only so long as it has relevance to practice in education. Hoyle (1986) distinguishes between theory-for-understanding and theory-for-practice. While both are potentially valuable, the latter is more significant for managers in education. The relevance of theory should be judged by the extent to which it informs managerial action and contributes to the resolution of practical problems in schools and colleges.

## The Nature of Theory

There is no single all-embracing theory of educational management. In part this reflects the astonishing diversity of educational institutions, ranging from small rural elementary schools to very large universities and colleges. It relates also to the varied nature of the problems encountered in schools and colleges, which require different approaches and solutions. Above all, it reflects the multifaceted nature of theory in education and the social sciences: “Students of educational management who turn to organisational theory for guidance in their attempt to understand and manage educational institutions will not find a single, universally applicable theory but a multiplicity of theoretical approaches each jealously guarded by a particular epistemic community” (Ribbins, 1985, p. 223).

The existence of several different perspectives creates what Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 11) describe as “conceptual pluralism: a jangling discord of multiple voices.” Each theory has something to offer in explaining behaviour and events in educational institutions. The perspectives favoured by managers, explicitly or implicitly, inevitably influence or determine decision-making.

Griffiths (1997) provides strong arguments to underpin his advocacy of “theoretical pluralism.” “The basic idea is that all problems cannot be studied fruitfully using a single theory. Some problems are large and complex and no single theory is capable of encompassing them, while others, although seemingly simple and straightforward, can be better understood through the use of multiple theories . . . particular theories are appropriate to certain problems, but not others” (Griffiths, 1997, p. 372).

## The Characteristics of Theory

Most theories of educational leadership and management possess three major characteristics:

1. Theories tend to be normative in that they reflect beliefs about the nature of educational institutions and the behaviour of individuals within them. Simkins (1999) stresses the importance of distinguishing between descriptive and normative uses of theory. “This is a distinction which is often not clearly made. The former are those which attempt to describe the nature of organisations and how they work and, sometimes, to explain why they are as they are. The latter, in contrast, attempt to prescribe how organisations should or might be managed to achieve particular outcomes more effectively” (p. 270).

2.Theories tend to be selective or partial in that they emphasize certain aspects of the institution at the expense of other elements. The espousal of one theoretical model leads to the neglect of other approaches. Schools and colleges are arguably too complex to be capable of analysis through a single dimension.

3.Theories of educational management are often based on, or supported by, observation of practice in educational institutions. English (2002, p. 1) says that observation may be used in two ways. First, observation may be followed by the development of concepts, which then become theoretical frames. Such perspectives based on data from systematic observation are sometimes called “grounded theory.” Because such approaches are derived from empirical inquiry in schools and colleges, they are more likely to be perceived as relevant by practitioners. Secondly, researchers may use a specific theoretical frame to select concepts to be tested through observation. The research is then used to “prove” or “verify” the efficacy of the theory (English, 2002, p. 1).

### Models of Educational Management: An Introduction

Several writers have chosen to present theories in distinct groups or bundles but they differ in the models chosen, the emphasis given to particular approaches and the terminology used to describe them. Two of the best known frameworks are those by Bolman and Deal (1997) and Morgan (1997).

In this chapter, the main theories are classified into six major models of educational management (Bush, 2003). All these models are given significant attention in the literature of educational management and have been subject to a degree of empirical verification. Table 1 shows the six models and links them to parallel leadership models. The links between management and leadership models are given extended treatment in Bush (2003).

Management model	Leadership model
Formal	Managerial
Collegial	Participative
Political	Transactional
Subjective	Post-modern
Ambiguity	Contingency
Cultural	Moral

*Figure 1: Typology of management and leadership models (adapted from Bush and Glover 2002)*

## Formal Models

Formal model is an umbrella term used to embrace a number of similar but not identical approaches. The title “formal” is used because these theories emphasize the official and structural elements of organizations:

Formal models assume that organisations are hierarchical systems in which managers use rational means to pursue agreed goals. Heads possess authority legitimised by their formal positions within the organisation and are accountable to sponsoring bodies for the activities of their organisation (Bush, 2003, p. 37).

This model has seven major features:

- 1.They tend to treat organizations as systems. A system comprises elements that have clear organisational links with each other. Within schools, for example, departments and other sub-units are systemically related to each other and to the institution itself.
- 2.Formal models give prominence to the official structure of the organization. Formal structures are often represented by organization charts, which show the authorized pattern of relationships between members of the institution.
- 3.In formal models the official structures of the organization tend to be hierarchical. Teachers are

responsible to department chairs who, in turn, are answerable to principals for the activities of their departments. The hierarchy thus represents a means of control for leaders over their staff.

4. All formal approaches typify schools as goal-seeking organizations. The institution is thought to have official purposes, which are accepted and pursued by members of the organization. Increasingly, goals are set within a broader vision of a preferred future for the school (Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 1989).

5. Formal models assume that managerial decisions are made through a rational process. Typically, all the options are considered and evaluated in terms of the goals of the organization. The most suitable alternative is then selected to enable those objectives to be pursued.

6. Formal approaches present the authority of leaders as a product of their official positions within the organization. Principals' power is positional and is sustained only while they continue to hold their posts.

1. In formal models there is an emphasis on the accountability of the organization to its sponsoring body. Most schools remain responsible to the school district. In many centralised systems, school principals are accountable to national or state governments. In decentralised systems, principals are answerable to their governing boards.

(Adapted from Bush, 2003, p. 37-38).

These seven basic features are present to a greater or lesser degree in each of the individual theories, which together comprise the formal models. These are:

- structural models;
- systems models;
- bureaucratic models;
- rational models;
- hierarchical models.

A full discussion of each of these sub-models appears in Bush (2003).

## **Managerial Leadership**

The type of leadership most closely associated with formal models is “managerial.”

Managerial leadership assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviours and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the

organisation will be facilitated. Most approaches to managerial leadership also assume that the behaviour of organisational members is largely rational. Authority and influence are allocated to formal positions in proportion to the status of those positions in the organisational hierarchy. (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 14)

Dressler's (2001) review of leadership in Charter schools in the United States shows the significance of managerial leadership: "Traditionally, the principal's role has been clearly focused on management responsibilities" (p. 175). Managerial leadership is focused on managing existing activities successfully rather than visioning a better future for the school.

## **The Limitations of Formal Models**

The various formal models pervade much of the literature on educational management.

They are normative approaches in that they present ideas about how people in organizations ought to behave. Levacic et al (1999) argue that these assumptions underpin the educational reforms of the 1990s, notably in England:

A major development in educational management in the last decade has been much greater emphasis on defining effective leadership by individuals in management posts in terms of the effectiveness of their organisation, which is increasingly judged in relation to measurable outcomes for students . . . This is argued to require a rational-technicist approach to the structuring of decision-making. (p. 15)

There are five specific weaknesses associated with formal models:

1. It may be unrealistic to characterize schools and colleges as goal-oriented organizations. It is often difficult to ascertain the goals of educational institutions. Formal objectives may have little operational relevance because they are often vague and general, because there may be many different goals competing for resources, and because goals may emanate from individuals and groups as well as from the leaders of the organisation.

Even where the purposes of schools and colleges have been clarified, there are further problems in judging whether objectives have been achieved. Policy-makers and practitioners often rely on examination performance to assess schools but this is only one dimension of the educational process.

2. The portrayal of decision-making as a rational process is fraught with difficulties. The belief that managerial action is preceded by a process of evaluation of alternatives and a considered choice of the most appropriate option is rarely substantiated. Much human behaviour is irrational and this inevitably influences the nature of decision-making in education. Weick (1976, p. 1), for example, asserts that rational practice is the exception rather than the norm.

3. Formal models focus on the organization as an entity and ignore or underestimate the

contribution of individuals. They assume that people occupy preordained positions in the structure and that their behaviour reflects their organizational positions rather than their individual qualities and experience. Greenfield (1973) has been particularly critical of this view (see the discussion of subjective models, below). Samier (2002, p. 40) adopts a similar approach, expressing concern “about the role technical rationality plays in crippling the personality of the bureaucrat, reducing him [sic] to a cog in a machine.”

4. A central assumption of formal models is that power resides at the apex of the pyramid. Principals possess authority by virtue of their positions as the appointed leaders of their institutions. This focus on official authority leads to a view of institutional management which is essentially top down. Policy is laid down by senior managers and implemented by staff lower down the hierarchy. Their acceptance of managerial decisions is regarded as unproblematic.

Organizations with large numbers of professional staff tend to exhibit signs of tension between the conflicting demands of professionalism and the hierarchy. Formal models assume that leaders, because they are appointed on merit, have the competence to issue appropriate instructions to subordinates. Professional organizations have a different ethos with expertise distributed widely within the institution. This may come into conflict with professional authority.

5. Formal approaches are based on the implicit assumption that organizations are relatively stable. Individuals may come and go but they slot into predetermined positions in a static structure. “Organisations operating in simpler and more stable environments are likely to employ less complex and more centralised structures, with authority, rules and policies as the primary vehicles for co-ordinating the work” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 77).

Assumptions of stability are unrealistic in contemporary schools. March and Olsen (1976, p.21) are right to claim that “Individuals find themselves in a more complex, less stable and less understood world than that described by standard theories of organisational choice.”

### **Are Formal Models Still Valid?**

These criticisms of formal models suggest that they have serious limitations. The dominance of the hierarchy is compromised by the expertise possessed by professional staff. The supposed rationality of the decision-making process requires modification to allow for the pace and complexity of change. The concept of organizational goals is challenged by those who point to the existence of multiple objectives in education and the possible conflict between goals held at individual, departmental and institutional levels. “Rationalistic-bureaucratic notions . . . have largely proven to be sterile and to have little application to administrative practice in the “real world” (Owens & Shakeshaft, 1992, p. 4)

Despite these limitations, it would be inappropriate to dismiss formal approaches as irrelevant to schools and colleges. The other models discussed in this chapter were all developed as a reaction to the perceived weaknesses of formal theories. However, these alternative perspectives have not



succeeded in dislodging the formal models, which remain valid as partial descriptions of organization and management in education. Owens and Shakeshaft (1992) refer to a reduction of confidence in bureaucratic models, and a “paradigm shift” to a more sophisticated analysis, but formal models still have much to contribute to our understanding of schools as organisations.

## Collegial Models

### Central Features of Collegial Models

Collegial models include all those theories that emphasize that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of the organization (Bush, 2003):

Collegial models assume that organizations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power is shared among some or all members of the organization who are thought to have a shared understanding about the aims of the institution. (p. 64)

Brundrett (1998) says that “collegiality can broadly be defined as teachers conferring and collaborating with other teachers” (p. 305). Little (1990) explains that “the reason to pursue the study and practice of collegiality is that, presumably, something is gained when teachers work together and something is lost when they do not” (p. 166).

Collegial models have the following major features:

1. They are strongly normative in orientation. “The advocacy of collegiality is made more on the basis of prescription than on research-based studies of school practice” (Webb & Vulliamy, 1996, p. 443).
2. Collegial models seem to be particularly appropriate for organizations such as schools and colleges that have significant numbers of professional staff. Teachers have an authority of expertise that contrasts with the positional authority associated with formal models. Teachers require a measure of autonomy in the classroom but also need to collaborate to ensure a coherent approach to teaching and learning (Brundrett, 1998, p. 307). Collegial models assume that professionals also have a right to share in the wider decision-making process. Shared decisions are likely to be better informed and are also much more likely to be implemented effectively.
3. Collegial models assume a common set of values held by members of the organization. These common values guide the managerial activities of the organization and are thought to lead to shared educational objectives. The common values of professionals form part of the justification for the optimistic assumption that it is always possible to reach agreement about goals and policies. Brundrett (1998, p. 308) goes further in referring to the importance of “shared vision” as a basis for collegial decision-making.
4. The size of decision-making groups is an important element in collegial management. They



have to be sufficiently small to enable everyone to be heard. This may mean that collegiality works better in elementary schools, or in sub-units, than at the institutional level in secondary schools. Meetings of the whole staff may operate collegially in small schools but may be suitable only for information exchange in larger institutions.

The collegial model deals with this problem of scale by building-in the assumption that teachers have formal representation within the various decision-making bodies. The democratic element of formal representation rests on the allegiance owed by participants to their constituencies (Bush, 2003, p. 67).

5. Collegial models assume that decisions are reached by consensus. The belief that there are common values and shared objectives leads to the view that it is both desirable and possible to resolve problems by agreement. The decision-making process may be elongated by the search for compromise but this is regarded as an acceptable price to pay to maintain the aura of shared values and beliefs. The case for consensual decision-making rests in part on the ethical dimension of collegiality. Imposing decisions on staff is considered morally repugnant, and inconsistent with the notion of consent.

(Bush, 2003, p. 65-67).

## Participative Leadership

Because policy is determined within a participative framework, the principal is expected to adopt participative leadership strategies. Heroic models of leadership are inappropriate when influence and power are widely distributed within the institution. “The collegial leader is at most a “first among equals” in an academic organisation supposedly run by professional experts . . . the collegial leader is not so much a star standing alone as the developer of consensus among the professionals who must share the burden of the decision.” (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 45)

While transformational leadership is consistent with the collegial model, in that it assumes that leaders and staff have shared values and common interests (Bush, 2003, p. 76), the leadership model most relevant to collegiality is “participative leadership,” which “assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group” (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 12). This is a normative model, underpinned by three criteria (Leithwood et al, 1999):

- Participation will increase school effectiveness.
- Participation is justified by democratic principles.
- Leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder. (p. 12)

Sergiovanni (1984) claims that a participative approach succeeds in “bonding” staff together and in easing the pressures on school principals. “The burdens of leadership will be less if leadership functions and roles are shared and if the concept of leadership density were to emerge as a viable

replacement for principal leadership” (p. 13).

## Limitations of Collegial Models

Collegial models have been popular in the academic and official literature on educational management since the 1980s. However, their critics point to a number of limitations:

1. Collegial models are so strongly normative that they tend to obscure rather than portray reality. Precepts about the most appropriate ways of managing educational institutions mingle with descriptions of behaviour. While collegiality is increasingly advocated, the evidence of its presence in schools and colleges tends to be sketchy and incomplete. “The collegial literature often confuses descriptive and normative enterprises . . . The collegial idea of round table decision making does not accurately reflect the actual processes in most institutions” (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 33).
2. Collegial approaches to decision-making tend to be slow and cumbersome. When policy proposals require the approval of a series of committees, the process is often tortuous and time consuming. Participants may have to endure many lengthy meetings before issues are resolved. This requires patience and a considerable investment of time. Several English primary school heads interviewed by Webb and Vulliamy (1996) refer to the time-consuming nature of meetings where “the discussion phase seemed to go on and on” (p. 445) and “I felt we weren’t getting anywhere” (p. 446).
3. A fundamental assumption of democratic models is that decisions are reached by consensus. It is believed that the outcome of debate should be agreement based on the shared values of participants. In practice, though, teachers have their own views and may also represent constituencies within the school or college. Inevitably these sectional interests have a significant influence on committees’ processes. The participatory framework may become the focal point for disagreement between factions.
4. Collegial models have to be evaluated in relation to the special features of educational institutions. The participative aspects of decision-making exist alongside the structural and bureaucratic components of schools and colleges. Often there is tension between these rather different modes of management. The participative element rests on the authority of expertise possessed by professional staff but this rarely trumps the positional authority of official leaders or the formal power of external bodies. Brundrett (1998) claims that “collegiality is inevitably the handmaiden of an ever increasingly centralised bureaucracy” (p. 313)
5. Collegial approaches to school and college decision-making may be difficult to sustain because principals remain accountable to various external groups. They may experience considerable difficulty in defending policies that have emerged from a collegial process but do not enjoy their personal support. Brundrett (1998) is right to argue that “heads need to be genuinely brave to lend

power to a democratic forum which may make decisions with which the headteacher may not themselves agree” (p. 310).

6. The effectiveness of a collegial system depends in part on the attitudes of staff. If they actively support participation then it may succeed. If they display apathy or hostility, it seems certain to fail. Wallace (1989) argues that teachers may not welcome collegiality because they are disinclined to accept any authority intermediate between themselves and the principal.

7. Collegial processes in schools depend even more on the attitudes of principals than on the support of teachers. Participative machinery can be established only with the support of the principal, who has the legal authority to manage the school. Hoyle (1986) concludes that its dependence on the principal's support limits the validity of the collegiality model.

### **Contrived Collegiality**

Hargreaves (1994) makes a more fundamental criticism of collegiality, arguing that it is being espoused or “contrived” by official groups in order to secure the implementation of national or state policy. Contrived collegiality has the following features (Hargreaves, 1994):

- Administratively regulated rather than spontaneous.
- Compulsory rather than discretionary.
- Geared to the implementation of the mandates of government or the principal.
- Fixed in time and place.
- Designed to have predictable outcomes. (p. 195-196)

Webb and Vulliamy (1996) argue that collegial frameworks may be used for essentially political activity, the focus of the next section of this chapter (Webb & Vulliamy, 1996):

The current climate . . . encourages headteachers to be powerful and, if necessary, manipulative leaders in order to ensure that policies and practices agreed upon are ones that they can wholeheartedly support and defend. (p. 448)

### **Is Collegiality an Unattainable Ideal?**

Collegial models contribute several important concepts to the theory of educational management. Participative approaches are a necessary antidote to the rigid hierarchical assumptions of the formal models. However, collegial perspectives underestimate the official authority of the principal and present bland assumptions of consensus, which often cannot be substantiated. Little (1990) following substantial research in the United States, concludes that collegiality “turns out to be rare” (p.187). Collegiality is an elusive ideal but a measure of participation is essential if

schools are to be harmonious and creative organisations.

## Political Models

### Central Features of Political Models

Political models embrace those theories that characterize decision-making as a bargaining process. Analysis focuses on the distribution of power and influence in organizations and on the bargaining and negotiation between interest groups. Conflict is regarded as endemic within organizations and management is directed towards the regulation of political behaviour (Bush, 2003):

Political models assume that in organizations policy and decisions emerge through a process of negotiation and bargaining. Interest groups develop and form alliances in pursuit of particular policy objectives. Conflict is viewed as a natural phenomenon and power accrues to dominant coalitions rather than being the preserve of formal leaders. (p. 89)

Baldrige's (1971) research in universities in the U.S. led him to conclude that the political model, rather than the formal or collegial perspectives, best captured the realities of life in higher education.

Political models have the following major features:

- 1.They tend to focus on group activity rather than the institution as a whole. Ball (1987) refers to "baronial politics" (p. 221) and discusses the nature of conflict between the leaders of subgroups. He adds that conflict between "barons" is primarily about resources and power.
- 2.Political models are concerned with interests and interest groups. Individuals are thought to have a variety of interests that they pursue within the organization. In talking about "interests," we are talking about pre-dispositions embracing goals, values, desires, expectations, and other orientations and inclinations that lead a person to act in one way rather than another (Morgan, 1997, p. 61).
- 3.Political models stress the prevalence of conflict in organizations. Interest groups pursue their independent objectives, which may contrast sharply with the aims of other subunits within the institution and lead to conflict between them. "Conflict will always be present in organisations . . . its source rests in some perceived or real divergence of interests" (Morgan, 1997, p. 167).
- 4.Political models assume that the goals of organizations are unstable, ambiguous and contested. Individuals, interest groups and coalitions have their own purposes and act towards their achievement. Goals may be disputed and then become a significant element in the conflict between groups (Bolman & Deal, 1991):

The political frame . . . insists that organisational goals are set through negotiations among the

members of coalitions. Different individuals and groups have different objectives and resources, and each attempt to bargain with other members or coalitions to influence goals and decision-making process. (p. 190)

5. As noted above, decisions within political arenas emerge after a complex process of bargaining and negotiation. “Organisational goals and decisions emerge from ongoing processes of bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among members of different coalitions” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 186).

6. The concept of power is central to all political theories. The outcomes of the complex decision-making process are likely to be determined according to the relative power of the individuals and interest groups involved in the debate. “Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when and how . . . the sources of power are rich and varied” (Morgan, 1997, p. 170-171).

### Sources of Power in Education

Power may be regarded as the ability to determine the behaviour of others or to decide the outcome of conflict. Where there is disagreement it is likely to be resolved according to the relative resources of power available to the participants. There are many sources of power but in broad terms a distinction can be made between authority and influence. Authority is legitimate power, which is vested in leaders within formal organizations. Influence depends on personal characteristics and expertise.

There are six significant forms of power relevant to schools and colleges:

1. **Positional power.** A major source of power in any organization is that accruing to individuals who hold an official position in the institution. Handy (1993, p. 128) says that positional power is “legal” or “legitimate” power. In schools, the principal is regarded as the legitimate leader and possesses legal authority.

2. **Authority of expertise.** In professional organizations there is a significant reservoir of power available to those who possess appropriate expertise. Teachers, for example, have specialist knowledge of aspects of the curriculum. “The expert . . . often carries an aura of authority and power that can add considerable weight to a decision that rests in the balance” (Morgan, 1997, p. 181).

3. **Personal power.** Individuals who are charismatic or possess verbal skills or certain other characteristics may be able to exercise personal power. These personal skills are independent of the power accruing to individuals by virtue of their position in the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

4. **Control of rewards.** Power is likely to be possessed to a significant degree by individuals who have control of rewards. In education, rewards may include promotion, good references, and

allocation to favoured classes or groups. Individuals who control or influence the allocation of these benefits may be able to determine the behaviour of teachers who seek one or more of the rewards.

5. Coercive power. The mirror image of the control of rewards may be coercive power. This implies the ability to enforce compliance, backed by the threat of sanctions. “Coercive power rests on the ability to constrain, to block, to interfere, or to punish” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 196).

1. Control of resources. Control of the distribution of resources may be an important source of power in educational institutions, particularly in self-managing schools. Decisions about the allocation of resources are likely to be among the most significant aspects of the policy process in such organisations. Control of these resources may give power over those people who wish to acquire them.

Consideration of all these sources of power leads to the conclusion that principals possess substantial resources of authority and influence. However, they do not have absolute power. Other leaders and teachers also have power, arising principally from their personal qualities and expertise. These other sources of power may act as a counter-balance to the principal’s positional authority and control of rewards.

## Transactional Leadership

The leadership model most closely aligned with political models is that of transactional leadership. “Transactional leadership is leadership in which relationships with teachers are based upon an exchange for some valued resource. To the teacher, interaction between administrators and teachers is usually episodic, short-lived and limited to the exchange transaction” (Miller & Miller, 2001, p. 182).

This exchange process is an established political strategy. As we noted earlier, principals hold power in the form of key rewards such as promotion and references. However, they require the co-operation of staff to secure the effective management of the school. An exchange may secure benefits for both parties to the arrangement. The major limitation of such a process is that it does not engage staff beyond the immediate gains arising from the transaction. Transactional leadership does not produce long-term commitment to the values and vision promoted by school leaders.

### The Limitations of Political Models

Political models are primarily descriptive and analytical. The focus on interests, conflict between groups, and power provides a valid and persuasive interpretation of the decision-making process in schools. However, these theories do have four major limitations:

1. Political models are immersed so strongly in the language of power, conflict and manipulation that they neglect other standard aspects of organizations. There is little recognition that most

organizations operate for much of the time according to routine bureaucratic procedures. The focus is heavily on policy formulation while the implementation of policy receives little attention. The outcomes of bargaining and negotiation are endorsed, or may falter, within the formal authority structure of the school or college.

2. Political models stress the influence of interest groups on decision-making. The assumption is that organizations are fragmented into groups, which pursue their own independent goals. This aspect of political models may be inappropriate for elementary schools, which may not have the apparatus for political activity. The institutional level may be the center of attention for staff in these schools, invalidating the political model's emphasis on interest group fragmentation.

3. In political models there is too much emphasis on conflict and a neglect of the possibility of professional collaboration leading to agreed outcomes. The assumption that teachers are engaged in a calculated pursuit of their own interests underestimates the capacity of teachers to work in harmony with colleagues for the benefit of their pupils and students.

4. Political models are regarded primarily as descriptive or explanatory theories. Their advocates claim that these approaches are realistic portrayals of the decision-making process in schools and colleges. There is no suggestion that teachers should pursue their own self-interest, simply an assessment, based on observation, that their behaviour is consistent with a political perspective. Nevertheless, the less attractive aspects of political models may make them unacceptable to many educationists for ethical reasons.

## **Are Political Models Valid?**

Political models provide rich descriptions and persuasive analysis of events and behaviour in schools and colleges. The explicit recognition of interests as prime motivators for action is valid, as are the concepts of conflict and power. For many teachers and school leaders, political models fit their experience of day-to-day reality in schools. Lindle (1999), a school administrator in the United States, argues that it is a pervasive feature of schools.

## **Subjective Models**

### **Central Features of Subjective Models**

Subjective models focus on individuals within organizations rather than the total institution or its subunits. These perspectives suggest that each person has a subjective and selective perception of the organization. Events and situations have different meanings for the various participants in institutions. Organizations are portrayed as complex units, which reflect the numerous meanings and perceptions of all the people within them. Organizations are social constructions in the sense that they emerge from the interaction of their participants. They are manifestations of the values and beliefs of individuals rather than the concrete realities presented in formal models (Bush, 2003):



Subjective models assume that organizations are the creations of the people within them. Participants are thought to interpret situations in different ways and these individual perceptions are derived from their background and values. Organizations have different meanings for each of their members and exist only in the experience of those members. (p. 113)

Subjective models became prominent in educational management as a result of the work of Thomas Greenfield in the 1970s and 1980s. Greenfield was concerned about several aspects of systems theory, which he regarded as the dominant model of educational organizations. He argues that systems theory is “bad theory” and criticizes its focus on the institution as a concrete reality (Greenfield, 1973):

Most theories of organisation grossly simplify the nature of the reality with which they deal. The drive to see the organisation as a single kind of entity with a life of its own apart from the perceptions and beliefs of those involved in it blinds us to its complexity and the variety of organisations people create around themselves. (p. 571)

Subjective models have the following major features:

1. They focus on the beliefs and perceptions of individual members of organizations rather than the institutional level or interest groups. The focus on individuals rather than the organization is a fundamental difference between subjective and formal models, and creates what Hodgkinson (1993) regards as an unbridgeable divide. “A fact can never entail a value, and an individual can never become a collective” (p. xii).
2. Subjective models are concerned with the meanings placed on events by people within organizations. The focus is on the individual interpretation of behaviour rather than the situations and actions themselves. “Events and meanings are loosely coupled: the same events can have very different meanings for different people because of differences in the schema that they use to interpret their experience” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 244).
3. The different meanings placed on situations by the various participants are products of their values, background and experience. So the interpretation of events depends on the beliefs held by each member of the organization. Greenfield (1979) asserts that formal theories make the mistake of treating the meanings of leaders as if they were the objective realities of the organization. “Too frequently in the past, organisation and administrative theory has . . . taken sides in the ideological battles of social process and presented as ‘theory’” (p. 103), the views of a dominating set of values, the views of rulers, elites, and their administrators.
4. Subjective models treat structure as a product of human interaction rather than something that is fixed or predetermined. The organization charts, which are characteristic of formal models, are regarded as fictions in that they cannot predict the behaviour of individuals. Subjective approaches move the emphasis away from structure towards a consideration of behaviour and process. Individual behaviour is thought to reflect the personal qualities and aspirations of the participants rather than the formal roles they occupy. “Organisations exist to serve human



needs, rather than the reverse” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 121).

5. Subjective approaches emphasize the significance of individual purposes and deny the existence of organizational goals. Greenfield (1973) asks “What is an organisation that it can have such a thing as a goal?” (p. 553). The view that organizations are simply the product of the interaction of their members leads naturally to the assumption that objectives are individual, not organizational (Bush, 2003, p. 114-118).

## **Subjective Models and Qualitative Research**

The theoretical dialectic between formal and subjective models is reflected in the debate about positivism and interpretivism in educational research. Subjective models relate to a mode of research that is predominantly interpretive or qualitative. This approach to enquiry is based on the subjective experience of individuals. The main aim is to seek understanding of the ways in which individuals create, modify and interpret the social world which they inhabit.

The main features of interpretive, or qualitative, research echo those of the subjective models:

1. They focus on the perceptions of individuals rather than the whole organisation. The subject’s individual perspective is central to qualitative research (Morrison, 2002, p. 19).
2. Interpretive research is concerned with the meanings, or interpretations, placed on events by participants. “All human life is experienced and constructed from a subjective perspective” (Morrison, 2002, p. 19).
3. Research findings are interpreted using “grounded” theory. “Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be “grounded” on data generated by the research act. Theory should not proceed research but follow it” (Cohen et al, 2000, p. 23).

## **Postmodern Leadership**

Subjective theorists prefer to stress the personal qualities of individuals rather than their official positions in the organization. The subjective view is that leadership is a product of personal qualities and skills and not simply an automatic outcome of official authority.

The notion of post-modern leadership aligns closely with the principles of subjective models. Keough and Tobin (2001, p. 2) say that “current postmodern culture celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths as defined by experience and revels in the loss of absolute authority.” They identify several key features of postmodernism (Keough & Tobin, 2001):

- Language does not reflect reality.
- Reality does not exist; there are multiple realities.

- Any situation is open to multiple interpretations.
- Situations must be understood at local level with particular attention to diversity.

(p. 11-13)

Sackney and Mitchell (2001) stress the centrality of individual interpretation of events while also criticising visionary leadership. “Leaders must pay attention to the cultural and symbolic structure of meaning construed by individuals and groups . . . postmodern theories of leadership take the focus off vision and place it squarely on voice” (p. 13-14). Instead of a compelling vision articulated by leaders, there are multiple voices, and diverse cultural meanings.

## The Limitations of Subjective Models

Subjective models are prescriptive approaches in that they reflect beliefs about the nature of organizations. They can be regarded as “anti-theories” in that they emerged as a reaction to the perceived limitations of the formal models. Although subjective models introduce several important concepts into the theory of educational management, they have four significant weaknesses, which serve to limit their validity:

1. Subjective models are strongly normative in that they reflect the attitudes and beliefs of their supporters. Willower (1980) goes further to describe them as “ideological.” “[Phenomenological] perspectives feature major ideological components and their partisans tend to be true believers when promulgating their positions rather than offering them for critical examination and test” (p. 7).

Subjective models comprise a series of principles rather than a coherent body of theory: “Greenfield sets out to destroy the central principles of conventional theory but consistently rejects the idea of proposing a precisely formulated alternative” (Hughes & Bush, 1991, p. 241).

2. Subjective models seem to assume the existence of an organization within which individual behaviour and interpretation occur but there is no clear indication of the nature of the organization. Organizations are perceived to be nothing more than a product of the meanings of their participants. In emphasizing the interpretations of individuals, subjective theorists neglect the institutions within which individuals behave, interact and derive meanings.

3. Subjective theorists imply that meanings are so individual that there may be as many interpretations as people. In practice, though, these meanings tend to cluster into patterns, which do enable participants and observers to make valid generalizations about organizations. “By focussing exclusively on the ‘individual’ as a theoretical . . . entity, [Greenfield] precludes analyses of collective enterprises. Social phenomena cannot be reduced solely to ‘the individual’” (Ryan, 1988, p. 69-70).

4. Subjective models they provide few guidelines for managerial action. Leaders are expected to acknowledge the individual meanings placed on events by members of organizations. This stance is much less secure than the precepts of the formal model.

## **The Importance of the Individual**

The subjective perspective offers some valuable insights, which act as a corrective to the more rigid features of formal models. The focus on individual interpretations of events is a useful antidote to the uniformity of systems and structural theories. Similarly, the emphasis on individual aims, rather than organizational objectives, is an important contribution to our understanding of schools and colleges.

Subjective models have close links with the emerging, but still weakly defined, notion of post-modern leadership. Leaders need to attend to the multiple voices in their organisations and to develop a “power to,” not a “power over,” model of leadership. However, as Sackney and Mitchell (2001) note, “we do not see how postmodern leadership . . . can be undertaken without the active engagement of the school principal” (p. 19). In other words, the subjective approach works only if leaders wish it to work, a fragile basis for any approach to educational leadership.

Greenfield’s work has broadened our understanding of educational institutions and exposed the weaknesses of the formal models. However, it is evident that subjective models have supplemented, rather than supplanted, the formal theories Greenfield set out to attack.

### Ambiguity Models

## **Central Features of Ambiguity Models**

Ambiguity models stress uncertainty and unpredictability in organizations. These theories assume that organizational objectives are problematic and that institutions experience difficulty in ordering their priorities. Sub-units are portrayed as relatively autonomous groups, which are connected only loosely with one another and with the institution itself. Decision-making occurs within formal and informal settings where participation is fluid. Ambiguity is a prevalent feature of complex organizations such as schools and is likely to be particularly acute during periods of rapid change (Bush, 2003):

Ambiguity models assume that turbulence and unpredictability are dominant features of organizations. There is no clarity over the objectives of institutions and their processes are not properly understood. Participation in policy making is fluid as members opt in or out of decision opportunities. (p. 134)

Ambiguity models are associated with a group of theorists, mostly from the United States, who developed their ideas in the 1970s. They were dissatisfied with the formal models, which they regarded as inadequate for many organizations, particularly during phases of instability. The most

celebrated of the ambiguity perspectives is the “garbage can” model developed by Cohen and March (1986). March (1982) points to the jumbled reality in certain kinds of organization:

Theories of choice underestimate the confusion and complexity surrounding actual decision making. Many things are happening at once; technologies are changing and poorly understood; alliances, preferences, and perceptions are changing; problems, solutions, opportunities, ideas, people, and outcomes are mixed together in a way that makes their interpretation uncertain and their connections unclear. (p. 36)

The data supporting ambiguity models have been drawn largely from educational settings, leading March and Olsen (1976) to assert that “ambiguity is a major feature of decision making in most public and educational organizations” (p. 12).

Ambiguity models have the following major features:

1. There is a lack of clarity about the goals of the organization. Many institutions are thought to have inconsistent and opaque objectives. It may be argued that aims become clear only through the behaviour of members of the organization (Cohen & March, 1986):

The organization appears to operate on a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences. It can be described better as a loose collection of changing ideas than as a coherent structure. It discovers preferences through action more often than it acts on the basis of preferences. (p. 3)

Educational institutions are regarded as typical in having no clearly defined objectives. Because teachers work independently for much of their time, they may experience little difficulty in pursuing their own interests. As a result schools and colleges are thought to have no coherent pattern of aims.

2. Ambiguity models assume that organizations have a problematic technology in that their processes are not properly understood. In education it is not clear how students acquire knowledge and skills so the processes of teaching are clouded with doubt and uncertainty. Bell (1980) claims that ambiguity infuses the central functions of schools.

3. Ambiguity theorists argue that organizations are characterized by fragmentation. Schools are divided into groups which have internal coherence based on common values and goals. Links between the groups are more tenuous and unpredictable. Weick (1976) uses the term “loose coupling” to describe relationships between sub-units. “Loose coupling . . . carries connotations of impermanence, dissolvability, and tacitness all of which are potentially crucial properties of the ‘glue’” (p. 3) that holds organizations together.

Client-serving bodies, such as schools, fit the loose coupling metaphor much better than, say, car assembly plants where operations are regimented and predictable. The degree of integration required in education is markedly less than in many other settings, allowing fragmentation to develop and persist.

4. Within ambiguity models organizational structure is regarded as problematic. Committees and other formal bodies have rights and responsibilities, which overlap with each other and with the authority assigned to individual managers. The effective power of each element within the structure varies with the issue and according to the level of participation of committee members.

5. Ambiguity models tend to be particularly appropriate for professional client-serving organizations. The requirement that professionals make individual judgements, rather than acting in accordance with managerial prescriptions, leads to the view that the larger schools and colleges operate in a climate of ambiguity.

6. Ambiguity theorists emphasize that there is fluid participation in the management of organizations. "The participants in the organization vary among themselves in the amount of time and effort they devote to the organization; individual participants vary from one time to another. As a result standard theories of power and choice seem to be inadequate." (Cohen & March, 1986, p. 3).

7. A further source of ambiguity is provided by the signals emanating from the organization's environment. In an era of rapid change, schools may experience difficulties in interpreting the various messages being transmitted from the environment and in dealing with conflicting signals. The uncertainty arising from the external context adds to the ambiguity of the decision-making process within the institution.

8. Ambiguity theorists emphasize the prevalence of unplanned decisions. The lack of agreed goals means that decisions have no clear focus. Problems, solutions and participants interact and choices somehow emerge from the confusion.

The rational model is undermined by ambiguity, since it is so heavily dependent on the availability of information about relationships between inputs and outputs – between means and ends. If ambiguity prevails, then it is not possible for organizations to have clear aims and objectives. (Levacic, 1995, p. 82)

9. Ambiguity models stress the advantages of decentralization. Given the complexity and unpredictability of organizations, it is thought that many decisions should be devolved to subunits and individuals. Weick (1976) argues that devolution enables organizations to survive while particular subunits are threatened (Bush, 2003):

If there is a breakdown in one portion of a loosely coupled system then this breakdown is sealed off and does not affect other portions of the organization . . . A loosely coupled system can isolate its trouble spots and prevent the trouble from spreading. (p. 135-141)

The major contribution of the ambiguity model is that it uncouples problems and choices. The notion of decision-making as a rational process for finding solutions to problems is supplanted by an uneasy mix of problems, solutions and participants from which decisions may eventually emerge. "In the garbage can model, there is no clear distinction between means and ends, no

articulation of organizational goals, no evaluation of alternatives in relation to organizational goals and no selection of the best means” (Levacic, 1995, p. 82).

## Contingent Leadership

In a climate of ambiguity, traditional notions of leadership require modification. The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a “one size fits all” stance. Yukl (2002) claims that “the managerial job is too complex and unpredictable to rely on a set of standardised responses to events. Effective leaders are continuously reading the situation and evaluating how to adapt their behaviour to it” (p. 234). Contingent leadership depends on managers “mastering a large repertoire of leadership practices” (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p. 15).

## The Limitations of Ambiguity Models

Ambiguity models add some important dimensions to the theory of educational management. The concepts of problematic goals, unclear technology and fluid participation are significant contributions to organizational analysis. Most schools and colleges possess these features to a greater or lesser extent, so ambiguity models should be regarded primarily as analytical or descriptive approaches rather than normative theories. The ambiguity model appears to be increasingly plausible but it does have four significant weaknesses:

1. It is difficult to reconcile ambiguity perspectives with the customary structures and processes of schools and colleges. Participants may move in and out of decision-making situations but the policy framework remains intact and has a continuing influence on the outcome of discussions. Specific goals may be unclear but teachers usually understand and accept the broad aims of education.

2. Ambiguity models exaggerate the degree of uncertainty in educational institutions. Schools and colleges have a number of predictable features, which serve to clarify the responsibilities of their members. Students and staff are expected to behave in accordance with standard rules and procedures. The timetable regulates the location and movement of all participants. There are usually clear plans to guide the classroom activities of teachers and pupils. Staff are aware of the accountability patterns, with teachers responsible ultimately to principals who, in turn, are answerable to local or State government.

Educational institutions are rather more stable and predictable than the ambiguity perspective suggests: “The term organised anarchy may seem overly colourful, suggesting more confusion, disarray, and conflict than is really present” (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 28).

3. Ambiguity models are less appropriate for stable organizations or for any institutions during periods of stability. The degree of predictability in schools depends on the nature of relationships

with the external environment. Where institutions are able to maintain relatively impervious boundaries, they can exert strong control over their own processes. Popular schools, for example, may be able to insulate their activities from external pressures.

4. Ambiguity models offer little practical guidance to leaders in educational institutions. While formal models emphasize the head's leading role in policy-making and collegial models stress the importance of team-work, ambiguity models can offer nothing more tangible than contingent leadership.

### Ambiguity or Rationality?

Ambiguity models make a valuable contribution to the theory of educational management. The emphasis on the unpredictability of organizations is a significant counter to the view that problems can be solved through a rational process. The notion of leaders making a considered choice from a range of alternatives depends crucially on their ability to predict the consequences of a particular action. The edifice of the formal models is shaken by the recognition that conditions in schools may be too uncertain to allow an informed choice among alternatives.

In practice, however, educational institutions operate with a mix of rational and anarchic processes. The more unpredictable the internal and external environment, the more applicable is the ambiguity metaphor: "Organizations . . . are probably more rational than they are adventitious and the quest for rational procedures is not misplaced. However, . . . rationalistic approaches will always be blown off course by the contingent, the unexpected and the irrational" (Hoyle, 1986, p. 72).

### Cultural Models

#### What Do We Mean By Culture?

Cultural models emphasize the informal aspects of organizations rather than their official elements. They focus on the values, beliefs and norms of individuals in the organization and how these individual perceptions coalesce into shared organizational meanings. Cultural models are manifested by symbols and rituals rather than through the formal structure of the organization (Bush, 2003):

Cultural models assume that beliefs, values and ideology are at the heart of organizations. Individuals hold certain ideas and value-preferences, which influence how they behave and how they view the behaviour of other members. These norms become shared traditions, which are communicated within the group and are reinforced by symbols and ritual. (p. 156).

Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan (1992) claim that culture serves to define the unique qualities of individual organizations: "An increasing number of . . . writers . . . have adopted the term "culture" to define that social and phenomenological uniqueness of a particular organisational community . . . We have finally acknowledged publicly that uniqueness is a virtue, that values are



important and that they should be fostered” (p. 173).

## Societal Culture

Most of the literature on culture in education relates to organizational culture and that is also the main focus of this section. However, there is also an emerging literature on the broader theme of national or societal culture. Walker and Dimmock (2002) refer to issues of context and stress the need to avoid “decontextualized paradigms” (p. 1) in researching and analyzing educational systems and institutions.

Dimmock and Walker (2002) provide a helpful distinction between societal and organizational culture:

Societal cultures differ mostly at the level of basic values, while organizational cultures differ mostly at the level of more superficial practices, as reflected in the recognition of particular symbols, heroes and rituals. This allows organizational cultures to be deliberately managed and changed, whereas societal or national cultures are more enduring and change only gradually over longer time periods. (p.71)

Societal culture is one important aspect of the context within which school leaders must operate. They must also contend with organizational culture, which provides a more immediate framework for leadership action.

## Central Features of Organizational Culture

1. It focuses on the values and beliefs of members of organizations. “Shared values, shared beliefs, shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sensemaking are all different ways of describing culture . . . These patterns of understanding also provide a basis for making one’s own behaviour sensible and meaningful” (Morgan, 1997, p. 138).
2. The cultural model focuses on the notion of a single or dominant culture in organizations but this does not necessarily mean that individual values are always in harmony with one another. “There may be different and competing value systems that create a mosaic of organizational realities rather than a uniform corporate culture” (Morgan, 1997, p. 137). Large, multipurpose organizations, in particular, are likely to have more than one culture (Schein, 1997, p. 14).
3. Organizational culture emphasizes the development of shared norms and meanings. The assumption is that interaction between members of the organization, or its subgroups, eventually leads to behavioural norms that gradually become cultural features of the school or college.
4. These group norms sometimes allow the development of a monoculture in a school with meanings shared throughout the staff - “the way we do things around here.” We have already



noted, however, that there may be several subcultures based on the professional and personal interests of different groups. These typically have internal coherence but experience difficulty in relationships with other groups whose behavioural norms are different.

5. Culture is typically expressed through rituals and ceremonies, which are used to support and celebrate beliefs and norms. Schools are rich in such symbols as assemblies, prize-givings and corporate worship. "Symbols are central to the process of constructing meaning." (Hoyle, 1986, p. 152).
6. Organizational culture assumes the existence of heroes and heroines who embody the values and beliefs of the organization. These honoured members typify the behaviours associated with the culture of the institution. Campbell-Evans (1993, p. 106) stresses that heroes or heroines are those whose achievements match the culture: "Choice and recognition of heroes . . . occurs within the cultural boundaries identified through the value filter . . . The accomplishments of those individuals who come to be regarded as heroes are compatible with the cultural emphases" (Bush, 2003, p. 160-162).

## Moral Leadership

Leaders have the main responsibility for generating and sustaining culture and communicating core values and beliefs both within the organization and to external stakeholders (Bush, 1998, p. 43). Principals have their own values and beliefs arising from many years of successful professional practice. They are also expected to embody the culture of the school or college. Schein (1997) argues that cultures spring primarily from the beliefs, values and assumptions of founders of organizations. However, it should be noted that cultural change is difficult and problematic. Hargreaves (1999) claims that "most people's beliefs, attitudes and values are far more resistant to change than leaders typically allow" (p. 59-60).

The leadership model most closely linked to organizational culture is that of moral leadership. This model assumes that the critical focus of leadership ought to be on the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves. Authority and influence are to be derived from defensible conceptions of what is right or good (Leithwood et al, 1999, p. 10).

Sergiovanni (1984) says that "excellent schools have central zones composed of values and beliefs that take on sacred or cultural characteristics" (p. 10). The moral dimension of leadership is based on "normative rationality; rationality based on what we believe and what we consider to be good" (Sergiovanni, 1991):

Moral leadership is consistent with organizational culture in that it is based on the

values, beliefs and attitudes of principals and other educational leaders. It focuses on the moral purpose of education and on the behaviours to be expected of leaders operating within the moral domain. It also assumes that these values and beliefs coalesce into shared norms and meanings

that either shape or reinforce culture. The rituals and symbols associated with moral leadership support these values and underpin school culture. (p. 326)

## Limitations of Organizational Culture

Cultural models add several useful elements to the analysis of school and college leadership and management. The focus on the informal dimension is a valuable counter to the rigid and official components of the formal models. By stressing the values and beliefs of participants, cultural models reinforce the human aspects of management rather than their structural elements. The emphasis on the symbols of the organization is also a valuable contribution to management theory while the moral leadership model provides a useful way of understanding what constitutes a values-based approach to leadership. However, cultural models do have three significant weaknesses:

1. There may be ethical dilemmas because cultural leadership may be regarded as the imposition of a culture by leaders on other members of the organization. The search for a monoculture may mean subordinating the values and beliefs of some participants to those of leaders or the dominant group. Morgan (1997, p. 150-51) refers to “a process of ideological control” and warns of the risk of “manipulation.”

2. The cultural model may be unduly mechanistic, assuming that leaders can determine the culture of the organization (Morgan, 1997). While they have influence over the evolution of culture by espousing desired values, they cannot ensure the emergence of a monoculture. As we have seen, secondary schools and colleges may have several subcultures operating in departments and other sections. This is not necessarily dysfunctional because successful subunits are vital components of thriving institutions.

3. The cultural model’s focus on symbols such as rituals and ceremonies may mean that other elements of organizations are underestimated. The symbols may misrepresent the reality of the school or college. Hoyle (1986, p. 166) refers to “innovation without change.” Schools may go through the appearance of change but the reality continues as before.

## Values and Action

The cultural model is a valuable addition to our understanding of organizations. The recognition that school and college development needs to be preceded by attitudinal change is salutary, and consistent with the maxim that teachers must feel “ownership” of change if it is to be implemented effectively. “Since organization ultimately resides in the heads of the people involved, effective organizational change always implies cultural change” (Morgan, 1997, p. 150).

Cultural models also provide a focus for organizational action, a dimension that is largely absent from the subjective perspective. Leaders may adopt a moral approach and focus on influencing values so that they become closer to, if not identical with, their own beliefs. In this way, they hope

to achieve widespread support for or “ownership” of new policies. By working through this informal domain, rather than imposing change through positional authority or political processes, heads and principals are more likely to gain support for innovation. An appreciation of organizational culture is an important element in the leadership and management of schools and colleges.

Conclusion

## Comparing the Management Models

The six management models discussed in this chapter represent different ways of looking at educational institutions. Each screen offers valuable insights into the nature of management in education but none provides a complete picture. The six approaches are all valid analyses but their relevance varies according to the context. Each event, situation or problem may be understood by using one or more of these models but no organization can be explained by using only a single approach. There is no single perspective capable of presenting a total framework for our understanding of educational institutions. “The search for an all-encompassing model is simplistic, for no one model can delineate the intricacies of decision processes in complex organizations such as universities and colleges” (Baldrige et al, 1978, p. 28).

The formal models dominated the early stages of theory development in educational management. Formal structure, rational decision-making and “top-down” leadership were regarded as the central concepts of effective management and attention was given to refining these processes to increase efficiency. Since the 1970s, however, there has been a gradual realization that formal models are “at best partial and at worst grossly deficient” (Chapman, 1993, p. 215).

The other five models featured in this volume all developed in response to the perceived weaknesses of what was then regarded as “conventional theory.” They have demonstrated the limitations of the formal models and put in place alternative conceptualizations of school management. While these more recent models are all valid, they are just as partial as the dominant perspective their advocates seek to replace. There is more theory and, by exploring different dimensions of management, its total explanatory power is greater than that provided by any single model.

Collegial models are attractive because they advocate teacher participation in decision-making. Many principals aspire to collegiality, a claim that rarely survives rigorous scrutiny. The collegial framework all too often provides the setting for political activity or “top-down” decision-making (Bush, 2003).

The cultural model’s stress on values and beliefs, and the subjective theorists’ emphasis on the significance of individual meanings, also appear to be both plausible and ethical. In practice, however, these may lead to manipulation as leaders seek to impose their own values on schools and colleges.

The increasing complexity of the educational context may appear to lend support to the ambiguity model with its emphasis on turbulence and anarchy. However, this approach provides few guidelines for managerial action and leads to the view that “there has to be a better way.”

The six models differ along crucial dimensions but taken together they do provide a comprehensive picture of the nature of management in educational institutions. Figure 2 compares the main features of the six models.

Elements of management	Formal	Collegial	Political	Subjective	Ambiguity	Cultural
Level at which goals are determined	Institutional	Institutional	Sub-unit	Individual	Unclear	Institutional or sub-unit
Process by which goals are determined	Set by leaders	Agreement	Conflict	Problematic May be imposed by leaders	Unpredictable	Based on collective value
Relationship between goals and decisions	Decisions based on goals	Decisions based on agreed goals	Decisions based on goals of dominant coalitions	Individual behaviour based on personal goals	Decisions unrelated to goals	Decisions based on the goals of the organisation or its sub-units
Nature of decision process	Rational	Collegial	Political	Personal	Garbage can	Rational within a framework of values
Nature of structure	Objective reality Hierarchical	Objective reality Lateral	Setting for sub-unit activity	Constructed through human interaction	Problematic	Physical manifestation of culture
Links with environment	May be “closed” or “open” Principal accountable	Accountability blurred by shared decision-making	Unstable external bodies portrayed as interest groups	Source of individual meanings	Source of uncertainty	Source of values and beliefs
Style of Leadership	Principal establishes goals and initiates policy	Principal seeks to promote consensus	Principal is both participant and mediator	Problematic May be perceived as a form of control	May be tactical or unobtrusive	Symbolic
Related leadership model	Managerial	Participative	Transactional	Postmodern	Contingent	Moral

## Attempts at Synthesis

Each of the models discussed in this volume offers valid insights into the nature of leadership and

management in schools and colleges. Yet all the perspectives are limited in that they do not give a complete picture of educational institutions. "Organizations are many things at once! They are complex and multifaceted. They are paradoxical. That's why the challenges facing management are so difficult. In any given situation there may be many different tendencies and dimensions, all of which have an impact on effective management" (Morgan, 1997, p. 347).

The inadequacies of each theory, taken singly, have led to a search for a comprehensive model that integrates concepts to provide a coherent analytical framework. Chapman (1993) stresses the need for leaders to develop this broader perspective in order to enhance organizational effectiveness: "Visionary and creative leadership and effective management in education require a deliberate and conscious attempt at integration, enmeshment and coherence" (p. 212).

Enderud (1980), and Davies and Morgan (1983), have developed integrative models incorporating ambiguity, political, collegial and formal perspectives. These syntheses are based on the assumption that policy formation proceeds through four distinct phases which all require adequate time if the decision is to be successful. These authors assume an initial period of high ambiguity as problems, solutions and participants interact at appropriate choice opportunities. This anarchic phase serves to identify the issues and acts as a preliminary sifting mechanism. If conducted properly it should lead to an initial coupling of problems with potential solutions.

The output of the ambiguous period is regarded as the input to the political phase. This stage is characterized by bargaining and negotiations and usually involves relatively few participants in small, closed committees. The outcome is likely to be a broad measure of agreement on possible solutions.

In the third collegial phase, the participants committed to the proposed solution attempt to persuade less active members to accept the compromise reached during the political stage. The solutions are tested against criteria of acceptability and feasibility and may result in minor changes. Eventually this process should lead to agreed policy outcomes and a degree of commitment to the decision.

The final phase is the formal or bureaucratic stage during which agreed policy may be subject to modification in the light of administrative considerations. The outcome of this period is a policy which is both legitimate and operationally satisfactory (Bush, 2003, p. 193).

Theodossin (1983, p. 88) links the subjective to the formal or systems model using an analytical continuum. He argues that a systems perspective is the most appropriate way of explaining national developments while individual and subunit activities may be understood best by utilizing the individual meanings of participants:

Theodossin's analysis is interesting and plausible. It helps to delineate the contribution of the formal and subjective models to educational management theory. In focusing on these two perspectives, however, it necessarily ignores the contribution of other approaches, including the cultural model, which has not been incorporated into any of the syntheses applied to education



The Enderud (1980), and Davies and Morgan (1983), models are valuable in suggesting a plausible sequential link between four of the major theories. However, it is certainly possible to postulate different sets of relationships between the models. For example, a collegial approach may become political as participants engage in conflict instead of seeking to achieve consensus. It is perhaps significant that there have been few attempts to integrate the management models since the 1980s.

## Using Theory to Improve Practice

The six models present different approaches to the management of education and the syntheses indicate a few of the possible relationships between them. However, the ultimate test of theory is whether it improves practice. There should be little doubt about the potential for theory to inform practice. School managers generally engage in a process of implicit theorising in deciding how to formulate policy or respond to events. Facts cannot be left to speak for themselves. They require the explanatory framework of theory in order to ascertain their real meaning.

The multiplicity of competing models means that no single theory is sufficient to guide practice. Rather, managers need to develop “conceptual pluralism” (Bolman & Deal, 1984, p. 4) to be able to select the most appropriate approach to particular issues and avoid a unidimensional stance: “Managers in all organizations . . . can increase their effectiveness and their freedom through the use of multiple vantage points. To be locked into a single path is likely to produce error and self-imprisonment” (p. 4).

Conceptual pluralism is similar to the notion of contingent leadership. Both recognize the diverse nature of educational contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation rather than adopting a “one size fits all” stance. Appreciation of the various models is the starting point for effective action. It provides a “conceptual tool-kit” for the manager to deploy as appropriate in addressing problems and developing strategy.

Morgan (1997, p. 359) argues that organizational analysis based on these multiple perspectives comprises two elements:

- A diagnostic reading of the situation being investigated, using different metaphors to identify or highlight key aspects of the situation.
- A critical evaluation of the significance of the different interpretations resulting from the diagnosis.

These skills are consistent with the concept of the “reflective practitioner” whose managerial approach incorporates both good experience and a distillation of theoretical models based on wide reading and discussion with both academics and fellow practitioners. This combination of theory and practice enables the leader to acquire the overview required for strategic management.

While it is widely recognized that appreciation of theory is likely to enhance practice, there

remain relatively few published accounts of how the various models have been tested in school or college-based research. More empirical work is needed to enable judgements on the validity of the models to be made with confidence. The objectives of such a research programme would be to test the validity of the models presented in this volume and to develop an overarching conceptual framework. It is a tough task but if awareness of theory helps to improve practice, as we have sought to demonstrate, then more rigorous theory should produce more effective practitioners and better schools.

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## **Solutions**

# Chapter 4. Preparing and Training Superintendents for the Mission of Executive Management



This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

## Preparing and Training Superintendents for the Mission of Executive Management

Superintendent preparation and training has remained substantially unaltered for a half century. State certification requirements drive the content and activities for preparation programs housed in higher education institutions. State agencies never participated in superintendent preparation beyond awarding certification to post master's educators completing an "approved" course of study. However, high stakes testing and accountability pressures are now causing a few states to reconsider traditional paths to superintendent certification. Illinois and Washington have "opened" the superintendency to individuals without educational, managerial, executive, or higher education backgrounds. What the effects of these attempts "to" provide local school districts with "superintendent choice" is unclear at this time.

Reform literature discussing preparation, selection, and evaluation of superintendents generally questions the abilities of superintendents to bring about higher student test scores. Seldom discussed is effective management of resources and systems. Policy literature often tosses aside superintendent management responsibilities as being a "technical" matter, not germane to the development of transformational executive leadership.

This paper focuses on "real" superintendent management preparation or training necessary to effectively and efficiently manage district fiscal, personnel, and physical resources. The creation of an effective and functional management system is most definitely a pre-condition for exercising effective leadership. Seldom are high scoring districts found without effective superintendent led management systems.

What is needed is a new vision of superintendent executive level management training consisting of a cooperative effort between universities, state agencies, and professional associations. This new paradigm should cast management training in an equal role with leadership preparation. The

existence of higher education and degree programs should not be eliminated but augmented by state agency resources and involvement with professional associations.

## Preparing Superintendents to be Executive Managers

### The Need for a New Paradigm

Often school reformers sarcastically criticize superintendents as “mere” managers not capable of leading, schools, districts and communities. Education literature abounds with conventional wisdom rhetoric advocating “silver bullet” leadership stratagems guaranteeing higher test scores. For the sake of self preservation, many superintendents “talk the talk” of transformational, creative, challenged, results based, follower based, distributive and situational leadership but few actual “walk the walk” toward verifiable results and “managerially” improved districts. District improvement is more likely achieved through “appropriate” board and superintendent leadership behavior in conjunction with effective management. One strategy alone in most cases will not maintain or bring about organizational effectiveness and reform.

Large urban districts poignantly and tragically illustrate this paradigm. These large urban districts (often mammoth impersonal hierarchical bureaucracies) serve more than a third of the nation’s public school children and provide a majority of No Child Left Behind’s (NCLB) “failing” schools. The picture of “failing schools within failing districts” in “failing communities” provides a chilling view of urban America today. By 2015 at least one out of two public school students will be a minority enrolled in one of these “failing districts” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000).

What massive set of policy initiatives can turn around this urban (actually national) catastrophe? More money, more teachers, better teachers, better principals, better curriculum, parental involvement, better governance or current “jingoistic” leadership by principals and superintendents?

Recent reform literature offers “quick school fixes” via “better” leadership. Foundations, state agencies, universities, private sector groups, and school districts have in the past, and are today, spending significant amounts to “implant” leadership skills in principals and superintendents. How this “new” leadership is to be evaluated, except by very nebulous test scores increases, is not discussed. Many reform writers slip into the beginning graduate student error of assuming high correlation denotes causation.

### The Roles of Superintendents

In some respects the superintendent’s role is an anomaly in comparison to many complex organizations. The roles of leadership (executive) and management are discrete functions carried out by separate role incumbents in large private sector organizations. This is only true in perhaps 1% to 2% of American public school districts.

A body of literature in the field of business not only separates the two roles but also discusses personality traits and types best needed to fit each role. These “managerial” and “leadership” personalities are portrayed many times to be in opposition and conflict (Zaleznik, 1977). If this business organization literature aptly describes leadership and management needed in public school districts, a curious paradox is created for superintendents. Can a superintendent possess both a leadership and management personality? Or does the more confining role of the manager inhibit the less confining role of executive leader?

Importantly, is there sufficient inter-role conflict to render the superintendency a plural role forcing incumbents to choose between often conflicting role expectations and responsibilities? If effective managers and effective leaders possess different personalities, can one superintendent be effectively trained for a role requiring a bi-polar personality? This is certainly another way to view the common description of leaders as being either relations or task oriented in selected practices and situations (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). This may also account for the reluctance of many superintendents to adopt a change agent role requiring “visionary” leadership and risks.

There appears to be an absence of literature examining the “managerial” and “leadership” attributes of superintendents in terms of emotional involvement, empathy, and social discourse. Leaders are typically characterized as being extroverted and intensely emotionally involved with followers and colleagues in a realm of ideas. Managers on the other hand relate to others according to roles and sequences of events in decision-making and task completion (Zaleznik, 1977). Which of the two best fits or describes current superintendents?

### Callahan Revisited

Callahan’s identification and description of four distinctive roles of the superintendent, scholarly educational leader, business executive, educational statesman in democratic society, and applied social scientist, suggest a plural role with built-in conflict (Callahan, 1962). Cuban (1976) and others correctly point out that superintendents must manifest behavior elements of these four roles at different times and places in their practice. This is correct as the superintendent is a highly situational position dictated by boards and unique sets of local circumstances. Lutz and Merz (1992) and others suggest three “general roles” for superintendents as, change agent, developer, or maintainer of the status quo. These roles are situational based requiring distinct sets of leadership and management skills. Do these skill sets require psychosocial attitudes? It is likely this trio of roles significantly affects a board’s decision when selecting a new superintendent.

A board satisfied with the performance of the district may carefully select a superintendent with excellent management skills charged to keep the district at its present level of operation. Or a board may choose a management skilled superintendent to carefully manage a district with very few resources and little possibility of implementing reform initiatives. This status quo superintendent role is very prevalent.

Another board may have already passed through an era of repeated failed reform initiatives led by a change oriented visionary leader and feel the time is ripe for a new superintendent to pick up the

pieces and develop and manage them into a whole program. The developer role may be the superintendent many large urban districts need at this time.

The hard charging visionary change-agent leader is resplendent in today's reform literature. This is particularly true in the urban districts where change agent superintendents stay fewer than 3 years and initiate three new reform initiatives each year of their brief tenure (Hess, 1999). Contrary to conventional wisdom relatively few boards are actively seeking this usually short term leader. Only 8 % of superintendents participating in the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Ten Year Study in 2000 said their boards hired them to be "reform leaders" (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2004).

The majority of school boards appear to be seeking a superintendent with ability to develop programs and effectively manage district resources. These boards probably agree with Zaleznik (1977), effective change agent leaders often create disorder, a condition many boards desire to avoid. This is a far different view from what school reformers and their political policy makers arrogantly and blindly demand of boards. A reality seen by boards is that a majority of school districts possess central office staffs of one or two administrators and while strong leadership is desired, management is imperative.

Unfortunately, what is not discussed in the literature is whether a superintendent can be adequately proficient in Callahan's (1964) or other multiple role models. Callahan's four conceptual roles expand the superintendency far beyond the business paradigm of leadership and management. The role models of change agents, developers, and maintainers of the status quo are overlapping and many boards may even require superintendents to act to a degree in each.

A complication certainly must arise in practice when superintendent leadership situations change due to board elections or adjustments in community expectations. The reform era has "politicized" the role to the point in some districts where the superintendent is the "chief political officer." Carrying out this role takes a superintendent "out" of the district and in extreme cases makes the role of superintendent a community rather educational role. This may be occurring more than we are presently aware.

## Leaders and Managers

Bennis and Nanus (1985) in their review of more than 1,000 studies of leadership and management found more than 350 definitions of effective leadership. Not finding a clear understanding of non-leaders versus leaders, they coined the term "a leader does the right thing" and "manager does the thing right."

Drucker (1985) states that effective leaders make relatively few decisions regarding the "total" picture and the future of the organization. If this is true, then superintendents in most districts are obligated by the board to make few "day to day" management types of decisions. Perhaps Drucker's axiom best fits the superintendent-board team role that may be cast as the district's "visionary-effective leader." In the context of American schools decisions resulting in broad



policy statements are the responsibility of the board.

What is the board's role in superintendent leadership? Management traditionally has been expected of superintendents by boards. Over involvement in management by board members (micro-management) has never been an approved practice. The National School Board Association (2000) and its state affiliates particularly condemn the practice, often creating conflict between boards and superintendents. The problem has been what is the demarcation line between policy, leadership, and management? When does superintendent leadership join or separate from board leadership? In addition, boards and superintendents often have very different ideas as to what constitutes board micromanagement.

Policy and procedures in school districts often appear to be management statements. The division between superintendent, leadership, and management might be:

- Leadership is “influencing” the community, staff, board, and students.
- Leadership is “guiding” in setting abstracts such as goals, vision, etc.
- Leadership is “persuading” staff to put aside self interests.
- Management is “shaping” district management systems to produce results.
- Management is “supervising” and insuring worker productivity.

Leadership overall recognizes the total school district and attempts to influence it or its employees in a certain direction. Management is actually accomplishing the task (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988).

As Lunenberg and Ornstein (2000) point out, a school organization does not need good leadership to survive. Poor leadership in a district may not affect the overall operation for years. However, poor management quickly impairs the organization effectiveness.

### A Management Training Platform

Most education leadership literature is strangely silent about district level management as the essential foundation or platform necessary for productive district system leadership. Without a solid district level management platform, leadership strategies of any type are likely to flounder or be seriously impeded. It is a challenge to find a high academic achieving district without competent fiscal, budget, facilities, personnel, curriculum, and support services management. A plethora of school based activities, if well supported by the central office, allow principals to better focus on the tasks of academic improvement.

If this management support is not present, principals may be likely to be in a continual struggle “against” the central office. This dichotomy of the principal's struggle to improve achievement and the struggle with a district central office is likely a strong contributor to “failing schools.”

Superintendents in high achieving districts are often characterized as being effective leaders; and those in chronically poor achieving districts are frequently thought of as ineffective leaders (Education Writers Association, 2003). Seldom is there discussion as to whether they are effective or ineffective managers in “leading” district management efforts.

By necessity, massive urban districts supporting hundreds of schools have created large hierarchical “classical” bureaucracies featuring a reliance on classical “scientific management” theory (now reinforced by NCLB). The number and complexity of essential management functions is difficult to see if looking from outside the organization. Few reformers and critics realize these large bureaucracies are very much a part of federal and state government actions created over a hundred years. In many respects they mirror any large governmental bureaucracy. They are unlike large corporations that change organizational structure when threatened with loss of profits and possible extinction. Smaller districts (like smaller private sector businesses) are usually closer to “customers” and can change organizational structures to meet public demand.

Superintendents seldom are well trained or experienced to simultaneously lead and manage school bureaucracies. The not too surprising result for urban superintendents is failing to raise test scores and bringing about institutional reform. They never get the management “system” to sufficiently support instructional programs (Hess, 1999). In short, the hub of the wheel cannot support the spokes. Managerial ineffectiveness by superintendents in smaller districts may also hurt instructional programs, but the task of fixing these systems is less difficult.

An excellent example of “fixing” a large organization is the Chrysler Corporation under the leadership of Lee Iacocca. When the Chrysler board hired Iacocca, the corporation was on the brink of bankruptcy. Iacocca immediately hired a team formerly working with him at Ford and began working on rebuilding corporate management systems. They did not immediately rush to the car assembly plant lines correcting the poor quality of Chrysler cars. This was a later step after corporate management was rebuilt sufficiently to manage needed changes in the production lines corporate image and creating a future for the corporation (Iacocca & Novak, 1987).

This is an excellent illustration of the need for effective management systems to be in place before visionary leadership dominates the district leadership paradigm. Urban school systems would be well advised to look at how failing corporations are rebuilt from the top down. Reform efforts since *A Nation at Risk* have been generally bottom up.

### Superintendents and the Management Imperative

The following managerial tasks are common to every school district regardless of size and wealth. They are prescribed actions both in highly centralized or decentralized organizational structures. Most are closely monitored by state departments and other regulatory agencies. In brief, they constitute a non-negotiable managerial imperative for superintendents to supervise, coordinate, perform and be held accountable to the school board and community. If performed efficiently and effectively fiscal costs to the district can be substantially reduced creating an opportunity to transfer “saved” dollars to “instructional” accounts.

If not managed properly district credibility with the community, state, and staff suffer making all district operations more difficult. More superintendents are dismissed for mismanaging finances with the exception of a poor relationship with the board (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

## Finances

A school district is a trustee of both the community's children and its tax dollars. Efficient and appropriate management of public tax dollars is a key responsibility for every superintendent. Inarguably, this is a complex and time consuming task for superintendents in districts of all sizes. School districts are not "stand alone" businesses in managing revenues and expenditures. Instead, they are part of large state school funding programs that are complex and difficult to comprehend and implement at the local level. Lack of competent fiscal and operational management skills is a leading reason for board dismissal of superintendents. High quality financial management is a characteristic of academically high performing districts. The following are fiscal management components found in all districts.

### Fiscal Planning

This important management task plans and sets spending patterns for present and future budget years. Competent fiscal planning establishes a reality frame around which a district can create a strategic plan. A critical decision made yearly by the superintendent is the forecasted revenue upon which to build next year's budget. Incompetent fiscal planning and revenue forecasting may result in the district not meeting program commitments, incurring unexpected budget deficits, and creating distrust with district personnel and in the community. Knowledge of state, county, and local tax revenue systems is imperative.

An often overlooked fiscal planning task is that of forecasting the future number of children to be served. Particularly in districts with budgets driven by state aid formulas, the number of children to be served is a critical budget variable. Knowledge of demographic variables and forecasting is very important to fiscal and facility planning.

### Budgeting

Allocating sufficient funds to each district program is a very difficult process. The superintendent does not usually make budget decisions alone. However, the superintendent must deploy and supervise the budget system in the district. The structure of budget systems is often mandated by the state. Although district staff may participate in the budgeting process by providing input, the final decisions about how scarce resources are to be allocated rests with the superintendent and ultimately the school board. After board (and state) approval, the superintendent must implement a plan to implement and manage the budget. This task can be complicated in districts with bottom up types of budget systems.

### Accounting

While superintendents are not expected to be certified accountants it is important for them to competently manage cash (sometimes accrual) accounting systems. Most important they must be able to adequately use the fund accounting systems required by state departments of education. In perhaps nine out of every ten districts the superintendent participates daily in district accounting processes (Ray, Hack, & Candoli, 2001).

## Debt Management

Due to reliance of school districts on state funding systems, most districts on a routine basis incur short and long term debt. Understanding bonding systems and borrowing options available to the district are very important management options. Districts frequently use short term borrowing to meet cash flow problems. In most districts cash flow management is a very important task for the superintendent to oversee.

## Investing

All districts, large and small, have funds to invest in short term or long term options. These funds augment regular program funds and often provide for a “rainy day” crisis. Superintendents often make almost daily decisions regarding the structuring and use of district financial investments.

## Auditing

The annual external audit is but one part of the districts auditing requirements. Cash accounts must be internally audited on a frequent basis. Program progress audits are often required by states as well. Federal auditing procedures, many times, do not align with state systems and this creates a challenge for superintendents. Understanding state auditing standards is a legal as well as professional obligation of superintendents. Bad audit reports in recent years have claimed the careers of more than several urban superintendents unaware their districts were many millions of dollars in debt.

## Purchasing and Contracting

States have strict laws requiring school district purchasing practices and superintendents must comply even if their boards disagree. Many states hold superintendents personally liable for violation of state purchasing procedures.

The issuing of contracts for goods and services is often a controversial issue for superintendents. Service contracts obligating millions of taxpayer dollars can be very complex. Examples are contracts for architectural services, transportation, and food services. Simple contracts for district foodstuffs and fuel can also be controversial if not done correctly. A medium size district of 2,400 students might process 400 to 500 purchase orders a month.

## Property Management

School districts are required by state law to maintain demonstrable control of all district property.

Periodic inventory of all district property must be conducted and discrepancies reconciled. Disposal of unusable property is strictly regulated in most states. Distribution of new purchased property and materials is an important task that can impact programs. In smaller districts, superintendents are very involved in this process. In large districts, they generally have little knowledge whether proper supplies are reaching the schools. And, even less knowledge of whether schools are controlling and accounting for public property.

## Risk Management

Every school district carries several types of insurance coverage including fire and casualty, errors and omissions, blanket policies, student insurance and employee performance bonds. Superintendents must keep the district adequately insured at a reasonable premium level. Thousands of districts in recent years have found it very difficult to obtain liability coverage and have resorted to multi-district cooperatives largely managed by participating superintendents.

## Salary and Wage Management

While some district employee salaries are determined by collective bargaining agreements, others are not. Periodic salary studies are necessary management activities in many districts. States sometimes regulate selected wage and management conditions. Salaries are a very sensitive issue. Unhappy employees and poorly managed payroll procedures can quickly put a superintendent in hot water.

## Facility Management

In perhaps a majority of communities across the nation, the value of local school buildings constitutes the single largest investment of public funds. Superintendents must understand the dependence of school programs on appropriate facilities and be able to guide the community in a financially responsible manner in replacing, remodeling, and retrofitting the district facility inventory. This process involves millions of public tax dollars and has a decided long term effect on educational programs. Managing construction projects has become a very challenging task in the past several decades. Successful management of facilities is an integral part of a district's community relations program. The condition of facilities to the majority of patrons not having children in school often represent an efficient or inefficient use of public tax dollars.

## Facility Assessment

Superintendents must be able to conduct or supervise frequent formal assessments of district facilities to insure they are providing suitable spaces for instruction and support. An increasing number of school facilities are overcrowded or outdated for use of technology. The superintendent working with the board and community should develop short and long range facility plans. This management function reaches into curriculum development, program management, and funding.

## Replacing, Retrofitting, and Remodeling

The superintendent is responsible for the implementation of plans to replace worn out buildings, change the functions of other buildings by remodeling, and bringing others up to current building and safety codes via retrofitting. This management plan requires a significant amount of funding acquired through community support. Some states require a short and long range use plan for every on line school facility.

## Safety and Health Concerns

The primary legal responsibility of a superintendent is to insure the health and safety of students and staff. A plan to maintain safe environments and work practices is a paramount responsibility for the superintendent. A safety management plan is a critical district document. This includes electronic and other security systems to ensure the safety of students and staff. An increasing number of districts are employing security personnel to patrol school buildings and parking lots.

## Human Resource Management

Most districts dedicate about 80% to 85% of the budget to personnel costs. The employment of appropriate employees for the right jobs is a critical financial matter. Insuring employees perform adequately and in the public interest is a primary responsibility for all superintendents. Although building administrators may select and evaluate employees, the district hires and fires them. In most states only the superintendent may take the names of prospective employees to the board for hiring and firing. Therefore, the superintendent is ultimately responsible for the management of all human resources in the district. Equally important is the superintendent and district compliance with the plethora of legal requirements surrounding personnel management. Personnel actions are the management area most fraught due to time consumption and expensive legal problems, which can be potentially dangerous to superintendent tenure.

## Personnel Needs Assessment

Superintendents typically are responsible for developing a personnel utilization plan for the district. This plan is integral to developing present and future district budgets. What types of employees are needed to match program requirements and at what costs are important decisions made yearly by every superintendent. The superintendent must be knowledgeable about state employee retirement systems, workers compensation, and state mandated personnel reporting and accounting methods. In many states this is audited yearly and a portion of state financial aid is affected by the accurateness of personnel records.

## Personnel Recruitment and Induction

Recruiting quality applicants for open district positions is not an easy task. Superintendents typically establish parameters for recruiting and interviewing prospective employees. Inducting new teachers is an especially important task as drop-out rates for new educators is very high in most areas of the country.

## Staff Evaluation

The dismissal of professional and support staff is probably the first or second most contentious community and legal issue confronting superintendents and boards. The superintendent's legal knowledge and ability to implement evaluation systems is extremely important. This is a key management responsibility with little room for error.

## Professional Development

The continuous improvement of employee skills and efficiency is often linked to state certification and licensing requirements. District resources used for staff development are sometimes linked to evaluation of district employees and often a legal and political "hot button."

## Payroll and Record Keeping

District payroll operations and record keeping management is usually not seen as a key superintendent management responsibility. However, state and legal requirements must be closely followed and a good management system must be in place for these functions.

## Fringe Benefits Management

Fringe benefit costs in many school districts constitute about 10 % of the total district budget. Health care, life insurance, and student insurance are complex programs to manage. Superintendents must be very knowledgeable to wisely advise the school board on the best options for the district. Health care benefits are becoming a very "hot" item in many districts as budgets are reduced.

## Worker's Compensation

The laws and procedures surrounding state worker's compensation programs are complex. The cost to the district is substantial and costly mistakes are often made by district administrators.

## Collective Negotiations and Contract Management

A form of bargaining or "meet and confer" option for personnel exists in every state. Successful bargaining evolves from well planned personnel and fiscal plans. Superintendents are a key figure in the districts bargaining program. Day to day management of the collective bargaining agreement(s) is a prime responsibility for superintendents. Superintendents are also the lead district administrator in managing grievances arising from the implementation of the contract or the formal understanding with employee groups.

## Student Personnel Management

Although students attend individual schools and programs, the district office has important responsibilities in managing student focused programs. Central management of school health,



special education, student records, and serious discipline is required by statute in many states. Special education is a very complex program requiring a considerable portion of the district budget and is prone to problems requiring legal services. Compliance with state and federal regulations (such as NCLB) is a serious management challenge for every district and superintendent.

### Student Attendance

Accurate management of the district's attendance program is critical. In most states the district's state revenue is driven by attendance count. State reporting for secondary school drop-outs is becoming a frustrating management problem for many districts and superintendents due to NCLB legislation.

### Support Services Management

#### Student Transportation

If buses do not run, many districts do not run. Transporting children to and from school safely is an important legal responsibility for the district and superintendent. Management systems creating bus routes, bus replacement, maintenance, and personnel is a critical management function.

#### Food Services

Food service operations take place daily in school districts and consume district resources in buildings, personnel, utilities, budget, supervision, and required management hours.

#### Legal and Professional Services

Districts employ the services of attorneys on a frequent, if not permanent, basis. Superintendents must be able to use these services to be the best financial benefit to the district. Other professional services managed by the superintendent are certified public accountants, engineers, architects, and medical personnel.

#### Outsourcing Services

Many districts currently outsource services such as payroll, food service, janitorial service, technology, and transportation. Superintendents are required to be competent in understanding bids, contracts, contract management, and evaluation of out sourced services.

#### The Context of Superintendent Management

The level of superintendent participation in the preceding management areas is primarily determined by district size, not training, experience, or personal inclination. The number of district administrators or managers available to work with or under the supervision of the

superintendent to accomplish management tasks typically depends on available dollars, enrollment size, and board approval. Larger districts have larger central office staffs allowing the superintendent to assign and delegate many management responsibilities. In most American school districts, superintendents perform the tasks themselves or share them with one or two other administrators.

While superintendents may “delegate” tasks to other administrators and managers, they still retain supervisory and oversight responsibility to insure the management task is completed promptly and correctly. Importantly, they are ultimately responsible to the board, community, and the state for effective and legal district management.

There appear to be four identifiable superintendent management roles within the nation's 14,500 school districts. Again, the size of the district largely determines the context of the role. The district size categories used in this paper illustrate or describe four superintendent “management” break out roles. These size groups have been used in the last fifty years in the American Association of School Administrators’ “Ten Year” superintendent studies.

The very large districts serve more than 25,000 students. There are 225 of these districts. The second size category is large districts serving 3,000 to 25,000 students. About 2,700 districts fall into this category. There are 7,400 medium size districts enrolling 300 to 3,000 students each. The fourth and last category is small districts, which is comprised of 2,300 districts. Each of the small districts is comprised of 300 or fewer students. The average size of the nearly 14,000 functioning school districts in the United States is about 2,400 students (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

### Very Large Districts

In this group of 225 districts containing 25,000 or more students, the superintendent is a general supervisor of deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, and managers assigned to both leadership and management responsibility for district finances, budget, planning, personnel, pupil services, community relations, instruction and curriculum, grants, facilities, maintenance, transportation, safety, food services, special education, evaluation, testing, and accountability.

The level of participation in supervising the management of critical district management functions is sometimes minimal due to the substantial number of managers. In these highly visible “bureaucratic” (often not well managed) districts, the superintendent is not a “hands on” manager. Typically the span of supervisory control for these superintendents is four to seven top level administrators. This means critical daily and long range management functions are performed by managers reporting and being supervised by other managers who report to the superintendent. The superintendent typically “manages” district management systems from a distance of periodic “key staff” meetings and “need to know” sessions.

Management in large urban districts with billion dollar budgets is a very complex undertaking, which requires great skill and experience. The large district superintendent, while not a “hands

on” manager, must possess sufficient expertise to confidently know important functions are being performed correctly. It is difficult and tenuous to competently supervise a high level manager without personal knowledge and experience in that management specialty. Another burden placed on urban superintendents is recruiting and hiring competent senior level managers. This is problematic for superintendents with little or no experience in the wide array of central office management responsibilities. Many current large district superintendents are hired for their “curriculum” (school reform) knowledge and experience rather than demonstrated abilities to manage billion dollar budgets.

Board members should not be surprised when serious fiscal, audit, budget, facilities or legal problems occur. These incidents not only reveal superintendents lacking management skills, but also question the competence of second tier management.

## Large Districts

Superintendent in districts over 10,000 have the opportunity to hire several office administrators to delegate managerial responsibilities. Their level of participation in management is similar to that of coordinator. Instead of supervising four to seven top aides in weekly scheduled meetings, they daily coordinate the districts’ management by meeting with managers, making frequent visits to sites, reviewing documents, and providing adequate supervision. They are sometimes “hands on” with the top management tier, but not so with program managers. They usually have to keep fewer board members informed than in very large districts where boards are usually nine or more members.

Districts between 5,000 and 10,000 provide opportunities for superintendents to be “hands on” coordinators. In this size district, a manager or administrator hired by the superintendent typically accomplishes most functions instead of delegating them to a lower layer of management. It is likely the most effective district management occurs in this size of district.

Districts with between 3,000 and 5,000 students provide unique opportunities for superintendents desiring to have their “hands on” the pulse of the school district. In these districts, superintendents can usually lead, supervise, and “manage by direct coordination” of principals and central office staff. In this size district, the “formal” distance between the superintendent staff is narrowed to the point where employees feel the superintendent is accessible to hear their problems.

## Medium Size Districts

A majority of American school districts fall into the 300 to 3,000 student size category. The district and the superintendent do not usually have the financial capability to hire a needed complement of central office staff. In these districts, most superintendents managerially become co-workers with one or two central office administrators. They are “hands on” managers working singly or with another manager in completing management tasks. The superintendent must be able to actually perform the management tasks in a medium size district.

A typical central office staff of the average American school district (2,400 students) would be a business manager, assistant superintendent, facilities director, transportation director, and food service director. Again, the superintendent in this size of district can realistically supervise the central office staff as well as building principals.

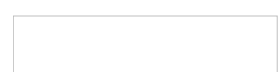
### Small Districts

Nearly 2,400 districts fall into the category of districts enrolling fewer than 300 students. In these districts, the superintendent works with a business manager and a principal in performing the myriad of management tasks common to districts of all sizes. The role of the superintendent is a “management worker.” There simply is no one else to do the work. Fortunately, county, regional, intermediate, and cooperatives often assist these small “one or two administrator” districts (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

### A Management Grid

The superintendent literature generally assumes the managerial role of superintendents is supervising and insuring the work of assistant superintendents for finance, personnel, curriculum, support services, student services, and special programs.

Table 1 does not continue to contribute to this myth nor the existence of a “monolithic” superintendent role. Superintendents in medium size districts singly or cooperatively perform numerous managerial tasks that superintendents in larger districts delegate to one or more lower levels of administration. The role and level of involvement differs greatly among districts of varying size, wealth, and program configuration.



The reader should not believe all superintendents of average sized districts (2,400 students) perform every managerial task as it is displayed in Table 1. Superintendents and their staffs differ in training, background, and inclination. Often they “rearrange” management tasks to fit local situations. The purpose of Table 1 is to illustrate the managerial role and work of the “average” American superintendent. Most management areas in Table 1 are found listed in Kowalski’s (1999) *The Superintendency*. Strangely this is the only “superintendent” text to do so since days of the “compendiums of best practice” prior to 1940 by the “founders” of educational administration such as Elwood Cubberly and Jesse Sears (Glass, 2004).

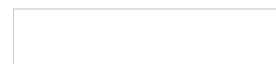
In developing a comparable table for large urban districts, nearly all of the X’s would be inserted into the Level 1 category as the superintendent would primarily be a supervisor of management performed by key senior managers and lower level designees. In a very small district, the majority of the X’s would be found in Level 4, meaning the superintendent performs nearly all the tasks. The point made is the variability between management roles of superintendents in districts of varying sizes.

## A Superintendent Leadership Matrix

The role of the superintendent is certainly that of executive leader. In the role, there is both a managerial imperative and a leadership imperative. One cannot be separated from the other without removing expectation for effectiveness.

The inclusion of a leadership matrix in this paper, focused on management, is because each leadership task includes management planning and execution. Leaders are often said to be those who do the right things and managers are those who do things right. This paper's point is that "right things" must be done "right", thus a leadership matrix corresponding to the management matrix.

In Table 2, the superintendent in the 2,400 student district coordinates others, works with others, and does a great deal of "hands on" leadership. This means the superintendent motivates, works with, and supervises others in these important leadership activities.



## Instructional Leadership Also Requires Management

The list of superintendent activities in Table 2 requires both leadership and management actions. Each of the activities must have leadership and management support from the central administration to be effective at the building level. A good example is curriculum management responsibilities found in special education and Title I programs requiring day to day management action.

A serious miscalculation of school reformers has been that "schools" can be "fixed" at the neighborhood level. For schools to work at the neighborhood level, they must have the timely and appropriate support from their "corporate headquarters"-- the central administration.

Special note should be taken of the superintendent role in community relations. In all district sizes they are the "front line" person working with community groups and responding to citizen concerns. Due to high public visibility, superintendents must put community relations at the forefront of agendas and schedules. This considerable part of the working day often makes completing other management tasks more difficult and creates job stress. The AASA Ten Year studies from 1910 through 2000 show the superintendency to be victim of ever increasing stress. In the 2000, AASA study superintendents indicate the job to be "very stressful" (Glass, 2003b).

## Training Superintendents to Lead District Management

School districts with budgets of a million or a billion dollars require competent professional management and effective leadership. Currently, some management responsibility is performed by managers lacking background in professional education. However, in a majority of districts key management positions are occupied by former teachers and principals. It is likely few

superintendents and assistant superintendents envisaged a career in upper level management when entering the teaching field (Glass, 1992).

Large private sector organizations with multimillion dollar budgets hire professional management at senior, middle, and lower levels. Managers in the private sector are typically trained prior to employment. In school districts, management personnel often receive basic management training after initial hiring. Private sector organizations far outspend school districts in providing professional development training for managers at all levels.

More than 70% of superintendents are former secondary school principals (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). This role usually affords a limited opportunity to participate in the development of district revenue plans, manage cash accounts, plan budgets, manage facilities, purchase materials, and supervise personnel management activities.

Middle school and elementary principals supervising fewer students, teachers, staff, and less complex programs typically have less opportunity to perform managerial functions similar to those in the central office.

In districts using forms of site based management, principals may be responsible for a myriad of (oftentimes inadequately supported) management functions separate from contact from “connecting” district central office management roles. Site based management models may even restrict principal knowledge of important central office management functions (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2000).

Principals in large districts may spend a whole career never developing more than a superficial knowledge of district financial and operation management. This is not likely to occur in small districts. In very small districts, principals are typically required to be lead managers for selected district-wide management functions.

Initial training for current superintendents to perform and supervise district level management activities ideally begins during the initial assistant principal level and continues to principal and central office experience. Most new superintendents today possess central office experience prior to the superintendency. There should be a seamless path of professional development in management training, abilities, and experiences. Today, educational administration training and preparation is conceptually disjointed between building and central office levels.

In the last decade, a majority of new superintendents have come from the ranks of central office administrators than in past decades (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Glass, 2002). This change in traditional career path offers opportunities for future superintendents to begin articulated training for district executive management while serving in both building and central office administrative roles.

## Current Paths of Preparation

Along with current discrepancies in superintendent preparation, certification requirements vary from state to state. In the past certification requirements have “driven” content of superintendent preparation. Certification or licensing codes generally require university coursework and passing a written exam. In about 30 states, the certification or licensure code is closely or loosely based on 6 standards developed for a “generic” K-12 principal position (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996).

This application of generic “principal standards” may be due to the traditional structure of many university superintendent programs being extensions of principal preparation (Kowalski & Glass, 2000). Standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium and the National Policy Board for Education Administration. Standards documents essentially are guidelines pointing out “general” areas of concern to the profession.

Administrators typically “space” their university preparation program out over many years. A good example of “time” displacement is that an initial school law class taken in the principal preparation will be followed by an advanced class in the educational specialist or doctoral program. This is often not the case (Kowalski & Glass, 2000). This part-time effort toward administrator preparation results in a situation where the university programs are populated by part-time students in very drawn out part-time and poorly sequenced programs.

The national number of superintendents yearly “needing” new certificates is about 2,200, as the superintendent turnover rate has hovered around 14 % for several decades. Superintendent tenure currently is between 6 to 7 years (Glass, 2003b). Critics argue there are hundreds to thousands of “unused” superintendent certificates. This is true but superintendent applicant pools are more and more “local” each year. Applicants apply frequently only for nearby positions. About 60 % of superintendents have a professionally employed “trailing spouse” (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

Most states grant superintendent certification in toto for districts of all sizes and types. Some states require superintendents participate minimally in “Administrator Academy” programs but for the most part “actual” superintendent preparation is through on the job training supplemented by university content laden coursework. Entry into the field is through self-selection from a career path beginning with classroom teaching (about 5 years). Superintendents from non-teaching backgrounds presently hold a very small number of superintendencies (Glass, 2002b).

### Higher Education Preparation

Traditionally, superintendents have gained access to credentials and positions through attendance in university based (heavily management based) degree and credential programs. In past decades most states have required about 30 semester hours of coursework beyond the masters degree for a superintendent’s credential. In numerous educational administration programs this 30 to 36 semester hours culminates in an educational specialist’s degree. Or, it satisfies a significant portion of the coursework required for a doctoral degree.



University coursework, theoretically training superintendents to be “management experts” beyond the principal’s office, requires courses in school finance, personnel administration, school law, and very occasionally facility planning. In recent years many, if not most, educational administration programs have eliminated “management” types of courses in favor of policy and leadership since superintendents should be “leaders” not mere managers. The result has been the majority of “management” training has been through on the job experiences and spasmodic or periodic in-service training provided by districts or state agencies (many times by private vendors).

## How Superintendents Might Be Trained for Management Roles

There are few if any supporters of current superintendent preparation programs. A reason being there are so few stand alone programs. Most preparation programs consolidate the superintendent credential into doctoral course program requirements. Strangely, to criticize superintendent credentialing is to criticize doctoral programs! This has created a situation where superintendent preparation has been “pushed” out of the way for academics.

This paper will not debate the appropriateness or inappropriateness of existing quasi-programs or the few stand-alone providing services to a small handful of aspiring superintendents. They serve a miniscule number of the year 2000 new superintendents (Glass, 2002). Superintendents themselves have over the years evaluated their preparation programs to be “good.” Interestingly, this positive evaluation is also held by “superintendent leaders” in the profession (Glass, 2002).

A key question is what agencies or institutions might best provide superintendent training to manage tax payer supported school districts. Historically, this has been largely the role of graduate programs in educational administration, housed in institutions of higher education. A modicum of pre and post employment training has been provided by professional associations, state agencies, and the occasional district. Perhaps the primary expectation held by the profession has been for higher education programs to provide important content knowledge. The skill training necessary for actual day to day work is left to chance or loosely organized.

Preparation program content for principals and superintendents has been and is still dominated by certification and licensing requirements. What is required for licensing and certification is what is taught. An example is that until the 1980’s most states required a school facility planning class. Today, only one or two states require the class and most educational administration programs no longer require or teach it. This is despite the need to replace aging infrastructure in a majority of the nation’s school districts.

One possible course of action to guarantee superintendent managerial expertise may be to restructure present certification requirements. Considering the critical nature of management, a separate or extended certification might be provided by a specialized university preparation track that is supplemented by direct state agency involvement. University programs should not continue to be isolated from local districts and the state agency in licensing superintendents.

This restructured certificate or license should be sized for large, medium, and small districts. It seems incongruent to certify a superintendent-manager for responsibility to manage a budget ranging from one million to one billion dollars. Present superintendent certification assumes a superintendent is qualified for any size of district. This assumption may have been appropriate 50 years ago but not in today's complex world of public education.

## Role of Professional Associations

In developing or creating a new or restructured certificate, states might choose to require superintendents to obtain professional recognition from a national or state professional association. A good example of a professional recognition program is one currently sponsored by the Association of School Business Officials. Applicants wishing to become recognized school business officials must meet criteria based on academic preparation, specialized training, experience, and recommendations from other practicing Registered School Business Officials. This program fills a void in school business officer state certification and university based preparation.

A possible model for superintendent executive management recognition is a coordinated consortium effort by universities, state agencies, and professional organizations. The university role would be to academically prepare applicants in appropriate content knowledge and essential skills enriched by field based experiences (practicum) aligned to course content/standards. The state agency's role would insure essential skills and knowledge were assessed and validated. The state agency might additionally assume responsibility to provide training in "essential" skills beyond university preparation requirement levels. The university and state, then together, could recommend candidates to professional associations for a "recognition" (or registration) assessment at the appropriate district size and budget level.

Portfolio review and interviews by professional organizations certainly seem to be logistically feasible. Each year about 2,200 new superintendents (about 50% new to the superintendency) actually are employed from pools averaging from 10 to 20 applicants (Glass, 2002). At the state level, the normal annual turnover of superintendents is about 20 %. National associations could organize and complete the recognition process working in conjunction with state affiliates.

The AASA currently provides numerous professional development opportunities for its membership. State affiliates often offer an even greater and broader number of opportunities. Although AASA might be thought to be the "lead" organization in preparing superintendents, other groups such as the principal associations provide professional development closely aligned with some aspects of the superintendency.

Numerous professional organizations serve superintendents and central office administrators; superintendents (AASA), personal directors (American Society for Public Administration [ASPA]), business managers (Association of School Business Officials [ASBO]), facility directors (Council of Educational Facility Planners International [CEFPI]), and curriculum directors (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD]) along with umbrella

organizations such as the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) , National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), University Council on Educational Administration (UCEA), National Council of Professors of Educational Administration and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The American Association of Management (AAM) might also be considered an allied professional group. These organizations sponsor numerous training opportunities for members. Several have made recent efforts to become quasi-licensing organizations.

## Recognition Levels

The vast range of district sizes, types, and budgets create a three tier “mastery” of professional superintendent management: (1) executive management, (2) registered management, and (3) qualified management. This scheme would accommodate district size differences as executive superintendent managers would likely be found in very large districts, registered managers in medium sized districts, and qualified managers in smaller districts.

A separate set of requirements need to be developed for each tier. An applicant should not necessarily be required to begin at the bottom tier. Many experienced central office administrators may be well prepared for the “executive management” tier without first going through the “registered” and “qualified” tiers.

A reasonable question evolving from this scheme is whether principals and central office administrators might be discouraged from seeking the superintendency because of raised levels for preparation, assessment, licensing, and professional recognition. A recent study found there to be no lack of qualified applicants for superintendents (Glass & Bjork, 2003).

Superintendent applicants with demonstrated and “recognized” management expertise in all likelihood would be more desirable (and qualified) candidates for vacant superintendent positions. Professional recognition by universities, states, and professional organizations would accentuate the importance of competent district management. Many boards now seem to “assume” that every state licensed superintendent is a competent manager of district fiscal, human, and physical resources. Considering the haphazard manner of current preparation and licensing, this simply is not true in a high percentage of cases. Superintendent research shows management expertise is and has been, over the years, the prime hiring criteria used by boards (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000).

## The Role of Standard and Performance Indicators

Many essential skills and knowledge bases are currently being offered by higher education programs as required by state sponsored programs and standards based licensing requirements. Specific management skills areas such as cash accounting, auditing, and financial investing are often provided by private sector groups.

Current National Policy Board and Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium ( ISLLC)

standards are vague and insufficient to serve as an accurate means to identify and verify quality district superintendent management. In fact, the ISLLC “performance indicators” do not even mention essential areas of district management! And, they do not differentiate between district sizes, budgets, types, and programs (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). The performance indicators, while mostly appropriate, are merely outline “statements” of required training and performance.

The AASA superintendent standards are sufficiently credible (validated) to serve as an appropriate initial launch point for establishing a “management curriculum” for the superintendency (Hoyle, 1993). A credible training program should be based on both validated standards and indicators. This joint undertaking between higher education preparation programs, state agencies, and professional associations to develop a “validated” training program could prove to district improvement.

The depth of a “management” curriculum is precise and detailed. An example would be that superintendents must be able to insure the state accounting manual provisions are being adhered to in a proper manner. Few superintendents have taken undergraduate courses in accounting and fewer have had a general introduction to accounting in their education administration preparation program. These state accounting manuals are typically hundreds of pages of complex information and detailed forms. This information is currently only provided occasionally by state agencies and professional associations and rarely provided by higher education classes. Most often this information is acquired (sometimes well and sometimes not so well) via on the job training. Many citizens might be quite upset to learn their superintendent (“chief executive officer”) managing a 50 million dollar budget has little if any understanding of basic accounting (or bookkeeping) functions. The same can be said of many other important (and expensive) areas of district operations such as fringe benefits, workers compensation, and investments.

### A Compendium of “Best Practices”

The complexity of district management requires a substantial compendium of “best practices” to insure efficient and effective management. This compendium, built on a verified knowledge and a validated standards base, should be a joint work of university, state agency, and professional associations. This district management “bible” might merge university textbooks, state manuals, and professional association publications into a usable “best practices” text. The curriculum needs to be built on research, not anecdotal accounts or conventional wisdom based on flawed professional practice.

Again, an extensive validation process is needed to insure “best practices” in the compendium are realistic, appropriate and inclusive for the various sizes and types of districts. The compendium topics might influence the curriculum of higher education courses, topics of state agency training, and evaluation standards for professional recognition. It should insure alignment between the university programs, state agency, and professional associations concerns. These compendia of best practices would serve as the base documents for the three tier recognition assessment.

## Five Domains of Superintendent Executive Management

There are five domains of management preparation for superintendents (1) fiscal, (2), personnel, (3) support services (4) facilities, and (5) student services. Each domain can be developed into an instructional and performance module.

Module 1 – Fiscal		
Service Provider	Service	Verification
University Program	Content knowledge about finance systems, accounting, auditing, salary management, budget systems	Written documents, successful practicum's, portfolios, interviews
State Agency	Topical training in state fund accounting, reimbursement documents, compliance documents, purchasing, inventory	Successful participation in topical training, state monitored internship or apprenticeship, portfolio
Professional Associations	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews.

### Module 1 – Fiscal

This critical module is focused on planning and managing the finances of school districts. The role of the university based program should be to disseminate content knowledge about state financing, taxing systems, budgeting systems, basic contract law, risk management programs, and structures of salary/wage management. This probably should be a 9 or 12 semester hour course sequence in finance, budget, and operations management. Practicum and field experience hours need to be required for students to experience first hand fiscal, budget, and operations systems at work in “model” school districts. Importantly, the course content (if possible) would extend previous learning at the master’s (principal licensing) level. An example is “budgeting at the building level,” a common content area in many master’s programs in educational administration.

The state role should be to provide specialized training (example being state accounting manual procedures) introduced in the university fiscal sequence augmented by practicum and field experience contacts. Other examples would be requiring students to attend state agency sponsored workshops and training sessions focused on implementing and managing district management programs in inventory, material distribution, fund accounting, auditing, and purchasing. The participation might be kept in “professional portfolios” containing specifics of the training (objectives, hours, content etc.) and of course the performance level of the participant.

Every state has very specific requirements on how these management functions are to be performed and accounted for by local districts. Most states have already learned the best way to achieve management uniformity is through agency sponsored workshop and training sessions. Hopefully, state agencies feel participants in these state sponsored training sessions perform better if they already have received baseline content knowledge in prior higher education

coursework.

An excellent example is the state of Washington's practice where the state auditor general directly audits the finances of school districts. Districts reimburse the auditor general's office for these costs and in return receive excellent staff training in how the state desires districts to maintain fiscal records, control budget processes, and insure proper accounting practices. Superintendents many times receive the same training from the auditors as the district bookkeepers and clerks.

### Internships and Apprenticeships.

Once a student has completed a 9 or 12 semester hour sequence and met state requirements in specialized management curricula, a 2 year internship or 1 year "apprenticeship" in a district central office should be required for licensing and nomination for professional recognition. A comprehensive internship would be planned and sequenced "on the job training" woven into the student-administrators "normal" working day as principal or central office administrator. This on the job internship would be supervised by the district superintendent and a university faculty member.

A 1 year apprenticeship in executive management would involve at least 25% to 50% time release. Internships would qualify applicants for initial recognition subject to further training. A completed apprenticeship would qualify applicants for "full" recognition. The most intense part of the internship and apprenticeship would be in the area of fiscal, budget, and operations management.

<b>Module 2 - Personnel Management</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
University Program	Content knowledge about personnel planning, evaluation, recruiting, interviewing, induction, payroll management, and staff development	Written documents, successful practicum, portfolios, interviews, and journals.
State Agency	Topical training in state evaluation systems, personnel reporting systems, state laws and regulations	Successful participation in topical training subjects, state monitored internship or apprenticeship, portfolio.
Professional Associations	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews.

### Module 2 Personnel Management

In this module, 9 semester hours of university course content would be required to provide essential knowledge of personnel practices such as managing recruitment, evaluation, induction, and staff development programs. Three semester hours need to be required in personnel operation management areas such as fringe benefits, safety, and collective bargaining contract management. The last 3 semester hours need to be an advanced school law class focusing on legal issues

particularly related to various types of contracts affecting staff and students.

As in Module 1, students need to be constantly required in practicum hours to observe and participate in district based personnel programs. Again, much of the content in this module is related to some content at the master's level. Again, attention should be paid to sequencing master's degree (principal licensing) and superintendent preparation.

The state role in this module might be the same as in Module 1. Similar to Module 1, internship or apprentice hours need to be spent in the personnel office or division of a school district. In the private sector and in schools of business, the training of personnel managers is a graduate degree enterprise. Again, an internship needs to require release time. The state, as in Module 1, might develop a battery of "check" tests for students to pass in each of the personnel management specialties before being eligible for review by a professional "personnel" association.

<b>Module 3 - Facilities</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
University Program	Content knowledge in facility planning process, assessment, financing, construction, retrofit, and remodeling	Written documents, successful practicum, project review.
State Agency	Topical training in state requirements for facility reports, construction, safety inspection	Successful completion of topical training, internship and apprenticeship.
Professional Associations	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio and project review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews.

### Module 3 Facility Management

The essential content of this module might be taught in a 3 semester hour course supplemented by practicum hours working in a local district on a school facility planning project. This would include facility assessment, educational specifications, bonding issues, bond campaigns, and management of existing facilities.

The state role in Module 3 might be specialized training in state sponsored facility construction programs, rules and regulations applying to facilities, and required safety programs. Again, the state might develop a series of check tests to insure mastery of content in these areas prior to recommending to a professional group for recognition.

Creating a training module in facility maintenance could easily be coordinated as most superintendent trainees are either practicing principals or in central office roles.



<b>Module 4 - Student Personnel</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
University Program	Content knowledge in special education management, student records, NCLB management, health, juvenile services, attorney services.	Written documents, successful practicum, project review, portfolios.
State Agency	Topical training in state regulations in special education, student records, student assessment, compliance, safety, and health issues.	Successful completion of topical training, internship and apprenticeship.
Professional Associations	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations.

**Module 4 Student Personnel**

The content for this module might be contained a 3 semester course in the university program reinforced by practicum experiences in school districts. Experienced principals and central office administrators often receive training at the master’s level or via on the job training in some this area. In this module special attention must be paid to the superintendent’s role in managing district special education programs.

The state role is again to provide needed specialized topical training and develop a series of check tests for students prior to being forwarded to the professional association for recognition.

<b>Module 5 - Support Services</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
University Program	Content knowledge about transportation, food services, outsource contracts, service contracts, legal, health, accounting, maintenance.	Written documents, successful practicum, project reviews.
State Agency	Topical training in state contracting and food service.	Successful completion of topical training, internship and apprenticeship.
Professional Associations	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews..

**Module 5 Support Services**

University based course hour requirements may not be required, but extensive topical training sessions should be conducted by the state agency to insure prospective superintendents possess sufficient knowledge in state regulations about busing, transportation, and out sourcing services. The agency training should be supplemented by “practicum” hours in a local district with hands

on experience in bus scheduling, completing reimbursement forms, food inventories, safety, and other relevant experiences. State agency developed check tests again would be administered to students.

Table 3 provides a tentative outline of a superintendent management training structure. The scope of the training involves many more classroom hours and in field placements. The result will be more costs to students, districts, and states. However, the payoff would be in higher levels of superintendent job performance and in the long run, provide a better school system.

## Conclusion

### Superintendent Management Program and Profile

At the conclusion of the university based courses and training provided by the state agency, each student could present a composite profile illustrating content learning, experiences, and demonstrated competencies attested to by state agency tests, university based tests and assessment and feedback from district superintendents. This broad based assessment should be sufficient to convince school boards and communities that a superintendent is competent to manage district fiscal and physical resources.

Fortunately, most of the management training needed by superintendents is assessable, as there is a right way and a wrong way to perform a task. In brief, it is a measurable type of training at the pre-service and in-service level.

The principal challenge for a state to develop and implement a superintendent management training program will be to:

1. Align efforts between higher education programs, professional associations, and the state agency.
  2. Require districts to provide release time for training, internships, and apprenticeships.
  3. Provide incentives for principals and central office administrators to enter a superintendent training program.
1. Establish a program to continually update and monitor the skills of central office administrators already recognized.

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## **Solutions**

# Chapter 5. The Art of Successful School-Based Management



This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

## The Art of Successful School-Based Management [\[1\]](#)

In this monograph the author offers the reader a new perspective on an important, dynamic, and sometimes daunting issue: managing successful school-based leadership. Organized around the seven elements of art criticism, the author uses an arts-based approach to weave together notions of research-based leadership skills for successful school-based management with standards of professional competence as represented by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. More particularly, in each section of this monograph the author presents a brief introduction of the leadership construct as represented in the art metaphor more fully described below. Then, the author suggests some possible applications of the theoretical element to the real-world realities of school leadership. Using a common-sense discussion on leadership coupled with theory and research within an arts-based perspective, the author encourages the reader to engage in the seemingly persistent problems and old trials of school management from a new perspective resulting in some refreshing possibilities for supporting student achievement in schools. It is also the goal of this arts-based approach that the reader might avoid the tendency to reduce school-based management to formula and instead recognize the complexity of leading and managing students and teachers within the constantly evolving culture of today's schools. As a result of this qualitative inquiry into the nature of leadership for today's schools, the author invites a new vision for old assumptions in schools, for teacher leadership, and for student learning. The eventual product of such an investigation might be a new vision for school leadership that is "more diversified and equitable" and one that "can expand our conception of human cognition and help us develop new forms of pedagogical practice" (Eisner, 1998, p. 245).

Leadership in the school building is at the heart of school leadership. It is in the school building, the halls, and classrooms that principals most directly impact teacher behavior. The question that arises from a study leadership in the school building is not about if principals can affect teaching

behavior but rather in what manner and to what extent principals might affect teaching behavior, school environment, and ultimately student learning (Stronge, 2002). And there is growing consensus in the literature, most recently reported in the “School Leadership Study” out of Stanford University (Davis, et al. 2005) that successful school leaders can influence student achievement in at least two important ways: (1) By selecting, supporting, and developing effective teachers; (2) By managing, implementing, and adjusting effective organizational environments. Other authors in this book will devote more time to the first element of effective leadership. In this monograph the author will focus on how school-based leaders can effectively manage the competing, and sometimes conflicting, demands of leading in today’s schools so as to provide an organizational environment that encourages growth and development on the part of students, teachers, and administrators. The responsibility of managing a successful learning environment is one shared by all stakeholders. If doing it alone is the plan for the school principal, then research suggests that the leader is less likely to maintain and support learning environments and is more likely to “burn out” under the broadening responsibilities of today’s accountability environment (Hargreaves, 2006). In light of this harsh reality, in sections of this monograph the author will offer school leaders ideas and possibilities for sharing the awesome responsibility of managing effective schools.

In distributed leadership contexts, school based leaders find ways for multiple stakeholders to participate in the leadership, and thus successful management, of schools. This notion of distributed leadership is most recently articulated by Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink (2006) in their book, *Sustainable Leadership*. The principal, as school building leader, interacts with teachers and students. It is at the school building where teachers also provide leadership in the daily interactions with their peers, with their students, and with their parents and other stakeholders. And, it is in the daily interactions with students that teachers and principals can encourage students to take on leadership. The literature regarding successful school based management continues to grow both in breadth and depth and if my graduate students are any indicator of today’s leaders, school based stakeholders yearn for specific and guiding principles for how to manage today’s learning environments. In very obvious ways it is at school building level where the tug between theory and practice is most powerful and most often confrontational (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Although establishing theoretical context is essential in framing a theory of leadership, principals often consider such discussions meaningless in helping them make sense of daily pressures and demands of schooling. What principals want is a theory of school building leadership that can speak honestly and directly to the challenges of helping teachers and students achieve in an atmosphere of standards and accountability (Stronge, 2002).

## A Way of Thinking

Over the past few years the author has investigated leadership in the schools from an arts-based research methodology. Based on his own experiences, conversations with leaders, and research, he grew to be suspicious that leading was in fact more than just good management. Indeed, it was management but also much more. There was this sense of art, not just craft, among the very best leaders. For example, the author began to discover that traditional assessment methods for

instructional leadership were often quite effective in addressing narrowing teaching functions but failed to grasp the nuances, subtleties, and totality of successful classrooms (Blumberg, 1989; Pajak, 2003). From a very different point of departure, Stronge (2002) also concludes that school leader practice has little to no effect on teacher behavior and subsequently student learning. According to Stronge, principals managed to do the craft of observations and provide some evidence of what they saw. They often completed this task with short, drop-in visits. But what was missing from this type of management was the fact that little change in teacher or student behavior came about as a result of the observation. In some ways, according to Stronge, principals failed to address the complexity of the teacher function. Indeed, leading schools and supporting teachers required school principals to do much more than managing. Successful schools were places where craft and art were practiced.

At this point, the author needs to ask the reader to consider a slight shift in thinking. Instead of trying to compete with the reader's assumptions and practices regarding school leadership, assumptions that emerge from powerful and successful experience no doubt, and instead of trying to convince the reader that the answer is "this" instead of "that," the author wants to encourage the reader to engage in "and" thinking. Recently when working with a high school principal, the author had this exchange: "I noticed that your teachers did not feel you visited their classrooms often enough. How might you respond to them?" The principal, in obvious frustration, responded "Yes, I know I need to do more than I have been doing but I cannot find time because of all the discipline referrals." The principal was doing what the author affectionately calls "Yes . . . but" thinking. How many times might one say in a day's time "Yes, I could get to that job but I cannot find time" or "Yes, I need to be in halls greeting students but I just cannot get out of the office and all the paperwork." This type of thinking tends to be defeatist in nature as it builds obstacles instead of possibilities. A different way to consider our thinking is what the author calls "and" thinking. For example, "Yes, I need to be in the halls more often and I will distribute some of the paperwork so that I can find time to do it." In reality, individuals tend to find time for those things that matter most. If being in the halls greeting students was really important, then they would create a world where that could happen. The shift from "yes. . . but" thinking to "and" thinking is a subtle but powerful change. Such a shift represents a change in values and priorities, indeed a paradigmatic change. In like fashion, when considering the work in this monograph the author wants to challenge the reader to engage in "and" thinking and not "yes. . . but" thinking. Instead of looking for the absolute answer in this work, consider the possibility that the content offers another way to be successful; not the only one. Now let the reader put that type of thinking to work as he or she prepares for the more specific discussion of successful management of schools.

### Arts-Based Research as a Way of Seeing

Is quantitative research the best choice for discovering truth? Or, is qualitative research the best methodology? In some traditional debates, the argument might follow something like this: "Yes, qualitative research offers some answers to questions on teacher performance but the real answers are in quantitative analyses." Or, "Yes, quantitative research has been around a long time but it is qualitative research that most clearly offers the best picture of teaching." Both examples tend to

create obstacles and not possibilities. The alternative conversation might flow something like this: “Quantitative research has certainly withstood the test of time with its rigor and analysis and qualitative research provides another perspective and level of analysis on the same behaviors.” This type of thinking encourages possibilities, not obstacles.

A similar dichotomy emerges regarding the nature of effective teaching. The debate over whether effective leadership is art or craft, or if effective teaching is technical in nature or aesthetic, is important and often lively. Indeed, there is growing research that supports the notion that teaching, when done well, is both art and craft, technical and aesthetic, personal and clinical (Lewis, 2004; Newmann et al., 1996; Blumberg, 1989; Eisner, 1983). When individuals begin coupling their thinking that teaching is both art and craft with a growing presence of arts-based research that seeks to extend the notion of what is meaningful, then they can begin to see the value of “and” thinking. In fact, teacher effectiveness research findings support the notion that students learn best from teachers who can be characterized as managing both the craft and the artistic dimensions of effective teaching. So as the reader engages in the journey of what makes for successful school based management, the author wants to implore him or her to engage in “and” thinking so that he or she can begin building power bridges for successful schooling and fewer walls.

Toward defining, evaluating, and thus understanding the leadership function in the school building the author will ground the following discussion in an arts-based research theoretical approach (Eisner, 1998; Barone & Eisner, 1997). The arts-based research format seemed appropriate for this investigation because as a form of qualitative research, arts-based investigations can more readily gain “a firm foothold” on the nature of human interactions embedded in school cultures (Eisner, 1998). The function of successful leadership is characterized as practice that acknowledges, embraces, and develops the relational nature of schooling. That relation may be student to student, student to teacher, student to subject, teacher to teacher, teacher to leader, leader to community, community to school, and on and on. At some level, all successful schooling is relational in nature. In addition, qualitative thought is always a component of interaction between individuals (Eisner, 1998) and coming to terms with the nature of relationships is central to the human experience. So, as readers come to terms with the fact that leadership encompasses both technical and aesthetic dimensions, craft and art, then they can begin to understand that an arts-based approach is entirely appropriate as one way to understand effective school leadership and management of schools.

As the author begins the work from a qualitative theory perspective (Eisner, 1998; Barone, 1998) that leadership may be viewed as an art form and that it can be described as interactive and relational, a sort of choreography of human understanding, then the reader might do well to develop a mechanism for “seeing” it as an artist might view a painting or a choreographer a dance (Kelehear, 2006). For the purposes of this investigation, that mechanism comes in the form of the elements of art and it is the goal of this monograph to help the reader begin developing some facility with aesthetic dimensions of leadership in the school building. Specifically, the author will use the elements of art to help frame the discussion of school-based leadership in this



monograph. Just as the elements of art can assist a viewer of art describe, analyze, interpret, or evaluate a work, those same elements can help a viewer of leadership art describe, analyze, interpret, or evaluate the management of schools. When individuals continue to view leadership narrowly, as a function of management and formula, then they narrow their view of leadership from an art of human experience and understanding to a strategy for control and manipulation of personnel. By applying the language of art individuals can construct a lens through which the nature of one's humanity begins to become clearer.

## Elements of Art as a Way of Understanding

The elements of art are line, value, shape, form, space, color, and texture. In the first part of each section the author will offer an artist's definition of each element. In an attempt to help the reader connect the arts-based frame to the leadership frame, in the second part of each discussion the author will briefly describe the leadership themes and possible implications. In the third part of each section, and indeed a key part of the entire discussion, the author will highlight key research initiatives and findings relative to that particular function. In the final analysis, the reader can have a helpful and grounded overview of what makes for successful school-based leadership in today's schools.

Because the author is framing the leadership discussion in an arts-based theoretical approach, some additional consideration about that approach is necessary. Similarly, as the author organizes the leadership discussion with a corresponding and appropriate language of art, in the form of elements of art, then that format can help the reader to understand the nature of the form. Eisner (1985) has explored the implications of this challenge of leadership as art most fully in his work, *The Educational Imagination*. A few of the more notable scholars who also looked to the arts to provide useful models to better understand and improve educational practice include S. L. Lightfoot (1983; 1997), P. Jackson (1998), T. Barone (1988), and A. Blumberg (1989). Within art, the author suggests that disciplines of aesthetics and criticism in general provide us a structure for understanding.

Dewey (1934) conceived aesthetics as the branch of philosophy that allows one to analyze the way he or she looks at the qualities of the world and assign value to experiences. Dewey's aesthetics provides a theoretical construct for thinking about leadership. Individuals are engaging in aesthetic thinking when they use their perceptions, sensations, and imagination to gain insight into what they might feel and understand about the world (Greene, 2001). Furthermore, Dewey (1934) implies that aesthetic refers to one's first critical reflection on objects he or she experiences. What is especially important is that experiences stem from attention to qualitative relationships. Through these reflections one's world and the wonder of life begin to take on deeper meaning. Priorities become clear. Important events assume an appropriate relationship with daily challenges. As these experiences first occur outside of language and the expected constructions of the world, by reflecting on them they offer individuals opportunities for understanding. This type of reflective analysis of experience is an integral part of critical theory through which one examines his or her own practice and habits of mind.

In cultivating this sensitivity one begins taking on an aesthetic task. One begins answering the questions: What is of value? What is meaningful? What is moving about a given situation? It is through attending to the smallest nuances of art or life that one begins to transcend to a more attentive form of existence. He or she moves to a plane of existence that releases imagination, passions, curiosity, and extraordinary circumstances. It is Dewey's view of reflection that leads one to the notion of critical theory as a vehicle for understanding and valuing. Dewey was adamant that this form of aesthetic experience is antithetical to the appreciation of beauty. Dewey's aesthetics is an active form of mental engagement with the world – not a detached, coldly objective appraisal.

When one begins to recognize that leadership is inseparable from human interaction, then one begins to understand that leadership is more about listening to and understanding each other rather than devising a checklist of behaviors. Leadership is engagement, not detachment or mere observation. The benefit is that one begins to appreciate the nuances and subtleties that come with managing and leading people. Being able to engage in this critique of human interaction and motivation allows one to view leadership as an art rather than a formula. It is interpretative, relative, and sophisticated. As such, it requires a comparable methodology for understanding: aesthetics, critical theory, and leadership as art. Following the guidance of aesthetics and critical theory, one can begin to view the art of leadership through the lenses of the elements of art. Just as the elements provide art observers with a language for critique, those same elements can help frame the critique of leadership.

Borrowing this notion from the world of art, the author will use the elements to describe specific, observable attributes of the art of leadership. As mentioned above, the elements are line, shape, form, space, color, value, and texture. In terms of understanding leadership, the author suggests that the elements will offer building blocks for understanding basic leadership skills. The author takes each of the elements as discrete parts of the leadership function. As the reader becomes more skilled at describing leadership, then he or she will also notice that it is difficult and artificial to see the elements as “stand alone” skills of leadership. Rather, the reality is more about one element playing a primary role while other elements function in a supportive capacity. Together, they support the leader's ability to work through a given situation.

As one begins to rely on elements, one begins to come to terms with what is seen, felt, and sensed. Understanding leadership becomes an aesthetic process. One not only knows it cognitively and conceptually, but also emotionally and personally. And leadership is skill, emotion, and personal. Leadership, when it is done well, is an art and applying the standards of the seven elements of art might help one to begin to know what leadership does, what it looks like, what it feels like, what makes it work. Just as with art, school leadership is not about finding a “magic formula.” Given the complexity of people and situations that leaders confront, it is no small wonder that no prescription exists. But, when one sees something work at this school or that system, one may often try to assign the success to a single strategy or individual. The reality is, however, that the success comes from the interdependence and interaction of several leadership functions in much the same way that the elements might contribute to the interpretation of an artwork.

# Effective School Building Management: A Way for Learning

The elements of art are the basic visual symbols in the language of art. They provide a specific, and often concrete, vocabulary for describing art. The elements are line, shape, form, space, color, and texture. The elements of art help create a view, a perception and a vision of effective management in the school building. Within each school, all seven elements may be present. The relative perceptivity of the various elements in a school, however, can be very different depending on changing needs, varying times of the year, or changes within the district. The constant, however, is that in effective schools, and by association in effective leadership, the seven elements provide a specific mechanism for reflecting on practice and for navigating the often difficult choices that come with educating our children for successful citizenship.

In the table below [See Table #1], the author offers an alignment of the ISLLC to the Elements of Art and the particular Leadership Dimension embedded in each element. In the discussion to follow, the author will offer each element, an artist definition, a leadership perspective, and then relevant research as a way to frame the key research and best practices for successful school building leadership.

Table 1  
Aligning the Elements of Art, Leadership Skills, and ISLLC Standards

Element of Art Line	Leadership Dimensions Limits, Boundaries, Parameters, Expectations	Supporting ISLLC Standard Standard #1, #2 Facilitating a shared vision that is shared by school community
Value	Priority, Focus	#2 Supporting student learning and teacher development
Shape	Management, Details	#3 Ensuring management of organization, operations, resources
Form	Perspective, Empathy	#5 Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner
Space	Collaboration, Growth, Challenge and Support	#2 Supporting growth of student and teacher within school culture
Color	Diversity, Openness	#6 Understanding & responding to larger political, social, economic, legal, cultural contexts
Texture	Tapestry, Bridges, Inclusiveness	#4 Collaborating with families, community members; responding to diverse perspectives

Element # 1:

Line: A long narrow mark or stroke made on or in a surface

The Artist's View:

Artists recognize the important contribution line brings to a holistic understanding of a given work. Lines can be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curvilinear, and zigzagged. When artists vary the line's length, width, texture, direction, and degree of curve they can multiply the visual impact of a work of art. For example, vertical lines convey height and inactivity. Vertical lines also express stability, dignity, poise, stiffness, and formality. Imagine how vertical lines on the side of a building will make the building look taller, more stable. By contrast horizontal lines are static. They express peace, rest, quiet, and stability. Horizontal lines can help make one feel content, relaxed, and calm. Diagonal and zigzag lines suggest activity. They communicate action, movement, and tension. Diagonal lines also seem to work against gravity and create a pull and tension that can be uncomfortable. Curved lines also express activity. Spiral curves around a central point are hypnotic and tend to draw the eye to the center. Zigzag lines in an artwork help to create a feeling of confusion. Clearly an element as simple as line can have a powerful affect on the message of an artwork.

ISLLC Standard #1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

A Leadership Perspective:

For school leaders, line means to be clear about boundaries and parameters. Successful school leaders communicate expectations for students and staff. They are consistent with the application of that understanding. Few things are as demoralizing to a staff as to see the leader apply rules inconsistently. The school draws stability, dignity, and poise from the consistent and fair application of rules and expectations.

Line also serves to remind leadership of the important role of mission and vision. When teachers are clear about where the school is going and how they are going to get there, then they begin to understand their role in the process. Conversely, when the direction of the school seems flat, or horizontal, then the learning atmosphere becomes stagnant and unproductive.

Finally, line informs leadership about the delineating negotiable and non-negotiable boundaries. If a school committee is to decide a particular issue, then effective leadership is clear about what is open to conversation and what is not. For a committee to work at an issue and submit a solution only to discover that the answer was not one of the options can frustrate good intentions.

In a recent article regarding organizational culture, Patterson and Kelehear (2003) assert: "Even with the best of intentions, organizations can't devote equal attention to all of the important culture values. Something's got to give when various culture values compete for your organization's time and energy" (p. 35). Without attending to the assumptions and beliefs in managing the school, leaders run the risk of developing "organizational blind spots [that] represent undetected misalignment between what the organization says it values vs. what it really values, what it says it does vs. what it really does, or what it really does vs. what it actually values" (p. 35). Although there continues to be some debate over the relationship between culture

and leadership, the debate is not that the two do not impact each other but the degree to which one has influence over the other. In the NASA article referenced above, the conclusion of the investigating committee on the Columbia disaster was that leadership absolutely effects organization culture. In fact, the committee asserted unequivocally that leaders create culture and leaders alter cultures. When what is valued, what is said to be of value, and what is valued in practice are not consistent, then leadership has created a dysfunctional organizational culture destined for failure.

Bolman and Deal (2003) assert that leadership plays a key role in providing symbolism for what the organizational culture values. Whether in terms of providing symbols (e.g., clothing, school cultures, trophy cases), providing vision and mission statements (e.g., in writing, on walls, in shared language), sharing organizational stories and myths (e.g., founders' day, past heroes), maintaining rituals (e.g., pep rallies, senior lunch rooms, seasonal concerts), or in other symbolic ways, leaders help craft a shared perspective on what matters most in the school and help build a culture that supports those articulated values.

Starratt (1991; 1994; 2003; 2004), Sergiovanni (1992; 2005), Strike, et al. (1998), Fullan (2003), Buzzelli & Johnston (2002), Cooper (1998), and others have articulated that school leadership has a responsibility of not only establishing a shared vision but that they are to create a shared ethical vision of behavior among all constituents in the learning community. That is to say that an effective leader helps others know how interaction among teachers, parents, and students is to occur, helps others know what to do in moments of confrontation and crisis, and helps others know how to engage each other in matters relevant to student concerns whether academic, emotional, or physical in nature.

When the rules of interaction and roles are clear, then individuals reduce the chances for misunderstanding that otherwise might infect healthy organizational environments. Sometimes leaders like to refer to their schools as families, a comfortable analogy upon first view. There is, however, something dysfunctional about such a comparison. In a family environment, there are often very clear distinctions between what parents may do and what children can do. When we apply the family metaphor to schooling, then we run the risk of establishing very clear expectations for the parent (i.e., principal) and the children (i.e., teachers and students) and there is something very unhealthy about such an organizational culture. Thus, making expectations clear is only part of the challenge. Treating each other fairly, so as to encourage a shared stewardship of learning and a shared responsibility for what happens during a school day, is an important part of establishing the element of line in an effectively managed school environment. An element closely related to that of line in effective school management is that of value where the leadership creates a culture of mutual growth among students and teachers alike.

Element #2:

Value: The lightness or darkness of a color or object

The Artist's View:

Value is the art element that describes the relative darkness or lightness of an object in a drawing or painting. How much value a surface has is dependent on how much light is reflected. If there is an absence of light, the surface will be dark; and if there is much light, the surface becomes lighter. There are many ways that artists create value. For example, when one looks at a dollar bill, one may see an entire artwork that is composed of tiny lines. The artist or the engraver uses lines to create value. The closer and more plentiful the line appears in a space, the darker the value. In turn the less line in a given space there is less value, and the space appears lighter. In fact, value is related to all the elements and is often understood best in association with other elements.

ISLLC Standard #1 and #2: A school administrator facilitates a vision and promotes success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

A Leadership Perspective:

For school leadership, value represents the “light” that emerges from daily activities that reflects attention to what matters most. Often times in schools individuals can fail to recognize, or to remember, what is most important. They earnestly engage in any number of activities that seem important, for the moment, but cast little light on the picture of what or who they are. In other words, their actions do not adequately support their most central, core values.

Core values are not observations, perceptions, or operating rules. They are things individuals believe to be extremely important. They are characterized by descriptors such as fundamental, guiding, philosophical, and pointing the way. Core values help answer such questions as: Who are we? What do we stand for? What business are we really in? What is important to us? Where do we want to go in our preferred future?

Accompanying core values are “we will” statements. “We will” statements are specific, concrete, observable, measurable actions that support the philosophy that emerges from core values. In many instances, the “we will” statements are single efforts such as special events or activities. In other cases, however, “we will” statements involve multi-year approaches to complex and systemic issues.

When individuals consider leading a school, it is important to note the relative importance of the many activities that come in a school day. Value in leadership means defining what matters most so that all can begin to understand what the business of school is. As individuals articulate the core values, the guiding and philosophical principles, then all decisions can emerge from a shared belief. The synergistic effect is that they can begin putting their energy toward specific values, avoiding the ad hoc decisions characteristic of many schools. What the student, teacher, leader, and community see reflected in the activities of the school is a value-driven institution with a vision for where it is going rather than an event-driven body. Just as with value in art, core values speak to all other elements of leadership. When done well, core values become the guiding principles for all decisions and help create school space characterized as a place for authentic

learning and caring.

In watching the students and teacher work together one trait consistently emerges as essential to a caring and authentic school: Empathy. Empathy can become value in that it represents a guiding principle for the school culture. Empathy is that interpersonal quality that allows one to know the feelings of another (Kelehear, 2001; 2002). As students work with each other, as teachers work with the students, and as the principal assists the teacher, the level of empathy present defines the qualitative relationship. And at the same time, the participants cultivate a sense of caring in the relationship as they began to understand the commitment in working together toward shared goals. In as much as caring becomes a part of the school climate, the relationships become more substantive and paying attention to each other becomes the order of the day. A process by which we can begin to shape a positive school culture might begin as school based leaders realign the role of four key players in the school day: the student, the teacher, the leader, and the curriculum.

Given the powerful influence on standardized assessments, federal mandates, and state-level oversight, it is easy to reduce students to input/output items rather than see them in their humanity. In his book *Schools Without Failure*, William Glasser (1969) emphasizes that allowing grades to create an incentive for learning has, in fact, a contracting effect on what is learned. The more that grades, and by extension standardized tests, are emphasized the more that students want to know what is exactly on the test, and only those items on the test. Students come to believe that any other information can become an obstacle or a distraction to getting the grade, and thus should be ignored (p. 65). Effective school leadership will recognize that there is a role for grades and standardized testing. Indeed, they can help provide accountability for learning certain bits of information. But to rely solely on grades and traditional assessments is painfully shortsighted.

School based leaders can build a school culture that shines light on authentic student learning and staff professional growth. One way to construct such a climate is to place emphasis on what Ted Sizer (1992), in his book *Horace's School*, calls exhibitions. This type of assessment helps encourage students to bring together facts and basic learning to create a new understanding— what Mortimer Adler (p. 29) called maieutic expression. A word of Greek origin, maieutic is loosely translated as "giving birth." Just as an artist might be able to use the elements of art to paint a still life, it is the artist's use of those "skills" and the simultaneous interpretation of that object through experience and feelings that can give birth to a new perspective, a new understanding, a deeper cognition (Eisner, 2001). Similarly, other aspects of the curriculum could have the same consequence.

School leaders and teachers must help students come to command facts and information, the kind of information that is readily assessed through pencil and paper tests and standardized assessments. Quickly, however, students begin to use the newly acquired information in applications of the concepts through repeated practice and coaching; just as the artist begins to command the elements of art. Although many very good teachers might guide students to this level of mastery, this is not enough. Through demonstrations, exhibitions, or other public forums, teachers should encourage students to create a new, deeper understanding, a maieutic expression.

The student's knowledge and understanding takes on what Eisner (1994) calls "a social dimension in human experience" (p.39). But teachers and students will only be able to do such authentic practice when the environment in general, and school leadership in particular, supports such practice.

In a recent study of an arts magnet school (Bender-Slack, Miller, & Burroughs, 2006) researchers observed teaching practice in the standard curricular areas such as mathematics, English, social studies, and science. The researchers also followed the students to the classrooms for visual and performing arts. The purpose of their observations was to ascertain the degree to which an arts-infused curriculum was being implemented. The observation and data collection were conducted in an art magnet school; the same type of place that one might think that arts-infused practice would be the norm, not the exception. To the surprise of the researchers, teaching practice among the core subjects areas remained traditional (i.e., teacher centered, lecture formats, seat work) and void of arts-infused practices. Similarly, the art teachers rarely embraced the standard curriculum in their delivery of instruction. Keeping in mind that the mission statement of the school emphasized an arts-based, multi-disciplinary approach to learning, the researchers discovered that the school had changed leadership several times in the previous five years. The message for the researchers was clear, where leadership fails to support innovative practice for teachers and authentic performances for students then leadership could not expect for the school to be any different than one that might be characterized as unimaginative and traditional (Bender-Slack, Miller, & Burroughs, 2006).

Understanding the teacher's role in developing authentic learning experiences is essential to supporting a school culture focused on teacher and student learning. The traditional view that the teacher is the conveyor of knowledge and truth is only partially correct. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) and Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996) assert that students learn best when teachers are engaged in authentic pedagogy design and provide learning experiences that: 1) encourage students to build new knowledge, 2) embrace and support disciplined inquiry, and 3) have value beyond the school setting. Creating such authentic pedagogy supports knowledge that students believe is more meaningful and relevant than what might be expressed in traditional pencil and paper tests that seek rote answers to prescribed questions. This position is not to suggest that knowledge memorized is always an undesirable product of schooling. The practice alone, however, is wholly insufficient. Rather, and in keeping with a position supported by Dewey (1934) and more recently embraced by constructivist philosophy (e.g., Lambert et al., 2003), when students begin to engage subject matter in meaningful ways, then they begin to construct meaning of and establish value in the school curriculum. The ownership of problems in the curriculum moves from teacher to student. In other words, instead of a teacher presenting problems to students to be addressed, students move to engage problems (i.e., sources of dissonance) that compel them to resolve apparent inconsistencies in their previous understanding. An important part of this authentic perspective posited by Newmann and Wehlage (1995) and Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996) is that authentic pedagogy supports meaningful, personal, and private reflection on the part of students and teachers alike. In essence, they are addressing qualitative relationships and fine grained distinctions (Eisner, 2002) between what they knew to be true



before the learning experience compared to what they are coming to know based on the personal construction of new knowledge. This intrapersonal reflection then becomes part of a classroom that embraces the aesthetics of learning. As students continue to seek meaning and purpose in the new knowledge, then they move to open discourse with their peers and teachers.

In order for teachers to encourage authentic expression from student and for teachers themselves to experiment with what works for different types of students, there will need to be a special type of leadership. The role of the principal is to protect jealously the learning environment, to guard the classroom as a safe place where teachers and students may take risks, and to promote an atmosphere of openness and authentic communication. Embedded throughout this vision for leadership is the pivotal role of trust (Kelehear, 2001).

Through open communication, shared decision making, and mutual respect, the school will model the characteristics of a pluralistic, democratic society. There will be many teaching styles; ideally, as many as there are different learning needs. The leadership will celebrate those differences while maintaining high expectations for student learning. Allowing teachers to utilize different techniques does not free them from responsibility for student learning. In fact, the opposite is true. In as much as the principal allows for teachers to choose strategies for student learning, then the principal can hold those teachers responsible for what happens in the classroom. The question to the teacher will not be "Did you teach well today?" but rather, "Did the students learn today?" As Sizer (1984; 1992) reminds us, if the answer to the second question is "yes," then the answer to the first question is "yes." Said differently, one cannot have taught well in the absence of student learning!

Authentic leadership would seek to construct a context where the teachers and principal work together to form a school culture that is focused on student achievement and engaged citizenship. The teachers and principal would be clear about student achievement and teaching excellence as essential core values. They would attend only to those activities that support and foster student and, as an extension, teacher successes (Patterson, 1993, p. 37-52).

The nature of leadership would be such that it too is not a prescription. Rather, leadership in the authentic school would celebrate children's uniqueness and the art of teaching. Similarly, teachers and principal alike would understand that leadership is in itself an artwork under construction. Just as the principal celebrates and promotes the uniqueness of teachers, the teachers would likewise support and challenge the principal to be open, authentic, and a risk-taker in making decisions that support the core values of the school.

Authentic learning spaces emerge when leaders create opportunities for teachers and students to reflect on experiences in qualitative ways. Central to the construction of such a space requires leadership to design a curriculum in which all the disciplines are embraced as complementary and supportive and not in competition for space and budget. In essence, successful school management becomes a process of providing opportunities for meaning-making for teachers and student alike. The final assessment of our schools might be as Eisner (2001) states, "It's what students do with what they learn when they can do what they want to do that is the real measure of educational

achievement” (p. 370). If our students do not continue after school the things about which we talk in school, then we may have failed them.

In today’s schools, leaders are confronted with the harsh reality that effective teaching and leadership involve experiment, reflection, and refinement and that effective school based leadership supports such practices. Today’s school cultures must be places that allow teachers and leaders to recognize their own humanity and that of their students (Palmer, 1998). Both teachers and students ought to be allowed to fail and leaders must provide for them support in their mistakes. School leadership can begin, thus, to acknowledge that out of the diversity of ideas, great wonders can emerge. Indeed, Steinbeck (1955) reminds us, "teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit” (p.7). Today’s school building leader must have the strength of will and the commitment to doing what matters most: attending to the needs of the children. The best way to achieve this goal is for school leadership to allow for the art that is teaching where authentic learning and caring for each other carry the day. Being clear about value and the light it sheds on practice is indeed a crucial part of successful school based management.

Element #3:

## **Shape: Two-dimensional area**

The Artist’s View:

A shape is a two-dimensional area that is defined in some certain way. By drawing an outline of a circle on a piece of paper, one has created a shape. By painting a solid red square, one has also created a shape. Shapes may be either free-formed or geometric. Free-form shapes are uneven and irregular and usually promote a pleasant and soothing feeling. Geometric shapes on the other hand are stiff and uniform and generally suggest organization and management with little or no emotion. Shape tends to appeal more to viewers’ minds rather than to their emotions.

ISLLC Standard #3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

A Leadership Perspective:

Schools have a shape, a smell, a look, a feel. As we imagine our elementary school days, we create physical images that capture our learning experiences. Similarly, as we walk into the elementary school just before lunch to smell the bread cooking in the dining hall, we are taken back to some of our favorite (or maybe not so favorite) memories of schooling. Whatever the quality of those memories, they are certainly vivid. We watch the big yellow school bus traveling down the road and wonder about the children in that lovely “monster” of a vehicle. These images are not about instruction. They are about the other things that inform our memories and have deeply affected

our lives. Even though they are not instruction, they are important to the successful school. They are the shape of schooling.

Management is the shape of schools. We manage budgets, discipline, community relations, and personnel. These are not the things that should be our focus in schools but they are exactly the matters with which we must deal so that we might teach children. And, the degree to which a leader can handle aspects of time management, scheduling, random but daily details, personnel management, parent conferencing, and community relations will determine the level of success for the students at that school. Of the management details, supervision of personnel is the most rewarding, demanding, and exhausting. Successful leaders find ways to be instructional leaders by offering supervision, staff development, remediation, and when necessary termination. But during the whole process of management, leaders struggle to balance being compassionate and supportive with being clinical and direct with personnel. Both sets of skills are necessary, but it is the rare leader who can do them both well. Effective leaders understand how to shape the modes of management to support the business of student learning.

Recently, while involved in staff development for assistant principals, it became clear to the author that the systemic configuration in the schools inhibited, or prohibited, the proper application of leadership functions. Put bluntly, school leadership has assumed so many different roles in the building that some leaders felt they were not doing any of the jobs very well. In fact, based on recent research with practicing assistant principals (Kelehear, 2005) the author and participants reconstructed the leadership position so that myriad responsibilities might be separated into two categories, for two different positions. Instead of one position in charge of both management and leadership, there would be the Manager of Programs (MP) for administration and the Instructional Leader (IL) for instructional supervision. Being in charge in today's schools continues to be a daunting task. Given the competing demands of federal mandates, state assessments, standardized-testing schedules, shrinking revenue streams, and the like, it is no small wonder that children and teaching somehow get lost in the shuffle.

It is clear from the literature (Sergiovanni, 1999; Smith & Piele, 1989; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Fullan, 2001; Starratt, 2004; Robbins & Alvy, 2003) that principals are called upon to do a myriad of jobs. It is a challenging task for principals to offer instructional leadership and also manage the other competing responsibilities. In much the same way as a teacher must be a successful manager of classroom behavior in order to be able to teach, the school leader must be able to manage the school so that instruction can take place. But to ask one person to manage all the business of schooling and also to conduct instructional supervision might be an unrealistic expectation. In working with 14 administrators, the author began to imagine that by separating the instructional supervision function from the principal's responsibility, then maybe another teacher leader could more fully supervise instruction in our schools (Kelehear, 2005). The role of instructional supervision would rest with someone whose primary responsibility was instructional development. Managing all other affairs of schooling such as budgets, parent conferences, and discipline would reside with the principal's position. The Manager of Programs (MP) was responsible for all matters of school governance and management

with the exception of instructional leadership.

The Instructional Leader (IL) would conduct all instructional programs relative to evaluation, supervision, induction, remediation, and instructional staff development. This job would carry with it a supervisory supplement that would recognize the lead teacher's supervisory responsibilities. The school would have an instructional committee whose responsibility it would be to select an IL who may or may not be a member of the committee. The IL's appointment would be 3 years. The IL would function as a part of the instructional committee but leadership within the committee would reside with a different person. One way to imagine the organization is to imagine an elected school board with an appointed superintendent. The committee will have representatives from grade levels for elementary schools or from subject areas for high schools. Middle schools would have instructional committees drawn from teams.

For matters relative to evaluation, the IL would have the primary responsibility for making "judgments concerning the overall quality of the teacher's performance and the teacher's competence in carrying out assigned duties as well as provide a picture of the quality of teaching performances across the professional staff" (Nolan, 2003). These data will be collected as part of the teacher's overall evaluation in terms of retention, tenure, and promotion. The actual process for making employment decisions is described later in this paper.

Within the context of supervision, the goal of the IL is to offer instructional support for teachers throughout their professional career paths. Novice teachers might receive close-ordered coaching to help through the stresses of being new to the profession. Tenured teachers might receive support in the form of instructional development and experimentation. End-of-career teachers might receive requests from the IL to share expertise with others or to take on staff development responsibilities. At whatever the career stage, the nature of the instructional support will be in the form of developmental supervision or mentoring.

Research on mentoring emphasizes that the direction and content of instructional development is a shared responsibility of both the novice teacher and mentor teacher (Glickman, 2002; Reiman, 1999; Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1993). Through collaboration and coaching the pair of teachers observe each other, share reflections on experiences, and develop professional development plans. Although during the early stages of the professional relationship, the mentor will likely assume a dominate role; over time the nature of the relationship will shift responsibilities from the mentor to novice (Gray & Gray, 1985).

A key function of the IL is to identify, develop, and supervise a cadre of successful teachers who are trained in developmental supervision and mentoring. The IL will be the lead mentor and will offer support and guidance to the cadre and will also substitute in cadre classes when the mentor is conducting observations or conferences. Each mentor will provide reports to the IL regarding dates of mentor contacts, the nature of the observation, and any issues that the IL might need to address. Because of the need for confidentiality and trust in the mentoring relationship, care will be given not to offer specific details of the mentor's contacts. The mentor's contacts will be formative in nature. Differently, the IL will conduct summative observations and evaluations of

teachers for employment decisions. The IL will offer summary reports and recommendations to the MP and those reports would become a part of the teacher's personnel file. The MP will also make recommendations, again for inclusion in the personnel file, for employment based on teachers' performances of non-instructional responsibilities (e.g., bus duty, lunchroom supervision, committee participation, attendance). The instructional committee will receive recommendations and will offer its recommendation for employment as well. In effect, employment decisions then come upon a three-vote decision: one vote from the IL, one vote from the MP and one vote from the instructional committee. Based on the three reports, the MP will construct a letter to the Director of Personnel that summarizes the findings and will offer a recommendation regarding the continuing employment status of the teacher. Both the MP and the IL will sign the letter. Any disputes or dissenting opinions will also be submitted, as attachment, to the Director of Personnel for inclusion in the personnel file.

Although the IL would be responsible for the personnel evaluation component, the instructional committee and mentors would engage in supervision exclusively. The group based the distinctions of what constitutes evaluation vs. supervision on Nolan's (2003) work. According to Nolan, the natures of evaluation and supervision are fundamentally and critically distinct within various functions of the teaching experience [See Table 2]. Given a particular dimension, the distinctions between evaluation and supervision become clear.

Table 2

## Purposes for Evaluation and Supervision for Various Teaching Dimensions

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Supervision</u>
Purpose	Minimal competence	Growth
Rationale	Protect children	Complexity of teaching
Working Relationship	Hierarchical	Collegial
Scope	Comprehensive	Focused
Data Focus	Standardized	Individualized
Expertise	Evaluator as expert	Shared expertise
Perspective	Best foot forward	Risk taking

It is in the form of mentoring as a supervisory practice that some of the more powerful benefits for teacher growth and development seem to emerge (Reiman 1999; Glickman, 2002; Pajak, 2002). Individuals who have a trained mentor are more likely to realize professional and personal growth than those who work alone (Vygotsky, 1986). This benefit is especially noticeable when teachers are in new assignments or in new settings. Whether we are speaking about new doctors, new teachers, new administrators, or new professors, a supportive colleague can help a novice move to higher levels of effectiveness. Writing about medical school novices, Rabatin et al. (2004) noted that a “mentoring model stressing safety, intimacy, honesty, setting of high standards, praxis, and detailed planning and feedback was associated with mentee excitement, personal and professional growth and development, concrete accomplishments, and a commitment to teaching” (p. 569).

For public school teachers having a mentor is associated with professional growth and a sense of self-efficacy for both novices and experienced teachers. In working with veteran teachers, Reiman and Peace (2002) sought to “encourage new social role-taking, support new learning in effective teaching, encourage new complex performances in coaching and support conferences, and

promote gains in moral and conceptual reasoning. Significant positive gains in learning, performance, and moral judgment reasoning were achieved” (p. 597). Mentoring had a bidirectional benefit for both novice and mentor. The best plan for supporting instruction will require a position that is wholly, and singularly, focused on the processes of teacher development.

As a benefit to school cultures, mentoring in a developmental supervision model encourages conversation among teachers. In conversation we begin creating a school community characterized by sharing, supporting, and caring. It has become clear through research of Noddings (2002), Palmer (1998), Starratt (1997), and others that when teachers and students work in a caring and supportive atmosphere, they are more likely to take risks, experiment, and attend to each other’s needs. It is just this type of collaboration that the process of mentoring can encourage.

## **Form: Three-dimensional structure or shape; geometric or free form.**

### **The Artist’s View:**

Forms are shapes that are three-dimensional and are either geometric or free form. In two-dimensional works of art (that is, artworks that hang on a wall), artists use value on a shape to create a form. In other words when artists add value to the shape of a circle, the shape becomes a sphere and takes on the illusion of something that is three-dimensional -- a form. Today artists refer to light and dark areas of a work of art as modeling or shading. Very dark areas of forms tend to recede into the artwork where very light areas appear closest to the viewer. In three-dimensional art works such as sculpture, all shapes are forms because they take up space in three dimensions. True forms occupy height, width, and depth in space.

**ISLLC Standard #5:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

### **A Leadership Perspective:**

The difference in management and leadership is the movement from shape to form, from two-dimensional perspective to a three-dimensional one. Leadership in many cases is a matter of perspective. Effective leaders find ways to recognize different perspectives in general through effective communication and more specifically through active listening. Truly gifted communicators can discern surface messages and distinguish them from the very important, but embedded, messages. What is the speaker saying? What is the speaker communicating? What is the speaker feeling? The answers are often wide-ranging.

The form for effective school-based management comes as effective communication. In other words, effective management requires one to be able to see individuals, events, and cultures from three dimensional perspectives. Communication has as its prerequisite trust. Without a sense of

trust between two people, both in terms of content and confidentiality, there is little hope of meaningful conversation. An obvious example might be that if teachers trust their colleagues to work with them and not reveal their weak teaching areas to the general public, and certainly not to supervisors, then they might be more inclined to share deficiencies with colleagues. In so doing, teachers might be able to find help toward improving pedagogical gaps. If, on the other hand, teachers do not have the confidence in others' genuine concern for their professional development, they will certainly not engage in conversation with people about any professional areas of need. It is through active listening that principals can communicate trust and genuine interest that might lead to collegial interaction and growth.

Fortunately, active listening is a skill that can be developed. Though many people might think they are good listeners, in fact, without concentrated and frequent practice, and perhaps training, few people are effective listeners. It is only through intentional practice that one can develop into an effective listener. And the truly good listener recognizes that communication comes in verbal and nonverbal forms.

Effective leaders also recognize that through empathic writing, a sort of active listening through writing, the content of a message can begin to have depth along with breadth (Kelehear, 2002). In other words, leaders see the message from the front, from the side, from the inside. In so doing, the effective leaders recognize the multi-dimensional dynamic, the three-dimensional reality that comes with effective communication.

Research on the role of effective communication and the role it plays in successful leadership proclaims that there can be no leadership without communication. In fact, it is communication that helps school leaders build trust and integrity in organizational cultures. Robbins & Alvy (1998) assert that today's principals are expected to be much more than simply instructional leaders. Among the multiple roles principals assume beyond instructional leadership are chief financial officer for the school building, student and teacher counselor for both professional and personal matters, and community contact for topics ranging from dress codes to the bus schedule. Embedded in all the principals' responsibilities, both the de jure and de facto assignments, is the requirement that they be clear and accurate communicators (Cousins, 1996). In fact, one might easily make the case that, above all else, effective principals must be skilled communicators (Stevan & Blumberg, 1986; Zigler, 1994; Tauer, 1996; Cousins, 1996; Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998; Reiman, 1999).

In the spirit of skilled communicator, effective school leaders are able to articulate the vision and mission of the school and school system, establish norms of behavior for both teachers and students, and communicate high expectations for teaching and learning. There can be no effective leadership, it would appear, without effective communication (Persell & Cookson, 1982; Buffie, 1989; Barth, 1990; Prestine, 1993; Blase & Blase, 1994; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

Particularly fascinating for today's principals is the possible role that technology, and in particular e-mail, might play in contributing to successful communication. With the infusion of technology into schools, computers and e-mail have become part of the daily routine for



principals and teachers. In interviews with twelve principals representing elementary, middle, and high schools, it became clear that both teachers and principals relied heavily on e-mail to communicate with each other (Kelehear, 2001). One principal commented that she no longer used the intercom, but depended on e-mail to reach teachers and students. She reduced faculty meetings from once a week to once a month and disseminated all daily and weekly information by e-mail.

Several principals also found that face to face contact with some teachers seemed to diminish through the use of e-mail, if not in qualitative terms, certainly in quantitative ways. Two principals had actually removed the sign-in sheet and had teachers sign in from their rooms via e-mail. They commented that by moving the sign-in sheet they inadvertently lost contact with half of the staff. Several other principals commented that if it were not for the mail boxes in the front office, they would likely not see many of their teachers. Or, as another principal lamented, "I was talking with a teacher I had not seen in a few days when he told me that he had been absent for two days. I did not even know he was not there!"

And finally, there emerged the expectation on the part of principals and teachers alike that an immediate response to e-mail was not only preferred, rather it was expected. When teachers and principals sent messages, they became annoyed when the response was not returned quickly. When pressed by what was meant by "quickly," the teachers expected the principal to respond within three or four hours. Principals were more exacting. They anticipated a response from teachers within the hour! Several of the schools conducted faculty meetings whose agenda items focused on establishing norms and expectations regarding e-mail.

Given that e-mail has so completely become interwoven into the fabric of the school culture, it is interesting to note the reaction of staff when "the system" goes down or crashes. One principal recounted her and her staff's reaction to such an event:

Last week the system stopped working. I sought out our technology specialist in an attempt to find the source of the problem. Almost simultaneously, teachers began drifting by my office to tell of the problem and find when it might be fixed. When I discovered that the system might be down for several days, immediately my daily routine began to change. I traveled the halls listening to teachers teaching and I talked with students as they moved on to their next class. During the transition to classes, I sensed that teachers were more likely to come to their doors and visit with each other and with students than they were when the system was working. For certain, I was in the halls more frequently doing the things I think a principal should be doing.

It is far from certain whether e-mail alone has encapsulated many teachers, but it is interesting to ask if a reliance on technological communication necessarily detracts from interpersonal conversation. Let it be clear, however, that not all schools with e-mail become cloistered communities. In almost countless ways, student academic achievement is augmented through the proper application of technology. Nevertheless, there is a possibility, as seen in the example above, that e-mail might reduce the important informal contacts between principals, teachers, and students.

Several studies support active listening as an important set of skills for authentic and accurate communication, especially for people in supervisory roles (Tauer, 1996; Cousins, 1996; Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1998; Reiman, 1999). This research applied active listening concepts to the medium of e-mail correspondence, thus creating the notion of empathic writing. Once principals recognize the pervasiveness of e-mail, they are left to grapple with establishing effective communication habits through that medium. Empathic writing might speak to this need.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that when the principals paraphrased content or feelings with empathic writing, teachers frequently responded with additional information, thus developing the original message more fully. Teachers commented that they appreciated the principals' taking their comments seriously and seeming to care about what the teachers were trying to say. Interestingly, it became immediately clear that empathic writing was rarely responded to in any substantive way if there did not already exist a significant relationship of trust and open communication between the principal and teacher. One possible conclusion of this condition is that empathic writing is rarely successful without a preexisting basis of interpersonal communication. But, where that relationship was present already, empathic writing by e-mail tended to enhance and affirm the communicative relationship. Where that empathic precondition did exist, teachers commented that the principals' willingness to respond to e-mail in an obviously meaningful way did indeed engender trust and collegiality.

Some real limitations to empathic writing by electronic communication emerged. With the loss of nonverbal signals inherent in face-to-face communication, some of the power of the principals' message was lost. More specifically, some messages sent by principals were misunderstood because the teacher was not sure of the principals' actual intent. One principal noted that many times silence or pauses communicated important, albeit subtle, messages and that component was lost in e-mail. There was just no way to display the "thoughtful pause" that might come in a genuine, caring conversation.

Another principal acknowledged some benefit to empathic writing, but was not willing to take the time, and risk, that this type of electronic engagement required. With this revelation as a backdrop, the writer stumbled upon a shocking finding. Principals were literally overwhelmed by the volume of e-mail messages that arrived daily. On the average, these fourteen principals received 63 e-mails within a 24-hour period. If the principals responded to every message utilizing empathic writing skills, there would be little time to do anything else. Two principals went on to say that they were reluctant to miss school for professional travel because they so disliked the many messages awaiting them upon their return. One principal put it very directly:

This e-mail is killing me. When I arrived in the morning there were always several messages from teachers, parents, and central office personnel waiting on my computer. I found myself arriving at work earlier and earlier each day so that I could deal with these messages before teachers and students began to arrive. Additionally, I stayed later in the day to catch up on e-mails and other business that should have been handled during the day when I was managing other e-mails. As a last resort, I began taking my laptop home to respond to e-mails and found that there was little

time for me to be away from the affairs of schooling. Managing these e-mails was burning me out. I was working fourteen and fifteen-hour days.

As in many jobs today, it is interesting to note that technology aimed to helping people work more efficiently and therefore have more time for themselves has achieved the opposite effect. The principals' work is following them everywhere and they feel overwhelmed. Today, there is a severe shortage of prepared leaders to fill the leadership positions in schools across the nation. There is the real chance that the very technology that intended to make lives better is, in fact, draining the energy of principals, and thus creating an increased leadership vacuum in our schools. It would be important for further research to examine the relationship of principal resiliency to e-mail management.

In the interviews conducted in this study, another area of possible inquiry became clear. Do principals who communicate well with personnel on an interpersonal basis find it easier to engage in empathic writing than those principals who do not relate well to staff members? From these few interviews, there appeared to be a positive correlation between principals who engaged in successful active listening and those who were comfortable with empathic writing. Principals who had previous training in active listening seemed comfortable translating those skills to the writing medium. This is an area where closer study needs to be conducted before any conclusions might be drawn, however.

In reviewing material for establishing e-mail messages, a potentially disturbing trend appeared. Under the perceived urgency to respond to e-mail immediately, many teachers found their lessons being interrupted by the frequent "beep" of the computer, notifying the teacher of a new e-mail. As one teacher put it, "We have replaced the intercom interruptions with computer ones." Several teachers and principals set their computers to check for new e-mail every two or three minutes, also saying something to researchers about the school culture and technology. Have we exacerbated an already fractionated, episodic school day with the inclusion of e-mail technology in schools? It would be very important, also, to examine to what extent teachers are responding to e-mail during instructional time. Finally, how much time are principals spending responding to e-mail versus their time conducting instructional supervision?

Another area of concern for schools and technology emerged from these interviews. Several principals related that they believed that contact with central office staff was decreased because of a heavy dependence on e-mail. Instead of seeing the personnel director, or the superintendent, or the curriculum coordinator, the principals and teachers received memoranda via e-mail "almost exclusively" and the e-mail technology actually did little to remove barriers or psychological distances between central offices and schools. Several principals commented that this separation might seem just the opposite of what ought to happen with e-mail. Principals believed that the schools' morale suffered from this exclusive reliance on technological communication. Central offices often are accused of being disconnected from students and teachers. There is a need to examine this possible separation broadened by technology. Further study is underway to clarify this apparent "entrapment" of central office personnel by e-mail technology.

In conclusion, communicating by e-mail is not likely to replace qualitative, interpersonal contacts. In many ways, words without physical context can be hollow. Empathic writing, however, can have many of the same benefits that effective interpersonal communication has. It can provide another means for principals to paraphrase teachers' feelings and content and, in so doing, enhance a sense of efficacy and trust among their instructional staff. Empathic writing tells teachers that principals care in significant ways about what is going on in the teachers' lives. Teachers can never have too many messages like that from principals. It would seem prudent that principals work to communicate well and often with their staffs through both personal and technological contacts. Given that effective communication is central to the form of effective building management and given email continues to be an important technology for communication, it stands to reason that building capacity for empathic communication, either electronically or in person, is an important part of successful leadership in today's schools.

## **Space: Area around, between, above, below, or within an object**

### The Artist's View:

All the area that exists around, between, above, below, and within an object is considered to be space. Forms and shapes are considered to be positive space and space that occupies the area in and around the form and shape is called negative space. Artists that utilize large negative spaces may express loneliness or freedom. Crowding together positive space reflects tension or togetherness. Depending on each other, positive and negative spaces interact with one another to create meaning. Space in three-dimension is considered to be the area that is over, under, around, behind, and through. Sculpture, jewelry, architecture, weaving, and ceramics are three-dimensional art forms. They are artworks that take up real space.

ISLLC Standard #2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

### A Leadership Perspective:

When a teacher works alone he often has fewer skills for problem solving than when he works with an older or more experienced person (e.g., mentor). The mentor can help the teacher explore different, and often new, ways to solve problems through trial and error or through approximations of existing schema. For example, if new learning is conceptually close to what the new teacher already knows and understands, then he can more readily internalize the information. If, however, the new learning is significantly different from what is already known, then the teacher will likely encounter more difficulty in capturing the new information. In this case, a mentor can assist the teacher in identifying new pathways of understanding. Mentors can enhance the ability to internalize new and difficult material. The simultaneous effort of support and challenge on the part of a mentor offers a productive model for learning. For example, the mentor might support learning by first presenting material that the teacher already understands and then

challenge him with information that is an extension of that understanding. Put more directly, a teacher learns best when learning is connected to existing understanding; teacher learning is social in nature.

Understanding the role of space can help leaders create learning places that are at once challenging and supporting. Teaching assignments and the pedagogy that come with them help create challenge. Leaders help teachers grow and stretch by challenging them to take on different subjects, different age groups of students, different roles. Additionally, leaders create positive moments as they encourage teachers to use a wide range of pedagogical techniques in order to reach more students. Left alone, these challenges can create negative working conditions as teachers feel stretched but not appreciated. Effective leaders find a way to balance challenge with support. Much as space in art is constructed with positive and negative dimensions, successful learning space is constructed with a balance of support and challenge. The appropriate balance might include new teaching methods, but at the same time might include opportunities for team planning or for coaching. Through sustained, long-term, coaching, and support, leaders can offer teachers a safe environment where risks are valued and mistakes are acknowledged as part of the growing process.

School-based management, in part, is successful to the degree to which that learning, amidst an environment of support and challenge, is present for both students and teachers. But bringing individuals and organizations to higher levels of effectiveness is a daunting task. It is the position of the author that organizational change can not happen without individual change, and vice versa. A first step in making such significant changes is to begin seeing teachers in a new way. That new way is a view rooted in an arts-based perspective and methodology.

The notion that school-based leaders can assist teachers improve their effectiveness in supporting student achievement is central to schooling. One of the most specific ways that leaders can support teaching is through instructional leadership and supervision. The author develops some of this discussion in an earlier part of this monograph under shape. But more needs to be addressed in terms of the possibility of leaders capturing successful teaching and stretching growth of teaching from an arts-based approach. Specifically, the author offers a mechanism for applying the conversation of art to the art of teacher development. Put differently, one might ask “How might a leader build the art of reflective practice into the daily practice of schooling?”

Reflection as a method for making meaning out of the teaching experience remains an important part of instructional supervision (Glickman, 2002; Pajak, 2003; Rucinski, 2005; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005). Reflection as a method of making meaning out of experience remains an important part of art criticism (Feldman, 1995). Reflection as conversation is central to making meaning out of the art of teaching. In as much as the supervision of teaching becomes art, then some understanding of the language of art is in order. In so doing, instructional supervisors can begin to utilize reflection, as in art criticism, as a mechanism for reflecting on teaching in a much broader and possibly more profound way.

Focusing specifically on how teachers and supervisors can reflect and discuss teaching behaviors,

scholars have readily acknowledged the role that reflection and feedback can play in supporting teacher growth (Beebe & Masterson, 2000; Bennis, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 2002; Dewey, 1938; Glanz, 2002; Good & Brophy, 1997; Kelehear, 2002; Lambert, et al., 2003; Nolan & Hoover, 2004; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Schon, 1987; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005, 2006; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Woolfolk & Hoy, 2003; Zepeda, 2000). The manner in which supervisor and teacher talk to each other reflects the capacity of both parties to recognize that teaching is about supervisor and teacher as well as teacher and student. The relationship that emerges from the conversation is beneficial to both the teacher and the supervisor. In other words there is a bidirectional benefit (Kelehear & Heid, 2002; Reiman, 1999; Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1993). But in order to understand this bi-directionality, some consideration must be given to the nature of conversation and how it can move from concern about self to concern about others. The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) provides such a theoretical understanding.

For several years, emerging in large part from Fuller's (1969) original study published in the *American Educational Research Journal*, researchers in staff development have provided an important mechanism for framing and supporting organizational change through the CBAM (Hall & Loucks, 1978; Hord, et al., 1978; Hall & Rutherford, 1990). The stages of CBAM are Awareness, Information, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing [See Table 3].

Table 3

## Typical Expressions of Concern about an Innovation

Stage of Concern	Expression of Concern
6. Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
5. Collaboration	How can I relate what I am doing to what others are doing?
4. Consequence	How is my use affecting learners? How can I refine it to have more impact?
3. Management	I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready.
2. Personal	How will using it affect me?
1. Informational	I would like to know more about it.
0. Awareness	I am not concerned about it.

This theory recognizes that when individuals come into contact with innovations, they necessarily travel through the levels of concern (i.e., starting with awareness and moving up the scale) based heavily on how “new” the innovation is. A profoundly important distinction between the first four stages and the last three is that the focus of the individuals moves away from themselves and more toward the effect an innovation has on others. Art conversation has some interesting parallels as well.

Edmund Feldman (1995) provides a paradigm for discussing art publicly, i.e., art criticism. His four-step, (description, analysis, interpretation, judgment) approach offers students a specific process for undertaking aesthetics or critical theory. When an observer engages an artwork using the Feldman Method, that individual will first describe the piece. The goal in this step is to describe objectively what one sees. An essential part of this step is to delay any judgments or conclusions. The second step in the Feldman Method involves analysis. In the process of analysis one begins to describe different elements of the art, like the use of color, or line, or value. The third step in the Feldman Method calls for interpretation. The goal is to try to find meaning in what one sees. The final step in the Feldman Method is for the observer to begin making

judgments about the artwork. This step is the first one that calls for evaluation on the part of the observer. Thus, if there is an art of reflection for teachers and an art of reflection for artists, then there clearly is a message for instructional supervision rooted in an arts-based theory.

If an instructional leader begins to describe teaching behaviors as art, one can observe that the same movement from concern about self to concern about others also happens. To put it differently, initially the conversation focuses on the technical dimensions and afterwards addresses the aesthetic elements of the lesson. In the first two steps the instructional supervisor observes the lesson in its technical dimensions. The observer describes and analyzes the lesson and these pieces are very important. In fact, without first establishing that the learner outcomes are met and that classroom management supports that achievement it is premature to consider any other portion of the instruction. If, on the other hand, the supervisor describes and analyzes the lesson with a teacher, and they both feel comfortable with those steps, then they can begin discussing the instruction in qualitative or aesthetic ways. As in the description of the Feldman Method above, teachers and instructional leaders can readily engage in “describing” and “analyzing” a lesson but it is quite a different story to “interpret” and “evaluate” the lesson. The final two steps require the instructor and observer to attend more carefully to the feelings, the consequences and the subtleties of the lesson (Heid, 2005). But the final two steps are the essence of beginning to observe teaching as an art and supervision of such teaching as also an art. To ignore those steps is to continue reducing class observations to inspection and “fact finding” rather than enlarging the observation to the aesthetic possibilities of excellent teaching. Given the important role that all four steps play in promoting the art of teaching and the art of discussing teaching, it is instructive to observe how using the Feldman Method makes sense [See Table #4].



Table 4

## Typical Expressions of Instructional Leaders Using Art Conversation.

Level of Criticism	Expressions of Criticism
4. Evaluation	Was the lesson successful? In what ways might it have been improved? What recommendations might be useful to improve the next lesson?
3. Interpretation	How did the methodology affect students? How did the methodology interface with the subject matter? How did the lesson match or mismatch the learner needs and styles?
2. Analysis	Were the learning outcomes met? How did classroom management affect the attainment of the learner outcomes?
1. Description	Objectively, what do I see? Withhold evaluation of the lesson or teacher.

Applying the Feldman Method to artwork was new for the instructional leaders and that newness helped remind them of the power, intimidating power, of innovations. Applying the Feldman Method in teacher observations was also challenging as it was innovative for the administrators and for the teachers. The author asked the same eight students to take their new knowledge of the Feldman Method and apply it to teacher observations. Using the chart above (See Table 4), the students began to be comfortable with the different steps in the method. In pre-observation conferences at their schools, they discussed with teachers the specific points for observation and the structure of the observation instrument. After each lesson, the observed teachers were asked to apply the Feldman Method as they reflected on their own lessons. In the post-observation conference, the instructional leader asked the teacher to lead the conference by moving through the Feldman Method. One of the instructional leaders came to class one week and remarked: "I can not get my teacher to do the last two steps. All the teacher wants to know is if he passed or not! We just have nothing to talk about after we finish the technical part." Other participants also reflected similar concerns. In a culture of high stakes assessment, of both students and teachers, it is easy to lose sight of the aesthetics that impact learning and to reduce learning to the technical or immediately observable elements of a lesson. Toward the end of the term several of the

instructional leaders commented that their teachers, after they began to trust the leader's intentions, were becoming more comfortable with discussing the aesthetic steps (i.e., steps three and four) in the Feldman Method.

With each attempt to apply the Feldman Method to instructional supervision, the students became more comfortable applying the conversation of art in conferences. An especially exciting part of this growing confidence and in keeping with the CBAM stages of consequence, collaboration, and refocusing, the students began considering different approaches to using art language in observing teaching. As the students became comfortable with the innovation later in the term, the author and students began discussing the consequence the Feldman Method might have on student learning and teacher growth. Their concern moved from concern about self to concern about the innovation's impact on others. They also moved quickly to collaborate on possible alternatives to the standard format the author proposed. And finally, as a final project in the class, they were asked to refocus the Feldman Method and formulate a new format for critique so that they could make the assessment instrument meet the needs of teachers and students at their schools.

Introducing school leaders to the language of art, and in this case the Feldman Method, reminded the author and students that innovation can be overwhelming. In order to come to terms with innovation, school leaders must also recognize the teaching the CBAM theory offers. A particularly exciting connection for the participants and authors, and an unanticipated one, was the link they made between concern for self and concern for others in both the CBAM and Feldman Method. The message was clear: when school leaders and teachers, in parallel fashion, begin attending to the art of teaching, then they necessarily begin to move beyond the important and necessary technical dimensions of teaching to the crucial and essential aesthetic considerations that make a classroom a place for academic achievement and personal development. And in this context, creating learning space for teachers invited experimentation, risk-taking, and a culture built on teacher professional growth and student learning.

## **Color: Property of objects coming from reflected light**

The Artist's View:

Color is the most dynamic and exciting element of art. It is also the hardest element to describe. Color comes from reflected light. When light reflects off of an object such as a red ball, the red ball absorbs all light waves except the red light waves. The red light waves reflect into our eyes and are interpreted by our brain as the color red. Often, we represent colors along a spectrum—primary (red, yellow, and blue), secondary (violet, green, and orange) and tertiary or intermediate (red orange, red violet, blue violet, blue green, yellow green, and yellow orange). When these spectral colors are bent into a circle, we form a color wheel. White and black are not considered colors at all. Black is the absence of color and white is considered to be all colors.

ISLLC Standard #6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social,

economic, legal, and cultural context.

### A Leadership Perspective:

As different colors contribute to the whole beauty of the art and people's different styles, different gifts support successful schools. One of the ways leaders can celebrate differences is by first acknowledging that diversity is valued. This diversity can be in terms of gender or ethnicity, of course. What might also be noted is that the diversity of ideas, teaching styles, or perspectives is important to the successful school. Successful leaders consider learning styles and personality types as they seek out teachers' help. Building a successful committee is as much about "who decides who decides" as it is about who is in the group. In other words, successful leaders help bring together individuals with acknowledged differences so that a true exchange of ideas can begin. The negative approach might be leaders who select the "right" ones for committees knowing before the work begins what the conclusions will be. Where leadership is successful there are shared values and goals coupled with an appreciation for the different paths one might take to reach those goals. One of the more notable examples of these shared values amidst diverse approaches can be in a principal's role as instructional leader at a local school high school. Specifically, how might the principal support a shared value through staff development initiatives that also celebrates diverse approaches to effective instruction?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB), for better or for worse, has school leaders across the nation looking carefully at staff development, especially as staff development affects the notion of "highly qualified teachers" and "school improvement." Two questions that continue to arise among many school leaders are, "How can we be sure that our money spent on staff development has measurable results?" and "How can we sustain any benefits so that our good intentions might last longer than just to the end of the training session?"

Historically, leaders have created mission statements and vision statements to help provide organizations a means to articulate what they value most. As noted earlier in this monograph regarding "space," some schools have adopted a core values approach school leadership. Core values help schools communicate to the community, students, teachers and administrators what is most important. It would stand to reason that the daily activities within the school would support those values as well. Principals have an especially important role in making certain that what the teachers are doing is supportive and consistent with the articulated core values. Additionally, in a time when much staff development is being eliminated because of diminishing budgets, initiatives must be able to communicate to various audiences their value with specific and understandable assessments. And as leaders begin to "justify" their expenditures for staff development in light of NCLB, then they might return to what matters most, helping children learn.

Even when a staff development program adopts a core values approach, it will continue to find challenges to implementing successful professional development. If on the other hand school leaders couple core values with an intentional, on-going reflection process, then they can greatly improve the chances for successful staff development. One way that professional development efforts can achieve desired results is by the principal, teacher-leaders, and teachers answering

affirmatively the following seven questions about the staff development initiative:

Given the core values of the school, have we done the following successfully?

1. Have we made all involved aware of the initiative?
2. Have we provided information about the initiative and how it supports the core values of the district?
3. Have we communicated the personal impact the initiative has on people affected?
4. Have we provided strategies for managing the initiative within the current realities?
5. Have we communicated what consequence the initiative will have on student achievement?
6. Have we provided opportunities for collaboration among those affected?
7. Are we willing to provide opportunities for the affected parties to work together to further extend and refocus the initiative beyond its present form?

In order to achieve desired results of a given staff development initiative, principals will answer, in order, all the questions above. Only after one is answered adequately can the next question be asked. Skipping or avoiding a question will prevent the successful implementation of the initiative.

At a local high school, the principal was considering various scheduling initiatives to support improved standardized test scores. Early in the school year, before students arrived, the principal and teachers agree upon the following core value: “We value knowledgeable, reflective, and thoughtful students.” At the school a committee, facilitated by the staff development leader, then examined various scheduling models that would support the articulated value. With district-level support, the high school team committed to team teaching for math-science and English-social studies.

The first order of business was for the principal, with the collaboration of the high school committee, to make the entire staff aware of team teaching. The leader then provided information that clarified in what ways team teaching supported the core value. Once the faculty had the team teaching information, it began asking questions like, “What does this have to do with me?” Individuals quickly moved to decide if the idea affected them personally. Again, the leader shared with the faculty how team teaching affected them. The faculty then imagined how it, collectively and individually, would absorb or adopt team teaching into its existing schedule. In other words, how would each teacher manage team teaching? Up to this point, questions focused on the teachers. When the faculty began to consider the impact of team teaching on student achievement, however, then their concern about the initiative moved from inward looking to outward looking. The discussion about team teaching moved to the consequence on student scheduling or student achievement. The phase revealed a significant shift in the focus of the faculty. The faculty

(principal and teachers) ceased to think primarily of itself and more towards the students. It is important to note that the faculty could not be asked to consider the needs of the students until the first four phases were addressed.

An especially exciting moment was when the faculty moved to the next phase of concern and began asking questions about how it might collaborate to further enhance the positive benefits of team teaching. This level of concern represented the best elements of site-based management and shared decision-making. This level, however, served to remind reformers that systems change is a multi-year challenge and that there are few shortcuts. Finally, in very rare instance, this faculty began to imagine how team teaching could be refocused or reconstructed to be an even better strategy for enhancing the quality and quantity of student learning.

For school leaders the message from the example above was that as schools engaged in professional development, they must attend to the needs of those caught in the change in specific and intentional ways. And only after individuals began to understand how they would manage the change could the staff development move to its most important point . . . student achievement. Understanding this process could help reduce frustration and ambiguity amidst the storm of change. As NCLB begins to disappear on the political horizon and the next “miracle plan” arises, then school systems can be confident that they are already attending to what matters most, helping children be productive, reflective, and knowledgeable citizens in a global society. Indeed, staff development can support high standards while also supporting a range of approaches. When staff development, as well as other school-based decisions, allows for shared values and diverse approaches, then those efforts support the diversity of ideas . . . the color of successful schools.

Element #7

## **Texture: Feel or appearance of an object or surface**

The Artist's View:

Texture is the art element that refers to how things feel or look as if they might feel. Touch and vision are how we perceive texture. One can use tactile sensitivity by using skin receptors to feel texture but one can also experience visual texture by looking at the illusion of a three dimensional surface. Once again the element of value comes to the forefront. Without the relative lightness and darkness of the surface arrangement, the illusion of a surface texture could not be seen. Texture is important to every art medium.

ISLLC Standard #4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

A Leadership Perspective:

Successful school leaders recognize that schools are a tapestry of people, interests and communities. Weaving those very different, and very important, stakeholders is a delicate and intricate process and will almost always result in some degree of stress and anxiety for all concerned. When bringing the various constituencies together, the school can become a seamless fabric of diverse perspectives that agree to celebrate student achievement. Or, if leadership does not effectively connect the various stakeholders, the school can begin to unravel into patches of angry parents, frustrated teachers, and misbehaving students. Successful leaders take the time to invite participation by all stakeholders. This invitation, then, would be offered to parents, community leaders, students, teachers, administrators, and support staffs. To the level that these constituencies are included then there would be more commitment by all concerned and less opportunity for subterfuge and negative energy. The notion that we are all in this together would serve to elevate the commitment for all and help create a fabric that embraces and supports rather than a blanket that smothers creativity and individuality. In many ways, the effectiveness with which leadership brings together the many constituencies that comprise the school can be measured by the safety and care that students feel in the day-to-day activities. In other words, when we can imagine a school environment that celebrates diversity of thought, perspective, and pedigree, then we can draw comfort that the stress of expectations (e.g., standardized tests, NCLB, AYP) will not tear at the texture of the school.

Watch a child enter a classroom for the first time and one can see real stress. Observe a middle school student “fumble” with the combination on a locker and one will see frustration and sadness. Consider the novice teacher after his first day teaching and one will see exhaustion. And then watch a new principal conduct her first conference with angry parents of a special needs child. She looks all over the desk for the child’s folder (that is right in front of her) and then becomes embarrassed when the parents point it out to her! Signs of stress again!

Everything we do involves some level of stress. We wake up with it. We live with it during the day. And then we try to sleep in spite of it. About the only way we can avoid stress is to do nothing, engage no one, and think of no new ideas. But it is Mark Twain who reminds us that the most tiring thing to do is nothing because we can never stop to rest!

If we can assume for a moment that stress is a necessary part of the school leader’s life, that it is in fact a central fabric of the schooling process then we can begin the process of embracing the energy that comes with stress and thereupon help students learn, teachers teach, and principals lead. Addressing stress for leaders in schools today, let us consider three questions:

1. What are the possible consequences of stress on leadership style?
2. In what ways can stress affect morale and productivity among principals and teachers?
3. What are some possible strategies for helping principals and teachers manage change, and its accompanying stress, so that they can support learning amidst difficult times?

In a recent article, Jerry Patterson and Kelehear (2003) acknowledged that leaders create culture

and that they have a responsibility to change it. When leaders are in a high state of stress, their leadership styles necessarily create a culture that is under stress as well. Schools that function in an atmosphere of unmanaged stress regularly begin to be dysfunctional and unhealthy. Teacher attitude and morale deteriorate. Leadership and teachers cease communicating. Students feel ignored and unsafe. The whole place becomes “tired,” filled with frustrated and angry teachers and students.

School cultures in tough times, like the people in them, lose the ability to reflect and self-evaluate. The negative energy associated with stress creates “blind spots” so that what is clear to an outsider is ignored, or at least not noticed, by those inside the culture. When the leadership’s stress begins to change, however, then the school culture reflects that shift. People are more open to critique. They communicate more often and more accurately. Teachers and principals pay attention to student needs more easily. Leadership absolutely affects a school’s sense of wellbeing and efficacy.

It does not take us long to recognize the source of much of the stress that many principals and teachers face. Given the various calls to address safety, overcrowding, drugs, gangs, low teacher pay, teacher retention, schools’ personnel can feel overwhelmed. Add to that stress the competing demands of increasing assessments and reporting in a world of decreasing funding, and we begin to see a prescription for emotional, professional, and economic collapse. Specifically, consider the pressure many principals and teachers are under as they try to come to terms with being “highly qualified” and achieving “adequate yearly progress ” (AYP) coming from the federal mandate, “NCLB.” These are not easy times for schools. Leadership style, school culture, teacher morale, and student performance all suffer in a community where tensions are high and emotional support is low. Uncontrolled, unidentified stress can drain the life-blood of even the best schools.

When one walks into schools, the stress level reveals itself almost immediately. One can watch a principal and teachers and see that the way they interact with each other and with students communicates the cultural undercurrent. Specifically, the leadership style this author finds most often amidst stress begins to be more about:

- Fixed and authoritarian vs. flexible and democratic
- Narrow and uninviting vs. original and embracing
- Vertically focused vs. collaboratively aligned
- Concrete and objective vs. abstract and subjective
- Judgmental vs. encouraging
- “My way” vs. “Our way”
- “Hurry up and do” vs. “slow down and think”

- Talking vs. listening

When the author examined morale in effective schools, he quickly found the same sort of indicators in the research literature as in anecdotal observations in the neighborhood schools. The teachers talked to students and to each other. Students felt safe and adults knew their names. The principal was in the halls, talking to students and teachers. One of my favorite places to visit had a principal who walked about with an index card in his shirt pocket. As teachers and students offered comments or ask questions, the principal took notes and the next day, without exception, returned to the person with a response.

As an instructional leader, another principal engendered trust and understanding when she gave all her teachers a “wild card.” The wild card was a small, colored index card that stated: “This card entitles me to a day, free from observation, without reasons or rationale.” The principal knew that there were some days that, for reasons beyond the teacher’s comprehension and control, things were not going well. When the principal appeared for an observation, the teacher had the option of presenting the card and the principal “turned on a dime” and departed the room. All teachers received one wild card for the year. They appreciated her realistic understanding and her support for their teaching.

In coming to terms with the attributes of good places to work, Buckingham and Coffman (1999) identify 12 questions that receive a strong “yes” in organizations where employees have high morale:

- Do I know what is expected of me?
- Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
- Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
- In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for good work?
- Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
- Does my opinion seem to count?
- Does the mission of my company make me feel like my work is important?
- Are my coworkers committed to doing quality work?
- Do I have a best friend at work?
- In the last six months, have I talked with someone about my progress?



- Have I had opportunities to learn and grow?

The message is clear: people want to work where their humanity is acknowledged and celebrated. Likewise, teachers perform better and feel more nearly positive about students in schools where the principal takes a personal interest in their professional development. And, when tough times come along, then the principal, teachers and students draw strength from relationships built on trust and empathy.

As leadership and teachers begin coming to terms with stress and its related, albeit often unanticipated, consequences they first notice that stress can destroy morale and enthusiasm in the schoolhouse. In other words, unmanaged stress debilitates teachers, students, families and dismantles their learning communities. Leadership can, however, create and sustain a school culture where student and teacher learning is the heart of the matter. There are two, very specific elements for building community within the varied texture of schools: Trusting Relationship and Caring Communities.

Over and over again, when I asked teachers what they wanted in a principal they responded that they needed someone whom they could trust. Leadership can build trust in a variety of ways. Through effective and authentic communication, principals engender trust by paying attention to the needs of teachers. One principal with whom I visited recently devoted one half-hour of the monthly faculty meeting to conversation. In that part of the agenda, teachers discussed their needs, celebrated successes, and then outlined goals for the coming month. The principal verbally paraphrased the teachers' comments and feelings, and in so doing, checked his own perceptions of what was being said. Later that night, he sent his notes in an email to the staff making sure he had captured accurately what was said. Within two days, the teachers delivered an email to the principal outlining one goal for the month and the accompanying plan for achieving that goal. Also, the teachers suggested one strategy that they would request of the principal so that he could support their pursuit of the goal. One caveat, and this was the really exciting part in the author's estimation, the principal encouraged teachers to include personal goals in their plans. Although strategies for student achievement and teacher effectiveness were always part of the discussion, the principal also encouraged private or personal goals. The message from the principal to the teachers: I value you as a professional and as a person. In the end, a relationship built on trust emerged and the morale and enthusiasm of principal and teacher alike were bolstered.

Not unlike trusting relationships, schools that are caring communities also support diversity and achievement. Anyone who has taught in middle school recognizes the folly of thinking that putting people into teams, alone, creates a community. Even scheduling shared planning, although necessary, is not sufficient for bringing teachers together. Creating a community requires intentional acts in an atmosphere of caring amidst shared needs and concerns. Leadership that provides teacher ownership of the schooling process invites the cultivation of community. Specifically, when teachers are given significant and real responsibilities for running the school, when they are expected to be aware of each other's needs and to support each other, then they begin to share needs and concerns. At one elementary school, teachers began a process of deciding

what mattered most to them as a staff and then committed to supporting that belief in an atmosphere of collaboration. It became clear, however, that collaboration was not an option for everyone as some teachers were working just to “stay afloat.” Recognizing this harsh reality, the staff met again and reflected on what it was, specifically, that got in the way of their being able to collaborate. In teams of three, an individual teacher identified one obstacle and then two other teachers committed to help address that obstacle. The teachers took time to listen to each other. They, in their teams of three, committed to helping each other address challenges each month. Much of the conversation and support during the month came in the way of emails and “accidental” contact during the normal schedule of the school day. The threesomes did agree, however, that some sort of contact was necessary at least three times a week. At the end of each month, the threesomes gathered to assess their status and to make plans for the next month. And all these monthly meetings occurred as part of the regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Although there were different levels of success in becoming a school of collaborators, a sense of community and caring clearly became the most important product of the initiative.

Leading is a lonely and stressful job. Given that school leaders are daily handed increased accountability amidst decreasing resources, it is no wonder that many are managing stress that is compromising their personal and professional health. The schooling we are doing today is far too demanding to go it alone. When we can create school cultures that emphasize trust and caring, places where teachers and principals see a shared responsibility for what is going on in the school building, then we can begin to survive the many harsh realities. Ultimately, it comes down to celebrating a place where everything is about relationships . . . about our individual “threads” of life that contribute to the fabric of the school. If we as principals, teachers, and students can tend to each other in a trusting and caring atmosphere, then we can begin to attend to what matters most, the children in our schools. And when that middle school child fumbles with the combination on her locker, she will look to the adults in her school as trusting and caring people who will help her through this tough time

## Conclusion on the Elements of School Leadership

The elements of art juxtaposed to leadership provide us with symbolic language for understanding what makes for successful school leadership. As might be perceived in viewing different art forms, some of the elements are more obvious or more significant in one instance versus at another moment or place. Such is the case with the elements of school leadership. Line, value, shape, form, space, color, and texture all contribute to quality schooling. Given one school with a certain set of needs, we might find that shape is the leading element. At another school with very different needs, however, we might find that texture is a focus. But just as in playing a piano or singing in harmony, there are individual strikes of the keys or notes of the harmony but it is the collective, simultaneous action that elicits an effect that is full, coherent, and complete. The successful school leader has all seven elements at her command, albeit at different levels. Because she understands the interrelated nature of the elements, she is able to orchestrate a successful learning and teaching experience for her students and teachers.

Using an arts-based approach to understand the nature of successful school-based leadership helps craft an enlarged view of what schooling might look like. It is not so much that this approach is the answer to understanding all schools, but such an approach offers one the capacity to view typical schooling in a new and exciting light. When one continues to see the world through the same metaphorical lenses, then one is likely to continue seeing the same things in the same light. When, however, one considers seeing schools from an arts-based approach then that observer may very well gain a new insight into perplexing and persistent problems. And in the final analysis, just as effective teachers learn to see different students from different perspectives effective leaders can see different teachers in light of their different contributions. Maybe by considering the use of line, shape, form, space, value, color, and texture one can open his/her eyes to a new reality.

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## **Solutions**

# Chapter 6. WHY IS SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION SO COMPLEX



This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

This chapter will make a wide sweep of leadership research, exploring some of the mysteries and attempting to define the term “leadership.” affirm the difficulties in linking leadership preparation in universities and executive development programs in preparing individuals to become successful leaders, examine what seems to be missing in leadership research, who is in charge when leaders back down and how do leaders keep the organization on the proper edge for productivity when faced with inevitable political tensions between members of the community, school board and school administrators?

One More Time: What is Leadership?

Any discussion about leadership returns to the tired question: are leaders born or made? Next come the issues about leaders’ temperament, intellect, persistence, and values and why some individual’s with great leadership potential never succeed and others with what appear to have limited leadership skills accomplish great things. The discussion can lead to personal charisma, gender, race, and physical attributes of strength and size and why some individuals perform better under pressure. Some leaders adjust to situations better than others, some are better test takers, others are more reflective, some leaders have an inner sense of when and how to act under pressure and how to guide others out of confusion. This inner sense of leadership was never more evident than during the horrible times at Auschwitz, the Nazi death camp. Elie Wiesel (2006) a prisoner at age 13 stood starving and shivering in the cold darkness when a Polish Jew supervisor of the barracks smiled at him and the others. Wiesel recalls his words of hope. He told us “Comrades, you are now in the concentration camp Auschwitz. Don’t lose hope. We shall all see a day of liberation. Have faith in life. Hell does not last forever” (p.41). Even though this young Pole was assigned by the Nazis to keep order in the barracks, he had compassion for their suffering and gave them hope for survival. Those were the first human words that 13 year old Elie Wiesel heard after being beaten and dehumanized for several days. In another classic display of leadership Winston Churchill excelled. During the devastating bombings of London in World War

II, Winston Churchill strengthened the resolve of his people and the world with his daily messages of hope. He told the world (Rogers, 1986):

We shall not flag or fail, we shall go to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island whatever the cost may be. ( p.77).

When Arthur Levine of Teacher's College and other critics attacked leadership education programs, this writer responded this way (Hoyle, 2005):

University preparation of school principals and superintendents has never been better. Based on indicators of academic achievement, such as entrance exams, grade point averages, and ethnic and gender diversity, the talent pool of graduate students in educational administration improves each decade. (p. 1)

When Gerald Anderson became superintendent of the Brazosport, Texas School district, he found a high failure and dropout rate among children of color and poverty. Driven by his Marine pilot determination and armed with the knowledge of mastery learning gained in doctoral studies and belief that all kids can learn, Anderson added training in the Edwards Deming's Quality Improvement strategies and within three years turned the district into a national success story. His belief that all students can learn led to a hard stance with teachers who thought otherwise. He told his entire staff and community that the district will make "no excuses" for failing to educate every child in Brazosport. Thus, a district wide effort was soon underway to diagnose every student in terms of prior learning, provide quality teaching and testing strategies, re-teach and re-test, and provide each student time to master the content. He and his staff created eight strategies that became a model for hundreds of other school districts faced with high failure rates among minority and poor children and youth. Other superintendents face similar overwhelming odds that Anderson faced but appear to accept the community norms that some students will never succeed due family history, cultural barriers, or lack of school funding to meet the needs of all students--especially those most difficult to teach. Thus, some individuals in leadership positions fail to act on their "inner strength" of leadership during times of crisis. We witness some of these leadership lapses by individuals with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other national and state political figures when hurricanes Katrina and Rita slammed into Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi coasts. Why do some leaders find that inner strength to act and others wait for someone or some group to solve the problems for them? These mysteries of leadership continue to elude the most curious leadership scholars and search teams assisting organizations in finding the right person or persons to lead as the world becomes more complex and competitive.

### Changing Definitions of Leadership

Leadership definitions are more plentiful than those who write about the topic. Warren Bennis indicated that leadership is like beauty, difficult to define, but obvious to. Each semester in my organizational leadership class, I ask students to define leadership. If 15 graduate students respond, I get 15 different definitions. Definitions of leadership have evolved over time. After the

devastating World Wars I and II, America was regaining its industrial might and leaders of industry, education, and national policy development assumed a posture of aggressive top-down control. The leadership literature of the period of 1950-1970 centered on influencing people to do what you want them to do or, managing others to follow you in completing a project, winning a battle, or creating a new product. These definitions were hangovers from the “great man” theories of leadership that recalled powerful individuals leading the industrial revolution and military campaigns emphasizing the anthropomorphic concepts of physical prowess and personalities of the powerful. Influential figures of the early 20th century, i. e., Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller, and other prominent land owners and bankers created the image of what leaders did in terms of exercising power and controlling the industrial, financial, political, and military sectors of American life. This image of what leaders do was influenced by the writings of Woodrow Wilson, Fredrick Taylor, Max Weber, Herbert Simon, Raymond Callahan and others who led in the creation of the science of administration and management primarily viewed leaders as managers of people and things to accomplish a common goal of efficiency, turn a profit, and plan ways to be more productive. According to Bertram Gross (1964), French Industrialist Henri Fayol (1841-1925) added to the trend toward scientific management by defining administrative leadership as planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. These terms have come to be known as “Fayol’s Elements” which best defined leadership in the early to mid-twentieth century. Fayol’s Elements and the definitions are as follows:

- To plan means to study the future and arrange the plan for operations.
- To organize means to build up the material and human organization of the business, organizing both men and materials.
- To command means to make the staff do their work.
- To coordinate means to unite and correlate all activities (Gross 1964, p.39).

Although the appearance of these “Elements” is top down and controlling by management Fayol did make room for some degree of shared leadership. Gross (1964) found that Fayol believed:

Administration was not the exclusive privilege or responsibility of a few people, but was spread out throughout the organization. Everyone should participate to some extent in the administration, but the degree of responsibility and participation increases as one moves up in the hierarchy. (p. 40)

Thus, Fayol promoted a science of administrative leadership and believed that it should be taught as a discipline in public schools and universities in order to produce leaders in the industry and other organizations. It is not surprising that during this time of “organizational efficiency” in business, public school administrators came under attack for running inefficient schools. In 1913, John Franklin Bobbitt applied Taylor’s scientific management to educational management and leadership. He believed that schools must be more efficient by creating a centralized authority

with top down control of all operations and proposed that children in schools were the raw material for the organization, the curriculum clearly identified and uniformly taught and authoritarian leadership by school administrators was an absolute necessity to assure that schools were to be business like and efficient (Callahan & Button, 1964). This definition of school leadership remained ingrained in the behaviors and the literature of educational administration until the late 1950's when the human relations era emerged under the influence of Mary Parker Follett and to studies conducted by Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger, and Chester Barnard. These giants of the human relation movement provided insights into the relationships among formal and informal groups and the importance of linking the roles and duties of the jobs and the personalities, and needs of the people doing the jobs. Follett was a clear leader and pioneer in the human relations movement and within the past ten years has been given the credit she deserved for her influence in being the human side to organizations. She wrote that there must be a "harmonious" relationship between the job to be done and those doing the job and that conflict was a natural phenomenon in organizations. Follett (1924) conceived three ways to handle conflict and use it for the good: (1) dominion determines a win for one side or the other; (2) compromise directs each side and gives us something to bring some peace to the situation; and (3) integration guides each side toward blending conflicting views so that each side gains in the process (p. 300). The human relations era was a time to attempt some balance between the demands of the organization and its primacy for production with the needs and dispositions of the workers. Before the strong labor movement led by John L. Lewis, laborers had no protection from the captains of industry. In 1935 Lewis and his staff struggled to organize all workers into a single union and in spite the controversy surrounding his leadership strategies, the standard of living of most laborers improved. In spite of the labor movement, labor relations departments and hundreds of articles and books on organizational relations, the search continues for a proper balance between the drive for higher performance and needs and welfare of the employees in most organizations. Unions and labor relations organizations today have specialists trained to deal with labor issues including mediation, arbitrations, and legal services.

Since the late 1950s the definitions of leadership have gradually changed from one of forcing others to comply to modeling the way for others though the use of empowerment, persuasion, professional development, and encouragement. The most dramatic changes in administrative leadership occurred as a result the Civil Rights Movement supported by the Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education, women's rights, legislation for the handicapped and increased pleas for social justice in our legal, corporate and educational systems. These movements have raised the awareness of the injustices suffered by women, people of color and those caught in the web of poverty. National, state, and local efforts to provide equal opportunities to oppressed individuals have inspired political leaders, educational administrators, and community leaders to reconsider the meaning of leadership and personal obligation toward inclusion of others in sharing power and resources. Thus, the definitions of leadership have gradually moved from the transaction to the transformational. That is, while transactional leadership is more of a stance of bargaining or agreeing to help others if they help you, transformational leadership is making organizations especially schools more caring communities by leaders guided by principle, morality, and service to others. This transformational and moral leadership style is an effort to lead others to toward

greater organizational productivity preparing and empowering others to take personal responsibility in assuring quality in the entire organization (Bolman & Deal, 1993; Sergiovanni 1999; Fullen, 2003; Wheatley, 2002; Hoyle, 2002; Burns, 1978). This soul centered leadership style is the primary reason for high performing schools at all levels. In 2006, schools and school leaders are caught in paradox of high expectations from the government and community, yet trying to lead school staffs to create caring learning communities for each child and youth. Caught in this 21st century high stakes, test-driven education system it is imperative that educational leaders demonstrate unconditional love for all team members if they are to meet the high expectation of society and prepare young people with the character to promote social justice for all people. The Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, General Pete Schoomaker, explained the difference between leadership and management and that the best leaders learn to merge the two. Leadership is “dealing with change, while management is about dealing with complexity. You do not ‘manage’ a soldier out of the bottom of a hole to face danger, you lead them there” (Saturday, April 1, The Bryan College Station Eagle). Thus, the definition of leadership has evolved from “Telling others to do what you need done,” to inspiring and empowering personnel to seek quality for the organization and to help assure the welfare for all persons.

### What Leadership Research is Missing?

How do we know that leadership training is worth doing? Researchers have found scant evidence that leadership preparation does prepare leaders. Since the work of Fred Fielder cast doubt on the effectiveness of leadership training and his provocative Least Preferred Coworker studies, researchers have become mired in the confusion of contingency theory of leadership. Others have joined Fiedler (1967), in struggling to find closer links between preparation and successful practice are Achilles (1988), Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000), Cooper and Boyd (1988), Murphy and Vriesenga (2004), Hoyle (2005), and Levine (2005). The pursuit of this link between leadership preparation and successful practice intensifies each year in university preparation programs and in staff development activates in the real world of schools and business. In educational administration, Martha McCarthy (2001) believes that challenges faced by leadership preparation programs include: (1) producing credible evidence that informs practitioners, scholars, and policy makers regarding effectiveness of leadership preparation programs; (2) deciding whether the standards being adopted for school administrators are the right ones, and if so how satisfactions with these should be assessed? Attempts to locate research studies that shed a positive light on the preparation-practice paradox, found limited, but credible “hard research” in descriptive form that revealed graduates’ satisfaction with the skills and knowledge taught to them in their graduate programs (Hatley, et al, 1996; Hoyle & Oates, 2000; Davis, 1997; Jackson & Kelly, 2002; Zimmerman, Bowman, Valentine, & Barnes, 2004; Schmieder & Townley, 1994; Martin, Murphy, & Muth, 1998; Doolittle, 2003). These findings range from “hard research” from well designed qualitative studies to the use of survey methods. Graduate students at the University of Missouri and Texas A&M University reported that their graduate programs were very instrumental in helping them prepare for and succeed on the job. Other graduates reported a “clear, well defined curriculum focus reflecting agreement on the relevant knowledge base needed for school administrators in their first year, or first few years in the profession” (Jackson & Kelly



2002, p. 208). Professors at other institutions found that graduates became more scholarly in their approach to problem-solving which helped them solve the real world problems of administration. Martin, Murphy, and Muth (1998) found that their graduates were prepared to “integrate reliable formal knowledge with clinical knowledge—theoretical and craft knowledge” (p. 152). Thus, while the evidence about the success of leadership preparation is limited it does include some important “hard evidence” that Murphy and Vriesenga (2004) failed to include in their exclusive literature search of only four journals in the field.

## New Research Initiatives

As part of the ongoing search for the “holy grail” for evidence of successful leadership preparation, several promising initiatives are currently underway. First, a collaborative effort among the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), and American Education Research Association (AERA)-Division A are producing a Handbook on Leadership Research edited by Gary Crow and Michelle Young. Ten domain leaders are working with other scholars to contribute chapters on a variety of leadership preparation topics investigating the links between preparation and successful practice. The primary aims of this effort is to (1) provide a foundation about existing research and theory in the field of leadership preparation; 2) identify gaps and new directions for research and leadership preparation; 3) stimulate more, better quality research in the field of leadership preparation; 4) encourage new and experienced researchers to undertake research in the field; and 5) provide a community of scholars for on-going conceptual and methodological work (Orr, 2006). Other initiatives are the new UCEA Journal of Research on Leadership Education (JRLE), the new School Leadership Review (SLR) published by the Texas Professors of Educational Administration (TPEA), and the NCPEA Educational Leadership Review. Unless, more compelling evidence is found linking preparation to successful practice, graduate programs in educational administration could face even greater scrutiny by professional administrator associations, university administrators, and policy makers at state and national levels. Unless research directs greater efforts to reveal more reliable evidence that the course work and related clinical experience prepares more effective school leaders other providers will fill the void with on-line and less expensive degrees and credentials. . The Broad Foundation, on-line universities, i.e., Phoenix, DeVry, and others are making claims that their programs for preparing school leaders are as successful as the traditional graduate schools and departments and at less cost and greater convenience to school administrators in full-time jobs who claim time constraints bar them from entering traditional, research- based, on-campus graduate programs.

Educational administration is not alone in lacking convincing research evidence that their graduate programs produce successful graduates. Graduate programs in business administration, public administration, hospital administration, health administration, and sports management suffer from a lack of solid research evidence that their graduates become successful as a direct result of their graduate studies. Programs in architecture, medicine, agriculture, computer science, and engineering, and other professional schools claim to have tighter links between preparation and practice due to the more measurable skills and performance expectations of meeting

professional standards. Thus, while educational administration continues to question which set of preparation standards are superior measures of successful practice, the gap remains between what skills are taught and what skills really make for successful practice. An expert panel was appointed in 2006 to revisit the ISLLC standards since 44 states have either adopted the standards or adapted them to meet state certification and degree requirements. Recent on-going inquiry into leadership preparation by UCEA, NCPEA, and AERA and individual researchers will provide greater insights into the preparation-practice gap. This writer with the assistance of Professor Mario Torres of Texas A&M University will investigate possible links to the gap during 2006-2007. First, we will visit 6 of the top 10 graduate programs in educational administration (ranked by U.S. News and World Report), to conduct interviews with graduate faculty, full-time students, and successful practicing principals and superintendent who graduated with doctorates from these top six programs in educational administration/policy/leadership. We will gather data on student admission, selection, and faculty mentoring procedures, curriculum requirements, instructional processes including the balance between traditional classroom and distance/web-based instruction, independent and group research activities, extent and variety of field/clinical requirements, types and extent of student progress assessments including course, entrance, preliminary, and final exams.

Second, we will ask each program director or key faculty members to recommend at least five graduates of their doctoral program who are now principals or superintendents of successful schools or school districts. We will seek graduates who have been in the same position for at least three years in order to have some assurance that their influence is a primary factor in the success of the school or district. Criteria for the schools in which the graduate serve are as follows:

1. High performing students based on state accountability exam scores in grades 3-11 since the administrator joined the school or district.
2. Mixed race student and family wealth of campus and district student enrollments.
3. Low teacher turnover since the administrator has been in place on the campus or in the district.
4. Lower number of student drop-outs since the administrator has been in place on the campus or in the district.
5. Extend of parent involvement in the school or the district since the administrator has been on the job.
6. Number of advanced placement courses in the secondary schools since the administrator joined the school or district.

Note: Decision rules about the six criteria will be made based on the data gathered about schools and districts of the graduates recommended by their program directors.

Third, the researchers will contact each principal and superintendent recommended by their

program faculty and after applying the seven criteria to the school or district, the researcher will make selections for personal interviews. The researchers will strive to interview five graduates from each of the top six programs and ask the following questions:

1. Since you completed your doctorate, what experiences, people, and activities do you recall that have been influential in your success as a campus/district school leader?
2. Try to recall specific courses in your major in educational administration/policy that have been helpful in your success and provide examples of how specific theories, models, strategies, or methods shared in educational administration seminars remain valuable to you today.
3. Try and recall specific courses outside of the educational administration major that have been helpful in your success as a campus/district leader i.e., curriculum, instruction, technology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, business, accounting or public administration.
4. Try and recall specific courses or research activities that help you today in collecting, tabulating, interpreting, reporting and distributing data to staff on student and teacher performance.
5. Recall your doctoral program advisor/s and try and recall any words of wisdom, knowledge, interpersonal, or communication skills that have been key to your success as a campus or district leader.
6. Recall any relevant contacts with your professors and classmates that have been of value to your on-going professional development and to the success of your school or district.
7. What habits of scholarship is a direct result of your doctoral student experience? i.e., reading scholarly journals, seeking on-line research findings, book readings, conducting personal research, making research based presentations at state and national conferences, and publishing your research in state and national journals.

Fourth, the researchers will analyze the data and codify information on the six doctoral programs, i.e., comparisons of admissions and program requirements, standards, curriculum, internships, research activities, faculty mentoring, class schedules, and committee structures in terms of faculty numbers and disciplines.

In the last step of the process, interview data gathered from the approximately 30 successful graduates will include the use of mixed methods. First, the researcher will analyze the responses of the five graduates from each program and seek parallels in the responses about courses, professors, activities possibly directly linked to successful practices. Next, after identifying possible links between preparation and practice in each of the six top ten programs, the researchers will then conduct vertical and parallel analyses seeking across preparation and practice across the six programs. If these links emerge the researcher will apply both inferential and descriptive methods to investigate significance between preparation and practice. For obvious

reasons related to socialization since completing doctoral programs these preparation practice links will perhaps be weak or missing. However, in spite of the difficulties in isolating the variables that impact successful practice the study could provide more clues to the mystery of leadership and how leaders can be better prepared to take charge and lead schools and school districts to become high performing.

### Who is in Charge When Leaders back down?

General George S. Patton knew that leaders in charge should never back down. Endowed with limitless energy and even when he knew his men were extremely tired, he never let them quit. According to military historian Edgar F. Puryear (1971) General Patton got his men to overcome fatigue and give their all for him--“to do just a little bit more than they thought humanly possible. He did it through his speeches in which he waved the flag, emphasizing that it was a privilege and an honor to fight and die for one’s country. He told his men what a wonderful job they were doing, but they needed to do better; and in his speeches, he convinced them that their fame would never die” (p.285). The George Patton leadership style may not apply to being in charge of a school, school district or chairing a doctoral dissertation committee and advising graduate students, but the same premise holds--leaders can not back down when pressure mounts. Patton was referred to as a driver rather than a leader and according to Puryear (1971), being a driver “was a technique which was fundamental and vital to his leadership success. It was a technique that brought him great success, but it also caused problems for himself and his senior commanders” (p. 287). This dynamic drive to lead and an excessive need to achieve can be a boon or a demon for individuals in leadership roles. David McClelland (Hoy & Miskel, 2005) created the n-achievement factor and hypothesized that individuals who are high in achievement motivation have three key characteristics: 1) they have a strong need to assume personal responsibility and tend to work alone to get the job done they way they want it; 2) individuals who have a higher need to succeed tend to set moderately difficult goals and take intermediate levels of risk. They like the challenge of difficult tasks that may appear to others to be unattainable; 3) high achievers need performance feedback about their accomplishments even if they fail in completing the task successfully. This obsession to take on difficult tasks by themselves and seek little outside assistance has its downside in terms of collegiality and teamwork. A driven leader can easily become known viewed as “compulsive” or “quick tempered,” demanding perfection in others and critical of any person who may appear to stand in the way of progress for his/her projects or for the organization. While George Patton took great care to assure that his soldiers were provided food, dry clothing, and shelter in combat, he also displayed a short fuse when any soldier failed to carry out his military duty. Puryear summed up Patton’s leadership this way, “At best he was superb; at his worst he was impossible” (p. 288).

Leadership behavior consists of a person’s general personality, demeanor, and communication patterns in guiding others toward reaching personal and organizational goals. The balance between “taking charge” and “empowering others” is indeed difficult to maintain over an extended period of time. A school principal may organize for and believe in teaching to the test, but staff perceptions may view the principal as an authoritarian who refuse to discuss alternative teaching

approaches. The literature reveals little empirical research evidence that answers why some leadership styles in specific situations are triumphant successes and others are dismal failures. Observers have pondered why some successful school leaders use a consistent leadership style in all situations and others use a more situational style. Moreover, research is silent in seeking answers about the impact of certain leadership styles across schools, school leaders, and situations. Some promising findings are emerging about how some leaders appear to read the school culture and adjust their leadership style to address critical racial and social issues that impact student learning (Lunenburg, 2003).

Leadership research continues to undulate between leadership as “being in charge” to “being among the leadership team.” The literature includes leadership as a personal quality, a remnant of the “great man” theories of the 1950s when personality traits and human capabilities that gave individuals advantage over others. Writers can not make up their collective minds about why it has been so difficult to move from the boss on the top to the boss in the middle model of leadership. Most writers avoid the boss on the top and write about the virtues of leadership as relational and as a moral quality. In the past five years leadership research investigates the power of love and spirituality in preparing tomorrow’s school leaders. Thus, will organizations especially schools continue its search for higher quality when leaders back down? This author thinks not! While effective leaders understand that cooperation cannot be forced on others, they must be persuasive and lead others to destinations beyond their imaginations and gain their commitment to shared goals. The formal leader is vital in capturing the cooperation of others in seeking higher goals for themselves and for every student they teach and counsel. The school principal, superintendent and professor of school leadership must possess the drive of George Patton, the patience of Job, the persistence of Nelson Mandela, and the love of

Mother Teresa.

### Keeping the Organization on a Proper Edge for Productivity in a Political Context

The four months leading up to the D-day invasion of Europe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, visited twenty-six divisions, twenty-four airfields, five ships of war, and many other important installations. His friends urged him to slow down and not wear himself out before the invasion. However, General Eisenhower told them that the information he was gaining was valuable to the war effort and would provide an edge for victory over the Nazis. In his memoirs, Eisenhower told his reasons for these extensive pre-battle visits.

Diffidence or modesty should never blind the commander to his duty or showing himself to his men, of speaking to them, of mingling with them to the extent to physical limitation. It pays big dividends in terms of morale, and morale, given rough equality in other things, is supreme on the battlefield. (Puryear, 1971, p. 231)

Diffidence and modesty should never blind a principal, superintendent, or professor from mingling with staff, faculty, and students to bring encouragement, needed supplies and equipment, ideas to improve instruction or student assessment, and “sharpen intellectual saws.” This high

visibility by the leader is not only a first step in creating a learning community, but it also reveals courage by the leader to become vulnerable as a member of the group. As a group member the leader becomes a peer who may not have all of the answers, but is willing to learn from the community members. While assuming learning community membership the principal, superintendent, or professor does not relinquish positional power, but gains in referent power necessary to move others toward team vision and programming.

Gaining referent power in public schools is difficult for school administrators if the school board is playing political games against the superintendent. He/she can be very successful in leading a district to higher student performance and be given supportive annual evaluations by the board and not have his/her contract renewed. The best university preparation includes courses on education politics and interpersonal relationships. The best superintendent performance evaluation model based on the AASA standards are of little consequence when a board decides to dismiss their superintendent for “failure to communicate” or some other political reason. Preparing superintendents to survive in politically driven communities continues to be a hot issue in leadership preparation across the country. However, it is not unusual for a superintendent to create political power struggles among members of the school community. This writer served as a consultant to a Cincinnati area suburban school district to conduct a leadership climate study. One part of the study was to ask principals, assistant principals, and assistant superintendents to complete a self report instruments to evaluate the leadership of the superintendent. Two weeks later I called the superintendent and asked how the climate study was progressing. The superintendent replied, “Well Dr. Hoyle, every instrument has been returned except for the one evaluating my leadership skills. I can’t understand what happened. I asked them to complete the form and sign it at the bottom before sending it to my office.”

After a few moments of silence, I asked why he had asked his administrators to sign the instrument. He replied, “Well, I wanted them to be honest and tell me what they really thought about me as their superintendent.” I then suggested that he re-send it and tell them that it is not necessary to sign it. He forgot a little lesson about the use or misuse of political power in his position as superintendent. As a result of this change he had 100% return and some positive suggestions to improve his communication strategies with them and change other central office processes to help building principals gain access to better information sooner. General Eisenhower gained greater power by mingling with his men and sharing his fears and hopes about the invasion on D-Day. The Ohio superintendent discovered that if he wanted to gain referent political power he needed to open lines of communication, mingle, and ask for open anonymous responses from his leadership team.

Keeping a keen edge is vital to sustain productive teams in academics or athletics. This sharp edge is created in order to meet accountability demands while striving to assure that every teacher is treated as a professional colleague. Richard Allington and Patricia Cunningham (2007) report a study by Ames and Ames that presents strategies to keep a sharp edge for improving performance. Selected teachers and the principal conducted sessions organized around data about student achievement, instructional process information, and school climate. They used standardized test

data to determine how well different groups of students were performing (boys versus girls, economically advantaged versus disadvantaged, and breakdowns by ethnicity). They reviewed other measures of teacher satisfaction, potential of students, and other information. Next the team identified the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, testing procedures, and translated these findings into specific goals and action plans. Shared decision making was the norm as the team created a framework for analyzing instructional aspects of the school programs. Collegial and collaborative efforts among faculty improved and Ames and Ames found good evidence that shared decision-making provided the keen edge necessary to improve the school culture toward higher student achievement and lead to improved schooling for all students. There is significant evidence that school administrators who use control strategies for curriculum and teaching processes lose their edge for higher performance. When a school administrator relies on “teacher proof curriculum” or exhibits a patriarchal model of leadership little progress is made in terms of student’s performance and teacher morale. In administrator “controlled” schools it is very unlikely that student performance will improve much because teachers are placed in a position of obedience and only teach what they are told to teach. They are fearful of teaching “outside the box” and become resigned to merely do the job and nothing more. Thus, to keep a keen edge toward greater productivity, mingling with those producing the product whether they are soldiers storming the beaches on D-Day or teachers striving together to liberate children from failure.

## Conclusions

There is little doubt among scholars and school administrators about the necessary strategies to create high performing schools. The steps include clear compelling beliefs, an inspirational shared vision, clear mission, goals, assessments, and targeted staff development. High performing school districts include these key ingredients plus community support systems that include high parental involvement, adequate financial support, and respect for school teachers and administrators. However, school leaders must be prepared and mentored in the art and science of leadership, teambuilding, communications, interpersonal relationships, curriculum and instruction, and skills in research, planning, and evaluation. These school leaders need the skills of a political scientist to wade through the political puddles of power and their harmful and helpful elements. Successful superintendents can not only wade through these political puddles, but they create a belief that all students can learn. They lead and teach others the art and science of diagnosing every child in terms of prior learning, how to create quality teaching and testing strategies, and how to accept “no excuses” for failing to educate every child in the system. Why do some leaders find the inner strength to act and others wait for someone or some group to solve the problem for them? These mysteries of leadership continue to elude the most curious leadership scholars and search teams assisting school boards in finding the right person to lead in a world that continues to grow more complex and competitive. Scholars know what skills and dispositions are needed to prepare leaders for high performing schools. The mystery is in the personalities of school leaders and their compassion for becoming a servant leader who can balance politics with a clear vision and calculated steps to both keep the job and educate every student for a life of success?

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## **Solutions**

# Chapter 7. Challenges Facing Black American Principals: A Conversation about Coping



This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

The success of educational administrators in United States schools is influenced by many variables, including demographics. Currently, Latino, Asian Americans, American Indians, and African Americans make up more than half of the student populations in California, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, and Texas (U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Gollnick & Chinn, 2005). Whites make up less than one fourth of the student population in the nation's largest cities; while 84% of teachers are White and 75% are female. In P-12 schools, nationally, 82% of public school principals are White, 11% are Black, 5% are Hispanic, and less than 3% are identified as Asian and Native American (Digest of Education Statistics, 2004).

Here are some basic facts considering the aforementioned data addressing the success of school principals (Ferrandino, 2000; Lewis, 2000; Page & Page, 1991; PR Newswire, 2003).

- There is a growing and tremendous increase in the number of children of color in U.S. public schools.
- Most principals come from the teaching ranks and fewer Blacks are entering the teaching profession.
- Fewer than 2% of the nation's nearly 3 million public school teachers are Black males, according to 1999-2000 survey results from the U.S. Education Department's National Center for Education Statistics.
- Census statistics show that 42 % of all Black boys have failed a grade at least once by the time they reach high school. And 60 % of Black males who enter high school in 9th grade do not graduate, according to a report by the Schott Foundation for Public Education.

At the same time that the success of principals in U.S. schools is influenced by demographics, there are other socio-economic issues to be considered. For example, by 2020, principals will lead schools where only 49% of the school-aged population will be White, 26% of all children will live in poverty, and 8% will speak a language other than English (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990; U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Considering these demographic shifts, with fewer minority administrative leaders and more students of color, how are these new 21st century principals going to cope? This chapter seeks to understand the challenges facing P-12 Black principals and other principals of color by asking them what makes them successful. Did they have a mentor? Did they have a mentor who supported them in achieving their administrative career goals? What challenges did they face in achieving their positions? Some other questions that support this study include the following: What are the challenges for the school administrator of the post Civil Rights era, as compared to the administrator of the Jim Crow period? What are some models or practices for effective administrators? What are some things that traditional school cultures assume work for Black administrators but in actuality, do not? How does the Browning of America influence the P-12 administrator?

Although the study reported here obtained responses from primarily active and retired Black American principals, the convenience sampling approach drew from available data that limited the representation of other historically underrepresented principals. The terms “Black” and African American are used interchangeably to reflect the overall acceptance of the terms by people of African origin. The intent of this chapter is to provide traditionally established cultures with a better knowledge and understanding about how they can assist in fostering a nurturing supportive environment in their school districts for the advancement of these historically underrepresented professionals.

## Background to These Issues

In 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *Brown* that the practice of Separate but Equal schooling was unconstitutional. At that time, African Americans made up the largest visible minority group in the United States. And, for the most part, the Separate but Equal policy was applied primarily to African Americans by the established culture, European Americans. However, it also affected other historically underrepresented minorities living in the United States. The High Court based much of its decision upon the testimony suggesting that desegregation created a blatant inequality in schools and in the distribution of resources. It considered that unfair laws and practices created feeling of inferiority, low-self-esteem, and low academic expectations, among African Americans. These policies also created an attitude of ethnocentrism for many in the established culture; Black Americans were inferior to the established community. At that time and particularly in the South, many Black public schools were managed by Black principals but many governing boards were White, as were the presidencies of many Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Most Black principals had been trained at Black institutions but the curriculum used was often dated and was

developed through the principles, theories, and pedagogical styles of the established culture.

During de jure segregation and immediately after the 1954 Brown, Black school principals were honored by the African-American community for meritorious service in education, civic, and religious affairs. To this end, their responsibilities included that of school manager, school supervisor, professional development coordinator, physical plant engineer, and curriculum coordinator, thus, increasing the efficiency of school staff, and enabling student adjustment in a changing community (Edwards, 1999). The segregated Black school was, according to Walker (1996, 2000, & 2003; Irvin & Irvin, 1983) an education institution that addressed the deeper psychological and sociological needs of its students. Irvin & Irvin (1983) characterized this by stating:

Black schools served as the instruments through which professional educators discharged their responsibility to their community. Black educators labored to help students realize their achievement goals. In their roles both principals and teachers were mere, but profound, extensions of the interests of the Black community. (p. 412)

Although Black schools were indeed commonly lacking in facilities and funding, some evidence suggests that the environment of the segregated school had affective traits, institutional policies, and community support that helped Black children learn in spite of the neglect their schools received from White school boards. Most notably, in one of the earliest accountings by Thomas Sowell (1974) the schools are remembered as having atmospheres where “support, encouragement, and rigid standards” combined to enhance students’ self-worth and increase their aspirations to achieve. In Sowell’s description of six “excellent” Black schools, students recount teachers and principals who would “not let them go wrong”; they described teachers who were well-trained, dedicated, demanding and who took a personal interest in them” even if it meant devoting their own money, or time outside of the school day. Before Brown, all African Americans were victimized by the same legal segregation and discrimination in American society; hence they shared a common bond. According to Hale (2001) it is more difficult for middle-income Blacks in the post-Brown era to recognize this bond. Some middle-class African Americans who took a working class route to the middle class do not have the same sense of interdependence, obligation, and responsibility to the Black masses.

According to Rhymes (2004) in 1954, about 82,000 Black teachers were responsible for teaching 2 million Black children. In the eleven years following Brown, more than 38,000 Black teachers and administrators in 17 Southern states lost their jobs. These mass firings were made easier because during desegregation all-Black schools were usually closed down – making Black educators expendable even when their credentials surpassed their White peers. The National Education Association’s figures from this period show that 85% of minority teachers had college degrees compared with 75% of White teachers. Black children left without the expertise of the more qualified Black teachers and a tremendous psychological and emotional well-being.

In this light, there is a scarcity of research available that considers how these Black administrators coped during the existence of Jim Crow Laws. However, research indicates that a disparity still

exists at various levels of the academic ladder when African Americans are compared to their White counterparts.

Adding to the problem is the manner in which principals are prepared for professional educational service. According to Gloom and Korvetz, (2001) historically most principals have served in an assistant principalship or resource teacher position for a number of years before stepping into the principalship. With the appropriate mental disposition, good mentoring, and a solid graduate program, those who serve for a few years in these roles amass many of the skills and much of the knowledge required to succeed in the principalship. However, due to the current shortfalls, there are often assistant principals and resource teachers who move into principalships after serving for relatively short periods of time in preparatory roles. Thus, the coping strategies and leadership skills they possess when assuming the principalship may be underdeveloped.

The first few years of the principalship are critical in influencing administrative leadership practice (Hart, 1991; 1993). During the induction period, principals usually try to exert their leadership function in a way consistent with their own personal values, mentor and protégé experience, and professional training. Simultaneously, they experience pressures from subordinates, superiors, and the community to act in a way consistent with their expectations. An essential key to principal success is the perspective that effectiveness is aligned with transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership is the ability to articulate a vision and inspire futuristic and high cognitive thinking among diverse people for an overall strong school culture. Effective leadership also includes appropriate modeling, intellectual stimulation, evaluation, re-evaluation, and reflection (Leithwood, 1993; Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998; Dembowski & Eksotrom, 1999;). Leithwood argues that transformational leadership is essential for effective school change. While the predominant operational mode for the principalship has been that of instructional leadership, Leithwood argues that this model is no longer adequate to respond to the challenges confronting school leaders. Nor are models adequate that do not embrace the elements of care, nurture, and constituent engagement. Effective schools without caring, nurturing, and good principals are misleading; hence the reason that many low socio-economic schools do not work.

Leithwood contends that the instructional leader model is dated. The instructional model reflected a principal's ability to carry out many tasks but it somewhat none essential as it relates to the improvement of student achievement. These instructional duties may include maintenance, finance, human resources, and public relations. In other words, the instructional model embraces the ability to make adjustments within the existing structure thereby restoring balance that is non-transformational and without new learning.

Second order changes, on the other hand, require a form of leadership that is sensitive to organization building. This includes: developing a shared vision; creating productive work cultures; delegating leadership to creating new way of seeing things (Leithwood, 2000). A paramount example of second order changes includes the ability to improve student achievement in an area of accountability. The failure to attend to reform at this level, accounts for much of the

failure of reform efforts. Proponents of second order change believe that is not enough to just know what is important; principals must also know what is essential (Waters & Grubb, 2004). The principal's role in change and improvement efforts has evolved to become that of a "leader of leaders" (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). "Images of transformational leadership emphasize the capacity of the principal to engage others as leaders rather than the ability of the principal to direct the efforts of parents and staff" (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993).

Morality is a component of both first and second order changes. Hoyle et al (1998) believes that principals must be cognizant that ethical and moral issues are the most controversial issues of society. These authors contend that school leaders become representative of that moral order, and advocates of its majoritarian values. Therefore, in order for a school leader to engage in policy and governance issues requires insight into the vision and reality of the administrator's school's role. At the same time, these leaders must understand the issues of care, love, and nurture. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) is one of the first to boldly disregard the effective schools rhetoric, interpreting a self-created model through a different lens. Lawrence-Lightfoot and others (Nodding, 1992; Mayeroff, 1971; Beck, 1994) believe that traditional models of effective school leaders fail to consider the ideals of caring and goodness in principal leaders. Lawrence-Lightfoot contends that one can be effective but not necessarily good and caring. It is easy to lose sight of these most important variables, goodness and caring, if one does not have a strong sense of community and belonging among students, parents, teachers, and other school constituents. Constituent efficacy is difficult to establish when principals do not reside in the school vicinity, speak a language other than English, actively interact with parents, students, and other school constituents, or demonstrate a nurturing and loving behavior to those with whom they lead. The cultural match of a principal and school is often obscured if the academic leader has not been properly trained and educated to interact with a culturally diverse consistency at the school practitioner rank. The principal's abilities to provide a culturally and intellectually stimulating teaching and learning environment can be diminished by his or her own lack of knowledge provided by their administrative credentialing program, negligible staff development, and limited personal experience.

Many studies (Schneider, 1991; Rooney, 2000; Mederios, 2001; Moir & Bloom, 2003) have found that one of the most effective ways to prepare and support principals in their careers is to provide a mentoring program. Daresh (2001) believes mentoring is an ongoing process in which individuals in an organization provide support and guidance to those who can become effective contributors to the goals of the organization. He further contends, "Unlike many other views of mentoring, a mentor does not necessarily have to be an older person who is ready, willing, and able to provide all the answers. Usually mentors have a lot of experience and craft knowledge to share with others. But the notion that good mentoring consists of a sage who directs the work of the less experienced to the point that no one will make any mistakes is not reasonable."

Many states, aware of the principal and teacher shortage, have created programs that enable aspiring principals, mentor principals, and the recruitment of ethnic minorities (Beebe, Hoffman, Lindley, & Presley, 2002; Erlanson & Zellner, 1997; Garza & Wurzbach, 2002). According to

Gardiner, Enomoto and Grogon, (2000) successful school principals are often mentored by professionals who have a vested interest in their well-being. Mentoring is characterized as an active, engaged, and intentional relationship between two individuals (mentor and protégé) based upon mutual understanding to serve primarily the professional needs of the protégé. Quality mentoring relationships can be distinguished by certain ways of relating, by expectations and parameters placed on the relationship that serve to promote the protégés professional success and well-being.

At the same time mentoring programs for beginning principals are designed differently than those for veterans within the school system. The earlier assumption implies that several key and essential skills are underdeveloped. Peer-Assisted Leadership (PAL) is an administrative in-service program in San Francisco that is designed for veterans and transferring principals that involves peer coaching strategies which encourage pairs of administrators to work together in order to promote more effective and professional development (Darshe, 2001).

However, King (2005) believes that it is important for historically underrepresented groups to be provided opportunities to participate in mentoring arrangements, and that it is essential that mentoring experiences be culturally relevant. In this light, she shares a professional development ideal created through an organization entitled Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE) whereby the ideal, Jenga, has been enlisted among the organization's tools to hone the leadership of educators. Jenga is an Ethiopian (Amharic) word that refers to a relationship which entails commitment, humility, and love (Herbert, 1999). In addition, Jenga/Jegnonch (plural) are established by special people who have demonstrated determination and courage in the protection of their people, land, culture, and who show diligence and dedication to African American people who produce exceptionally high quality work and dedicate themselves to the defense, nurturing, and development of their young by advancing their people, place, and culture.

The connection of between mentoring and self-efficacy for Black principals is also connected with spiritual belonging. Intense religiosity among Black American refers to the great importance of God and religion in their lives, high frequency of church attendance, church membership, and the prevalence of prayer in daily lives (Gallup, 1996; Ploch & Hastings, 1994; Roof & McKinney, 1987). Black religiosity is based upon what Pattillo-McCoy (1998) and Morris (1996) describe as the Black church's ability to have existed as a more encompassing institution when Blacks did not have the ability to participate fully in the economic, social, and political life of the majority society. The church was also the only institution controlled completely by Blacks. The role of the church in predominantly Black social movements, such as the Civil Rights movement, created after school programs to curb youth delinquency, promoted voter participation, and facilitated other civic actions.

From an historical context, when faced with challenges and resulting despair, African Americans have often leaned upon spirituality as a means of optimism and encouragement. Thomas Parham, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Counseling and Health Services and Director of the Counseling Center at the University of California (Irvine) believes one of the most enriching elements



respected by many African-Americans is the “notion of spirituality.” Parham (1991) contends that “...what is true is that while you can chain a person's body, [and] you can shackle their ankles and their arms, it is often times more difficult to shackle the spirit. The belief of deliverance is carried from one generation to another. It is a transcendence of belief with active participation that has evolved through centuries of challenges. Horton and Horton (2001) contend that it is this kind of reckoning that gave slaves the sense of intense belief in a higher power which could emancipate them from slavery. At the same time, it also brought about an ambiguous and precarious freedom. Reconstruction faded into southern segregation policed by organized terrorism. The 21st century evolved with cross-cultural partnerships among labor, a sophisticated cultural renaissance in northern cities, and struggles against Jim Crow among African Americans that would eventually afford Blacks access to public accommodations, including education.

According to the Higher Education Research Institute (2004) the term “spirituality” points to individuals’ interior, subjective life, as contrasted to the objective domain of material events and objects. One’s spirituality is reflected in the values and ideals that he or she holds most dear, including a self-understanding of our purpose presently and in the future, and the legacy left for others to benefit. For the principal, this self-understanding can create a connectedness to other principals, students, other school constituents, and the world. It is within this context, that spirituality is understood as an element of that which is deeply religious. Spirituality relates to the connected interaction of the soul, the spirit, and sacred matters. It is all of these things together that create within spirit filled people, the mindset of solidarity, the willingness of self-sacrifice, and the determination and success within human nature that only occurs with divine guidance.

In higher education, a study of 136 select colleges and universities by the Higher Education Research Institute (2004) indicates faculty believe that factors like religiosity, spirituality, and meditation contribute to the overall wellbeing of faculty. In the organization culture of academicians, Caldwell (2000) emphasizes that success of African Americans must be culturally authentic. According to Caldwell, success in education must be inclusive of God, spirituality, ancestors, community, ritual study, worship and extended and immediate family as support groups. The historical context of race set the stage for the kinds of challenges to success that Black principals face in the 21st century. Many researchers acknowledge (Dumas, 1980; Scott, 1980, Yeakey et al., 1986; Linden, Wayne, & Stillwell, 1993) that among ethnic minority principals’ challenges including the task of demonstrating competency in the aftermath of a history that has often defined them as incompetent by race; guaranteeing that all students perform well, ensuring cultural responsiveness towards all their diverse students, and facilitating a workable means of communicating with parents, caregivers, and other community stakeholders. This is no small task. Increasing diversity among educational professionals and students is one of the most critical adaptive challenges that schools face; especially if one considers that by 2020, students of color will represent nearly half of the elementary and secondary population (Gollnick & Chinn, 2005).

In support of this premise, the author conducted a research study in which the method, findings, and discussion seek to share additional light on how principals of color cope in this millennium.

Forty-seven individuals participated in the survey. The data for the study were obtained from a survey instrument sent to African American and other minorities at the P-12 principal level and/or retired career principals. This level of administration, as well as retired professionals who once held these positions, was selected because of the changing demographics that include these personnel though on an infrequent basis.

The questionnaire utilized a convenience sampling methodology that included administrators in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Ohio. All of the individuals were invited to participate in the survey by way of a letter explaining the purpose of the survey, requesting an interview with them through telephone or in person, or offering the choice of completing the survey by mail. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included with each questionnaire.

In the analysis portion of this study, many of the participants used pronouns when referring to the principals, the established culture, and school districts. In the documented quotes, the uses of proper names are given where appropriate. There is no written interpretation of the oral interview data to strengthen the narrative so the validity of the oral interview data is in no way jeopardized. Lastly, an incorporation of oral interview reportage, for continuity purposes, is given throughout this narrative.

## Results and Discussion

The questionnaire was designed to determine what leadership models tended to work effectively for them in their roles as principals, if the principals had a mentor to guide them, and what challenges were associated with the principalship.

### Description of the Sample

Thirty-six of the survey participants were female while 11 were male. In addition, half of the survey participants were between the ages of 35-45 years old. The majority of the participants were also African American. Most of the participants (80%) earned their Administrative certification in the southern states of Mississippi or Louisiana. Within this group, most completed their undergraduate degrees at Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCU) and most graduate degrees were earned at Predominately White Colleges or Universities (PWCU).

### Leadership and the Principalship of Black Americans

Upon analysis of the data, there are some constant themes that are apparent. These consistent responses concern the issues of best practices, race, mentorship, spirituality, and health. The manner in which the training of leaders has undergone transformation is noted by the reflection of a 36-year veteran educator and retired principal living in the Mississippi Delta:

The principal position was the highest position of academic and socio-economic strata respected by most African Americans. The Black principal was more times than not, a man. I'm one of those men. He was the authority figure of the community. He was the direct contact between Whites

boards and superintendents and members of the Black schools. His home was usually a part of the school grounds and his house utilities were paid for. The principal decided whether or not a female teacher would take maternity leave or not. Salary inequities were as common as corporal punishment and neither was to be questioned. . . . Black folks, back then, may have looked at the White man and knew that we wanted to hold a high position like him but White folks didn't really prepare us to become principals. They made offers for us to lead mostly Black schools, like in the Mississippi Delta. But what training? We learned most by practice.

Most of the principals in this study addressed the transformational leadership model as an appropriate model for honing their leadership in an academic setting. This was further affirmed by those principals who contend that transformational leadership is only as successful as the community in which it exists and where school constituents allow the model to be effective. As one seasoned principal added, "Every model needs to be reviewed every now and then because times change and circumstances too."

Another principal added:

The reason that I like this transformational model...and by the way, I actually learned the most about it in the Louisiana Principal Induction Program is that it teaches you that you've got to balance a lot of different roles. I think one of the hardest things that you must do is live and work within contradictions or ambiguities within all the roles and still find balance. I was one of those folks who moved from teaching straight into a principalship in an unacceptable performing school. It is challenging position but I like it. I think it helps that I am single and without my own children.

Lomotey (1989) and Monteiro (1977) argue that the success of Black principals in their communities may rely largely on their interactions with the community. According to Lomotey, Black principals seem to place a higher priority on community involvement in the educational milieu than do their White colleagues. They are more inclined, as a group to involve parents and other community members in school activities and to a degree, in decision making. They view such involvement as fundamental to the overall success of the school and to their individual success. Black principals are often less threatened by a focus on community relations as they tend to relate more closely with the larger community. In Black schools, it is possible that this emphasis onto the larger community may be a key ingredient in bringing about improved academic performance for Black students. Although it may appear that Black principals are able to incorporate this relationship in a way that is elusive to principals of other races, many of the study participants stressed the critical importance of educational leaders having the ability to develop self-esteem, facilitate appropriate moral behavior, and instill academic achievement in students even if their race does not match the race of their students.

When asked the questions: "Do you have a mentor?" "Did that person assist you in professional growth?" "To whom do you turn for advice?" Most survey participants (80%) indicated that they had a mentor who supported them in professional growth and guidance. At the same time, that person was often not the person to whom they turned for advice. The person to whom they sought

advice was often referred to as a spouse, significant other, legal advisor, or a member of the clergy. Some of the respondents indicated mistrust in confiding to a principal colleague but felt greater comfort in speaking to someone of color who holds a higher ranking position. This person was frequently referred to as the “dean” or “daddy.” At the same time, 90% of the survey participants indicated that mentors guided them in achieving the goal of principal but only half indicated that these mentors shared the same racial identity as they themselves. A few (20%) principals indicated they did not have a mentor. They use descriptors such as, “I am ruled by my own drumbeat,” “I ask God to direct my path,” and “No one can let me down but me.”

Most Black female principals suggested that with the dwindling numbers of Black principals, there are even fewer senior level Blacks to mentor up-and-coming Black principals. Many female survey participants suggested that they often suffer gender hostility and other exclusions from women colleagues rather than men. Quite often the hostility and exclusion came from the unexpected: other Blacks colleagues!

Yet, all principals who work in predominantly White school districts responded that there was a concern about not “fitting-in.” A common concern was “being able to find someone who has a connection.” This can be interpreted as finding a White American who is accepted and respected by other European Americans school leaders but who is also able to communicate effectively with historically underrepresented principals. In these circumstances, an ethnic identity model should be considered.

Tatum (1991) supports this assertion with her description of Williams Cross’ Theory of Racial Identity Development. According to this theory, once African Americans exit the immersion/emersion developmental stage “characterized by a strong desire to surround oneself with symbols of one’s racial identity, and actively seek out opportunities to learn about one’s own history and culture with support of same-race peers, they move into the stage described as “internalization” which is characterized by a sense of security about one’s racial identity. He further noted, “Often the person at these stages is willing to establish meaningful relationship across group boundaries with others, including Whites, who are respectful of these new positions. It is equally critical at this point that support networks exist, comprised of one or possibly several individuals who understand and affirm the ideologies, perspectives and perceptions of success and failure that people of color may encounter Butler (1993).

This condition is significant in educational leadership because African Americans often lack the connections (or social capital) ordinarily developed through ties in established cultures that European Americans have more easily availed themselves. Black Americans may not have the awareness of opportunities that include leadership institutes, mentors, stipends for professional degree programs, travel funds, grant monies, support services, professional/civic memberships, social invitations, co-publication offers, and the communicative skills to know how and what information to give and acquire in various settings. Without these variables, the African American principals may be left with an intense feeling of isolation and loneliness. Attempting to become skilled in obtaining social capital may include the ability to practice “shifting.”

Code-switching or shifting is purposeful changing the manner in which one communicates. According to research by the African American Women's Voices Project, (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003) shifting is a sort of subterfuge that African Americans have long practiced to ensure their survival. It is a common theme that emerged through the conversations with principals. According to a thirty-five year old principal:

Sometimes, when a low-income mother with a bad behavior comes into my office, I put myself into check. I say to myself calm down, smile, offer my hand and offer a seat. I also often change the way I speak. Don't adhere to the King's English too much. By all means, don't be loquacious and you may even want to be complimentary of dress attire. On the other hand, you may want to infuse a lot of the opposites when you are interacting with a majority culture in which many assumptions are made.

Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) believe that African American women shift more than any other historically suppressed group. This means they hide their true selves to appease White colleagues, Black men, and other segments of the community. Black women shift to accommodate differences in class, gender, and ethnicity. Shifting is evident in one's usage of Standard English and shifting to Ebonics, non-standard English used primarily by Black Americans. Physically, shifting can take place by minimizing social distance. Shifting can occur by styling natural hair to perms. Shifting exists when changing one's physical posturing and facial expressions to expressionless and neutral positions. Shifting can also reflect changing how one thinks and communicates. According to one principal:

We don't have a lot of Hispanic children. My school is Black, Whites, or mixed-kids. What I must do is learn the language of young people. I watch BET. I learn hip-hop and rap. I learn what is popular so that I can often infuse Standard English with non-standard forms of communications. If you can't communicate with young folks, you will lose them.

A male principal, supports this statement but contends that shifting is not simply and solely race-based. "If you are addressing people who don't have a lot of exposure and resources, you meet them where they are in order to effectively communicate."

In order to obtain social capital, historically underrepresented groups must understand, and know how and why, information is constructed. The construction of information creates a paradigm, a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality by the community that shares them (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). The manner in which individuals construct information is based upon societal monitoring and subsequent associated and acquired knowledge. Paradigms are created from events that occur in the historical and present context. Paradigms are influenced by societal rewards and punishments. Paradigms are also based upon culture, language, thoughts, behaviors, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and more. Paradigms can be considered as mental frameworks that have unwritten rules but direct actions. When one paradigm loses influence and another takes over, there is a paradigm shift. Knowing in advance how a paradigm shift might occur gives a person an advantage over others.

African Americans and other historically underrepresented principals may enter into leadership positions having had stellar presentations from national and international conferences, but may not be rewarded and recognized for these contributions. At the same time, a member of the dominant culture may have fewer or equal publications and presentations, and yet is lauded for his or her contributions. The historically underrepresented member may feel slighted and question equity in a society that espouses democratic principles. However, if this person genuinely understands the manner in which variables such as gender and race have been manipulated in the United States across time, an awareness and understanding exists.

Suppose a newly hired principal of the established culture is invited to attend a church attended by other constituents of the established group. After church, he or she meets the superintendent's single daughter or son, and is later invited to dinner where other senior level administrators are dining. Discussions emerge and the newly hired principal is invited to join a principal leadership institute. Hence, social class is alive and well. The principal of color observes his or her colleague socially and professionally advancing and is only slightly aware of what social capital is available to the counterpart.

An emerging paradigm shift occurs once ethnic minority principals know the paradigm of the dominant culture. The paradigm reflects the idea that to successfully operate in a world of historical unfairness, they must acquire knowledge about the paradigm of other groups as well as their own. They must find the mechanisms to enter into the frameworks that have unwritten rules but direct action within the more powerful culture. They also need to know and understand the history, beliefs, norms, and values of the dominant culture, so that their value of self worth and esteem is not dictated by individuals who do not share, or at least respect, their paradigm. If the person of color is unable to recognize and understand the paradigms of self and others, the results can create apathy, loss of cultural identity, lack of motivation, career burnout, and the inability to differentiate when actions are racist and when they are not.

### Other Challenges of Race, Health, Spirituality and Humor

All of the principals expressed racism as a concern they frequently encountered. Lomotey believes that subordinates may react differently to their supervisor depending upon the supervisor's race (found in Parke, 1976). If subordinates act differently to supervisors based upon the supervisor's race, it could affect the leadership of the supervisor along racial lines, again differentiating the leadership of Black and White teachers. One principal's sentiments echoed the voice of many survey participants interviewed:

In the South, corporal punishment is an accepted discipline. Quite often it becomes an issue because White parents do not want a Black principal, it doesn't matter if you are a man or woman, to paddle their child. You can follow all the rules in the handbook but if my White colleague paddles, there are very few objections.

Another issue associated with race evolves around who is appointed to predominately ethnic minority schools with an at-risk population of students. Several principals suggested that when

career applications were made to larger White public schools, the applications are not filled by Black principals but rather White principals. They contend that they are “equally as qualified to mentor White students and teachers” as other their White peers. However, because they are Black, there is an unconscious racist perspective that reverse mentoring is not possible. One seasoned administrator posed the difficulty of discerning when many actions are actually issues of race and when they are not. “Sometimes you encounter racial issues so much you wonder if this is racist or if it isn’t. In the Black culture we use a lot of metaphors to better understand what’s going on and sometimes we still don’t get it.”

In order to support this administrator’s dilemma, the sport of golf is used as a racial metaphor. A former university dean described golfing as an engaging sport that creates a dialogue for a multiplicity of topics including race. This sport also offers a metaphor for understanding the culture in which we live. According to Albert Doucette, during golf, a lesser player may be given a Two Gotcha Handicap. At any time during the game, the player could stand behind the better player and in the middle of the person’s shot yell "gotcha." This outburst obviously would interfere with the player’s shot. This first, of two or more “gotchas”, was used very early in the game. The second “gotcha” was used very late or never. Hence, it was the anticipation of its use that ruined the better player's focus and game success. There is a correlation between golf and actions of racism. People of color meet prejudice early in life. This is their first “gotcha.” They then anticipate the second or subsequent gotchas for the rest of their lives. This anticipation often ruins much of their life because sometimes behaviors of the dominant culture can be perceived as racist when in actuality they are not and at other times actions are certainly acts of blatant racism. Whether mirage or reality, both situations play with the human psyche and often cause members of historically underrepresented groups to imitate the discriminatory actions of many dominant culture members. Consequently, people of color often begin to target one another with acts of wrongness.

In a stratified and multiethnic society, those at the bottom of the stratification system tend to vie for resources and opportunities by exhibiting the “battle royal” of Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952). Ellison illustrates that Blacks, like crabs in a bucket, are often forced to entertain the world whereby one crab attempts to make it to the top toward liberation but does not succeed because it is quickly pulled down by another crab below.

The crabs in a bucket idea can be consciously and unconsciously evoked when there has been one person of color in a work environment and a new person of color arrives. The newcomer’s arrival may create a feeling of competition and back stabbing by the former employee rather than generating a welcoming atmosphere where there is unity in numbers and collaboration. This behavior occurs in far too many cases; Black principals are victims who have been taught to problem solve through coercive tactics rather than mind, intellect, and futuristic ideology.

Many of the participants (52%) mentioned health as a factor in effecting successful principals. The position was consistently described as “highly stressful.” Among the list of health concerns faced by Black principals were high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Hence,

the survey participants in this study advocate infusing a healthy exercise regiment into the administrative lifestyle. According to principal, Reginald Elzy, a seventeen year educational professional, "I wake up every morning and work-out beginning from 4:45am-5:45am." Carolyn Roman, twenty-seven year career professional, suggested, "I had a flare-up with high blood pressure and immediately started walking. Thank God I do not have to rely on high blood pressure or behavior altering medications as many of my colleagues do." The respondent, continued, "Issues of health seem to be really important during career changes."

Career transition evolved as a variable in conjunction with health. Many principals who were married or in committed relationships, echoed that the transition from one level of administration to a higher level of administration created stress in communications with their spouses, significant others, and/or their children. Spirituality was described as one of the vehicles to facilitate one through this transition. A former principal and now acting superintendent described his career transition like this:

The way I cope is to work in my garden and yard. I am also an avid reader. I think most importantly, is that I have God in my life and I try to work with my wife (a teacher) to bring as little school work as possible home. Home is my own family's time. By the way, I think women have more problems with bringing the school work to the home environment than men.

Many of the participants noted humor or laughter as a temporary solution to challenges associated with the principalship. One principal living in Mississippi described her ability to cope with difficult challenges in the following manner, "I go into my office and laugh and laugh." Laughter is now being studied for its therapeutic qualities. Laughter can be medicinal. According to Godfrey (2004) there is growing evidence, both scientific and observational, of a clinical association between humor and health. Numerous studies (Goodgrey, 2004; Dziegielewski, Jacinto, Laudadio, & Legg-Rodriguez, 2004; White & Camarena, 1989) support the benefits of laughter in cardiac rehabilitation, pain perception, discomfort threshold, coping and stress, and immune response. It improves heart functioning, reduces stress levels, has the power to heal relationships, and is great for mental outlook. Because of its many health benefits, laughter can indirectly help manage chronic pain and speed recovery from injury.

Music is another form of coping with challenges provided by survey participants. Again, most of the survey participants listed music as a stress reducer to school related challenges. Research by Glantz (2000) recommends a practical, concise, easy-to-read guide for relieving stress, written specifically for educators. Glantz, in a recent book, suggests a relaxation and energy-enhancing practice with breath-control exercises, an energy-generating form, and concentration (meditation) techniques. An accompanying CD includes 11 relaxation routines set to soothing background music. Educators who were taught these relaxation and energizing techniques reported overall feelings of well-being, increased self-confidence, less frequent headaches or bouts of insomnia, and better personal relationships with spouse, children, school employer and colleagues.

This discussion bears a personal note for the use of humor and music. I have a Ph.D. in Education and my sister holds an M.D. in Internal Medicine. She is also a wife and mother and I am a newly



adoptive single mother, so the quality time shared as sisters is usually when I have returned home from the university and she is driving home from work to pick up her children from school as she navigates rush hour traffic while talking on the cell phone. There are very few days that pass when we do not have a dialogue about the day's experience. These experiences usually entail some forms of discrimination that have taken place at her workplace or mine.

Our dialogue is so entitled because of the perseverance it takes to complete a professional degree program and, in spite of the long hours of clinical practice and research, one still experiences racism. Racism is alive and well, despite our academic advancement and movement within middle-income status. Almost daily, we revisit how we have constructed the paradigm of being Black American professional women. Sometimes our pains and experiences are so deep that at the end of the conversation we try to think of something to make us laugh and usually it is the usage of words like, "That's your cousin, girl." For example, my sister observed a wealthy client (who visited a medical facility) request that their medical service be provided by White only staff. The request was honored. I laughed and exclaimed, "Girl so, they ain't recognizing yo "D" huh?" We both fell into insurmountable laughter.

In turn, I relayed to her how one of my White students asked, "How did you learn to speak like dat?" The student was referring to my usage of Standard English and the ability to code switch. Our laughter reflects our understanding that deep and soul filled laughter is therapeutic and helps to relieve the stress of the day.

When injustices seem too unbearable, one often uses music to illustrate "You gotta hurt before you heal" (Bland, 1989) and I add that hurting and healing takes time. In the Black experience, music and laughter provide opportunities to release, express, and temporarily remedy frustration and stressors. Dialogue, music, and laughter enable people of color to maneuver within the game of politics, for if one does not learn to play the political game he/she will surely be played by politics. It is equally important to know that many things that exist as barriers, must often be left alone if the time for removing these barriers is not right. Quite often, issues should be left alone until the appropriate amount of ammunition for engaging in battle is available to the aggrieved to ensure that he or she has a strong case. For example, if an aggrieved faculty member is filing a grievance against an administrator, the faculty person needs to ensure that necessary documentation has been submitted in a timely manner and in accordance with university policy.

In the hit song "The Gambler," [Kenny Rogers](#) has this advice for listeners and I share it as metaphor for African Americans and other historically underrepresented people attempting to thrive in chaotic situations:

You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, Know when to walk away and know when to run. You never count your money when you're sittin' at the table. There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done.

## Summary and Implications

This short chapter has many implications for school districts that are committed to supporting the success and effectiveness of school principals in the 21st century. Although the transformational leadership models embody collaboration and strategic planning for moving from a simple instructional design to incorporating first and second order changes, the facilitative leadership might be more appropriate for principals of color. This model includes the behaviors that embrace the collective ability of the school principals to adapt, solve problems, and improve performance. Facilitative leadership includes behavior that helps the school achieve goals that may be shared, negotiated or complemented (Murphy & Louis, 2001). In addition, resources such as Skills for Successful 21st Century School Leaders (Hoyle, 2005) are recommended for districts seeking to prepare skilled leaders. This resource envelopes practical approaches to establishing relationships with culturally diverse constituencies, formulating policies for bonds, facilitating site-base decision making, gathering and analyzing data, and implementing futuristically focused staff development. In addition, the following ideals are recommended in preparing principals from historically underrepresented groups. The ideals are supported by culturally responsive proverbs.

Knowledge is like a garden. When it is not cultivated it cannot be harvested. -Guinea

Perhaps learning academies that promote the richness of the education profession should be introduced as early as the middle school and high school years. The church, as an organization, has long been the icon of social and economic progress for the Black community. In this light, the church as an organization, as well as the school community, should be considered in developing partnerships to hone and develop interest in the profession. Principals in training need to be guided to look at how they problem solve from a personal and cultural perspective. They also need to learn how and why other cultural groups may problem solve differently. This knowledge and understanding about problem solving, better equips the principal for effective organizational leadership and decision making. A Louisiana middle school principal addresses why understanding problem solving within a cultural dynamic is important.

I had a student who had been retained twice. This kid had a big truancy problem. But, he was excellent with anything and everything technologically. He was always helping teachers to fix a problem with computers. One day, the student asked me what I was doing for the Spring Break. I told him I was relaxing and visiting family in Atlanta. He asked me what I do to relax. I responded that I enjoy listening to music. He said, "What kind of music do you like?" I said, "All kinds." He responded, "I am going to hook you up."

The following day he returned with a big sloppy grin on his face and placed a backpack in front me. Music had been (highly likely) improperly downloaded ranging from R&B and old school, to spirituals and gospel. He had attached printed labels and titles of cds. All cds were organized by author. He said, "How did you like it?" I smiled and said, "You did this for me?" He said, "You're a pretty cool principal. We want to help you too." I smiled and made sure that I said, "Thanks for helping me to relax."

Now, I could have inquired how he had acquired all of these cds and called his parents. I did not do this. He offered me a chance to see where his talents lie. I pray that he will finish school and

seek a career in computers. I am sure encouraging him. Whether I see my kids in Walmart or church. I make certain that I am encouraging them. A principal's job is 24-7.

And yet another principal in Mississippi described issues of problem solving like this:

You know, our students overall don't do well on highstakes test. I believe

one problem with their ability to do well on analytical and logical reasoning tests is due to the fact that they solve questions from a Black cultural context.

Another paradox for our children is the cultural dynamic of behavior at home and the school culture that dictates that you act in another way. Take Zero Tolerance. You may have a Zero Tolerance Rule in your district. You can't fight or you are kicked out of school. Well, here is a kid whose father tells him don't pick on other kids but if they pick on you, I expect you to kick butt. Don't be a wussy. So, what message are we, at school and at home, sending the kid? I'll tell you what we are doing. We are sending that kid mixed messages. The kid doesn't know what to do. These actions carry over to how we problem solve on higher cognitive and intellectual issues also.

It takes a village. -Sioux and Ibo

Educational managers for school districts may find it necessary to incorporate supportive resource systems that contribute to principals of color participating in professional organizations (i.e. National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP]; American Association of School Administrators [AASA]; Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, [ASCD]) that include people from culturally diverse backgrounds. At the same time, principals of colors should not be trapped by historic divisions between races and genders and make the decision to interact with groups that solely match their own racial heritage.

No one person's success is attributed to his or her actions alone. It takes the support from others to be successful. Principals need to acquire the attitude and behavior of "win-win" relationships; that is, relationships that are supportive amongst and between school constituents. These kinds of relationships help to establish networking ties.

Furthermore, school districts should ensure that principals are trained through principal institutes, forums, seminars, and professional development hours. And, these programs should entail mentoring programs specifically designed for historically underrepresented groups.

Though many principals in this chapter chose to operate without the support of a mentor, this is ill-advised. Principals should undergo mentoring and training to ensure the most effective development of leadership skills. School leaders set the tone of the culture by carefully choosing the people with whom they surround themselves, by communicating a sense of purpose for the organization, and by reinforcing appropriate behavior. The manner in which school leaders interact and participate within the community, greatly influence their success as a leader. When support is lacking for principals of color, their success and effectiveness is greatly impeded.

Blessed are they who are pleased with themselves (South Africa)

Most principals encounter many variables including issues of race and health. They find coping through music, humor, nature, and laughter. School districts should offer retreats that include workshops that focus on music, humors, nature, and laughter. Retreat locations should be carefully selected. School district organizers must not assume that because “political correctness” is the modern coined term that people are not emotionally riveted by retreat locations such as plantation sites. A part of the retreat agenda should acknowledge that most principals of color identify with a cultural heritage that has once been oppressed hence, it is important for that oppression to be acknowledged and then identity where that oppression links to many barriers they may currently encounter.

For example, Black principals need to acquire an understanding of their school cultures by first asking, “What is my purpose within this organization?” Secondly, one must ask, “Is my purpose aligned with the organization’s?” The answers and understanding include knowing how, when and where paradigm construction and shifting becomes necessary. Furthermore, the dynamics of the work environment can create anger among those who believe that they are being disenfranchised and anger can be good if it is empowering. But being labeled as “mad” (rather than angry) or “lacking collegiality” connotes irrational behavior and this, in itself, is not good and reflects TGC. Some situations need to be challenged and some need to be left alone until the time is right for addressing; for to act in haste often makes waste. Black principals often need to take time away from the work situation. This may be particularly difficult for principals working in rural areas in the South where the culture often espouses an extremely strong dawn to dusk work ethic. Often, when principals do not adhere to this ethic, principals may believe that their constituents believe that their time away from the office insinuates idleness. Rather than idleness, more importantly, they should consider times for revival, reflection, and rejuvenation away from the office as “mental health days” (MHD). The paradigm reconstruction of revitalization, reflection, and rejuvenation is healthy rather than the paralyzing construct of idleness.

Principals need to get in touch with themselves and their surroundings. A drive away from the suburbs and inner city, a walk on the beach, meditate, jog in the woods, sit by the water, and talk to wise Big Mamma (she need not have a degree to possess wisdom) or a professional elder “dean” who broke the ice long before your arrival thus making your professional presence possible. School administrators and their principals of color need to understand (in theory and practice) spirituality, support groups, shifting, and paradigm reconstruction, Two Gotcha Handicap, and humor. Black principals in the postmodern era must teach these terms to future educators and principals for they too, must learn to analyze and interpret within their paradigm and the paradigm of others how to know when to “hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, and know when to run.”

Each one Teach one (Diaspora)

Lastly, the diversity of our schools is upon us. Principals in the new millennium enhance the texture of their leadership success by listening and interacting with faculty and students from

different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Mentors not only experience an honor to serve but mentoring can be a powerful indicator that the school values a mentor's skills and abilities to lead and share with others (Playko, 1995). In this light, the mentoring can increase the mentor's self-esteem (Czaja & Owens, 1999). Another intrinsic value of mentoring is the feeling of having a potential impact on the future of educational leadership (Milstein, 1993, Daresh & Playko, 1992). Galbnüth and Cohen (1995) noted that mentors and mentees have reported that mentoring is a highly satisfying and rewarding as it fosters a cohesiveness within the organization while encouraging the complete development of each individual by facilitating growth of personal development. The willingness of both people to invest their time, energy, emotions and themselves in an agreement to work together can result in shared personal enhancement, growth, and satisfaction, as well as improved communications.

Mentoring programs that engage both practicing and retired school administrators can be mutually beneficial as a programmatic effort that affirms self-worth and acceptance. Moreover, the diversity of the mentee's and mentor's backgrounds and approaches enrich the process of discovery, the ways of thinking about solving problems, and the multiple modes of communicating ideas. Therefore a comfort level with difference, as well as flexibility to learn in various ways, must emanate from the organization of schools.

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# Chapter 8. Editor's Biography

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

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Frederick L. Dembowski is the Hibernian Endowed Professor, and Head of the Department of Educational Leadership and Technology at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. He received his EdD from the University of Rochester, New York. He has served as a professor, department head and dean for over 25 years at Purdue University, SUNY Albany, Lynn University and the National University of Somalia, Africa. His work has focused on school business management, management, and international development of educational organizations. He currently serves as the Editor of the AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice. He is also the Managing Editor of The NCPEA/CONNEXIONS Project. He has over 100 publications including: *Effective School District Management* (1999), published by AASA and Scarecrow Press; and *Unbridled Spirit: Best Practices in Educational Administration – the 2006 NCPEA YEARBOOK* (2006), published by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

The Editor wishes to thank his lovely wife, Ronnie, for her support throughout his career!



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