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Creating and maintaining a safe environment in the public high school : a reflective essay

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Creating and maintaining a safe environment in the public high school : a reflective essay

Abstract

School violence is an unfortunate fact of life in our society. Administrators need to consider multiple variables when deciding how to deal with violence in their building. The climate of the community must be taken into consideration. In a large metropolitan school with a history of violence, measures such as metal detectors and armed security guards may be justified. At a rural school such measures might be considered an overreaction. Furthermore, in this age of shrinking budgets an administrator may have difficulty justifying expenditures for metal detectors and guards in a school without a history of violence. The answer for both types of schools may be to combine the ideas of Elliot Aronson, Neila A. Connors, and others. Teachers would focus on creating an atmosphere of safety and security for students in conjunction with their normal curriculum.

CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN THE PUBLIC
HIGH SCHOOL: A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

A Research Paper
Presented to
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Counseling, and Postsecondary Education
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts in Education

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Introduction

Background

In this paper I will address my personal characteristics, my research on school violence, coursework experiences, and personal vision for administrative practices. The purpose of this paper is to describe my vision of how an administrator creates and maintains a safe school environment.

In order for the reader to understand my personal characteristics, it is necessary for me to discuss my background both as a student and a professional educator. I was raised in Brighton, Iowa and attended school in the Washington Community School District. Washington was a middle-sized school district. I graduated with about 130 other students. Students at Washington had the opportunity to become familiar with many of the faculty members. Indeed, even the administrators knew me by name, and not necessarily because I spent a great deal of time in their office. Most students at Washington took advantage of the opportunity to become part of the school community through co-curricular activities. Upon graduation from high school, I enrolled in Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. Wartburg was an appropriate college choice for me. Wartburg is a small college, and

again I was able to develop relationships with faculty and staff, as well as participate in co-curricular activities. The culture of a small college allowed this. I also enjoyed the feeling of security that a small campus afforded me. I still have personal and professional contact with some of the people I knew from Wartburg. I graduated from Wartburg with Bachelor's Degree in Social Studies.

After graduating from college, I accepted a position as a teacher and coach at Heritage High School in the Rockdale County Public School System in Conyers, Georgia. Heritage is a large school with over 1,200 students in suburban Atlanta. The administration of Heritage was very proud of the fact that the school had been chosen several times as a Georgia School of Excellence and twice as a National School of Excellence. Academics were a priority at Heritage, however athletics were held in high regard as well. In June of 1997 I accepted a position with the North-Linn Community School District in Troy Mills, Iowa, and returned to my home state. I am still teaching at North-Linn High School.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Strategies for Dealing with Violence in Schools

One of the reasons I chose to leave Georgia and return to Iowa is that Heritage became a progressively more dangerous place to work during my eight years there. When I began teaching, security at the school was minimal. When I left Heritage we had security cameras, magnetic door locks, two unarmed security guards, and a full time armed sheriff's deputy on duty during school hours.

Some people believe the way to handle the increasing danger in our high schools is through "Zero Tolerance" policies. Zero tolerance policies considered include those concerning the use of alcohol away from school events and the use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or weapons on school property. I have researched the results of one case heard by the Supreme Court of Iowa, two cases heard by various United States Courts of Appeal, and two cases heard by different United States District Courts. The cases cited involve both students and school district employees in situations where zero tolerance policies were broken and later challenged in a court of law. Implementation strategies in two very different school districts will be considered as well. These districts are the North Linn Community School District located in Troy Mills, Iowa and the Newton County Public School District located in Covington, Georgia. Opinions were solicited

from Principal Dan Buenz of North Linn High School, Troy Mills, Iowa and Principal Mitch McGhee of Indian Creek Middle School, Covington, Georgia.

I also reviewed the Constitutionality of zero tolerance policies by considering the Constitution of the State of Iowa, the Constitution of the State of Georgia, and the Constitution of the United States of America.

The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the State of Georgia guarantees protection of Live, Liberty, and property by the government, as well as equal and impartial protection under the law. The Georgia Constitution also protects against unreasonable search and seizure. Also included is a provision affording free, public education that is paid for by taxation.

The Constitution of the State of Iowa has two provisions pertinent to this discussion. One of these, Section 7, requires "all rules and regulations made by the Board" to be published and made public. The second is Section 9, which affords the right of trial by jury.

The Constitution of the United States includes two amendments that may be applied to zero tolerance policies. Amendment IV deals with protection against unreasonable searches and seizure. Amendment XIV, section 1, prohibits states making laws which "deprive any person of life,

liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Based upon reading of these excerpts from the various constitutions, a school board and administrator should feel comfortable enforcing a zero tolerance policy as long as the following criteria have been met. The policy must be published and made available to the public within the school district. Also, when enforcing the policy, due process must be followed before removing the student from the school setting. The North Linn Student Handbook meets the requirements for publication. On page 21 sections U, V, W, and X of the Student Discipline Code clearly state the position of the North Linn School Board. Section U states “No person shall possess or consume an alcoholic beverage on any public school property or while attending any public school-related function.” Section V addresses “Attendance or participation in any regular or co-curricular activity in an intoxicated state.” Sections W and X pertain to possession and/or use of controlled substances. Page 21 of the Student Handbook also states that “students who violate the regulations or rules established by the Board of Directors of the School District including breach of discipline as defined by this policy, may be suspended or expelled from school or

otherwise disciplined, including the denial of co-curricular activities."

Court Cases

To determine the standards which school must reach in order to guarantee due process I will look at various court cases. In *Hearn v. The Board of Education* (1999), the court found that when a school district's policy is well publicized, or in this case contractual, search and seizure is allowable given probable cause. Although this case deals with the termination of a teacher, it sets a precedent concerning search and seizure. In this case Sherry Hearn was terminated from her position as a high school teacher in Savannah, Georgia after the Chatham County police found a partially burned marijuana cigarette in the ashtray of Hearn's car during a campus wide drug sweep. Hearn sued the school district for reinstatement and damages. The judge in the case found for the defendant because the police had probable cause to search the car and Hearn was aware of her contractual obligations. The judge further noted that Hearn was terminated for "insubordination" and "other good and sufficient cause" as the result of her refusal to take the drug test. Furthermore, Hearn was given a hearing by the board before finalization of her termination. This case

shows that given probable cause and by granting due process to the accused a school district has the right to discipline employees.

Bunger v. Iowa High School Athletic Association (1972), demonstrates how school districts may lose a zero tolerance case. On June 7, 1971, William Bunger was a passenger in a car that contained a case of beer. Because Berger knew of the presence of the beer in the car, the school district suspended him from athletic competition (football) for a period of six weeks. This was done in order that the school district would be in compliance with the Iowa High School Athletic Association's (IHSAA) conduct policy as it pertained to alcohol. The Supreme Court of Iowa found that the IHSAA and Waverly-Shell Rock Community School District could not discipline a student for acts occurring away from the school and at a time not during the athletic season.

Trujillo v. Taos Municipal Schools (1996), dealt with due process. On November 15, 1993, Veltran Trujillo, Jr. admitted to having a .22 caliber pistol in his gym locker and turned the pistol over to school officials. Two days later Assistant Principal Irene Hern sent notice of a hearing to Trujillo's parents informing them that their son had violated the school's "weapons policy" and the

hearing would be determined if Trujillo "would be recommended for expulsion." At the hearing the decision was made to suspend Trujillo for the remainder of the school year. Counsel for Trujillo's parents requested a "Grievance Hearing." At this hearing Principal Ruben R. Quintanta refused to reconsider Trujillo's expulsion. The Trujillos sued for summary judgment on the grounds that they were denied procedural due process and equal protection. The Court found that due process requirements were met and found for the defendant.

A case dealing with zero tolerance and special education students is *Doe v. Board of Education* (1995). On September 9, 1994, John Doe was found to be in possession of a pipe and a small amount of marijuana at a school dance. Doe was granted a hearing and expelled from school after a hearing. Doe's parents claimed that he was unable to understand the seriousness of marijuana possession due to his Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The school district claimed that Doe's possession of marijuana was unrelated to his disability. The Court found that due process requirements had been met and that Doe's actions were unrelated to his disability, so the school district was within its rights to expel Doe.

Casey and MacDonald v. Newport School Committee

(1998) also deals with zero tolerance. Lochiel MacDonald, a freshman at Rogers High School in Newport Rhode Island, had been disciplined a number of times for engaging in disruptive behavior. On May 16, 1997, teacher Dale Hennessey sent a report to Dean of Discipline Barry Coofer that MacDonald had threatened him. The zero tolerance policy of Rogers High School required that MacDonald be automatically referred to the police. Although the police were unable to find sufficient evidence to prosecute, MacDonald was removed from Hennessey's class for the remaining five weeks of the school year. During that time he was instructed by Dean Coofer, a former science teacher, despite the fact that MacDonald's performance had been so poor that it was impossible for him to pass science class. The MacDonalds claimed that their son had been denied due process and sued for intentional infliction of emotional distress, malicious prosecution, and negligent supervision. The Court found that Rogers High School had a formal grievance procedure in place and that the MacDonalds had made use of this procedure before disciplinary action had been taken. Furthermore, MacDonald had not been denied access to an education because a qualified science teacher had instructed him

individually during the period of MacDonald's removal from the class.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Personal Interviews

I interviewed Dan Buenz and Mitch McGhee about the zero tolerance policies of their districts and how those policies were implemented. Both principals stated that their district's policies required a hearing before expulsion of a student. Buenz stated that during his three-year tenure at North Linn High School, the zero tolerance policy has never been implemented. McGhee said that in the Newton County school district drugs were treated more severely than alcohol. He further stated that there is "an exception with weapons. If a kid brings a hunting knife or pocketknife to school (by accident) they may immediately turn it into a teacher before any teacher or administrator knows about it with no punishment. If we hear about it from anyone else, then they're busted." Also, McGhee makes exceptions for what he calls "itty-bitty penknives" of the type that are commonly found on key chains. He says "we have taken up four or five of the over that past several years. We suspend the kid pending a parent conference, and then we assign two to five days in-school suspension, depending

upon their record. If a kid were to use one in a fight, that would be a different story, but we've never had that happen."

Application of School Policy

The practical application of a zero tolerance policy seems simple; however, it is not. Administrators must implement such a policy fairly and consistently, always being sure to give due process to the student in the form of a hearing with parents and legal counsel. Also, principals must take into account the standards of the community in which they live. A student would have a hard time convincing me that they brought a hunting knife to school by accident if I were the principal of Towers High School in Atlanta, Georgia. However, having lived in Georgia for eight years, my familiarity with Newton County would allow me to accept the claim that a student had brought a hunting knife to school in this community that is still somewhat rural and has a large population of sportsmen who engage in hunting. Possession of drugs on campus is an easier issue to deal with. I can think of no community where the use or possession of illegal drugs on a school campus is acceptable. The same standard applies to threatening a student or school employee. Again, as long as the policy is administered in a fair and

consistent manner, said policy should withstand a court case. The courts seem hesitant to become involved in situations where the courts could be perceived as telling school districts how to best protect and serve their students.

There is a school of thought that believes zero tolerance policies are not the answer. Dr. Elliot Aronson presented an alternative to such policies in his book Nobody Left to Hate: Teaching Compassion After Columbine. Dr. Aronson discusses how schools and other organizations may deal with and eliminate the problem of violence in school. The two categories of strategies are titled "Pump-Handle Interventions" and "Root Cause Interventions."

Pump-handle interventions are short term, quick fix solutions that may or may not work. Dr. Aronson seems to understand the desire of many people to institute pump-handle interventions, yet makes clear his belief that root cause interventions are necessary if we are to experience long term success in reducing school violence. Root cause interventions seek to find the underlying cause or causes of a problem and eliminate that cause, thus eliminating the problem in the long run.

Dr. Aronson then supports his viewpoint with an anecdote about Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia. It seems these two cities are very similar and of course are in close geographic proximity. Vancouver has more strict gun laws than Seattle. Vancouver also has a lower rate of violent crime. Dr. Aronson also points out the work of sociologist Dane Archer who has found that Britain, which has a ban against handguns, experiences a lower homicide rate than the United States. At this point in Nobody Left to Hate I would have liked to have been informed as to what constitutes a homicide in Mr. Archer's study, as well as the years in which the study took place. The skeptic in me requires empirical data and quotes from sources that can be checked.

As Dr. Aronson points out, extremists on both sides of the gun control argument are missing the point. The NRA fears that any gun control laws will eventually lead to the total elimination of the right to own firearms. On the other hand those who would eliminate the availability of guns in our country are only looking at a pump-handle solution. We need to remember the perpetrators of the Columbine massacre had also planted bombs in several locations and the Federal Building in Oklahoma City was destroyed without the firing of a single shot from a gun.

As Dr. Aronson explains, the answer lies somewhere in the middle, perhaps in the registering and licensing of firearms. Also, as Dr. Aronson mentioned "smart gun" technology is a reality and soon most firearms sold will be "smart guns."

Since pump-handle interventions are not the answer to the problem we must consider root cause interventions. Dr. Aronson mentions other locations where school shootings have occurred. One such place is Heritage High School (HHS) in Conyers, Georgia (p. 3). I have a love for HHS as I spent the first eight years of my career in education teaching in room D-114. On May 20, 1999, one month to the day after the Columbine massacre, HHS sophomore Thomas (T.J.) Solomon Jr. "strapped a rifle inside his pants leg and used it later as one of two weapons to shoot six students at the school...Rockdale County Sheriff Jeff Wigington said" (Atlanta Journal Constitution, May 21, 1999). Solomon also used a .357 Magnum pistol that he had smuggled into school in his book bag. Two questions arise: first, what prompted Solomon to shoot his schoolmates, and second, would the pump-handle interventions and root cause interventions suggested by Dr. Aronson prevented this tragedy?

Before answering these questions we will first look at the type of school HHS is. This is a statistical portrait of Heritage High School as it appeared in the Atlanta Journal Constitution (AJC) on May 21, 1999.

Enrollment: 1,303 students

White	87.3%
Black	10.4%
Other	2.3%

**High School Graduation Test: 11th
Graders who passed on first try**

English	97.6%
Math	96.0%
Science	86.9%
Social Studies	88.5%
Writing	96.1%

Percentage of grads eligible for HOPE scholarship*	66.7%
Percentage of dropouts	2.0%
Teachers with master's or higher	52.9%
Average number of parent/teacher conferences	2.2
Percentage of students absent 10 or more days in a year	21.7%
In-school suspensions as a percentage of total suspensions	86.8%
Percentage of students with drug/alcohol violations	0.2%
Percentage of students with violence violations	0.2%
Percentage of students with firearms violations	0.0%
Percentage of students with property destruction violations	0.0%
Average ACT score	22.7
Average SAT score	1014

*The HOPE scholarship is offered to high school students in Georgia who meet certain criteria and plan to continue their education at an institution of higher learning in Georgia.

As you can see from the statistics published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution, HHS is a safe school. Its faculty is highly educated and its students academically successful, at least by the standards employed by the state of Georgia. My experience in the Rockdale County School System, of which HHS is a part, tells me that some of Dr. Aronson's techniques and ideas are already being employed there. I know jigsawing, a type of cooperative learning, as espoused by Dr. Aronson on page 135 has been used. Jigsawing would be included in the root cause interventions as a way of helping students develop empathy for each other through learning from and teaching one another. Heritage, like many other schools, has a history of helping troubled youths. In fact "parents said students there (HHS) are nurtured and guided, rather than considered potential security risks" (Atlanta Journal Constitution, May 22, 1999). According to the AJC, Donna Hattaway's son Chris experienced this nurturing first hand when school administrators supported Chris and helped him raise his grades during a particularly stressful time in the Hattaway family. When assistant principal Cecil Brinkley took the pistol away from Solomon, T.J. hugged Mr. Brinkley, another example of caring.

Heritage had taken many of pump-handle interventions similar to those Dr. Aronson mentions. According to The Morning Sun Online, HHS had taken many security precautions. "Video cameras already watched kids on school buses and in the schools. Trained dogs periodically came to sniff for drugs." Both of these precautions were in effect while I was still teaching at HHS. All public high schools in Rockdale County have an armed Sheriff's deputy on duty during school hours as well. After the Columbine shootings "security measures in Rockdale were reviewed" and teachers were given written instructions describing how to respond to an emergency. "I don't think that you could prevent 100 percent, said Paul Lee, a Conyers father of two teen-agers." "They have terrorists all over the world, In the Capitol, that guy broke in and killed two guards," he said, referring to last July's killings in Washington" (Morning Sun Online, May 23, 1999). Mr. Lee's comments echo Dr. Aronson's view that pump-handle solutions are not necessarily going to prevent all gun violence. Former HHS principal Lowell T. Bidy also recognizes the shortcomings of solutions such as metal detectors. According to a Savannah Morning News article published on March 7, 2000, Mr. Bidy stated "No physical barriers would have stopped what happened."

Pump-handle interventions did not prevent the Heritage shooting. Rockdale County School System employs some of the root cause interventions advocated by Dr. Aronson. The shooting happened anyway. This tells me one thing. There is no way to completely eradicate the possibility that some day in some school in our country a student may bring a gun and fire that weapon at their classmates. The only way to totally eliminate this possibility would be to completely eliminate all firearms. I do not advocate this and it is impossible in our republic. The freedoms we enjoy come with some risks and responsibilities. Furthermore we need to remember that our schools are very safe places. According to Dr. Aronson "There are approximately 50 million students attending some 108,000 public schools in this country, but fewer than one percent of adolescent homicides occur in or around schools (p. 4). Dr. Aronson is on the right track with the subtitle of his book, Teaching Compassion After Columbine. We need to help students understand what it is to be compassionate, empathetic, and feeling. Will raising compassionate, empathetic children eliminate all of our problems? No. But consider the following. Before the shootings occurred at HHS, the PBS program Frontline was filming a documentary in Conyers entitled "The Lost

Children of Rockdale County.” This documentary focused on a syphilis outbreak that occurred among Rockdale County teens. The end of this program touches on the shooting. Producer Barak Goodman has an applicable quote.

“Shootings are not about boys and guns. Syphilis outbreaks are not about girls and promiscuity. They’re both about kids searching for something: attention, connection, somebody to take them in hand. There was a wonderful sort of metaphor at the end of the school shooting in Heritage. The boy involved, TJ Solomon, knelt down to the ground and put the gun in his mouth to kill himself. And he was stopped in doing that by an assistant principal who put his arm around him and held him and said, “Don’t do it.” And TJ dropped the gun, and shuddered, cried, cathartically. And that to me, speaks volumes. Somebody stepped in, took control of this kid.” Goodman also states “We have a family in our program, at the end of our program, in which the mother does the same thing. She finally steps in, takes control of her kid. All of these things that we’re seeing in adolescence: sexual promiscuity, violence, they all have the same root cause. Which is that people, parents but also others, are not stepping in and taking control of children. Giving them limits. And giving them boundaries. And giving them

a direction." (PBS Online, 1999). Perhaps Mr. Goodman and Dr. Aronson are both correct. Children need guidance, direction, limits, as well as feeling, compassion, and empathy.

Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

My knowledge, skills and attitudes have been shaped a great deal by my experiences. At Wartburg I learned the basics of teaching. I was baptized by fire at Heritage and discovered that some of the methods I learned in college do not always work in practice with all students. For example, the students at Heritage were leveled into basic, average, and advanced tracks. The advanced students expected to be lectured to and did not always respond well to other methods of teaching. In fact, I would occasionally receive complaints from parents if we did too much cooperative learning in class. The average students thrived in cooperative learning. The basic level students would not pay attention to a lecture and I would have to focus more on tactile-kinesthetic types of learning. The exception being basic level seniors. By this time, the students could see that the end was near and they would do just about anything asked of them in order to graduate.

At North Linn there is no tracking, although we have students who would fit all three levels. To some extent teaching is more challenging at North Linn as I have to meet the needs of all levels of students in the same classroom. This variety of levels has caused me to consider various ways to assess students. Armstrong (1994) described several methods of assessment in Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom.

My attitudes toward leadership have also been influenced by a course I attended at Grant Wood Area Education Agency. The course was titled Contemporary School Leadership. The course is designed to aid those who see themselves taking a leadership position in their school, but not necessarily limited to administration. Two of the measurements of leadership we have been shown are the Gallup Principal Perceiver (The Gallup Organization, 1978) and "Who Leaders Are" from the brochure Make Yourself a Leader (Fast Company, 1999). The Principal Perceiver (The Gallup Organization, 1978) gives the following as traits leaders exhibit: commitment, ego drive, achiever, developer, individualized perception, relator, stimulator, team, arranger, command, discipline, and concept. "Who Leaders Are" says that leaders are the following things: leaders are both confident and modest;

leaders are authentic; leaders are listeners; leaders are good at giving encouragement, and they are never satisfied; leaders make unexpected connections; leaders provide direction; leaders protect their people from danger and expose them to reality; leaders make change and stand for values that don't change; leaders lead by example; leaders don't blame, they learn; leaders look for and network with other leaders; and the job of a leader is to make more leaders. In retrospect I have seen many of the aforementioned attributes in the best administrators I have worked with. During my time at Heritage I learned it is necessary to find someone who will give honest and accurate feedback. In my current position at North-Linn High School, Ardy Sloane and Brad Bridgewater often serve as my feedback givers. Ardy teaches next door to me. She is willing to critique lessons and coaching decisions and techniques. Ardy readily admits she knows nothing about wrestling and cares for it even less. She serves as a great sounding board as a mother of former high school athletes. Ardy is not afraid to say "If you did or said that to my child, I would be very upset." She often keeps me from making mistakes. Brad served as my assistant for three years and will co-coach with me this year. He is anything but a "yes man," and is a valuable asset to the

team. Indeed, I find myself using Brad as a model to be followed in my role as an assistant football coach.

I also try to stay informed. In addition to reading the literature of the several professional organizations to which I belong, I read the local newspapers to try to keep my finger on the pulse of the local populace. I also regularly converse with community members who I know aren't afraid to speak their mind.

The experiences I have had as a classroom teacher and coach will influence my administrative practice. I have learned that in order to keep good assistant coaches the head coach must allow his coaches to do their job, which is to coach. Furthermore the head coach must appreciate and acknowledge the contributions of the assistants. Also, the assistant must have a feeling of ownership in the athletic program. The head coach must also protect the assistants from parents and others who are not happy with the performance of the team. If these things do not happen, the assistant will become disgruntled and either quit coaching or seek a different position. The same principles apply to principals and teachers and other staff. Teachers are dedicated professionals who must be allowed to do their jobs without interference from the principal. Teachers need to be appreciated by the

principal. Sometimes a simple word of thanks will meet this need. Teachers need ownership in the school and its programs. This can be accomplished by seeking teacher input in important decisions regarding the operation of the school. These decisions may range from the method of covering student detentions to the development and implementation of curriculum. Finally, teachers need to know that the administration supports their classroom decisions when those decisions have been made with the best interests of the students in mind and have been made in an ethical and legal manner. However, in spite of the previously mentioned aspects of administration, the principal is expected to make the final decision regarding building manners and the superintendent is to make those decisions regarding district manners. After receiving the input of teachers and others, if the administrator needs to make a decision contrary to the desires of others due to legal or other considerations, the administrator must do so. However, the administrator must be able to give sound reasons for their decision. Administrators also face the task of keeping faculty members motivated. In her book, If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students, Neila Connors addresses this task.

Connors begins her book by presenting the "menu" of topics. She explains her motivation for writing the book and discusses whom she thinks should read the book. Connors believes one of the groups of people who should read the book are what she calls "well-adjusted leaders." She also explains in some detail what constitutes a well-adjusted leader. In the interest of brevity the following is a list the attributes of such a leader without explaining them. They are: the ability to care and be concerned for others, the desire to be successful, the ability to handle stress, a general feeling of good health, the ability to think logically, and the ability to have fun. In chapter two, entitled "The Need to Feed," Connors discusses why administrators need to feed their teachers. She gives a list of 50 indicators of effective leadership. These indicators include low teacher absentee rate, visibility, communication, showing appreciation, and having a life outside of work..

The third chapter deals with "Preparing to Dine." Connors discusses in some detail the needs that must be met before effective "feeding" of teachers can occur and change can take place. Although her ideas are similar to Maslow's hierarchy, Connors outlines her ideas in the form of a ten- step process. Some of the more important steps

include doing away with impediments to change, encouraging risk taking, and monitoring growth. Connors spends chapter four identifying people and things that may be impediments to change and how an effective administrator deals with them.

Chapter five deals with providing meaningful experiences for staff. Connors details how to conduct effective faculty meetings and staff development sessions. She lends support to her ideas with examples of "all-you-can-eat buffets" filled with "foods" that leaders provide to their staff. These foods are: communication, risk-taking, feedback, empowerment, celebrations, support, the "95%-5% philosophy," and humor. Chapter six discusses how leaders may identify high levels of stress in their staff and in themselves. Connors also indicates some of the sources of stress as well as strategies for relieving stress. These strategies include being able to recognize when the plate is too full and focusing on solutions rather than problems.

Connors spends chapter seven serving desserts. She lists ways to bring a little humor or other form of relief to the teaching environment. These include the fun things such as the "you need a laugh award," and "no bus duty coupons." They also include building a staff development

library and beginning a staff exercise program. Connors ends her book by re-teaching practices effective leaders use to take care of their staff and themselves.

As the title implies, Connors presents a paradigm that teachers who do not have their needs met can not meet the needs of the students.

Conclusion

School violence is an unfortunate fact of life in our society. Administrators need to consider multiple variables when deciding how to deal with violence in their building. The climate of the community must be taken into consideration. In a large metropolitan school with a history of violence, such as Heritage, measures such as metal detectors and armed security guards may be justified. At a rural school like North-Linn such measures might be considered an overreaction. Furthermore, in this age of shrinking budgets an administrator may have difficulty justifying expenditures for metal detectors and guards in a school without a history of violence. The answer for both types of schools may be to combine the ideas of Aronson, Connors, and others. Teachers would focus on creating an atmosphere of safety and security for students in conjunction with their normal curriculum. The cooperative learning methods

espoused by Aronson and others would help in this endeavor. Teachers would also use multiple assessments to ensure that the curriculum was being taught while accounting for different learning styles. Administrators would do well to "feed the teachers" to keep them from "eating the students." The feeding of the teachers will help them to create a school climate in which students are able to thrive.

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