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## A preferred vision for administering elementary schools : a reflective essay

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## A preferred vision for administering elementary schools : a reflective essay

### Abstract

Today's aspiring principals may have a lot to worry about, but they also have a lot to celebrate. Not only do today's principals have to worry about the mental and physical challenges of the principalship, but they also are living in a time of tremendous possibility for systemic change. The possibility for raising the level of student performance is not only unprecedented, it is to be celebrated.

Principals must have a tremendous desire to lead in today's world. They must believe every child can learn and help that child discover his/her particular way of learning. They must have a commitment to lifelong-learning and desire high expectations from others. They must demonstrate discipline in six leadership performance areas: visionary. instructional. organizational. collaborative. ethical and political. Finally. they must demonstrate determination. They must model the quality of not giving up. and work at problems until they are overcome.

A Preferred Vision For Administering Elementary Schools

A Reflective Essay

A Research Paper Presented to:

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,  
and Postsecondary Education  
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree Program

Master of Arts in Education

By

Maurice D. Betzel

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Driving home from the University of Iowa to my hometown of Davenport, my father looked at me in a puzzled way and asked me why I wanted to be a dentist. I couldn't come up with an answer right away because I had not thought deeply enough. Perhaps I thought I wanted to be as successful as he seemed to be. He asked me if I had thought of changing my major to Physical Education. I was always on the go, excelled in anything physical, loved being around others, and really liked helping people. Little did I realize that day, my father had planted a seed that caused me to change the direction my life was going. I transferred to Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois and changed my major to Physical Education and Health. At Augustana I met Dr. Stan Kittleson, a very enthusiastic and forward thinker. He took those of us who had previously been majoring in "shallow thought," and encouraged us to take a deep look into ourselves, into a worthy future profession. Although I didn't realize it at the time, he caused us to reflect upon times in our lives when we were successful, and the people that helped, assisted, facilitated, and advocated for us. One of the first exercises he assigned to us was to tell of a time when someone influenced us positively and what we learned. I shared the following story. One very hot and sultry day in the middle of summer, our Little League baseball team was playing the "larger than life" and undefeated team of older kids from Sparky's Bicycle Shop. Since I was just a beginner, I waited my turn to play by holding the wooden bench to the floor in the dirt dugout. We threw our best pitcher against

their best. It was a close game, with our team holding to a one run lead. I remember my excitement when Coach Williams sent me to right field in the bottom of the seventh inning. I had been itching to go in, but the game was so close, he didn't want to chance putting me in. I wasn't a particularly good player. My dad didn't spend much time with me because he was going through a divorce and working a lot to pay for the live-in housekeeper. Fortunately, two outs were made and no balls came to right field. Unfortunately, the third batter hit an extremely high fly ball, half way between me, and the first baseman. The sun was shining brightly and all I could see was a little black dot in the sky. The ball was so high, in fact, I had time to listen to the cheers of the other team's parents and players as the runners sped around the bases. I could also hear the cheers of my team, especially Coach Williams yelling, "You can do it Maury." After I caught the ball, our team rushed the field and lifted me on Coach Williams shoulders. He just kept repeating, "I knew you could do it."

I learned a valuable lesson about encouragement and personal beliefs that day. Through encouragement and modeling, Coach Williams had inspired me to be a believer in myself, as well as others. He inspired me to want to help others by modeling how fun it is to be successful. Most of all he chose, no dared, to care about a little kid that wasn't very skilled.

The following December my father remarried and our family of five became a family of ten. I now had three stepbrothers and sisters to go along with four

other brothers and sisters. My mother remarried also, but to a man without any children. At first, the five of us would go to my mother's to visit every weekend. My father complained we came home so wild, it would take a whole week for us to settle down, and then it was time to visit again. That is when he went back to court and had the divorce decree changed to once a month visitation. Needless to say, my mother was very unhappy, and this was the beginning of a very rocky and tumultuous relationship between families.

As a child, teenager and young adult, I witnessed how our families chose not to get along. Caught in the middle and trying to get along wasn't simple. But try to get along I did, even though sometimes I learned the easiest way was not always the best way. Sometimes I had to go through tremendous hardship to do what was right. Sometimes I learned the hard way by making the wrong decisions.

Junior high was a lot of fun. High school became a challenge. The teachers and coaches I remember from high school were "on fire" with enthusiasm about their subject or sport. They believed you would not survive in life without it. They were confidence builders and encouragers just like Coach Williams. They instilled a "never give up" attitude in us when confronting obstacles. They modeled to us that things may not be simple, but with persistence and will power, we could accomplish anything.

These days, making things simple seems to be the way to go. Eat a quickly heated frozen dinner from the microwave or pull your car in to the ten-minute oil change shop. Scan groceries yourself and pay bills via the internet. Unfortunately these quick solutions to some of our daily problems cannot and will not be this quick and easy for today's aspiring principal. Principals must take a deep and honest look inside themselves, just like Dr. Kittleson made us do, to determine how they can help the many stakeholders in education be as successful as they can be in the learning process. To accomplish this, the principal can work with a triune model. "Desire" is the first tenet of this model. It is an intrinsic trait that attracts, guides and directs people to "do the things they do." The second tenet is "discipline." Discipline is a learned extrinsic trait that people use to gain knowledge. Principals must be disciplined by choosing what works through research, study, and experience. The third and final tenet is "determination." Determination is a person's intrinsic ability to overcome obstacles or problems, to not give up.

### Desires

Desires can be related to core beliefs of principals. The most important of all beliefs in education is the idea that anyone can learn, regardless of age, gender, background or handicap. According to Chapman (1993), "Every child can learn," (p. ix), and "it is our responsibility as educators to find each student's particular way of learning" (p. ix). Principals must have this belief and value in mind at all



times. They must model it to staff and stakeholders, never settling for anything less than success. Education, past, present, and future revolves around it.

### *Desire to Change and Improve*

A second desire principals must have is the desire to change and improve.

In an interview with Don Dehner, a veteran teacher and current principal at Pleasant View School in Pleasant Valley, Iowa, his first priority as an educator is to be able to help his staff, students and parents compete at the cutting edge in a global society. “Due to the demographics of my school, students come less prepared in kindergarten compared to other schools within the district. When leaving in the sixth grade, our students, in comparison excel at the highest level” (D. Dehner, personal communication, November 11, 2001). According to Dehner, his trust in students, faculty, and parents ability to learn and commit themselves to positive change drives them toward success. As stated by Cunningham and Cordiero (2000), “Improvement occurs when teachers are made aware of the great possibilities to improve education and are encouraged to experiment with these ideas in their own classrooms and schools” (p. 66). Principals must encourage teachers to try different instructional approaches and vary their teaching methods to assist students with learning. Furthermore, in Marcia D’Arcangelo’s (2000) article, “The Scientist in the Crib: A Conversation with Andrew Meltzhoff,” Meltzhoff says, “What is unique about human biology is that we depend on other people for learning. We are influenced deeply by our

teachers, parents and peers. I like to say we humans are born to learn” (p. 10).

This further supports the fact that every child can learn, but principals must always be conscious of their influence on teachers, and assist them to make sure all students continue to learn and do not fall behind.

As principal I will promote change by encouraging each individual to grow and improve in his or her chosen areas. I will help create study groups to stretch the creative minds of staff. I believe this accomplishes two things. First, it demonstrates a caring attitude about teachers as people, not just employees. Second, it demonstrates caring, by holding dear a chosen field teachers believe is important.

I will also support a strong culture of collaboration, developing the idea that our school act as a team, and for change to be successful, we must work together. Hall and Hord (2001), discuss this as “professional learners who value change and seek change in order to increase their efficacy as teachers” (p. 16). As a team the idea is to help each member reflect on his/her own practice, discover what each person has to learn, to ultimately help each student learn.

### *Desire for Lifelong Learning*

A third desire a principal must have is the need for lifelong learning. The fastest way to throw up a barrier to change and improvement is to believe the idea that if something isn't broken, don't fix it. If that was true the winners of the Indy 500 would use the same car engine over and over again until it broke during

the middle of another race, causing them to lose. That is why the engine is overhauled before it wears out. Education needs the same attention. All stakeholders in the educational process need continuous input and export of new knowledge and assessments to keep the learning processes on the cutting edge.

Beilaczyc and Collins (1999), promote the “learning-community approach” (p. 4) that “fits the growing emphasis on lifelong-learning, which can naturally be extended beyond the classroom walls” (p. 4). Principals must be ready, willing and able to promote skills and knowledges used in a global market place.

“Students need to be able to direct their own learning, communicate and work with people from diverse backgrounds and views, and develop ways of dealing with complex issues and problems that require different kinds of expertise” (p. 5).

To promote this idea of life-long learning and building a learning community, I will battle to get rid of the common structures found within the factory model of education. DuFour and Eaker (1998), describe the factory model as uniform, bureaucratic, and go on to say it is organized to provide strict supervision, making sure teachers “do as they are told” (p. 21). As principal I will break down rigid stifling structures, and allow for spontaneity, risk taking, and creativity in the classroom.

#### *Desire to Improve Self, Student, and Staff Performance*

A fourth desire a principal must have is a high expectation for self, student and staff performance. Principals that have a deep-seated desire to perform to the

best of their abilities will surely serve as positive and productive role models for students, staff, and community members. In this capacity the principal will serve as a great motivator to accomplish the vision and mission of the school. Stripling (1999) says,

Schools are moving toward high expectations for student achievement, a collaborative culture among teachers and students, and greater accountability for student performance. Everyone must focus on the same high expectations and work together to achieve success. The principal is in a prime position to align those efforts.

(p. 51)

In support of this collaborative culture, I will adopt a model of “professional learning communities” (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002, p. 1). They promote “reculturing schools” (p. 9), changing the way they are organized as a primary way to change learning behavior. Instead of teaching in isolation, they promote collaborative teams. Instead of saying “all children can learn,” they clarify “how the school will respond when students do not learn” (p. 13). In a professional learning community, there is a “shift from a primary focus on teaching, to a primary focus on learning” (p. 18). Decisions are research based, rather than “averaged opinions” (p. 21). As the process of building relationships within the model of professional learning communities develops, celebrations of

improved student learning become very important. It becomes embedded in everyday activity.

Finally, as principal I will take action against attempts of sabotage. As Eaker, DuFour & DuFour (2002) state, “the leader’s role is to promote, protect, and defend the school’s vision and values, and to confront behavior that is incongruent with the school’s vision and values (p. 28).

### Discipline

To build a community of learners, the principal must be disciplined. Research, study, and experience, will help today’s principal be able to choose what works in the school he or she leads. The following six performances are areas the disciplined principal must know and be able to demonstrate:

(a) visionary leadership, (b) collaborative leadership, (c) instructional leadership, (d) organizational leadership, (e) ethical leadership and, (f) political leadership.

### *Visionary Leadership*

First, the principal must have a shared vision and mission for the school that has been developed by community stakeholders. According to Cunningham and Cordiero (2000), “Many researchers have identified core values, enduring purpose, and vision as the most distinguishing characteristics of the most successful organizations” (p. 177). They go on to say these organizations “Understand the difference between what should and what should never change” (p. 177). Principals should be able to identify their

instructional, management, and community building skills that work well. In this way an inclusive school culture can be built that communicates its vision and mission to all stakeholders, including to those not involved in the educational process.

Furthermore, with the school's vision and mission in mind, the principal must research and plan for school improvement. Using data collected by staff, students, parents, the school district and outside agencies, the principal can get a good look at areas that may need improvement, ones that need reinforcement, areas that can stand alone, and even some needing elimination. One area the principal should be looking at is standardized testing. Test scores provide an easy picture of achievement, in order to set goals for instruction. Data from questionnaires completed by students, teachers, parents, and community members, should be used to assess the safety climate of the school and surrounding community. They should also be used to assess the popular enrichment activities that support student learning. Also, principals must build relationships with business and others, promoting and embedding service learning within the curriculum.

### *Collaborative Leadership*

Second, the principal must rely on collaboration. Principals must have a working knowledge of how the community interacts with students and develop a model to help guide improvement efforts. As I stated earlier, the professional

learning community will be a model I will adopt in order to reculture from the traditional factory model school. There are, however, other ways to add to that model. Lawson (1999) says,

First, ...children, families, and community environments promote good schools and vice versa. They are interdependent. Second, success or failure depends on collaboration between schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations, and religious institutions. Third, principals choose their environment strategically with an eye toward building supports for children and schools. (p.19)

Some structures Lawson suggests principals develop as collaborative leaders include, “(1) community youth development programs, (2) supportive, safe, caring school environments, (3) effective teaching by exemplary teachers in supportive classrooms, (4) peer supports of learning and, (5) educational supports for, and from parents” (p. 19).

As principal I will not only develop structures such as the ones Lawson suggests, but I will also promote participation in programs such as the YMCA, Junior Achievement, College For Kids, and more. I will also work tirelessly to promote and enrich the learning of both teachers and students outside of the regular school day. I will strongly support the use of internet websites for teachers to assist parents in learning how to help their children learn.

As principal I will use my experience as a sales manager with Tupperware. Tupperware's philosophy of building the best distributors, managers and dealers is one hundred percent collaborative. Employees' of Tupperware will tell you that each level of their organization shares visions and ideas, successes and failures with each other. When people share in this manner, everyone benefits and fewer mistakes are made, making the organization more effective, efficient and successful. When teachers are able to share their ideas with each other, they improve their practice much faster than the traditional trial and error method. They reduce their isolation in the classroom, seeking, more and more help and assistance from others. As principal I will strongly encourage and develop a culture of sharing.

When principals reach out to community leaders and organizations, religious institutions, and businesses, they are able to shape vision and mission. They are able to address the types of learning necessary for future success of students, reduce administrative work load, develop partnerships to strengthen school programs, achieve goals, and become helpful servants to outside stakeholders. Stakeholders want successful organizations like these. Edmondson, Thorson and Fluegel (2000), write of a small Minnesota K-12 school facing extinction because of population erosion and very poor public support. Don Anderson, superintendent of the Herman-Norcross school recognized the importance of collaboration and contacted the Center for Small Towns, a



community outreach program housed at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Together they developed a vision for the school and created an action plan. Through town meetings and collaborative efforts including teachers, administration, businesses and private stakeholders, the school district not only survived, but “set the stage for long-term sustainable change” (p. 53). Today the school continues to grow.

Another example of collaborative leadership is evidenced by the “Success for Life” program at Lasalle Academy in Providence, Rhode Island (Pasi, 1997). As described by Pasi, this program “includes not only schoolwide initiatives, but also the deliberate integration of social and emotional literacy into the curriculum, across all disciplines” (p. 41). Teachers prepare lessons infusing social/emotional learning into their lessons. Administrators and faculty develop goals and skills for students each year. Students participate in programs like Big Brothers and Big Sisters and in Senior Service Learning projects. Krystal (1999) points out this type of “service learning should be at the core of every school’s curriculum...It gives students a feeling of accomplishment; reward from giving as well as receiving; making a difference in someone’s life or community; discovery of special talents, and fun in learning” (p. 61). As principal I will develop a integrated program that will allow and promote the positive benefits of social/emotional learning.

In addition, I have always believed if anyone really wanted to know what it felt like to help someone, they had to find someone to help that truly could not help back. Give to someone who cannot give back. Service learning activities should include activities with this philosophy. Examples may include working in soup kitchens, delivering meals to shut-ins, delivering presents to needy kids, or raising money or supplies for children in war-torn countries like Iraq. It would also mean students would discuss events or situations causing such hardship, and what they can do to make it better. To accomplish such a lofty goal, requires the help of parents and community, to identify truly needy people, putting together plans and resources to accomplish the job.

### *Instructional Leadership*

Another performance principals must be disciplined in is instructional leadership. I believe the core of this leadership role is the principal's ability to bring out the best work of teachers. Teachers are the ones in the classroom that, through choices of instructional practices and methods, either positively or negatively impact student learning. Whitaker (2003), says "Good teachers consistently strive to improve, and they focus on something they can control – their own performance" (p. 14). To assist teachers in becoming a positive force in the classroom, the principal must establish a high level of trust between him/herself and teachers, as well as students. This means getting to know the staff on a personal basis and really caring what happens in their lives. It means

careful choosing of words in conversations that are not sarcastic or cutting. It means praising good work, celebrating successes of others and sharing how success was accomplished with other teachers and stakeholders.

I believe one of the most effective ways a principal can accomplish these successes is with a positive, well-planned teacher evaluation system. The current Iowa Teaching Standards and Criterion are a great place to begin building or maintaining a great teacher. These standards are areas of instruction that really matter. Principals can keep teachers focused on them, working toward the development of effective teaching practices.

I also believe, to raise teacher's level of expertise, they must be allowed to get out of their classroom and observe what other great teachers are doing. What better way is there to learn than from another great teacher? Today's principal will have to be innovative in releasing teachers for this observation, because budget cuts may not allow for payment to substitute teachers. To break teachers free without breaking the budget, I will substitute for that teacher, while he/she visits other classrooms. I will also allow teachers with back to back special area classes to visit at that time, plus perform some creative scheduling if necessary, to add time for classroom visits.

Another great example of professional development in this area is, and has been understanding of how the brain learns. Since the "Decade of the Brain," (George Bush, 1990), we know there is more than one way to learn, and

rote memory learning is now only a part of the entire process. Helping staff, students and parents become familiar with what each students needs are in this area will promote higher levels of success. Westwater and Wolfe (2000), claim students learn better when information is made relevant. To make this information relevant they suggest “(a) linking new meaning to previous experiences, (b) using analogies, similes, and metaphors, (c) brainstorm, (d) link subjects to real-life activities and, (e) solve authentic problems” (p. 50). This means there will be multiple opportunities for students and teachers to learn. I believe principals must play a key role in the professional development of teachers in this area.

Another instructional area I believe the principal must promote is the use of technology. There are numerous ways technology can be integrated into the classroom. Yes, teachers and students should be proficient in the use of a computer and surfing the net. But, there is much more. Principals must be sure their teachers are able to use digital cameras, scanners, Proxima, Powerpoint, Excel, Word, and many other programs or equipment that can enrich student presentations and assignments.

Finally, I believe whenever barriers to student learning exist, the barriers must be identified and addressed. It could be that certain students are being bullied on the playground. It could be that the noise level of classrooms is disturbing others. Maybe the construction work on the new addition to the school

is exceptionally loud. Perhaps the new block scheduling is not working as originally thought. Principals should anticipate and become familiar with barriers and contextual issues such as these, making sure they do not interfere with student learning.

### *Organizational Leadership*

A fourth performance principals must demonstrate is organizational leadership. This includes such things as running the school plant, maintaining a safe, clean, aesthetically pleasing school environment, or even coordinating the parking for holiday programs. But that is not all. The principal must be able to properly manage his/her time to simply get things done. With the tremendous number of things principals must manage, they must allow other faculty, staff, parents and community to share some of the responsibilities and/or celebrations of the job.

In talking about principals, Hausman, Crow and Sperry (2000) posit that, “Acknowledging their limitations enables them to surround themselves with others who possess the strength they lack... They see leadership as an organization-wide phenomenon and allow others to grow and develop” (p. 11). By allowing others to lead, the principal reduces the burden of everyday activities, building trust and efficacy within the staff. The staff as a whole then understands the importance of doing their part in leading, becoming more readily accepting to sharing the burden of work. One great example of this at Pleasant View School is

the Solution/Focus Team. This team is made of various staff in the school, including the principal, counselor, teachers, aides, parents, and other outside agencies, depending on the problem being addressed. Each person on the team contributes to the solution of the problems students bring to the table.

Principals must also be aware of potential problems and be thinking of how they will handle these if they occur. A good example of this type of thinking occurred at Pleasant View when principal Don Dehner formed a committee to deal directly with student discipline. This committee, of which I am a member, developed a system to manage negative student behavior. Of course appropriate conflict resolution skills, with an eye toward school law, was also part of this very important and necessary discipline management process.

Finally, the principal must be able to manage both material, financial and human resources of the school. One of the best ways to organize for success is to properly distribute helpers in needed areas. This may include hiring aides to run copies for teachers or take playground duties, freeing teachers to spend more time teaching. It could include the PTA organizing a theatre group to teach drama or dance as an enrichment activity. It might include the organization of a career day to promote student interest in various subject areas. Most importantly, it would include scheduling time within the school day to provide extra time and support to students needing help.

### *Ethical Leadership*

A fifth performance principals must value is ethical leadership.

Hausman, Crow and Sperry (2000) note, "Understanding one's needs and emotions is also crucial to good school leaders. Effective principals meet their own needs as well as those of their organization" (p. 11). They demonstrate an absolute respect for people. One that does not need to be earned, but is freely given. They demonstrate a love and liking for all people, regardless of where they come from. When dealing with students that have broken school rules or the law, they apply discipline fairly and consistently. Hausman, Crow and Sperry call this "self-regulation" (p. 11).

Self-regulation is the ability to control one's emotions and withhold judgment before acting. Such control enables principals to create cultures of trust and risk-taking. Principals who possess emotional control are reflective. They are able to stay calm, cool and collected, even under the most difficult circumstances. This sets a positive tone for the entire school.

(p. 11)

When principals act in such a manner, they are modeling behaviors they expect from others. Principals treat matters dealing with staff, students and parents, as well as others confidentially. This means keeping private all secret information they may learn about students or their families. On the other hand, information

may be shared with personnel if a danger to self or others exists. The principal needs to maintain the highest level of trust between him/herself and the community. Principals must only share information on a need to know basis, and only if it helps students. When acting ethically, staff, students, parents and community stakeholders will envision a kind and caring leader that can be trusted during hard times, as well as easy ones. Ethical leaders not only do what is right according to the law, but do what is right for all stakeholders.

### *Political Leadership*

The sixth performance a principal must exhibit is political leadership. Because of our interconnected world, the principal operates in a constantly changing environment. A most recent event, the attack on the people in the World Trade Center and in the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, demonstrates how fast life can change. The principal must not only be knowledgeable of current trends, issues and potential environmental changes, but must be able to communicate effectively with stakeholders. Changes made to the environmental setting need to be made on behalf of the stakeholders, and care taken not to adopt carbon copies of other programs that may have worked elsewhere, but may not work in a different setting. Sure, there may be supporters of programs that have worked for other schools, but principals must be able to effectively demonstrate why that program would not be appropriate, or would be appropriate in a different setting.



Principals need to communicate with representatives of diverse community groups, heading off potential problems. Lawson (1999) calls groups like these “community partnerships” (p. 21). He says “They are the key organizational mechanism for allowing integrative planning to occur” (p. 21). He goes on to say “principals have a clear choice regarding whether to become a full service community school, or borrow some elements of it to fit local needs and contexts” (p. 22). As stated by Keith Osborn, retired principal of Pleasant View Elementary School, Pleasant Valley, Iowa, “You just have to find what works in some models and apply that to your own situation” (K. Osborn, personal communication, January 21, 2001).

Good principals will also be aware of legislation on the state and federal levels that will directly or indirectly affect education. As an aspiring principal, I have attended several legislative forums with state senators and representatives. Many principals and superintendents, as well as teachers, parents, members of the media, and others were there to learn about pending legislation and the thoughts of those we elected to political power. As a group we were able to express our opinions, but most importantly, we were able to advocate what was most important and essential for our students to learn at the highest level.

#### Determination

The third and final tenet a principal must follow is determination. Determination is an ability within ones-self that does not allow for failure.

It helps to transform failure of one kind into a success of another. Examine a hypothetical situation where a principal fails to implement an effective social-emotional learning program. Perhaps the ineffectiveness was caused by using an inappropriate strategy, lack of proper teacher training, poor communication, or even misdiagnosing the real problem. Good principals reflect upon and assess the cause of failure, ultimately using it as a springboard toward a more effective and successful program. They view setbacks as temporary, focusing on how to fix problems and prevent them from happening again. They also search for what is best for all stakeholders. While serving on the student discipline committee at Pleasant View Elementary School, I observed principal Don Dehner respond to teacher requests to revamp the current ineffective discipline system. First, he considered the many different contexts students could misbehave or be disrespectful. Second, he made a list of negative behaviors students exhibited. Third, he directed our group to generate a list of interventions aimed toward changing negative student behavior. Finally, after much research and discussion, policies, procedures, and communications were put into place, to assist parents and teachers in the process of modifying behaviors and enhance character development in students. Instead of implementing a one-size-fits-all approach to discipline, principal Dehner was determined to consider what was best for all students, teachers, parents, and the greater community.

Determined principals also have a tremendous drive to keep going, to stay the course, to not quit when things get rough. Hausman, Crow and Sperry (2000) refer to this as “motivation” (p. 11). They say “effective principals love to learn and are driven to make a difference for students. They work tirelessly to address extremely difficult challenges and model commitment to their school and staff” (p. 11). In the previous example concerning principal Dehner, he addressed the tough challenge of discipline by developing a character building system tailored to the needs of the school and community. He took the lead in modeling this program for staff and students.

Barth, (2000) speaks about modeling commitment as well. He describes the superintendent and assistant superintendent of District Two in New York City, as they create culture within their school system. These two superintendents aim at developing a culture of adult learning by modeling to stakeholders that “continual learning on the part of all educators in the system is expected, demanded, facilitated and rewarded” (p. 26). Determined principals in their system pair up with, and frequently observe other principals, in order to improve their own knowledge and practice. They model determination to teachers, necessary for teachers to understand when providing instructional practices that produce authentic learning opportunities for students.

Determined principals are also found in the classrooms of other educators, sharing their new knowledge of issues directly related to education such as,

attention deficit disorder, bullying and violence prevention, conflict management, and teaching strategies. To make it clear, good principals will teach lessons, modeling the exact method or strategy they feel will be successful within the classroom. Not only do they raise their own awareness with current trends, but they build trust with teachers, reinforcing the thought that teachers will receive help and support when they need it. Finally determined principals are very empathetic. They have knowledge and understanding of people's feelings, and are able to work to solve problems, leaving an individual's dignity and self-respect intact.

As principal I will turn failure into success, stay motivated to learn, model commitment, share my knowledge with staff, and prepare to solve problems with an empathetic eye toward human feelings.

#### Summary

Today's aspiring principals may have a lot to worry about, but they also have a lot to celebrate. Not only do today's principals have to worry about the mental and physical challenges of the principalship, but they also are living in a time of tremendous possibility for systemic change. The possibility for raising the level of student performance is not only unprecedented, it is to be celebrated. Principals must have a tremendous desire to lead in today's world. They must believe every child can learn and help that child discover his/her particular way of learning. They must have a commitment to lifelong-learning and desire high

expectations from others. They must demonstrate discipline in six leadership performance areas: visionary, instructional, organizational, collaborative, ethical and political. Finally, they must demonstrate determination. They must model the quality of not giving up, and work at problems until they are overcome.

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# Research Evaluation Report

	Unacceptable	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excell
<b>A. Form</b>						
1. General appearance						
2. Title page						
3. Citations						
4. Headings and subheadings						
5. References						
<b>B. Content</b>						
1. Title						
2. Thesis statement						
3. Supporting evidence						
4. Logical Development						
5. Summary and/or concluding statement						
6. Plan of organization						
<b>C. Style</b>						
1. Word choice						
2. Sentence structure						
3. Paragraph structure						
4. Transitions						
5. Spelling						
6. Punctuation						
<b>D. Research</b>						
1. Quantity						
2. Quality						
3. Evaluation of sources						
4. Use of quotations						
5. Use of paraphrasing						
6. Interpretations						