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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
Administration is a journey of discovery. This reflective paper is the testament discovery for one administrator who is not the same person as she was one year ago. The anniversary of acceptance to take a position in administration has passed and has found this administrator with newly found confidence, knowledge and purpose to constantly improve and never cease to learn.

This paper is a reflection of the cognitive and affective gains made by one administrator in her first year. It demonstrates what practical application while learning can do for the professional career of a future administrator. "A leader who plans, acts, walks, and talks like a leader—and wears a good suit—is damn near invincible" (Monroe, 1997, p. 173).
A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

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Administration is a journey of discovery. It requires one to be self-reflective, self-actualizing and self-motivated. It is the focused belief in child-centered instruction and the overarching need to benefit the academic and affective lives of children. This is done through quality leadership and commitment. Learning and achievement of students is determined through teacher effectiveness. It is the administrator who leads teachers, families and community with vision, consistency and strength. The job is cognitive and affective. The administrator must become a balance of caring and achievement. Lyman, in her book, stated a premise based on affective leadership. The administrator is focused on the welfare of students and staff. “He goes above and beyond the call of duty. He inspires us to be a dedicated team because he is so dedicated to what he does” (Lyman, 2000, p. 90). This task may seem overwhelming, however, an administrator with a central purpose on the greater good of people will succeed in having the staff respect, care and be motivated by such a leader. The journey of discovery begins on the first day of a new school year. When she begins as an intern and is able to initiate progress, she is able to increase her knowledge and its subsequent application of it through experience. It is a journey with roadblocks and detours. It is both straight and winding. It is often a freeway where breakneck speeds can be reached when least expected. However, it is also a road that is picturesque with scenery at every turn. One just needs to keep the windshield clear and remember to look around to realize how much distance has been traversed. This reflective paper is the testament discovery for one administrator who is not the same person as she was one year ago. The anniversary of acceptance to take a position in administration has passed and has found this administrator with newly found confidence, knowledge and purpose to constantly improve and never cease to learn.
This paper is a reflection of the cognitive and affective gains made by one administrator in her first year. It demonstrates what practical application while learning can do for the professional career of a future administrator. One begins to understand what Monroe meant in her doctrine, “A leader who plans, acts, walks, and talks like a leader—and wears a good suit—is damn near invincible” (Monroe, 1997, p. 173).

Personal Characteristics

Visionary Leadership

The vision of what a school is to become is centered in an environment where anyone who walks into it feels the cohesiveness through a shared vision of students, staff and community. It is a place where the faculty believes in themselves and their ability to change. Everyone involved feels empowered to share in the development and analysis of student growth. A strong sense of community is evident which enables students to become intrinsically motivated to learn. The staff, students and community are well informed through a variety of communication techniques that have no limits. The school is a place where staff and students feel safe and are willing to take risks toward improvement. It will be a place where no one is clinging to the past but is embracing the future and all of its possibilities. It is the obligation of all adults to help children learn and apply knowledge so they may become productive members of society. “But a lot of good can come from rational problem solving. And we humans are problem solving animals” (Aronson, 2000, p. 7). This fundamental understanding of people is critical in creating authentic learning situations that will help children become productive. This philosophy is evident in how one acquires and uses visionary leadership and is reflected in an administrator’s school.

An administrator uses self-actualizing skills to maintain focus on the vision of educational improvement. She is effective in her ability to see a multitude of possibilities and opportunities. She is open-minded, and flexible in
her approach to a situation. This is critical in developing change. When does she know she possesses this skill? The LSI (Life style Inventory) indicates a confirmed strength by both the administrator and those who evaluate her. Her reflection on a situation is evident when everyone has been heard and consensus is reached. She will have hired creative individuals who foster growth and positive attitudes. These people will work together and grow as a staff. The journey is well mapped due to her creativity, humor, and nonjudgmental attitude working toward a vision for all staff members develop to their fullest potential.

**Empowerment through organizational leadership**

An administrator must foster independence in the staff. Discussions based on past mistakes must be incorporated into professional lives. Continuing discussions are held that will improve teaching and subsequently learning. As an administrator it is imperative that we empower teachers to increase student learning. Making statements like, “Please let me know if you can think of any ways that our school could be better, and let me know if you see anyone not being respectful and treating others with dignity” (Lyman, 2000, p. 77). This action will cause teachers to respond with statements like “It starts with us” (Lyman, 2000, p. 77). Administrators must have the courage to step outside the box and listen attentively. The goal is to empower teachers and other staff members to improve their teaching skills. This leads to a belief in their capacity to lead and make a difference in the lives of their students.

We also must build cooperation, empathy and compassion within all classrooms. To accomplish this we must look to the significant adults that affect students. We as educators can overcome all factors that put children at risk with high expectations, empathic understanding and quality instruction. Children and teachers must feel that, “You are working in a situation where you feel respected and feel like an important member of a team—no matter what your job is” (Aronson, 2000, p. 126). Learning is a job that requires significant motivation to
succeed. It must be authentic in its purpose and interesting to the mind. Teachers must learn to understand their students in order to succeed. When successful students have been studied it was found that the major difference between success and failure was the development of a significant relationship with an adult (Payne, 1998).

When looking at the LSI (Life Styles Inventory) the administrator would have confirmed strength in affiliative and humanistic-encouraging leadership. The administrator would be effective in inspiring teachers to think, grow and take responsibility for their actions. An administrator with these skills would help staff become problem solvers and develop self-confidence in the ability to make a difference with children. The administrator is well liked and respected because she has demonstrated genuine concern for staff members and their needs while maintaining high expectations for performance. Throughout the school year many situations have arisen that caused self-reflection in these areas. Many situations have triggered a metacognitive stance while maintaining patience. It is easy to finish the job alone and quickly, however, people do not have ownership in the implementation or the results if they did not have a role in the development of the plan. She listens at the end of the year to comments made by teachers in a building improvement meeting and swells with pride as each individual describes with passion and can clearly articulate how they facilitated learning. Listening to the assistant superintendent when she makes the comment, “This is not the same staff of one year ago,” confirms her feelings of confidence and the belief that she has empowered her staff to change. The journey continues because the administrator trusted, empowered and respected people.

Instruction

“What a teacher feels and thinks about the children in front of her makes all the difference in how much those children learn” (Monroe, 1997, p. 104). A child should learn to compare and use thinking skills in error analysis, and
historical investigation to completely understand history and make important decisions. Administrators must foster, promote and model effective skills in leadership so children will achieve success in life. Evidence of learning is the fundamental achievement of teachers. Staff development must focus on the improvement of teacher facilitation of learning. It should not matter that the goals are instructional or affective. It only matters that those goals raise achievement and are child-centered. It is time for teachers to change the paradigm of polishing lessons and begin to develop strategies that polish learning at an individual’s level. One of the lessons learned in the Houston School District was that of having high expectations for all students. McAdams (2000) writes,

"Trustees must not accept low levels of performance from poor children. Educators repeat often the phrase ‘all children can learn’ and then turn around and expect less for poor children.” He goes on to state “We make no excuses for schools serving poor communities. We expect principals and teachers in these schools to develop teaching methods that meet the learning needs of poor children, and we hold them accountable for the performance of their students” (p. 257).

In addition, it is critical for teachers to be aware of the cognitive schemata and cultural background that students bring with them to school.

“A significant body of literature on teacher effectiveness has examined the impact of teacher behavior on students achievement. However, only a few of these inquiries have considered the implications of student variability, specifically cultural variability on the outcomes of student and teacher interaction” (Thomas, 2000, p.100).

Teachers and administrators must realize that the cultural background that children bring with them has a significant impact on achievement. Together all stakeholders work to understand this.
Knowing and implementing high expectations can often conflict within a teacher's belief system. It is imperative for the administrator to convey an understanding of high accountability for teachers as well as students. It is through this conveyance that achievement can be realized. Teachers will become empowered in the changes and allow themselves to grow and embrace new instructional opportunities. Action research centered on growth in measurable terms will demonstrate student learning and give everyone a tangible opportunity to celebrate. Accountability is expected from the state and federal government and therefore, a school district must allow principals to create staff development opportunities that will foster positive growth in children. However progress and the subsequent reformation is successful when an administrator has created a culture of learning for children, staff and parents.

“It is improbable that any claim of reform progress would have either credibility or staying over until it demonstrated that the quality of education in one classroom and in one school was essentially the same as in another classroom or school, and that the level of quality was steadily improving.” (Wilson and Corbett, 2001, p. 40)

In addition, administrators must be prepared to support teachers when they are forced to confront achievement data. “Standardized tests may tell us what a person know, within framed parameters, but they are not valid indicators of what a person can learn” (Cornell, 2000, p. 72). Teachers and administrators must realize that all of the factors that influence a child's achievement must be considered and used as tools to diagnosis success.

The LSI profile would show confirmed strength from the administrator and others that would demonstrate her skills in achievement. These skills would allow the administrator to lead by example, and encourage everyone to give their best effort in every aspect of their job. This administrator sets realistic performance standards and communicates effectively. She would promote
teamwork and consistently seek staff input. In addition, she would not behave in power-oriented ways or overtly act as a perfectionist. She would take a more casual approach to completion of a project while encouraging people to do their best. However, this understanding would need to be tempered with light pressure and consistently look to others for input. She would not use authority to force people into compliance. She would be willing to demonstrate flexibility and not insist on a singular point of view. She is a participative manager and would recognize the value in empowering others. The performance indicators would allow one to look at the actual plan for building improvement and then listen to teachers, as they understand the expectations set before them. The subtle, yet undeniable, expectation of raising student achievement would be evident in discussions with parents, students, and staff. A goal will have been set and everyone would maintain focus on it. The journey would persist because the administrator has learned to be less competitive and realizes that sometimes one needs to go slow to go fast.

Change

The primary purpose of change, Gilley wrote is to “improve the institution and make it more effective” (2000 p. 54). This philosophy encompasses every aspect of the system. The effectiveness of an organization is in direct correlation to its ability to consistently achieve their strategic goals and, adhere to them. Three factors to maintain effectiveness are: the correlation between the institution’s ability to acquire resources to accomplish the desired results; the relationship between the school’s ability to smoothly transition and the connection between the school’s ability to satisfy the stakeholders during the process. Simply stated schools are most effective because the administrator devotes over fifty percent of her time to instruction to affect progress in achievement. Each of these factors provides insight into a school’s effectiveness. However, it is most likely the eclectic approach toward implementation that the most effective schools
practice. Professionals who efficiently manage their time and are not overwhelmed with minutia are successful. The process of change and the specific job responsibilities of staff must be effectively planned and be streamlined to garner success. Given all of the information available to an administrator, it is critical not to omit the student in the change process. When students were asked about their involvement they said, “just because the above implications are based on students’ stated preferences does not mean that students will willingly and easily add new expectation to their existing definitions of what school is supposed to be like” (Wilson & Corbett, 2001, p. 126). It is critical that the students’ perspective is considered when developing a plan for change.

The administrator with skills to manage and effectively lead during change would not demonstrate a high need for approval or dependency. She would be able to take risks and allow mistakes to occur. She would not rely on unrealistic expectations for drastic change. She would be able to demonstrate her trust in teachers along with the confidence she has in their ability to effect change. The administrator would also use a variety of strategies to support her staff during the process. She would offer encouragement, incentives and resources to develop her staff. She would convey her understanding that everyone’s position on a learning curve is valid. She would motivate her staff to realize that any amount of positive change and growth is significant and valued. Confirmed strengths in humanistic and encouraging managerial skills would demonstrate her ability to lead during change. The journey may be marked with obstacles of avoidance, opposition, or a lack of confidence. However, her resiliency will be maintained as well as fostered in her staff. She will continue to listen first before she seeks to be understood.
Knowledge/Skills/Attitudes from Experience and Coursework

Administrators are educational leaders who can influence students’ lives and learning by working closely with family, staff and the community. Schools that work within a constructivist style have specific demonstrated behaviors that positively effect student achievement.

Lambert (1998, p. 53) reported seven conditions to build leadership capacity within a school. The administrator must focus on these elements to create a culture of learning where her educational leadership inspires teachers to affect change in the lives of students. This culture will foster growth and the craft of teaching will be examined and celebrated in the reflected glow of a child’s eyes.

1. Hire personnel with demonstrated leadership capacity and develop veteran into skillful leadership.
2. Build trusting relationships
3. Give equal access to all for building leadership. Develop a school wide focus on student achievement and professional growth.
4. Encourage inquiry, reflection, questioning, data gathering and evaluation.
5. Encourage collaborative inquiry
6. Implement plan for leadership building.
7. Develop a district perspective aligned with the policies and practices forth.

Instructional leaders are educators who will lead in the midst of change. “As an educator, the principal must be a continual learner who researches, studies programs and innovations, interacts and talk with others about educational issues, and models life-long learning with a clear focus on improving student and staff success” (Speck, 1999. p. 33). As a model of learning the administrator is able to lead through example. They demonstrate and ally themselves with teachers who are participating in staff development. The principal is the lead developer of learning, teacher growth and themselves. This is done with skills in facilitated
leadership and self-actualization. Administrators promote growth through the development of learning, the study of teaching and positive decision-making.

**Visionary Leadership**

An administrator must empower teachers to increase student learning. One must not be in a position to make excuses for families who do not participate or are of a specific socio-economic status. Tools and resources must be used to efficiently accomplish success in education. Administrators must have the courage to step outside traditional roles to empower teachers and other staff members to believe in their capacity to lead and make a difference in the lives of their students. Many opportunities for learning have presented themselves over the course of a school year. For example, the determination of who will sit on a leadership team and how that team will progress through change is one such opportunity. Creating and maintaining a plan for building improvement must be done with consistency and resiliency. The beginning of the school year requires the team to get together and develop a goal or mission. It was important for staff, students, and parents to maintain focus on this goal. The vision must be centered on affective and cognitive factors that effect a child’s development. “Educators and scholars believe that ‘social and emotional development and the recognition of the relational nature of learning and change constitute an essential missing piece in our educational system’” (Lyman, 2000 p. 118).

A comprehensive school improvement plan that includes academic and affective goals toward achievement must be presented to the District yearly. This will require a great deal of focus and resiliency toward a central purpose. Many educators perceive implementation of one or another. This task requires everyone in the district to maintain a primary focus on achievement yet working with staff to develop affective strategies to support the instructional strategies focused on raising performance. The students’ role is to develop interpersonal and other social skills that will help them with their success.
Becoming a leader is an act of self-invention. "Imagine yourself as a leader; act as if you are a leader until you actually become one" (Monroe, 1997, p. 126). This is the vision of self. It is the manifestation of a belief in her self-image and ability to make a difference in education. An administrator once said teach or lead each year to the fullest because what students will remember is the last year you were with them not the previous thirty-one. This is profound in that it allows everyone to continue to learn and take instructional opportunities with vigor. All stakeholders are potential leaders and, therefore, must imagine themselves in that role.

**Instructional Leadership**

Instructional leadership is the primary focus for administrators. She advocates, nurtures and sustains a school culture. She maintains an instructional program that is conducive to student learning and a staff's professional growth. The student is key to success. They actively participate and make decisions as they uncover material. Fostering skills and strategies that allow children to become intrinsically motivated toward a goal of learning and achievement must be maintain to be an effective instructional leader. This motivation helps learners excel when they become metacognitive thinkers.

"Something was missing: It was, we came to believe, the juxtaposition of the study of literature in a workshop setting and deep, focused comprehension instruction – instruction that targeted the thinking that occurs during reading, thinking that determines how deeply the text is understood" (Keene, 1997, p. 26).

Through modeling think aloud strategies, teachers are able to explicitly instruct students in the benefit of metacognition in reading comprehension. Keene's book *Mosaic of Thought* was the cornerstone for staff development during the 2000-2001 school year. Teachers concentrated on four of the eight comprehension strategies described in the book. Quarterly, teachers gathered data
and purposely designed instruction to incorporate Keene’s strategies. The staff found that students who are mindful of what they are doing and how they understand the purpose of learning were most successful. The trend for student results as reported on the ITBS for the 2000-2001 school year was one of regression, however. At the beginning of the school year the teachers were under the assumption that student results above the 40th percentile would have to increase by six percentage points. Due to the significant regression of student scores teachers are now under the assumption that student results above the 40th percentile in the 2001-2002 school year will need to increase by eighteen percentage points. This is a significant goal one that the teachers are ready to make. An action plan to compensate instruction to meet this goal was developed. The action plan focused on ten strategies for implementation. Evaluation and progress monitoring was essential in determining the effectiveness of the strategies. Administration and teachers believed that if we were success there would be significant improvement in achievement in the fall of 2001.

1. Identify 3-5 students scoring in the 20th to 40th percentile on total reading.
2. Determine instructional practices, enrichment, remediation, and parent involvement strategies to help these students score above the 40th percentile in the 2001-2002 school year.
3. Identify 1-2 student(s) scoring in the 60th to 90th percentile on ITBS total reading.
4. Determine instruction practices, enrichment, remediation, and parent involvement strategies to help these students score above the 90th percentile in the 2001-2002 school year.
5. Maintain an integrated approach to comprehensive literacy instruction.
6. Develop lessons and comprehensive implementation strategies occurring throughout the school day.
7. Maintain instruction with homeroom students for the entire school day.
8. Target students with the SOAR to Success reading program. This will occur in addition to regular guided reading instruction.
10. Encourage reading for pleasure and reinforce this with an incentive program.
ITBS data from the past seven years show evidence of a significant lack of progress. Achievement data from the past seven years was reviewed and it was found that students at Nathan Pusey failed to make one year’s growth on average. Many years saw but four months growth in one year. What does this mean for the instructional leader? The belief that need exists to continually empower the staff to believe in themselves and their abilities to make a difference with children. Many new administrators will try to 'do it all' in hopes of impressing supervising administrators. However, it is with this top down leadership style that will cause a staff to become complacent. This phenomenon will stagnate student achievement. One will find that everyone has been working hard but not working smart. This is facilitated through quality staff development. “One way to achieve this goal is to create a staff development module that uses a discussion-reflection-action-type format” (Cornell, 2000, p. 126). This model of staff development will be incorporated during the school year. It is a model where teachers will use the study team model of small group discussion after common reading of professional literature. There will also be a component of accountability in the form of an implementation log. This log will act as evidence of classroom practice of the model discussed in study group. These study groups will occur twice each month during the school year. The other two weeks will be focused on significant staff development using Bruce and Showers’ workshop/workplace approach to staff development (Calhoun 1994). Embedded within both strands will be a high level of accountability that will help teachers become self-actualized learners about the science of teaching. (Calhoun, 1994) Teachers are beginning to see this as an effort to help the Phoenix rise from the flames. They are poised to witness and facilitate positive achievement.
Organizational Leadership

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. There are many factors that effect school transformation. Some of which are costs, competition, political ideologies, government, changing population and technology. Several influences move school districts. One of them is the organizational leadership; another is a shift in population. The results of fewer students are directly reflected in fiscal management. Districts must ‘cut back’ and work toward efficiently using all the dollars allocated. Student attendance is the core to documenting school achievement results. Specifically, a school cannot claim students who are not there. Truancy issues are one of the biggest obstacles an administrator faces today. (Gilley, 2000)

Leaders should believe in anticipatory management. This requires administrators to share in the decision-making process and work toward empowering teachers to greater responsibility. Schools should adopt a human resource model to enhance its responsiveness. They must become flexible, proactive, and continuously leaning toward improvement while making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching. Administrators must learn to juggle many projects at once. The job is diverse and unpredictable.

Organizational leadership can become pervasive and overtake an administrator’s day. Approximately sixty percent of an administrator’s day is spent in unscheduled meetings. (Senge, 2000) Therefore, time management must be done with foresight and focused purpose. Priorities must be set, in order to accomplish all that is to be done in any given day.
Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leaders are those who act as a team with families and community members. They respond to the diverse needs of a community through their interests and by mobilizing resources. An administrator needs to attend many meetings with the district’s board of education. Several experiences have allowed for the modeling of this standard by the trustees. These meetings demonstrated best practices in collaborative leadership. Attending these meetings serve as a model for prospective and current administration. The board members and administrators serve not only as role models but also as mentors. They also act as resources if an administrator finds herself in a similar situation with the community in and around her building. The superintendent models effective communication in the description of emerging issues and trends that may potentially impact the school community. The board supports these efforts and gathers information from a variety of community resources. They asked for examples of successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education with regard to the implementation an alternative calendar, staff development, state mandates or curricular issues. The general disposition of the audience, board members and administration is reflected in the involvement of families and other stakeholders. A school board meeting also illustrates the need for an informed public as well because the District has set such high standards for implementation of an issues, dissention will be minimized through a strong sense of community. Members listen and comment logically and respectfully during the presentation. Each community member or stakeholder is treated equitably and given the same amount of time to speak unless they had called in previously. The superintendent also supports the efforts of those who had presented and is also well informed on all aspects of an issue. These descriptions of issues are only a minute view into the job of a collaborative board.
"Educators have failed where boards of education have allowed them to fail. Special interests have prevailed over the common good where boards of education have not had the integrity to resist them" (McAdams, 2000, p. 260).

The importance in this statement of caution is significant for all schools to heed. Without the cooperation of the board and administration change and reform are nearly impossible. It is critical for administrators to keep a 'finger on the pulse' of the board and continue to work closely with them in a variety of issues. Ethical Leadership

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 situation arose this school year where knowledge, disposition and performance in ethical leadership were needed. A mandatory workshop for Iowa schools in need of assistance was scheduled for June eleventh and twelfth of 2001. The administrator received notification of its delineation as a school in need of improvement in March of 2001. This was met with considerable consternation by the staff as well as the administrator. The reality was the school had just finished its first year as a Title I school and was now designated as in need of improvement. The entire staff had been studying longitudinal data as well as triangulating it for many months. The result of the analysis had shown significant areas in need of improvement especially in the areas of reading and Language Arts. When the news came therefore no one was surprised. The workshop was designed to outline the new strategies in reading instruction that would be mandatory in the coming school year. A team of staff members along with the administrator was assigned to attend the workshop.

A voice mail message was received from the Executive Director for personnel services. He requested a call because the UNISERV director of the ISEA had phoned him with concerns that the administrator was mandating teacher participation in a workshop that took place after the negotiated contract had
ended. The teacher perceived the mandate as high handed. However, there is irony involved here surrounding the question: How were the teachers going to be able to carry out the new teaching strategies without the training? This would be required under during the next school year. It was important to take a step back and separate the people from the problem. A memo was drafted and then faxed to the building. The secretary then photocopied it and distributed it to the staff.

The outcome of the situation was another exercise in irony, however. The staff upon the return of the administrator expressed embarrassment and were worried that she was personally insulted. She reassured them that this was going to be a learning process and the staff would get through it together. In the end everyone committed himself or herself to attending the workshop. The patience and need for expediency taught a valuable lesson in ethical leadership. An administrator must not allow herself to take a journey on the low road. She should always take the 'high road' and act, as she would like others to act. Being an administrator requires one to swallowing one's pride. It is hoped that the ability to read minds is never discovered because one might find in reading this administrator's that this standard had been violated. Until that time it is best to maintain silence and patience and sometimes count back from ten, twenty or in times of deep consternation fifty.

Leaders must maintain the organization's capacity for resilience. Teachers must be coached and focused on their ability to overcome and adapt. In addition, it is important for a leader to help the staff become more adept at synthesizing information and implementing change. The primary binding agent is the trust that is built among staff members and the leader. The connection between the change and the focus on goals and principles must be maintained. This type of effort helps staff members to see change as a learning opportunity or a chance for growth or advancement. Leaders are responsible to help staff members accept the reality that conflict is inevitable. Change is an on-going process that promotes
productivity and efficiency. The environment should promote consensus building as its primary operational practice. Change should be illustrated as a link to progress and the core values and guiding principles agreed upon in goal setting. It must be modeled consistently. "It is not only what students do, it is important what we teachers do (not what we preach, but what we practice)" (Aronson, 2000, p. 171). Administrators are teachers of staff and students. They lead by example and expect teachers to do the same for their students. The circle of influence becomes wider when one becomes an administrator. It is the opportunity to facilitate a significant change.

Political Leadership

Political leadership is defined as having skills that promote the success of students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social economic, legal and cultural context. The community is an active member in building consensus. The community includes parents, business partners, outside agencies and out of district support personnel. The parent and community works to build a closer relationship between school and home. The parent feels confident in voicing concerns and celebrates victories. Families understand and are empowered in the educational growth and further decision of the children. "Business leaders play a critically important role in urban school reform" (McAdams, 2000, p. 258). They provide act as an outside resource or evaluative tool. They also have a considerable amount of influence on legislative issues. In addition, a district would not attempt to ask for a bond election without consulting the business community.

The community is comfortable with and has faith in the faculty, administrator and district. They participate as the primary child advocate in curricular and extra curricular activities. The community feels comfortable volunteering and understand the shared vision of the building improvement goal. The learning environment was improved through the concentrated effort of
authentic experiences. Those feelings of pride and accomplishment foster new possibilities to try innovative initiatives. After school programs are created that help students gain an advantage. Community efforts can inspire improvement in many ways. The increased sense of pride was focused to academic issues that would help children succeed in life. Community reinforcement of educational initiatives is a strategy that gives children the tools to transfer learning into authentic application. These efforts toward physical improvement have lasting effect on learning. Those students have had the benefit of modeling and continued effort toward a common cause. They know that their community cares about them and will work hard not to let them down.

Personal—Professional Vision for Administrative Practice

The administrator’s role is to be a facilitator of change. She is aware of the shared goals that have been collaboratively developed with students, staff, parents and community members. The administrator promotes efficacy in each member of the learning community. This efficacy will result in the empowerment of each individual to participate in the planning, investigation and evaluation of proposed changes. Models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling are demonstrated and implemented. While this job may seem overwhelming it is the eclectic balance of instructional, managerial and community leadership that will maximize success.

"The implication is that we have to look deeper and more holistically at the principal and the school as an organization. Leadership relates to mission, direction inspiration. Management involves designing and carrying our plans, getting things done, working effectively with people" (Fullen, 1991, p. 157).

When children are asked what they want from their education they, "...wanted a teacher who nudged them along the way and made sure that they worked. ...they wanted the confidence, drive, perseverance, or determination to
do it on their own" (Wilson, Corbett, 2001, p. 70). It is up to future administrators to embrace this philosophy and set a course toward successful implementation.

Conclusion

Administrators must have a strong knowledge, and understanding of learning to promote and implement change. "The process of change in schools is often broken into three overlapping stages: planning, implementation, and institutionalization" (Deal, 1994, p. 98). Using examples and modeled behavior in integrity, tolerance and history develops credibility among staff, students, parents and community members. She encourages experimentation, rewards and continuous improvement. The administrator is a coach that encourages the faculty to believe in themselves and their ability to improve. The self-reflective administrator participates in an on-going analysis of programs and practices. She exemplifies a personal commitment to change using skills of dynamic, team building and management. The administrator must insure that the plans developed are living documents and guide the action that benefits all students. The focus is on collaborative work cultures and strategies of teacher on-the-job training, peer coaching, and experimentation is used to promote continuous student improvement. The administrator demonstrates a strong sense of professional community (Covey, 1997). Administrators build the capacity of others to learn and lead. This is how the journey continues constantly winding and giving new insight as each turn. It is exhausting and rewarding. Most importantly, however, is the tangible realization that one person's influence made the positive difference in the lives of children.
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