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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

Why is it that some people give up the relative security and comfort of working with children in the classroom to join the principalship? Why do these same people choose to leave an area where they are the perceived expert in their field for an area where one's decisions are constantly questioned and criticized by those he or she works for and with? These are difficult questions to answer and in a rational sense, there are not a lot of logical responses for why some individuals decide to devote the effort necessary to understand and achieve the position of the principalship. As Houston (1994) notes, most of the easy problems have been solved before they get to the administrator, and any problems that do get to the administrator and are solved are often thankless and unappreciated.

A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

A Research Paper
Presented to
The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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by
Randall W. Strabala
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
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Why is it that some people give up the relative security and comfort of working with children in the classroom to join the principalship? Why do these same people choose to leave an area where they are the perceived expert in their field for an area where one's decisions are constantly questioned and criticized by those he or she works for and with? These are difficult questions to answer and in a rational sense, there are not a lot of logical responses for why some individuals decide to devote the effort necessary to understand and achieve the position of the principalship. As Houston (1994) notes, most of the easy problems have been solved before they get to the administrator, and any problems that do get to the administrator and are solved are often thankless and unappreciated.

Fortunately for the millions of school children in the United States, I believe most individuals who have ascended to the position of the principalship are good leaders who have accepted the responsibility for making education meaningful for all children. Roland Barth (in Teschke, 1995) states that good schools must have good principals for three reasons: "(a) the quality of the educational program depends on the principal, (b) the principal is the most important reason that teachers grow or are stifled on the job, and (c) the principal is the most potent factor in determining school climate" (p. 8).

Who are these people and what motivates them to accept this awesome responsibility? Many are leaders, outstanding individuals who are driven and remembered more for the substance of their ideas and

actions than the style with which they lead (Sergiovanni, 1994). They are individuals who know what they stand for in education and use their beliefs to impact the lives of children and make education more meaningful. They model the values and behaviors that provide the direction for their schools (Teschke, 1996).

Throughout my studies, I have reflected upon characteristics, behaviors, and functions demonstrated by successful educational leaders which I hope to carry with me as I enter the profession. As I have moved into this new phase of my career, I have needed also to reflect upon my beliefs of what the principalship entails, what roles I must be able to perform and what is there within me which has motivated me to seek this position of leadership in education.

Personal Motivation

I look at myself and occasionally wonder why I decided to pursue the principalship as the next step in my career. What influences have there been in my life which have developed my inner beliefs regarding education? I have found that I have always had a strong love of learning, dating back to my elementary and high school experiences. Coming from a modest family, I realize that my parents had instilled into our family of six children, the fundamental importance of an education and what being an informed person requires.

Although my parents did not receive formal post-secondary education, I can look back now at their actions and understand that learning has no boundaries. They helped me realize that every situation

can, and should, be turned into a learning situation. As Bennis and Nanus (1985) state, "leaders are perpetual learners" (p. 188). Leaders keep learning, especially when frustrated with a difficult or unpleasant situation or faced with a failed opportunity. Throughout these frustrating situations, a commitment to get the task completed with the intended outcome while understanding why something did not work creates and implements a set of skills to be used in solving future dilemmas.

Although I disliked spending my time tending to the animals we raised or helping mom out in the kitchen or with my little brothers and sister, the lessons which I learned have helped me through my undergraduate and graduate school days. I would not have been able to pay for my own schooling or to take on the demands which are, or were, associated with each stage of education without the skills, internal motivation and sense of worth which was developed by working as hard as possible to do a job right. My dad always told us that if we were going to do a job, we might as well do it right the first time so that we did not have to waste valuable time undoing the mistake as well as having to do it right anyway.

These values and beliefs from the developmental stages of my youth continue to direct my personal and professional actions today. Although I do not use my fine cooking skills as a means of paying the bills as I did in college, one of my favorite hobbies, and means of stress reduction, whether for my family, at school or entertaining continues to be food production.

My wife, Jan, has been a great supporter of my decision to enter school administration. While I was busy at work, with classes, and studying, Jan took on the responsibility of doing more than her share of raising our three young boys and maintaining a home which met our physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It still overwhelms me when she and our boys sincerely state that they are very proud of what I have undertaken and accomplished. Without such a support group so close to me, it would have been much more difficult to make it through the physical and mental challenges of the past several years.

I still believe that education is the basis of what we are and who we are able to become. This is why I became a teacher, and now why I have entered the principalship. Through the encouragement of several former administrators, I feel that I have been blessed with certain skills and values regarding education and it is my duty to share that commitment with others. I have to give credit to Jim Hamilton, a former principal, for sparking the flame by identifying these skills through encouraging evaluations and educational discussions. Likewise, my most recent principal, Kirk Ketelsen must be recognized for allowing me the experiences and opportunities to practice these skills, for providing an encouraging atmosphere and for being a mentor as I reflected on why I was undertaking this journey and what it would take to be successful.

I had a sign hanging in my room which I moved to my new office. It reaffirms daily my belief in the power which knowledge has in our lives. It is paraphrased from the rock singer David Lee Roth who I heard on a

radio program and states simply, "I don't believe in the power of knowledge because I am a teacher, I am a teacher because I believe in the power of knowledge." I believe in life long learning and what I have learned throughout the educational leadership program, has made me a better classroom teacher than much of my undergraduate work or inservice training throughout the years.

I now have a much better understanding of how to improve and make instructional changes with the "big picture" in mind, and hope to pass that same discovery on to current as well as aspiring teachers. With that belief, I see the move to the principalship as a means to influence what is done in our schools and to develop a love of learning among our nation's youth in the same manner that my parents and teachers developed that love within me. I am still a teacher although today my classroom is now the entire school rather than a social studies room. As I move into the principalship I plan to focus my efforts on the role of the principal in instructional leadership, the change process and supervision and evaluation of instruction.

Instructional Leadership Role

"You have to be in it for the kids. You have to love working with the kids, and make sure everything, and everybody, from the board to the bus drivers, is working toward the best interest of the students" (K. Ketelsen, personal communication, September, 1993). This is a summary of the leadership duties which my former principal, Kirk Ketelsen, feels is the most important role of a modern day administrator.

As I enter the world of a high school principal, prepared through my course work and my practicum experience, I agree with his statement. I have come to believe that the instructional leadership provided through the principal's actions and beliefs is essential in meeting the goal of providing the best education possible to our youth. Instructional leadership is any action taken with the intent of developing and improving all the factors and conditions within a school which affect or influence student learning (Gorton & Schneider, 1991)

I agree with the assessment that the principal must take the responsibility for ensuring that the entire school and community are working toward the same goals. The principal must assess, understand and influence community members and school personnel toward an acceptance of, and commitment to, these collective goals. It is through these goals and coordinated influencing actions that the entire learning community is guided in the same collective direction (Vann, 1994).

As instructional leader, the principal also has a responsibility to help students and staff to develop their professional and leadership abilities and to maximize their potential (Parks & Barrett, 1994). This can be accomplished by identifying those in the school who possess evident leadership skills, encouraging and supporting these individuals, and then stepping aside and letting those with the potential to lead develop and utilize their leadership skills. Effective principals become "leaders of leaders" (p. 10) by empowering staff members to demonstrate leadership skills themselves (Teschke, 1996). To suggest that the principal can be

the only source of instructional leadership implies that teachers and students possess only passive traits, thereby locking them into a permanent subordinate role and restricting the collective leadership available within the school for the achievement of the school's goals.

The role and duties carried out by the instructional leader are vital to the success of the school. Although there are a variety of definitions of leadership, in a general sense, a principal who assumes the role of instructional leader is a person who is able to influence the commitment and work of others toward the fulfillment of the school's mission. I believe that instructional leadership involves the ability to do the right thing at the right time with the right intention in mind and to try and help each person, both student and staff, to reach his/her potential (Wheeler, 1994).

In order to successfully meet these expectations, a principal must possess or develop strong communication and interpersonal skills as well as the prerequisite conceptual and technical skills needed to understand the operation and culture of the school and community. These skills are necessary in order to develop leadership capacity among all school members and to create a school climate conducive to transferring meaningful authority to these groups and individuals.

To become a leader of leaders, a principal ideally should possess: (a) team-building and group processing skills, (b) conflict identification and resolution skills, (c) oral and written communication skills, (d) persuasion skills, and (e) diplomacy skills (Parks & Barrett, 1994).

The purposes of these skills are to guide the development of others with the use of role modeling, develop respect for conflicting viewpoints, and practice the art of consensus-building. This will increase the likelihood of group and individual ownership in decision-making, and its subsequent success. Consensus building is a process where a group arrives at a mutually acceptable decision that all members agree to support (Lewis, 1986).

The advantages of consensual decisions are many and important if schools are to achieve excellence in providing opportunities for staff and students. By using and discussing the ideas of many individuals, decisions tend to be more creative and people are more committed to a decision they had a part in creating. By using others in the decision-making process, a sense of teamwork also develops which eliminates or reduces the sense of losing for an individual or side and enhances the concept that the team goal is more important than individual issues (Lewis, 1986).

While consensus decision-making offers the opportunity for more effective decisions, the process is not used as much as possible due to several drawbacks. The major concern is that the process takes a great deal of time and patience to come to a conclusion. Also, individuals need training in the process, communication skills and a great deal of energy to sustain the process (Lewis, 1986). I see the principal using the aforementioned skills identified, by Parks and Barrett (1994) as necessary, to overcome these roadblocks. The principal can then bring

stakeholders together and implement the process in his/her school and in the process, empower others in leadership roles.

I have tried to use a consensual decision-making process as much as possible over the past two years to reach decisions regarding instructional changes contemplated at our school. The most notable has been in regard to the decision to implement a block schedule.

Throughout the process, staff, students and parents were involved in the discussion and exploration of why and what types of changes would take place, what was needed for the transformation to be successful and how to evaluate the change. Ultimately, the final recommendation to the school board for the change came from me but not without three years of study and the support of staff and most students and parents.

I believe the principal, as instructional leader, must also possess the conceptual skill or ability to see the "big picture" of the educational mission and be able to direct not only what is done, but also how it is done, toward the completion of that mission (Krug, 1993). This skill must work along with the principal's interpersonal skills to recognize and influence personal agendas or areas of concern toward the goals of the institution.

As an instructional leader, the principal must also have the technical or management skills to identify and provide the required resources, maintenance, recognition and most importantly, the time necessary to ensure the success of the program. Surely the best of intentions can fall prey to a full spectrum of management pitfalls. It is

clearly the role of the principal as instructional leader to utilize his/her management skills to provide the stability and positive climate desired in order for others to properly perform their functions in providing an optimal educational experience for students.

In the execution of these skills, the principal needs to continually coach his/her developing leaders toward fulfillment of the shared vision for the school as well as the agreed upon mission and goals. The principal must also provide the training needed to teach the leaders how to review and reflect on their actions to ensure they are focusing on consensual outcomes.

I believe that an effective school has an instructional leader who demonstrates the aforementioned leadership skills. However, possessing the requisite skills does not make an individual an instructional leader. I believe it is the application of those skills in the daily operation of teaching and learning which sets a true instructional leader apart from others in the profession. As Krug (1993) notes, the daily functions of instructional leadership which are crucial to student success and constitute the fundamental behaviors of the principal are: (a) define and communicate a mission for the school, (b) manage the curriculum and instruction, (c) supervise and evaluate teaching, (d) monitor student progress, and (e) promote a safe and effective instructional climate stressing high student achievement (p. 241).

It is imperative that the principal work with other stakeholders to develop a clear understanding of the school's mission regarding the

purpose of education. The team of school personnel, students, parents and community must have a clear understanding of how and why we are educating children. Individuals also need to know how to work toward and support the school's mission as well as what individual contribution they can make to the fulfillment of that overall purpose. Without an agreed upon mission, each individual or group will develop his/her or their own idea of the purpose of the organization and work without the goals of the organization in mind (Team Leadership, 1992).

I believe that a leader's vision is necessary to identify a view of the future for the school that is better in significant ways than currently exists. This vision provides a landmark to measure where we are, a goal of where we want to go, and the means to be employed to transport us to our destination. The principal must use his/her own personal vision to be one source of ideas which lead to discussion and possible change.

While holding a personal vision is important, it is also important that the principal work with others empowering them to make decisions toward collective goals and the success of the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1986). Effective leaders not only possess and advocate a personal vision of how things should be but also can communicate this vision to others in the school so they can share in development of the vision (Terry, 1996). No vision can guide the direction of an organization unless it is shared by the stakeholders of the organization. A principal can have an incredible vision of where he/she would like to see the school go, but if a commitment to a common idea with teachers and

parents is not developed, then the vision will likely be a failed vision.

Vann (1994) also notes that a joint effort is needed for achievement of the vision and a vision can only be successful through an understanding and support of the vision by teachers and others significant stakeholders.

With a vision providing guidance, the principal can assess the needs of the community and students to provide direction toward management of curriculum and instruction. As Wagner (1995) asks, "How can you expect the community to support your priorities for school improvement when you don't know what they think is important" (p.19)? In order to function as an instructional leader in this role, the principal must examine, with the assistance of other stakeholders, what it is that the students are to learn as well as what, and how, the teachers are to teach (Vann, 1994). Here the principal must have the knowledge of the abilities of the staff and match those abilities with student needs in order to provide effective educational experiences.

An individual attempting to be an instructional leader must be willing to obtain and provide the necessary resources, especially time for reflection, training and experimentation needed by the staff to meet the school's vision. As Roebuck and Alvarez (1994) note, an instructional leader should also meet this responsibility by being proactive and anticipating current and future trends or needs and gathering as well as disseminating information to aid in the professional development of both professional and classified staff.

Change Agent Role

In order to establish sincere and lasting change in the school the principal must be able to bring along the staff, students and community to share in and support a vision of what the school should be like (Wagner, 1995). As Sergiovanni (1994, 1996) indicates, moral connections from commitments to shared values and beliefs connect people to their jobs and make change significant and lasting. In proposing change, the principal must know where the school is at, where the principal would like it to go, and the means to achieve the transformation.

Meaningful change requires engaging all who interact with the school community in understanding what is worth doing in the school and determining why it is important to do it (Parker, 1993). One of the keys to developing change is to influence the staff, students, and community to be a part of identifying, developing and accepting the change as a positive and workable method to improve the educational process at the school, thereby empowering others with the decision.

In setting the stage for change, the principal must show a dedication toward the change and create a positive atmosphere for change to take place. Through both verbal and non-verbal communications, the principal can demonstrate his/her sincerity to the staff regarding the educational process by not wasting their time on frivolous "fad-of-the-month" reforms and unnecessary or unmeaningful staff meetings (Hughes & Andreas, 1995; Kita, 1994; Vann, 1994). An instructional leader must ensure real changes will be substantial and

transforming. In addition, an instructional leader should demonstrate this devotion through a commitment to professional development for all staff, including administrators, through the sharing of professional literature, budgeting for educational conferences, and seeking staff evaluation of his/her own performance (Kita, 1994).

When proposing a reform or change, the principal must ensure that all involved in implementing the plan are willing to assist in the movement toward that goal. The best method to use to achieve this is to involve those directly affected by the change in the entire process (Hughes & Andreas, 1995; Stopsky & Lee, 1994).

The initial step in proposing change is to build grass roots support. Those who will be empowered to implement the program should be involved in the early stages of assessing needs, developing the plan, determining what needs to be accomplished, and gathering as many alternatives as possible. In addition, those closest to the change are also in the best position to evaluate it and suggest potential remedies for deficient areas (Hughes & Andreas, 1995).

When identifying a need for change, it is imperative to set realistic goals for the proposed plan of action. Schools need to redefine what a successful action would represent within the confines of human and material resources available, and readjust their goals if the initial stages are met, in order to not waste resources and bring on a defeatist attitude among staff (Donaldson, 1993). Success breeds success and can energize staff members to attempt additional, more intensive changes in

the future. Unrealistic goals surely mean limited success at best and will affect the psyche, energy and support the staff will offer regarding future endeavors.

When setting the stage for change it is also important for the principal to collect as many differing perspectives on issues and solutions as possible, as well as to give ownership of ideas and the process to as many areas of the staff and community populations as one can. As Donaldson (1993) suggests, however, once a group or individual has accepted involvement in each step in the change process, they must also accept responsibility for completion of the process and its resulting proposals. As a change agent, the principal must be a resource-provider and a guide, motivator or coach for everyone involved in order to keep their focus and energy directed toward improvement of the instructional program and fulfillment of the school's mission of what education should look like in their school (Wohlstetter & Briggs, 1994).

One method which may be employed to ensure the change is taking place as intended, is to create checkpoints for periodic evaluation, by the group, to analyze their accomplishments and to redirect their actions if needed (Stopsky & Lee, 1994). It is easier to fix a mistake early in the process of change before a great amount of emotional involvement and resources have been invested. At the pre-designed completion point of the change activity, everyone involved must take the time to evaluate the results. Through the evaluation of failures we can learn and utilize the information to guide future courses of action.

The principal needs to provide recognition for those involved in instituting the plan, encourage them to celebrate their successes, and make sure the results of their work are fully implemented. Through these actions the principal sends the message that he or she believes the changes are authentic and he or she values the time and effort invested by those involved, thereby increasing the likelihood the principal will gain their support and effort in dealing with the next issue requiring an institutional transformation.

Supervision and Evaluation Role

Supervision and evaluation of staff are two interrelated areas which should be utilized for the improvement of the instructional process in our schools. The most direct way to benefit teachers and student learning is to use the evaluation and supervision process to provide constructive feedback and direction for improvement (Frase & Streshly, 1994).

In order to be effective as a means for improving instruction, both steps must be included in the process. Evaluation is a process where strengths and areas for growth are identified in staff and supervision is a process where development is designed based on the strengths or limitations of the individual or staff as a whole (Gorton & Schneider, 1991). Without the remediation or enrichment developed through supervision, evaluation and the identification of growth areas can be frustrating for staff as no action is taken to remedy the deficiency. Similarly, growth through supervision without the direction of evaluation

data can be frustrating or wasted as it lacks focus or is not directed at actual needs (Gorton & Schneider, 1991).

While the principal need not be an expert in all content areas, I think that there are effective teaching behaviors which may apply to all teachers, regardless of their style, and should serve as a foundation from which the teacher and principal could measure growth. In addition to a sense of caring for children and a solid knowledge base in their content area, according to Sheeran and Vermette (1995) effective teachers should include several principles in their lessons: (a) learning is an active process, we learn what we do; (b) evidence that learning has taken place; (c) emphasis on the use of multiple modalities to impact all students; and (d) modeling of proper behavior and expectations. It is through the processes of supervision and evaluation that these areas can be monitored and remediated or enriched.

I believe the function of supervising and evaluating teaching is an area which many principals are mentally and morally devoted to and yet, due to demands of management issues, are physically prevented from succeeding at to the level they would like. More principals will lose their positions due to management concerns than for educational issues, thereby placing management problems at the top of the priority list (R. Decker, personal communication, June, 1994) .

An effective leader will recognize the constraints which are placed on his/her time and identify a means to alter their effect on his/her schedule to overcome these obstacles (Hoerr, 1996). If classroom

supervision is a priority, an instructional leader will make the time to get into the classroom and interact with the staff and students on an instructional basis, finding out what is going on and initiating discussion regarding means of evaluating and improving instruction.

I have experienced the demand management issues such as meetings, discipline or paperwork have placed on my time during my two years as principal. I also realized that if I did intend to make supervision and evaluation a priority in my professional life, I would have to come up with some strategies to get myself out of the office and into the classroom. I try to take care of most paperwork and mail after school hours and schedule my day around mandatory meetings so that I will have time during the day to visit as many classrooms as possible, knowing full well that emergencies may, and will, come up which affect even the best intentions.

I believe that an effective leader must be highly visible in the classroom. Currently I have four floors or areas of the high school and the middle school under my supervision. My general intent is to visit every classroom, in one of the five areas, one day out of every week, rotating the days and times when I visit. By breaking it down this way I am able to spend several minutes every week observing what is taking place in all classrooms so that I have a better sense of both good practices and areas needing improvement. This idea is taken from the concept of management by wandering around (Teschke, 1995; Terry, 1996) which is a method of handling or preventing management or

student discipline by being visible in the classrooms and hallways. Frequent classroom visitations and constant involvement in the instructional process provides the principal with the data needed to provide constructive and timely feedback to teachers regarding classroom proceedings (Frase & Streshly, 1994).

It is through this visible interaction that trust regarding a principal's intent for educational improvements are fostered among both staff and students. By interacting with students and staff, a principal is able to understand much more about the daily operations of the classroom. The successes and limitations which take place in the classroom, due to student or staff behaviors, curriculum, or resources are more readily accessible and understood if trust and communications have been established.

I believe that in order for the instructional leader to maximize the effectiveness of the teaching staff, and the students' educational experiences, a climate of trust must exist where the principal is able to encourage teachers to implement innovative teaching techniques and take educational risks identified through a review of educational literature. The establishment of trust between the teachers and supervisor is essential to the development of a positive collegial relationship.

By utilizing various observation and data collecting techniques, conferencing skills, and knowledge of effective teacher behaviors and learning styles, I hope to demonstrate my competency and sincerity to

teachers, thereby earning that trust. Once allowed into the teachers' professional lives, I would like to provide the time and training to lead the faculty into more reflective self-analysis where I would fit into the role of influencer and facilitator of instructional plans and discussions.

I believe the principal must establish a climate in which staff do not feel threatened by taking academic risks and should be a resource providing information regarding new and effective teaching and learning methodologies, use of technologies and other academic materials. Ultimately, I want teachers to feel confident enough in each other's abilities and in mine, and existing in such a non-threatening environment, that any of us will be able to walk up to another and say, "That's a great idea, what if..."

I have tried to utilize my visibility, modeling of expectations regarding self-growth and communication skills to foster this type of trust in our supervision process. Teachers have commented that our staff development over the past two years has been the most effective with which they have been involved. They have been involved in the decisions regarding what they need in the classroom to increase their effectiveness especially as a part of our transition to the block schedule. Through the processes of evaluation and supervision I have noticed most are in the process of implementing the new methods as part of their growth plans.

Our staff knows through my actions that I have placed a high commitment toward everyone's professional development and are willing

to come to me to discuss ideas for individual or group development. I find it very encouraging that a majority of our staff is willing to take these risks and am very proud of our middle school staff for their role in a self-growth project last year.

We had been discussing how to use the longer class periods to connect learning for students between subject areas. After some research and discussion in the area, the middle school staff decided that they would create a study group dedicated to the study of integrated thematic units. I served as facilitator for the group, collected materials and arranged for recertification credit for the members through our local AEA. We met for several hours monthly after school and I was able to provide release time for key members several times during the year. The project culminated with the knowledge of how and why to use thematic teaching and the creation of a grade-wide unit for the end of the year with plans to expand their use in subsequent years.

What was so exciting about this project was that because the concept was the staff's idea, they were very energetic and due to the commitment of time and energy, ownership developed and they sincerely applied it in their classrooms. In addition, due to middle school staff excitement and the success of the project, other staff have begun talking about ways they could work together to improve their classroom effectiveness and student learning. I continue to see my role as a resource and time provider as well as group facilitator and encourager of ideas designed for growth.

Conclusions

What does all this mean for the principal? Many people desire to become an instructional leader, however, based on their actions, they are just providing “lip service” to the title. I believe an instructional leader is able to view and deal with the unlimited number of daily issues which confront the position while staying focused on the “big picture” of what these issues mean and how they affect the purpose of the school. I also believe the principal as an instructional leader is able to take any of these issues which present themselves and turn the situation into a teaching and learning issue.

While it may be difficult to place our hands on the issue of leadership, we surely can identify the impact of an effective leader; someone of substance who stands for important issues and uses his/her ideas to bring people together to make others' lives meaningful (Sergiovanni, 1994). That impact would be increased student, staff and community development of, support for, and commitment to, the school's mission. Additionally, we would see the creation of a positive and enthusiastic climate facilitating exciting and innovative teaching and learning, which is in turn reflected in increased student achievement. We also interpret the effect of poor leadership resulting in ineffective educational experiences for students. If a person is able to accept less than the best for students, they should not be in the position of principal.

Early in this paper, I wondered why anyone would want to leave the security and comfort of working with children in the classroom to join

the principalship. As I have reflected upon what I see as the roles and responsibilities of a modern, effective principal, I realize that I have not left teaching. Instead I have merely exchanged my daily classroom with 25 students for a building and community classroom with both adults and children to reach. It is through the aspects of getting others actively involved in learning, modeling high expectations and accountability, demonstrating an intense enthusiasm for learning and recognition of accomplishments, and managing an atmosphere conducive to learning that my classroom now is much larger and my skills exposed to positively impact many more people than before. It will be an incredible challenge to accomplish these plans, but the results will be well worth the effort.

After all, "You have to be in it for the kids. You have to love working with the kids, and make sure everything, and everybody, from the board to the bus drivers, is working toward the best interest of the students" (K. Ketelsen, personal communication, September, 1993).

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