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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

The principalship: What does this mean? As I have proceeded through my career as an elementary teacher seeking to become a building principal, I have asked myself this question over and over. What does it really mean to be a principal? Why would I leave the fulfillment of classroom teaching to become a principal?

**A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:**

**A REFLECTIVE ESSAY**

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**The Department of Educational Administration**

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**by**

**John S. Beeck**

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

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The principalship: What does this mean? As I have proceeded through my career as an elementary teacher seeking to become a building principal, I have asked myself this question over and over. What does it really mean to be a principal? Why would I leave the fulfillment of classroom teaching to become a principal?

I have been teaching elementary school for seven years now and have always had the intentions of becoming a principal. Because I truly enjoy teaching and love the interaction with students, I had no desire to become a principal until I grew tired of the classroom. My reasons for becoming a principal were simply to increase my position in the educational system and to obtain an increase in salary. Not until I had been involved with my masters program for a while did I truly realize that my first impressions of being a principal were totally erroneous and that to ever succeed as a principal, a person should not lose his/her classroom teaching enthusiasm, desire, and mentality, but intensify it and learn to adapt it to fit the role of a principal. After clarifying this in my mind, I have begun to see the possibility of becoming a principal not as a loss of my love for teaching but an opportunity to multiply my abilities and desires to meet the needs of so many more children. Becoming a principal has turned from an act of financial security and prestige to a challenging opportunity to expand my love for teaching.

Throughout this paper I will discuss the personal characteristics, knowledge and skills that I believe are needed to become an effective

principal, and my personal professional vision for being an effective building principal.

### **Personal Characteristics, Beliefs and Values**

In order to meet society's new demands for a quality education, I believe a building principal must have an established set of personal characteristics, values, and beliefs to draw upon during the numerous situations that occur throughout a career as a school principal. If these characteristics, values and beliefs are not firmly grounded, a principal's decisions will be inconsistent and will not provide for long term success of the school.

### **Personal Vision**

I believe the first characteristic that an effective principal needs is a vision of what he/she believes should be accomplished in a good school. During an average day, a principal engages in several hundred interactions. These interactions are characterized by brevity, fragmentation, and variety. Attention must be given to the needs of students, teachers, staff, parents, community members, and supervisors at every turn. Without a clear educational plan designed by the principal to help him/her evaluate the significance of these situations and prioritize them, important decisions that need immediate attention will not be effectively made and may become lost in the shuffle. Above all, I believe a principal needs to establish a vision of what makes up a good school in order to effectively deal with the many situations that confront him/her daily.

According to Barth (1990), a personal vision provides a road map that can guide a principal through the hundreds of daily situations in a less random and more thoughtful way. He stresses that without a vision, our behavior becomes reflexive, inconsistent, and shortsighted, but with a vision we learn to look on each hectic occurrence as an opportunity to seek the “good news” in each event and to focus using each occurrence to further our own vision. Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, and Bossert (1982) also found that effective principals had visions of what a school should be, and they attempted to achieve these goals in their daily work. Creating a vision of what you believe is vitally important to the success of a good school is certainly a prerequisite to being a truly effective principal.

### Affective Characteristics

Through my course work at The University of Northern Iowa and by continual reflection of myself, I have come to believe that a truly affective principal must have certain innate characteristics. These characteristics must be sincere and drive a person's decision making, achievement of goals, and relationship with others. Without these I believe the principalship will become a tedious job void of personal commitment or an opportunistic view of challenges which create personal rewards of satisfaction, accomplishment, and fulfillment. In the past, a person could get by being a principal who simply managed the school as any manager did for a business. If things were kept running smoothly, dogs were kept off the playground, discipline

was held in check, materials were ordered, and no one questioned what was being taught or learned, the school was considered to be meeting its obligation. Likewise, the principal was considered to be successful. But with society's concern for the educational accountability of schools, simply having a manager mentality will no longer suffice for those in the role of a principal. "In order to correspond to a different world view about learning, schools, and leading, principals can no longer remain as traditional managers of buildings and the status quo" (Leadership in Educational Administration Development [LEAD], 1991, p. 23).

I believe successful principals benefit from having several affective characteristics that inspire confidence, loyalty, trust, and respect. These characteristics can be summed up by the research of Stoker (cited in Educational Research Service [ERS], 1984). Here, the perceptions and attitudes of 400 teachers toward the personality traits associated with an affective principal were reported. Stoker's report concluded that "kindness, consideration, friendliness, impartiality, patience, pleasantness, calmness (particularly under stress), decisiveness, honesty, optimism, and sensitivity were the personality traits most helpful to teachers as well as students" (p. 56). Caring about the needs of others and working with them in a respectable way, creates an environment that everyone is happy to be associated with.

### Commitment to the Welfare of Children

The cornerstone for any truly effective principal's value system must be a sincere commitment to the welfare of children. I agree with the National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP] (1991) that "a principal must be a caring person who places strong emphasis on the fact that all children, regardless of their cultural/socio-economic background, can be successful students" (p. 4). Without this love for kids and adamantly seeking what is best for their well-being, I believe a principal will not be successful in meeting society's requirements. The action required by society of our educational leaders will be seen as simply stress to conform instead of seeing things as optimistic challenges to improve what is best for kids. According to Sergiovanni (1987) most successful principals accept their responsibilities as a mission rather than as a job. I believe that today's principals must leave the managerial hierarchy behind them and emphasize that schools are not businesses to be managed but places where the benefit of children is the ultimate purpose and goal.

I believe a principal must believe in several other things which he/she should build into the overall climate of the school.

### Positive School Climate

High Expectations. To begin with, a principal should set high expectations for all students and teachers, and him/herself as well. Being seen as the one person most responsible for the success or failure of a school, I believe there is no other acceptable mentality a

principal could have. Without high expectations for all, how can a school accomplish the ever-growing amount of responsibilities that are given to it? Much research has found that a relationship exists between the principal's expectations and student performance. For example, Gersten, Carnine, and Green (1982) found that appropriate expectations on the part of a principal that students can and will learn the curriculum are necessary for effective teaching and learning to occur in a school. Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, and Wisnbaker (1979) also found that if a principal had low expectations for students and did not seem to expect a high level of teacher performance, achievement was low. It will be my goal to establish a climate of acceptance with high expectations for all in order to help ensure success for all children and adults in the schools I serve as principal.

Collegiality. I believe a successful principal should desire collegiality in the school climate. In order to increase the successfulness of teaching children, our schools must have a family atmosphere which includes supporting one another throughout successes and failures. According to Judith Warren Little (cited in Barth, 1990), "collegiality is present when adults in schools talk about practice; observe each other engaged in the practice of teaching and administration; plan, design, research, and evaluate curriculum; and teach each other what they know about teaching, learning, and leading" (p. 31). I agree with Little that when adults share and cooperate, students tend to do the same. As a building principal, I will strive to

create a climate of collegiality by establishing schedules that provide opportunities for teachers to observe one another, plan together, share ideas, and teach each other about good teaching.

Risk-taking. Teachers should not fear taking risks in their attempts to teach children nor should they have isolated relationships with one another. According to Barth (1990), "schools should be places where teachers and principals talk with one another about practice, observe one another engaged in daily activities, share their knowledge of their craft with one another, and actively help one another become more skillful" (p. 513). He stresses that if we want to improve schools, we must risk doing things differently. New and unusual ideas must be viewed not as nuisances or embarrassments, but as signs of life and growth. It will be my goal to create a family climate of congeniality and a comfortable risk-taking atmosphere in the schools where I am principal. By allowing time for teachers to work together and by promoting all ideas that benefit student learning, I can help make these schools cooperative, innovative places to be.

Humor. The one thing that I associate with children the most is humor. Laughing, joking, and having fun is what being a kid is all about. Again, if our true meaning for a school is to do what is best for kids, I believe creating an atmosphere that enables humor will motivate children's natural tendencies of participation and so create a place where they will long to be and ultimately increase our ability to teach them. Humor is strongly associated with learning and the development

of intelligence and it is important to the quality of life. Barth (1990) suggests that, "Principals should make an effort to elicit and cultivate it, rather than to ignore, thwart, or merely tolerate it" ( p. 515). In their study of innovative school teaching, Walker and Goodson (1977) found that jokes between teachers and students, and teachers and principals, mark points at which the boundaries between school-knowledge and action-knowledge are potentially negotiable. Because of my own beliefs and the support of these findings, I believe that laughter is good for schools and for those who inhabit them. I would hope to create a positive school climate in which humor is recognized as an important part of the learning and social environment.

Shared Leadership/Decision Making. I also believe an effective principal should practice shared leadership and decision-making. I do not believe a person can enter the principalship with an attitude of knowing it all and thinking that he/she can tell everyone what to do and single-handedly fix all of the school's problems. I believe principals must reflect the image that they, too, are learners and must continually seek improvement and input from others just as they expect from teachers and students. According to the NAESP (1991), effective principals should value the input of staff, parents, students, and community members and give credit for other's contributions. Thomas and Brewer (1989) suggest:

When teachers, parents, and members of the community shared the decision-making process, and were not just in advisory

positions with no real authority, several advantages accrue, including the following: pupil achievement increases; public confidence in the school intensifies; positive relationships are developed between teachers and administrators and between school employees and parents; negotiations are conducted in an atmosphere of collaboration, trust and goodwill; and concentration on teaching/learning becomes a high priority. (p. 3)

A study done by Phi Delta Kappan (cited in Educational Research Service [ERS], 1984) also reported that principals of elementary schools exhibiting improved academic achievement provided their staffs with the opportunity to share in the decision-making process. Because of society's new demands to be more involved in our schools and the results of the studies mentioned, I believe that effective principals need to collaborate to promote a positive climate. As a building principal, it would be my goal to seek the input of staff, parents, students, and community members in order to share the leadership and decision-making responsibilities of the school.

In order to make a principal's values and beliefs a reality, there are many skills that need to be mastered and many areas of knowledge that a principal must be familiar with.

### Knowledge and Skills

#### Teaching Experience

To begin with, I believe a principal needs to have experience in teaching children. Without having this experience, a person cannot

understand the trials and tribulations that go on in classrooms and be able to assist teachers in the education of students. Principals need to be aware of and understand how their decisions will directly affect individual classrooms, teachers, and students. A principal needs to demonstrate a level of skill and practical understanding that only results from working directly with students in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. "School leaders must be soundly grounded in the teaching and learning processes, in both contemporary and traditional patterns of instruction, and in validated instructional techniques and strategies" (NAESP, 1991, p. 3). Biklen (1983) reports that "principals are seldom seen as respected experts on classroom practice and their leadership skills with teachers is negatively affected" (p. 517). Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) found that teachers' attitudes about a principal's decision making were greatly affected by the elementary teaching experience the principal had. I strongly believe that without several years of actual classroom teaching experience, a principal cannot effectively deal with the many problems and situations that arise in every school. My teaching experiences should serve me well when I enter the principalship.

### Knowledge of and Experience with Curriculum

An effective principal also needs to be familiar with the curriculum at his/her building and needs actual experience working with an elementary school curriculum. There are many times that a building principal needs to know about and be able to work with the

curriculum. For example, Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh (1985) report:

A principal needs to coordinate and monitor the content and sequencing of the curriculum, be aware of major curricular shifts in emphasis, be familiar with curricular materials that might concern possible controversy or challenge, and provide the necessary resources for support of the curriculum. (p. 112)

I believe that a principal cannot effectively deal with the many questions and challenges that occur with administering an elementary school curriculum, without having personal experience teaching within one. I will draw heavily from my teaching background as well as my experiences with curriculum development and implementation when I become a principal.

### Leadership Skills

I believe a principal must have effective leadership skills to successfully lead others to accomplish their educational vision. "Although teachers, parents, students, and the community play vital roles in shaping a school's quality and character, a principal is the one person directly involved in every aspect of the school's operation" (NAESP, 1991, p. 5). For example, a governmental survey conducted by the Select committee on Equal Educational Opportunity (cited in Sergiovani, 1987), came to the following conclusions:

In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. . . . It is his/her leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of

professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. . . . If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their ability one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success. (p. 305)

I plan to exert my leadership abilities by creating a positive school climate that is centered upon doing what is best for kids. I will promote this by being visible throughout the building and by interacting positively with students and adults alike. I desire to gain high expectations for all by first modeling that I demand the best of myself at all times. I also will be present within classrooms to ensure that effective teaching techniques are being conducted and all students are learning to the best of their abilities.

### Judgment

School administrators make many decisions in a day. These decisions may seem insignificant unless they are wrong. Because of this, principals must be well informed and eager to seek input from others in order to make wise decisions. According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), an effective principal needs to be able to do the right things. Knowledgeable principals understand that what is an effective strategy in one situation may cause a disaster in another. According to Kilmann (1985), administrators need to have common sense to know when to make quick decisions and when to identify intended and

unintended consequences and systematically analyze them. Because the success or failure of a school often falls upon the shoulders of the principal, I believe the ability to make wise decisions is very important. As a principal, I believe I will be able to make wise decisions based upon my ability to seek decisions that are best for kids. Maintaining this mentality and keeping an open mind to intended and unintended consequences will ensure my success as a principal who makes wise decisions.

### Communication

A principal must have the skills necessary to communicate to others the goals and mission of the school, as well as the the reasoning behind decisions. People are more likely to support a school if they understand and are made aware of what is going on. Without followers, there is no leader. As stated by Heller (1988), “without the loyalty of the followers, the decision-making skills of the leader will go for naught, information received from the leader may be distorted, decisions made may be undermined, and implementation of activities may be stymied” (p. 155). Because of this, NAESP (1991) suggests an effective principal needs to be able to articulate beliefs persuasively, effectively defend decisions, explain innovations, and behave in ways that are congruent with beliefs and decisions. If and when decisions need to be put in writing, a principal must also write clearly and concisely so that the message is understood by the intended audience. Effective communication skills are a must for a school administrator.

Using them often and correctly will help ensure the success of our schools.

### Leadership Styles

Effective principals need to develop specific leadership styles to ensure support from others. Many studies have been done to determine what leadership style is most effective. One of the pioneer studies on leadership style was done by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (cited in ERS, 1984). Here, groups of boys worked under leaders using different leadership styles--autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. The group's achievement and climate varied under the different styles. Production in the groups with autocratic leaders was slightly higher than in groups with democratic leadership, but aggression, discontent, and dependency were higher also. Boys with democratic leaders were more motivated, original, and group oriented; their work was of better quality. Groups with laissez-faire leaders were least productive and motivated; they operated with a great amount of fooling around and discontent. A study done by Thomas and Brewer (1989), supports these earlier findings. Autocratic leadership by principals created a climate where teachers were usually frightened and emotionally troubled. Principals who used the laissez-faire style of leadership created an atmosphere of the blind leading the blind with everyone groping to find an authority figure. A democratic leadership style produced the most beneficial atmosphere for teacher moral and student

learning. Overall, although no one style is most effective and a principal needs to be able to use each of the styles in situations where they would be most effective, a democratic style which promotes involvement and shared decision-making, is my preferred leadership style.

Principals' leadership styles often have been studied in terms of task-oriented and person-oriented behaviors. Early studies done by Brookover and Lezotte (cited in ERS, 1984) reported that principals in schools registering improvement in student achievement were more likely to be assertive instructional leaders than principals in schools registering declines in achievement. Although agreeing that achievement- or task-oriented styles produced greater gains, Utz (1984) found that the school climate was more positive and the principal's ability to influence change with teachers was much more effective when a balance of task-oriented and person-oriented styles were used. Utz's results showed that a leader who emphasized teamwork, cooperation, trust, and respect, was perceived as the most effective. The work of Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), noted that principals who lead seem to be highly goal oriented and have a keen sense of goal clarity. Their research concluded that successful principals are alert to opportunities or create opportunities favoring their ability to impact what is going on in the school.

According to Hall, Hord, Huling, Rutherford, and Stiegelbauer (1983), successful principals use different styles: initiators--make it

happen, managers--help it happen, and responders--let it happen. Their data suggests that there is no ideal style of principal leadership. Dwyer et al. (1982) found that leadership styles can be affected by situational factors. Their study found that principals were more successful if they used different leadership styles with teachers with varying levels of experience. For example, successful principals who were least obtrusive in instructional matters led faculties who had taught for 10 years or more. The more direct and intervening principals were more successful when they led less mature teacher faculties or ones in which more turnover occurred.

Based upon these studies, it is evident that leadership styles vary as personalities and situations vary. Among them all, though, "effective principals display behavior, values, beliefs, and personal attributes that inspire others to grasp and achieve the school's academic, social, and cultural goals--and thereby assure a meaningful and enjoyable school experience" (NAESP, 1991, p. 6). Sergiovani (1987) also states that "styles should take different forms and shapes depending on problems faced and teacher needs" (p. 310). Being the person directly responsible for leading the school, I will need to effectively direct my staff by using various leadership styles that fit particular situations and personal needs within my school.

### Supervision and Evaluation

Another skill needed by successful building principals is the ability to regularly observe and assess teaching methods and

strategies, with feedback given to teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Decisions must be made regarding assistance and remediation plans, staff development, employment retention or dismissal, and alterations or modifications of the curriculum. The evaluation process should always be viewed as a helpful one aimed at personal or organizational improvement. According to Biklen (1983):

A principal needs to have refined skills in supervising and evaluating because some teachers resent the fact that the person responsible for judging their competence observes them infrequently and knows less than they do about what is going on in their room. (p. 518)

Care should always be taken to follow properly established evaluation policies and procedures and adhere to due process for all evaluations of students, staff, or program. Because I believe the major goal of a school is to ensure that all children are learning, principals must have effective supervision and evaluation skills to make sure the improvement of instruction is a continual process.

### Current Knowledge

In order to maintain a high level of knowledge about educational skills and ideas, I believe a principal needs to keep abreast of correct educational trends. Because there is continual, significant, new information regarding the ways in which students learn and teachers teach, principals must be up-to-date on the current literature and research in education to be effective. The NAESP (1991) reports that

since the dynamics and strategies involved in the education of children are so complex and so challenging, research into their intricacies must be constant. The NAESP believes that principals who fail to keep abreast of the current literature and research in education will soon become distinctly less-than-proficient principals. Gordon and Schneider (1991) stress that a planned program and regular schedule of reading professional journals is a must for administrators serious about maintaining professional growth and development. Barth (1990) adds that if a principal is engaged in learning, staff are more committed to their own staff development and it is beneficial in creating a culture of learning throughout the school. Staying informed and aware of educational improvements is a must if the principal is to effectively fill the role as instructional leader.

Although I believe that skills and knowledge relating to the benefit of children's learning are the most important, managerial skills by a principal are also necessary for the success of an effective school. As mentioned by Lipham et al. (1985), a principal must make sure that the day-to-day functions of the school are well organized and keep the school running smoothly. The organizational structure and administrative arrangement of the school must be set to work toward the school's mission and meet the needs of the students, the staff, and instructional program. If these organizational tasks can be kept in the proper perspective, a principal can pay the necessary attention to other areas such as curriculum, instruction, and evaluation.

### School Community

I also believe a principal must have knowledge of the school community. Such knowledge builds understanding and respect for all people within the entire school climate. A principal must know about the demographic trends and cultural diversity within the school community so that he/she can interpret relevant data to the staff. This information can ensure that an understanding of children's needs and situations are honored by teachers and modifications are made.

America's classrooms have become filled with a rainbow of ethnic, socio-economic, and family backgrounds. Greater demands are heaped on teachers to reach children with widely varied learning styles, ability levels, behaviors, and personalities. Increasing our effectiveness in dealing with such culturally mixed populations is essential. For example, according to a report by Sava (1992) summarizing the results of studies done by others, it was suggested that a child's socio-economic background--as measured by parents' income, education, and occupation--did more to explain achievement than all other school factors put together. Sava stresses that "parents scrambling to make ends meet cannot spare money for apparent luxuries such as children's books, and the sheer struggle for survival can exhaust the child-raising energies of even devoted mothers and fathers" (p. 614). The Streamlined Seminar focusing on Cultural Awareness (NAESP, 1993), stresses that it is important for administrators to discover all they can about the heritage, customs, beliefs, traditions, family structures,

religions, medical practices, and educational systems of the cultures within a school community. This pamphlet mentioned that “while a little knowledge may be a dangerous thing, a lack of knowledge can be tragic” (p. 3). According to Sander and Wiggins (1985), educational institutions should adopt the premises of multicultural education by integrating information about contributions and perspectives of different cultural groups into the entire curriculum and by using teaching strategies that build on different students’ learning styles.

As student populations have become increasingly diverse in terms of culture and ethnicity, it has become necessary for administrators to possess a knowledge base, a set of attitudes and values, and a philosophy of education that is multicultural. Principals should encourage staff to make the school a center of acceptance for all cultures by arranging activities designed to include all families and communities.

Based upon the information and findings listed previously, being an effective principal involves many skills and areas of knowledge. At first glance, they seem overwhelming and it appears to be impossible to implement them all effectively. However, I believe if an administrator desires to be a life-long learner and holds strongly to the philosophy that schools are ultimately for the benefit of children, these skills will be a welcome challenge and enthusiastic responsibility.

Through the process of clarifying my values, beliefs, and philosophies about education, and identifying the skills and knowledge

areas that I believe are needed to accomplish them, I have developed a vision of what I believe is important and should occur in a good school. My vision statement is based upon these values and beliefs and, most importantly, centered upon the philosophy of doing what is best for kids.

#### Personal Professional Vision

In my envisioned school, a positive climate exists based upon trust, collegiality, shared leadership, encouraged risk-taking, humor, and high expectations for all. My personal vision statement is as follows:

I envision a good school as a place where dedicated adults--teachers, principals, parents, and community members--work together to create an environment where all individuals are eager to attend and able to learn purposeful skills and ideas which will help them succeed in an ever changing world.

According to Behrens (1989), the most important job of a principal is to create a vision and a sense of purpose and then to share that vision with others in the organization. He believes that the vision must have quality that stirs the consciousness of others and induces their commitment through sharing it as their own purpose. Behrens (1989) stresses that "the symbolic leader, after all, stands for something that is important and that gives meaning and purpose to the seemingly mundane and routine work of others in the school" (p. 27). I have confidence that my vision will suit these purposes.

Creating a vision that stirs the consciousness of others and induces their commitment through sharing it as their own purpose would be an ideal situation for any incoming principal. But what if a principal's vision doesn't agree with the feelings and aspirations of the faculty or community? According to Duke (1990), "meaning often is what distinguishes visions that inspire from those that inflame" (p. 26). To be effective, he believes a vision must be meaningful to those affected by it. As Fullan, Bennett and Rolheiser (1992) state, "principals do well by developing collaborative visions rather than simply imposing their individual visions" (p. 13). Glickman (1991) believes that a principal should be responsible for making vision-building a collective exercise. He states that "a principal should strive to be not an instructional leader, but rather a leader of instructional leaders (p. 7). Schein (1985) believes that it requires great sophistication on the part of school leaders to express their own values without being imposing; to draw out other people's values and concerns; to manage conflict and problem solving; to give direction; and to be open at the same time. I agree that in order to obtain support for our own visions, principals need to develop the ownership of others. I plan to do this by encouraging teachers to identify personal visions from which a shared vision and mission statement can be cooperatively developed within the school.

## Conclusion

What does it mean to be a principal? Throughout this paper I have attempted to answer this question. It has not been easy nor short in scope. It has caused me to search hard and long throughout many sources and materials, seek information from several places, ask many questions from numerous people, and most importantly, reflect upon my own beliefs and values.

Based upon the information given in this paper, I believe being a principal is a very demanding job which requires tremendous skill and knowledge. Not only does it require professional knowledge and skill in the educational areas of teaching and child development, but it also requires effective human relation skills as well. Being a principal demands a well rounded individual who is personally confident and able to accept many responsibilities. He/she must be an assured leader who is able to make sound decisions, yet not so confident that he/she does not value or respect the input of others. Successful principals have a vision of good schools and they collaboratively work with others to accomplish that vision. They are never satisfied with the status quo, yet patient enough to work toward their goals even when resistance is great. I believe an effective principal is basically a teacher who is concerned about the well-being of students and teachers and works adamantly to assist their development and needs. Effective principals long for success, but give the rewards and praise to their students and teachers. Effective principals work hard, yet gain

satisfaction in knowing they are doing things that are in the best interests of kids. Effective principals desire to make their schools exciting places to be.

What is a principal? Overall, I believe it is someone who truly wants the best for kids and is sincerely committed to taking the risks necessary to make a difference in our schools. Who is an effective principal? In the years to come, I plan to be on the list.

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