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A preferred vision for administering secondary schools: A reflective essay

Joseph G. Malsam
University of Northern Iowa

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A preferred vision for administering secondary schools: A reflective essay

Abstract

As a classroom teacher for several years, I've had the opportunity to develop what I believe to be a fair and equitable learning environment. I have a real liking for what I've done as a teacher, a respect for my students and an understanding of the proper student-teacher relationship. I've worked with several student-teachers and have attempted to pass on learned skills to them through their on-the-job experiences. Through the years these experiences have helped me continue to learn and grow as a classroom facilitator. I am now at a crossroads of professional growth and have determined a potential change in course is probable. So, here I sit pondering my vision for my personal administrative practices.

A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Administration

and Counseling

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

by

Joseph G. Malsam

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Dave Else

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Date Approved

Adviser/Director of Research Paper

James L. Doud

4-19-94

Date Approved

Second Reader of Research Paper

Robert H. Decker

4-19-94

Date Received

Head, Department of Educational
Administration and Counseling

As a classroom teacher for several years, I've had the opportunity to develop what I believe to be a fair and equitable learning environment. I have a real liking for what I've done as a teacher, a respect for my students and an understanding of the proper student-teacher relationship. I've worked with several student-teachers and have attempted to pass on learned skills to them through their on-the-job experiences. Through the years these experiences have helped me continue to learn and grow as a classroom facilitator. I am now at a crossroads of professional growth and have determined a potential change in course is probable. So, here I sit pondering my vision for my personal administrative practices.

I've always felt self-evaluation to be extremely difficult. Yet, as our studies in administrative course work progress, I think I am beginning to understand a bit more about what is truly important for the year 2000. What can I do to assist schools in becoming effective learning environments that create opportunities for the community to grow? What I see as being necessary are administrators who don't necessarily have all the answers. Administrators need to know the right questions to ask, and take the time to understand their community's needs and desires. Administrators should assist the community in shaping a vision for their schools. Today our schools are challenged from so many diverse directions: disintegration of the nuclear family, blended families, single parent families, unwed mothers, dynamic neighborhoods and the graying of our population. Many of these people can't understand why the students of today can't be taught like they were! Our changing teaching staffs is another model of diversity. The need to draw strong qualified teachers into the profession is a

constant struggle. The demands for successfully proven staff development programs to keep all informed of current trends and needs won't disappear. Communities we live in continue to be dynamic. Immigrants that bring customs and traditions different from our own are becoming the majority of citizens in many areas. The schools and thereby school administrators are going to need to take leadership positions in meeting the needs of these diverse communities.

It is clear to me that people in each school district in this country must make their own vision for their schools. School leaders must apply the accumulated research and direct their districts into the 21st century. I believe this can be done by using the proper formula: a team approach, partnership, and incorporating a community school concept. Communicate to the community that their schools are for everyone: students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and business leaders. Motivate and engage these interested people to assist in developing a vision for their district. Enlist experts who can give a variety of suggestions. Select what fits. Needs and vision will be different for an inner city school that is more of a war zone than a rural district which is concerned about survival of a different sort. Each district will need to find its own effective way to educate all students to be part of a global economy. This concept is one on which I truly can hang my hat.

As states develop standards for all students to meet, our educational system will be tested. As Seeley (1984b) put it,

...if we don't find a way of actually achieving this result, the new standards will become a crueler form of screening and pushing people out

of educational opportunities, or they will be rescinded or watered down in the name of practicality. (p. 386)

The United States no longer has an economy based on industrialization. More and more opportunities will be created in the next decade which are in the service based sector of the job market. School districts will be demanded to evaluate their programs, to be sure that students have the necessary skills to participate in an economy that is not based on industrialization.

This approach, with all diverse groups of a community pulling together for common goals, must have insightful administrators. The experiences I have had as a successful coach, I believe, can be of great value to me as a school administrator. I have had multiple experiences through my years which have directed me in what it takes to have a successful team. My personal approach centers on the concept of "team above self." Basically this means that sometimes personal gain or success must take a secondary position to team success. In schools, this may mean teachers spending free time with students who need extra help. Parents will need to become active participants in their children's schools through volunteerism. Business leaders must be sympathetic to the financial resource limitations of districts. These same business leaders may be asked to participate in cooperative partnerships with their local schools helping to bring the demands of the real world into the classroom. "Team above self" is not an easy philosophy to participate in, especially as people in our society portray so many times how to "protect one's own backside." Think how exciting it could be to draw from such a diverse resource of people who should care about what happens in their schools, and bring them together as a team for success.

People working as a team need to capitalize on successes. Start small and literally graduate to big successes together in partnership. As an administrator I must be the master communicator and motivator. I've helped athletes to understand how to maximize their potential. This can also apply to stakeholders in schools through continual self-evaluation of programs, working to be their best. I must be a compromiser, without losing touch with the vision of the district. I've always felt differences in successful people and people that have not been able to reach their full potential may be the inability to identify the "little" things. This includes many items such as a positive work ethic, discipline, and dedication to complete a task. It can also be as simple as a friendly greeting and a smile. I believe, to be successful, expectations must be raised. Don't allow the people at the top to compromise their work ethic. Demand the people with lowered expectations to rise toward the top, not the other way around. Midwest quality of life is good. But the troubles of the world are our troubles, too. We must understand our global responsibilities.

As a future administrator, I must know my school and community, and understand their culture. I must recognize what will work, what will not. I must be a leader for a "community school partnership" concept. I must require caring involvement of students, parents, teachers, and community leaders. It is everyone's school--a community school.

In the booklet "An Introduction to Community Education for Wisconsin," community schools are defined as,

...schools which provide a facility for total community use by citizens of

all ages in the community including: (a) regular educational programs for school age children; (b) expanded and enriched, year-around programs for youth; (c) programs for pre-school age, adult and senior members of the community; (d) procedures which encourage involvement of the community solving its own problems and improving the quality of life within the community; and (e) leadership in the delivery and coordination of community programs and services. (p. 6)

It will be a challenging task to draw all of these groups together to develop the potential of a school district to be at its peak.

To develop this community school partnership concept, educational leaders must maintain professionalism with democratic authority. As Sergiovanni (1991) stated,

Decisions should be made on the basis of professional judgment. Put it in a way that allows for the democratic participation of important players. These players need to seek a kind of equality that is built on candid and open professionalism, that may result in the administrator's knowledge being considered privileged and that of teachers, parents, business leaders, and the general public as subordinate. (p. 526)

The commitment of a shared vision for a community school is a challenge I am prepared to undertake. When all players are given an opportunity to share in this vision to form partnerships, with a team approach, a successful school climate can be achieved. This vision must include a redefining of educational roles. Seeley (1986) stated, "As long as everyone's roles and relationships remained defined by the current political and bureaucratic accountability

system, genuine partnerships between teachers, parents, students, and community will be hard to find" (p. 82). The involvement and commitment of teachers, parents, business and community activists, students, and administrators will be described in the following pages. Developing this vision, this community concept, this partnership notion, will require input from all players. Each community must be given opportunities for input as to how these concepts will be implemented into their community schools. To accomplish the community school partnership, I must work with the differing groups of the community. I must create environments that foster a free flow of ideas, makes suggestions, finds solutions to mutual problems, and develops partnerships. Implementing this team approach to community schools will be challenging and rewarding.

As a building leader, I will encourage teachers to take risks to develop strategies for student growth and learning. I will encourage the faculty to assist each other through mentoring programs and develop confidence in themselves to become more effective teachers.

During the summer of 1993 course work, the opportunity was created to undertake a LIFE STYLES INVENTORY, (Human Synergistics, 1989). It was interesting for me to discover that the area I scored highest on was Humanistic-Encouraging. This type of manager/principal gains satisfaction through seeing others grow. In general, this style has a focused concern for the growth and development of people. Such leaders tend to appreciate the strengths of others and believe in other's potential for improvement. As a coach, these principles are what I truly believe in and practice. By motivating an athlete to work to the

maximum to be his/her best, instead of "what's in it for me approach," success has been more consistently achieved. Working with coaches and players who set clear goals, maintain real involvement and ownership in the program, and maintain the concept of team above self, we all work for the same end--success. Success is defined as people becoming caring, involved, socially aware, productive community members.

As a building principal, allowing teachers to draw on their expertise, experiences, and willingness to learn new strategies and take risks, the same success can be achieved when the classroom doors close. According to Ann Leonard (cited in Sergiovanni, 1992), principal at Copperopolis, California, schools should, "use shared leadership with a heavy emphasis on following vision rather than a person" (p. 42). Leonard continued,

I've watched a metamorphosis occur. Those less-than committed staff members who I thought needed closer supervision than I could manage are now working harder and putting in more work hours because of a shared vision we have developed together. The staff is not working harder and longer because I'm a charismatic leader or because I'm using a carrot on a stick. These people are working toward realizing a goal that they believe in; their internal motivation takes much of the burden of motivation and management off me. That gives me more time to devote to finding the resources we need to realize our dream. (p. 42)

Teacher's Role

Teachers may be the most significant players in the community schools partnership concept. They have tremendous power and potential for positive

influence on future community members. The more positive the school experience, the greater the chance for graduates to be successful community participants. As the idea of teachers as professionals becomes more accepted, power, manipulation, and management will give way to leadership, and shared values. Seeley (1982) put it this way, "Teachers will have to be seen as the most important links in the educational process, next in importance to the real producers of learning, the students themselves" (p. 43).

Since the mid-1980's, many school administrators, particularly principals, have started to emphasize their role as instructional leaders and to view themselves once again as principal teachers. In many schools, it is becoming fashionable once again for administrators to teach. The emphasis on building school cultures and enhancing collegiality and on a renewed commitment to shared decision making suggests that administration and teaching may be coming together as a single common profession, bonded by a shared commitment to teaching and learning but allowing for differentiated roles (Sergiovanni, 1991).

Teachers have a special obligation to help construct the center of shared values. This center defines certain morally held responsibilities and obligations of teachers. Teachers need to be committed to do their best to make the community work and work well. This means teachers work diligently, practice in exemplary ways, keep abreast of new ideas, help other members of the learning community to be successful, and do whatever else is necessary for the community to function and flourish (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Parent's Role

My leadership of the community school will require constant input from all players. In the previous section, the important role of teachers was discussed. As first educators, parents play a significant role in the educational development or lack thereof in their children. Educational research has continued to focus on the importance of the family as educator. It is now being recognized that much of what a child needs, both before and during the school years, is learned in the family (Seeley, 1982). With the changing family structures of today (single parent, unwed parents, etc.), schools will be looked upon to serve in a variety of social and educational capacities. As a school leader concerned and interested in parental involvement and understanding societal changes in family structure, I must be constantly aware that adjustments will have to be made for changes in family patterns, if the school is serious about parental involvement. A serious question of concern that deals with parental involvement is: can poor, single, and working parents be partners? According to Seeley (1986), the answer is unequivocally "yes". "Surveys have demonstrated that single and working parents care as much as other parents about the educational success of their children, and are open to helping them be successful as long as they know what to do and how to do it" (p. 84). This does not mean I can expect working parents to volunteer for a reading program or tutoring program at 10:00 a.m. on any given school day.

I must keep an open line of communication with parents. Rich (1988) stated, "Communication between the home and school must occur frequently and on a regular basis. It is imperative that parents feel that they are

welcome in the schools and that importance is placed on their ideas and concerns. Rather than feel threatened by this type of parental input, schools should seize the opportunity to build strong links with the community by using the comments, suggestions, ideas and concerns presented by parents to develop the best possible educational program for their students. (p. 9)

Researchers Brandt, 1989; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Rosado, 1990 (cited in Ramos & Santos, 1991), have found that American parents, no matter what their socioeconomic status and cultural or linguistic differences, want their children to experience educational success. They also understand that to do this it is vital that they collaborate with educators to meet their children's needs (Ramos & Santos, 1991).

How can parental partnerships be implemented? If a school system is to be successful in this partnership, what can a district do to work toward assured success? I don't think there is any question that connecting families to schools will take some transition. As a building leader, this new partnership will be a learning process but the rewards will be worth the efforts. I realize mistakes will be made. Yet the final outcome, student success, will be worth the time and effort to accomplish this common goal—the preparation of our students to be productive citizens. If a school system is to be successful in getting parents actively involved in the educational process, it is necessary to identify ways of making parents feel welcome within the school system. As a high school principal, I will implement a September open house for parents and community members to become more acquainted with our school. At this open house parents

will be introduced to a program of involvement in their child's educational development. A home-study packet of information outlining our volunteer program, the process for parent-teacher conferences, tutoring information and a second copy of the activities calendar will be available. We will use this open house to encourage parental involvement.

It is imperative that efforts be made to identify the characteristics of strong parental involvement programs so that these may be replicated (Ramos & Santos, 1991). A recent research project of Southwest Education Development Laboratory, identified essential elements which characterize strong parental involvement: written policies, administrative support, training, a partnership approach, two-way communication, networking, and effective evaluation activities.

According to Williams and Chavkin (cited in Ramos & Santos, 1991), parental involvement programs which utilize a partnership approach are more likely to be successful in encouraging community participation in school affairs.

An example of administrative support for parents comes from Houston, Texas. The technique involves six weeks of training in the use of home computers for parents and students, with the opportunity at the end of the training for families to borrow a computer for two weeks of home use (Seeley, 1984a)..

Training of parents must go beyond a "one-time-only" basis and should occur over time and focus on developing partnering skills. Examples would include improving parent/teacher conferences, supporting school learning at home, and working as joint decision makers with educators. Parents can improve the interaction at home with the child by supporting and encouraging the completion

of homework. This can reinforce learning in the home (Ramos & Santos, 1991). This type of parental involvement will be a top priority in our school. I know from my own experiences that encouragement can serve as a positive reinforcer, especially for students who sometimes need a redirecting of attention!

Williams and Chavkin (cited in Ramos & Santos, 1991) next emphasize a partnership approach for consideration. Superintendent Billy Reagan, Houston Public Schools, through the school's Operation Fail-Safe project (Seeley 1984a) argued, "...parents and teachers must be partners in a child's education" (p. 387). Operation Fail-Safe instituted a variety of programs including workshops to help staff members and parents learn their new partnership roles. People in the Houston School System have made a commitment to work in partnership. This team approach is exciting for me to read about. It is one thing to theorize team work and partnership, it is another to be able to implement a positive realistic program for the school.

Two-way communication implies a give and take approach. Again in the Houston Schools, Operation Fail-Safe has worked to enrich the parent/teacher conference, to make it a real planning session for both parties to help the student become a successful learner. Home study packets for parents to assist students with reading and math have been developed. Rich (1988) stated,

Parent involvement must no longer be defined as involvement only in children's schooling, meaning meetings and time spent at school. Not many parents, especially employed mothers, can participate in this way. Effort must be redirected to involve families in children's education beyond the school setting. (p. 90)

Klein (1993) stated, "For 25 years, almost every serious study has found only one variable that has a significant impact on the educational success of children: their parents" (p. 21). Pell and Ramirez have found that children are likely to develop positive attitudes toward school when their parents display interest in their school experience (Ramos & Santos, 1991). As a building leader, I believe it imperative for teachers to be trained through in-service programs to capitalize on the partnership development with parents, school, and community. This training and support for teachers in how to work within this new partnership will have much to do with the success of the total community school concept. I will seek out schools that have implemented this approach successfully and use their experiences to build a program that will meet the unique needs of our building.

Parents and teachers working together should become the norm rather than the exception. Student success can be enhanced through cooperation. The greatest gift a school can offer a community is to provide an appropriate and challenging education for its children. This can become more significant when both parents and school personnel join together in a team approach to work toward achieving this goal (Ramos & Santos, 1991).

Community's Role

As I approach this section of my paper, I am most excited about the prospects of community involvement. I envision two major ways to involve the community: (a) business partnerships and (b) volunteerism. Although I envisioned these separately, research has shown an overlap. This is exciting.

We are in a trend where a small percentage of our population has children in schools. As a result of this trend, schools need to seek ways to gain support within their communities. School leaders will have to focus on services and offerings that appeal to other than those who are directly benefiting from the K-12 programs (Kindred, Bagin & Gallagher, 1990). One workable way to enlist the support of non-parents is through a volunteer program. Volunteering is a way for the community to become aware of the schools' needs, problems, and accomplishments. Invariably, volunteers are boosters of the schools' programs (Gray, 1984).

What can a volunteer program succeed in accomplishing? When the New York City school system announced that 7,000 high school seniors would be denied diplomas because they were not able to pass the new competency requirements, one principal stated, "To educate everybody is an impossible goal. Some will never learn how to read and write no matter what you do" (p. 386). Some considered this as just one more form of educational cruelty. Fortunately, this was not the end of the story for some of those who were not able to meet the requirements. Enter the New York City Volunteer Program participants who after six weeks of tutoring, were able to assist 90% of the 400 students tutored to pass the test (Seeley, 1984a). Seeley stated,

How was it that the tutors were able to accomplish what the classroom teachers were unable to do? The tutors were able to make use of two factors that regular teachers usually can't supply to all students.

Personal attention, care, and encouragement of a one-on-one relationship, and the symbolic approach of partnership. The message, the

community outside the classroom cares. The community as a part of the team cares about the success of the students, expects them to succeed, and will help them succeed. (p. 387)

Raising expectations, community involvement, and successful contact, are experiences that need to be replicated.

In January of 1993, I attended a conference in Rochester, Minnesota. As the conference was winding down, I sat in the lobby of one of the hotels just to gather my thoughts and begin to synthesize on paper my experiences over the previous three days. As I sat, a woman sat near me and struck up a conversation about the conference. As our conversation progressed, I inquired about her position and involvement with the conference. She told me she was the coordinator of the volunteer bureau for the Rochester Public Schools. I was intrigued by this concept, having observed hundreds of people throughout the city tagged "volunteer." She told me that she has a committee which assists people in individual buildings in establishing a network of volunteers for their school. As this lovely woman wished me a safe trip home, my mind began to imagine the positive elements of a volunteer program. Volunteers can help to improve student and teacher productivity. Volunteers can work to improve student achievement.

Gray (1984) described how volunteerism is taking on a new sophistication. Good volunteer programs, to assure accountability, assign workers to a task in the classroom or elsewhere, only after the task's expected outcome has been defined and some system has been established for determining how well task objectives were met. This step of the organizational process can bring

accountability to the volunteer program and begin the evaluative process. Teachers who were tired or "burned out," according to Gray, received a "shot in the arm" by way of their contacts with professionals, scientists, mathematicians, lawyers, doctors, architects, and journalists, who came into schools as volunteers. Teachers commented on how these contacts "reinvigorated and stimulated" them to begin learning again.

Another consideration was how this informal in-service program was at no cost to the district. Volunteers have persuaded many companies to open their laboratories or business offices so students can become familiar with equipment beyond the budget reach of the school system. Volunteers can also extend the reach of the paid staff. Through individual tutoring of children or working in small groups, volunteers can reinforce the lessons taught by the teacher and allow the teacher to move to other activities (Gray 1984). There can also be other rewards. According to Gray,

The volunteer's free service also can be valued in terms of student achievement. Volunteers working with students one-on-one or in small groups, supplement regular class activities in reading, mathematics, science or art. They often see students gain several levels of competence in a school year. Teachers say this type of achievement growth happens even if the volunteer is simply a friend or listener who raises a child's self-esteem and confidence by paying attention and showing interest in their accomplishments. (p. 18)

As a coach, I know that a word of encouragement, a recognition of improvement, the raising of expectations, can work in symphony to increase

self-esteem, improve productivity, and assist in growth. These concepts also hold true as a classroom teacher and an administrator who is excited by the involvement of more than just parents, teachers, and students in the educational process. Many volunteer programs draw heavily on people rarely seen in schools before the establishment of volunteerism. Retired people are among the best volunteers (Gray, 1984).

One major concern I have relative to the establishment of a volunteer system of assistance for the school is, where to start? Networking with other systems that have successfully implemented programs is one way to begin. Another is to contact The National School Volunteer Program, Inc. This is a membership organization of local volunteer programs and individuals. It provides management training and technical assistance to schools and local communities in forming effective partnerships for volunteer activity (Gray, 1984).

Business' Role

The involvement of community resources also includes some form of business partnership. School/business collaboration needs to go beyond the bank president reading stories to first graders, or department store personnel visiting selected classrooms twice a year. Louis Gerstner (1990), CEO RJR Nabisco, Inc., discussed the "decade of renewal" of which we are all a part. We Americans need to mobilize to meet the economic and social challenges that will determine our global position in the 21st century. He stated, "Our success will depend on a public education system that equips every child with the skills needed to succeed in a complex, competitive world" (p. 16).

As an administrator, what does this mean to me? What can schools do to provide experiences to prepare our students for the work world of the 21st century? One key to me is implementing programs that can bring partnerships into our schools and allow our students to move from our "hallowed halls" into real life working environments. To accomplish this, I believe business partnerships have the capabilities to satisfy these needs. John Clendenin (1990), CEO of Bell South Corporation stated, "Business further must share with educators its own strategies for instilling these same skills and values in its employees and for evaluating their achievement. It is not enough for us to talk generically about 'problem solving' and 'critical thinking'" (p. 20).

At Aiken High School, Cincinnati, Ohio, a successful school business partnership has been formed. The General Electric Foundation has funded a program to assist Aiken students to strive for college placement. The foundation's experience is that grants and volunteers can serve as a boost for morale and a catalyst for citizen action. Aiken, is one of several foundation school partnerships, each engaging local community service organizations, cultural institutions, and universities, to assist each schools' commitment to increase its college-going rate. At Aiken, more than 100 GE mentors have helped increase the number of college-bound students from 3 to 63 in three years. The goal now is to double that number, and the effort will be funded by a new one million dollar GE Foundation initiative (Ostergard, 1990). Ostergard commented, "The common element in each GE-funded school is the involvement of company volunteers. We've learned that mentors and tutors help raise students' aspirations, reinforce self-esteem, and overcome negative peer attitudes about education" (p. 19).

Just outside of Chicago, the community of Beneseville is looking to "create an environment where the entire community serves as a campus" (Mecklenburger, 1992, p. 284). The town of 17,000 wants students to learn in a variety of settings and the school to become a lifelong learning center. This partnership is geared toward, active learning, teacher as facilitator, higher-order thinking skills, relevance, and hands-on-learning. A governing body has been established including the village manager, a day-care director, a pastor, a pharmacist, some local business presidents, parents, students, teachers, and administrators to oversee the community campus (Mecklenburger, 1992). This is an exciting program that I envision other community schools grasping.

By involving business in schools through partnership, both parties can see advantages. Business can exercise their social responsibilities and improve their community image. They can influence the spending of tax dollars on education. They can contribute directly to programs assuring a continuing supply of well-educated future employees and they can earn tax breaks (Gray, 1984).

In our school, business partnerships will be organized through the school board. Interested businesses will be contacted by the board secretary to attend an informational meeting in October concerning the potential for a business partnership with the school. The partnership begins with volunteers coming into our building to share career options and opportunities with students. These or other volunteers will then begin tutoring groups of students during available school time. These tutoring contacts will then develop into student contacts within the business. These businesses will generate real world situations for

students and emphasize necessary abilities needed for future employees. Each partner will establish a vested interest in the arrangement between the school, the business, and the students.

This can definitely be a win-win situation for schools and businesses. The community school concept, with a team approach can pull all of the community together. It has worked successfully in many communities. I believe it can work in our community too.

Administration's Role

As I envision the administration of the community school partnership, the principal will be the building leader. Because the students are those in-line to benefit most, the responsibilities associated for/with student success need to be out of the hands of the principal and into the care and nurturing of parents and teachers.

In previous sections of my paper, I have demonstrated the important role of teachers, parents, and the community-at-large in constructing a community school partnership. Principals who realize that their job is to foster productive learning relationships will not be threatened by influential/powerful teachers and strong student-teacher-parent-community partnerships (Mecklenburger, 1992).

I, as a principal, will be most concerned with understanding each players role in the community school system and how each can work together to make our school better. Seeley (1984b) quoted Harold Leavitt of Stanford University, "The managing process is an interactive flow of three variables: pathfinding, decision making and implementation" (p. 10). Seeley feels that in educational

leadership there has been an overemphasis on implementation and not enough attention placed on pathfinding and decision making.

As an administrator of the future, one of many things that has become crystal clear, is that all involved in schools, students, parents, teachers, community members, and administrators must find a common supportive path. If the path is clear, the implementation along the road should be smoother. I do understand that troubles will exist along the way. By using a collaborative approach to solving problems, confidence from all players can be gained and solutions found and implemented. In pathfinding or what I would refer to as a vision for schools, it is imperative that I, as a principal, as a building leader, be prepared to listen to everyone who might find solutions to problems regardless of their title or credentials. This should not imply listening that is not critical or accept anything anyone proposes. It simply means I have to expect leadership to come from many sources.

This leadership is different from what was needed in 1964 or even 1974. The principal becomes the leader of leaders, rather than the leader of followers (Seeley, 1984a). John Elliot (cited in Sergiovanni, 1990) concluded, "...reflection and improvement are the likely results when teachers derive their own theories of practice from studying their teaching. Supervision, in this mold is a process of helping teachers to understand, test, and reconstruct their own theories on teaching" (p. 248).

In my coaching, I've found success in a similar pattern. I instruct/show players what to do and, most importantly, how to do it right. Next the players practice these taught skills so they can be developed into learned skills. Our

program refers to this step as "coaching to the point of reaction." Skills are practiced in a variety of settings, each setting being more progressive than the previous, always working on improvement for game situations. Along the path, I am constantly requesting input from players, seeking improved ways of accomplishing successful tasks. This allows for ownership from the players. It is their team, their game, their time. This system will bring success in different ways, some of which have nothing to do with the won-loss record. Individual improvement, group improvement, and ultimately team success goes beyond the won-loss record.

The path of education can, as has been noted, travel the same road. Community school partnerships can assist in bringing success to students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community-at-large through the framework of partnership. All must bring a shared sense of purpose to the "game". Success depends on this shared sense of purpose. As Gerstener (1990) concluded,

America's education revolution will come from the personal involvement parents, teachers, principals, and the community-working together to remove barriers of change...It's up to school administrators to stimulate the creativity of their teachers and enlist local and national business to help make our schools the best in the world. (p. 16)

This is a tremendous challenge for the administrators of the future, that includes me. As a building leader, I must assist the school I lead to find its vision for the future. The goals that are determined to be most important need to be shared and prioritized for future implementation.

Students' Role

I believe the major purpose of the community school partnership is to direct student experiences that will prepare them to be cooperative workers, problem solvers, critical thinkers, clear communicators, lifelong learners, and socially aware and actively involved in communities. Schools need to create opportunities for students to practice these outcomes. Historically, the massive, once unsurpassed system of publicly administered schools has failed; failed individual students, failed families and communities, and failed the nation and its future (Seeley, 1982). Students might be the secret weapon that can change the whole picture. They do have less involvement in the old ways of operating schools. They have a vested self-interest in making school more satisfying. They can be idealistic. Students might be the ones to not only implement but lead the way to partnership (Seeley, 1986). They can be the change agents.

Seeley (1986) referred to students needing to be "tuned in" to the school and its purpose. If they are not "tuned in", how can they learn? The challenge for any school is to locate the right station to tune students in to learning. Learning is hard to define, hard to control, hard to be accountable for. One reason for this is that learning is ultimately produced not by the school and the teachers, but by the students, by work they do in their own heads. Students have come to be seen not as equal players in the school system, but as "clients" or as "targets" of school services. As a result, students, and so learning, are often left out of the equation for school improvement (Seeley, 1984a).

Teachers and students need to work together to develop successful learning relationships. Partnership can help to develop successful learning relationships. Two strategies that have been successfully demonstrated in schools, that place responsibility for student learning on the students, are peer tutoring and cooperative learning. Research shows that peer tutoring is one of the most effective and cost-efficient activities a school can use. It places significant responsibility for students to assist students in a cooperative partnership. It assists students in practicing communicative skills. It allows them to develop sensitivity to other's needs, and turns away from the notion that students don't need to actively participate in the learning process. Teachers can also observe and interact with student directed learning strategies (building a better mousetrap). Maybe students have a better way to teach some material.

Cooperative learning engages students in helping each other learn and changes the classroom from a source of disruption and apathy into resources for learning and success.

Another strategy that can assist students in developing a sense that someone cares is through business partnerships. Businesses and individuals come into buildings as student helpers, not just taxpayers and voters (Seeley, 1986).

These strategies do redirect and refocus the school's attention. They make learning the primary goal of not the teacher or the school, but the student as the prime producer, and that is most desirable. Schools need to be more aware of the relationship between services and students. Students are not isolated individuals within brick and mortar. They are members of families, peer groups, and community. Productive educational relationships must take into account the

variety of relationships that students experience. Seeley (1984a) refers to this as a "educational partnership". I refer to this as a part of a successful community school partnership.

As a building leader, I will direct teachers to use peer tutoring and cooperative learning strategies in their classrooms. I will use in-service programs to make information available to the faculty and encourage the attending of seminars in these areas for further teacher support. I will encourage teachers to take some risks by implementing different teaching strategies to work at improving student achievement in their classrooms.

Conclusion

An African proverb states, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," (Thompson, 1991). With respect, I can adjust this proverb to state, "It takes an entire community to educate our children." This, to me, is what the community school partnership is envisioned to be. My approach to community involvement is through an active partnership of teachers, parents, business, administrators, and students. This partnership approach has many advantages. One immediate advantage is the assistance it provides in escaping the dilemma of whom to blame for educational failure. The old service-delivery concept of education makes families either victims or villains. When learning does not take place, the client can blame the provider, and the provider can blame the client. Arguing about blame is unproductive for both (Seeley, 1982).

Another advantage of my community school partnership is the sharing of responsibility for educating the children of a community between the home, the school, and the community. This sharing creates the strong potential to involve

community members who no longer have children in the school system. By involving these people in the partnership, they will develop a sense of ownership in the system and a further understanding of the needs of the school. This group of citizens makes up the major financial support base for the schools. It is best to have them allies rather than adversaries.

Teachers, principals, and volunteer coordinators in schools across the country have seen and felt the success of educational partnership. The success extends to their classrooms, schools, and programs (Seeley, 1986). In Utah, workshops are held to promote "Home-School-Community Partnership." Within these workshops the importance of involving parents and the community at large in students' learning is emphasized. In Alaska's Effective Schools Movement, everyone works together to get the job done. Students, staff, and parents take part. As is concluded, learning takes teamwork. The New York State Board of Regents is at work on a plan to promote school/community partnership throughout the state (Seeley, 1984b).

While the above examples encompass the "big" picture, the concept and philosophy of community school partnerships can begin in one building of one district within one state. To me that is what truly is significant.

The challenges and concerns confronting education, including family structure, technological explosion, business down sizing, and the modernization of our industrial society, all will need to be addressed through our educational system. I believe, a community school partnership concept can assist our children to approach the 21st century knowing that there is a network of groups and people to assist them. Teachers and parents will have to work harder to

motivate students. Communities will have to work harder to create a "learning society." Students, will have to work harder because they are our future and the prime producers of learning (Seeley, 1986).

This partnership is based on the premise that the students are the most important element of the formula. They must understand the significance of a strong educational base, that has high expectations for all students to succeed. So, what's my role in this complex network we refer to as schools? My role is to facilitate the community school partnership, through a visionary approach that includes all of the players being part of the game. I will step back, cut lose, take risks, be the leader who fits the puzzle together framing the picture of a successful school partnership. What a wonderfully challenging world/school this will be.

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