



Educational Records Bureau

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the Evaluator

Research Says Effective Schools Have Quality Leaders

In this article:

♦Significant Relationship between Leadership and Achievement

♦School leadership not exclusively principal leadership

♦Success is more likely when teachers have vested interests in decision making

School leadership is the hallmark of effective schools everywhere. Both practice and professional literature bear this out. For example, researchers at the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) have identified 21 leadership responsibilities that are significantly associated with student achievement.¹

The meta-analysis of research studies over the past 30 years conducted at McREL by Waters, Marzano, and McNulty² for McREL quantified the long-held belief by educators that instructional leadership

is a defining characteristic of successful schools.

The Spring 2004 issue of The Journal of the Alabama Best Practices Center³ provides additional evidence of the impact that school leadership can have on the performance of all stakeholders in a school and the community around it. And school leadership is not synonymous with principal leadership. A more accurate summary of research findings and experience reveals that, "highly effective principals are successful because they know how to create many highly



Average student achievement can increase by up to as much as 10 percentage points!

effective leaders within their schools." ⁴ Those who think that principals have to be the exclusive leaders in a school overlook the impact that emergent leaders can have on teaching and learning. Teachers can be and often are the greatest source of sustained improvement in a school.

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News from ERB

CTP 4 Constructed Response Questions to Change in 2005-06!

Those schools using the Constructed Response (CR) option in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics on the CTP 4 should take notice when ordering for 2004-05 that this will be the last year for Form 1 of this section. CR Form 2, featuring a new, but fully equated, set of constructed response questions in reading and math, will replace the current form

of the test in 2005-06 for the CR section only. This has no impact on the reuseable multiple-choice test booklets.

Online Presentations Available

If you are interested in information about the CTP 4 or WrAP and would like to explore an online presentation option, go to our Web site at www.erbtest.org or call 800.989.3721, ext. 308. See page 6 for more information!

School Leadership (cont from page 1)



A principal's leadership style can affect student achievement

That's because stakeholders who have a vested interest in the decisions that affect them are more likely to accept the changes those decisions entail and work to make the outcomes successful. At the same time, reactions they have to the change and sug-

gestions for improvement are likely to be honest and objective when they take part in the decision making from the outset. A principal who stands alone and prescribes ideas for a school must often "sell" the idea to wary staff. On the other hand, "a shared vision based upon the core values of participants and their hopes for the school ensures commitment for its realization." ⁵

Applying Research to Practice

Let me share an example from my own experience as a high school principal several years ago. At the time, the school was considering a change in its master schedule and I asked the two assistant principals who were in charge of building the school's master schedule to form a committee to research ideas for a new schedule. Although I encouraged them to include on the committee teachers, students, and parents, since all of them had a stake in the outcome, the initial committee consisted exclusively of representative volunteers from the different departments in the school. The Schedule Committee, as it was called, gathered research on various schedules, including block scheduling. When I sought updates on their work and inquired about including students and parents, my assistants responded that the teacher members were concerned about enlisting additional members from these two stakeholder groups too soon. They worried that the teachers would not be as open or honest in their deliberations if students and parents were on the committee in the early discussions and were privy to any disagreements. As it turned out, one of the committee members devised a modified block schedule that satisfied all of the criteria for a new schedule established by the committee when it began its

work. With their research on master schedules all but complete and their allegiance to the proposed schedule nearly unanimous, the teacher committee was now ready to invite students and parents to join the group.

As you can well imagine, the new members of a committee that had now been in place for the better part of a year felt that their inclusion was merely to "rubber-stamp" what was by now a foregone conclusion. Resentment and distrust soon surrounded the meetings as new members saw themselves as outsiders whenever they posed a question about the research others had long since been through or offered suggestions for the new schedule. Frustration built up quickly as the meetings were dominated by the original teacher members while the others sat silently as bystanders.

Things did not go much better when the Schedule Committee was ready to present its recommendation to the entire faculty. Many of the faculty felt disenfranchised even though most departments were represented on the committee. Others felt uninformed about the deliberations that led to the conclusion for a new schedule and voiced their disapproval. As the grumblings of the teachers spilled into their classrooms, student unrest about the new schedule started to escalate. The students in turn shared their upset with their parents. Predictably, P.T.A. meetings became highly charged as parents felt a momentous decision about a new school schedule was imminent without sufficient opportunities to examine it by those who would be affected by it. The outcome in the above example was predictable from the outset.

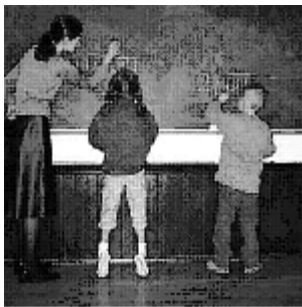
"The ability to set high expectations while building a professional partnership with teachers is the hallmark of today's successful principal"

The more a principal relies on him/herself (or a very small group) rather than the larger school community, the more the dependency behaviors by the staff will increase. Moreover, not only does

School Leadership (cont from page 2)

the principal remain the chief problem solver for the school, but the decisions become the principal's decisions, and no one else accepts ownership for the results. Therefore, I told my assistants that the committee's recommendation would be put on hold. I knew how difficult it would be to adopt a new schedule with the many unforeseen complications that were likely to occur. Without sufficient stakeholder input and support, the new schedule would be viewed as "the administration's schedule," and the ensuing problems would be "the principal's problems," exactly as the literature described it.

That knowledge led me as principal to disband the Schedule Committee, restructure it with administrators, teachers (some from the original committee volunteered again), students, and parents combined from the outset with a renewed charge that included periodic reports to stakeholder groups so everyone would know what was happening before any final recommendation was delivered.



Teacher input can be critical to school leadership

While the conclusion of the newly formed Schedule Committee was ultimately the same as the original group's recommendation, the reaction by the stakeholders was completely different. Even though some did not agree with the decision, their objections were heard and considered. More important, however, the expanded committee "owned" the decision and

served as emissaries to their constituents so as principal I did not have to defend the decision alone. Similarly, the problems that accompanied the new schedule were "our" problems, and the solutions became a group effort. Leadership theory and school practice had truly blended together.

Characteristics of Schools With Balanced Leadership

Quality schools don't just happen. They are the result of thoughtful professionals working toward a collaboratively developed and well understood mis-

sion. Author Linda Lambert says that schools with "high leadership capacity" have these characteristics:

- ♦Principal, teachers, parents and students are skillful leaders.
- ♦Shared vision results in program coherence
- ♦Questions are posed and data is analyzed to inform decisions and practice
- ♦Broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility are reflected in roles and actions
- ♦Reflective practice leads consistently to innovation
- ♦The school has high or steadily improving student achievement⁶

"Teachers can be and often are the greatest source of sustained improvement in a school."

If schools are to achieve their desired outcomes, they need leaders who are prepared to work collaboratively with all who make up the school community. In schools where people are respected and their opinions are valued, there is usually a healthy interdependence among the stakeholders. When those ingredients are in the mix, the principal can more readily point out when a job is not getting done without experiencing a backlash. On the contrary, what used to be hard-working teachers saying, "I'm doing the best I can with what I have," is now transformed to a group of professionals who know that they can solve any learning problems in the school. When an "us vs. them" attitude is eliminated, students are the beneficiaries. That is why "the ability to set high expectations while building a professional partnership with teachers is the hallmark of today's successful principal."⁷

References

- 1 Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning. (2003). "Balanced Leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement." Aurora, CO: Waters, T., Marzano, R.J., & McNulty, B.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 The Journal of the Alabama Best Practices Center. "Working Toward Excellence." (Spring 2004): (4)1, 2, 8-9.
- 4 Ibid., p. 1.
- 5 Ibid. p. 2.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.

ERB Welcomes Dr. David Clune



Dr. David Clune

ERB is happy to welcome Dr. David Clune as its new president as of August 16, 2004, replacing Dr. Thomas Maguire upon his retirement after seven years at the helm. Dave brings a wealth of relevant experience to his new role. For the past 22 years he served as the superintendent of schools at the Wilton Public Schools in Wilton, CT, where Dave lives with his wife MaryLynn and their four children. The Wilton schools have been users of the CTP and WrAP for many years, thereby giving Dave valuable first-hand experience with ERB tests and services. As a member of ERB's Board of Trustees from 1997-2003, Dave brings vast knowledge about the company, its mission, and the challenges for the future.

Prior to his work as superintendant, Dave served as a principal of Lexington High School in Massachusetts for seven years and at Western Junior High School in Greenwich, CT for two years. He has previously served as a Housemaster at Greenwich High School, Teacher-Leader at Eastern Junior High School in Greenwich, and a graduate assistant in the School of Education at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, where Dave received his Ph.D. in secondary education in 1971. Dave's career in education began as a junior high school teacher of mathematics and science.

This lifelong commitment to education serves to demonstrate how patience and perseverance combine to yield huge success. And what acclaim Dave has received during his 40 years in education. Among his many honors, Dave was named "Wilton Citizen of the Year" by the Wilton Rotary Club in 2003. In 2001 he was

awarded the "Connecticut Superintendent of the Year" by the American Association of School Administrators and went on to become one of the four finalists for title of "National Superintendent of the Year."

Local and national honors have come to Dave from many sources for many years. He has been recognized for his leadership ability, communication skills, knowledge, character and compassion. For example, the Suburban Schools Superintendents, a national organization of 100 public school superintendents, elected Dave president in 1999-2000. He was president of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents in 2002-2003. As co-chair of the Tri-State Consortium, a group of 35 exemplary school districts in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, Dave advanced the mission of the group to improve education for their students using rigorous assessment principles and tools. In addition, Dave formerly served as president of the Headmasters' Association, a national association of 100 independent and public school Heads.

"Dave brings vast knowledge about the company, its mission, and the challenges for the future"

As you can see, Dave has been associated with and enhanced quality education in the school districts where he has worked throughout his illustrious career. His remarkable and varied background as an educator and leader makes Dave a great match with ERB, a company known for its "quality assessments for quality schools." Add to that his reputation as an open and accessible person, and you can expect to find the level of availability that our members have grown accustomed to from the entire staff at ERB over the years. Please join us in congratulating Dave and welcoming him as the new president of ERB.

2004 Annual Conference Update . . .



Randy Cohen

Our October conference will be here before you know it! We are very excited about this year's program, and about all the wonderful activities and offers we have planned. The highlight of the ERB conference is, as always, our outstanding list of speakers and first-rate sessions. We are proud to have Randy Cohen, "The Ethicist,"

giving our keynote speech on Thursday morning. Near the end of his session, Mr. Cohen will answer ethical dilemmas provided by our audience! If you would like to suggest an ethical question, please email it to randi_rosenberg@freeagent.com.

We are thrilled to welcome Donna Corwin to speak at our conference. Ms. Corwin is the bestselling co-author of "Time-Out for Toddlers," and most recently, "Pushed to the Edge: How to Stop the Child Competition Race so Everyone Wins." She will help to illustrate some of the dangers of excessive pressure on children, and how to distinguish between helpful pushing and harmful pressuring. Her articles have appeared in such publications as *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Denver Post*, *GQ*, *Shape*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Parenting*. She also writes a monthly advice column for the *Los Angeles Family Magazine*.

Another welcomed speaker will be Richard Phelps, author of "Kill the Messenger: The War on Standardized Testing." Mr. Phelps will describe the current testing debate, the players, their interests, and their positions, as well as explain and refute many of the common criticisms of testing. Mr.

Phelps is a member of the Board of National Advisors, NYC HOLD, and the editor of the "In Defense of Testing" series that appeared in EducationNews.org.

Back by popular demand, we will be offering sessions led by the knowledgeable ERB staff on test interpretation, curriculum guidance, and best-use practices for the CTP 4, WrAP and ISEE. This year will also feature a panel session led by Dr. Val Sandberg on linking state standards to the CTP 4.

In addition to our outstanding sessions, we have a number of wonderful social and networking opportunities for you. This year's Broadway offering is

Wicked, the smash hit of the 2003-04 season. Don't miss Idina Menzel's Tony-award winning performance as the Wicked Witch of the West in this prequel to *The Wizard of Oz*.



The cast of "Wicked"

While you are in the city, be sure to take advantage of ERB's Convention Delegate Pass Program. You can use your conference badge to save at restaurants, museums, and even on transportation. And speaking of restaurants, don't forget to sign up for our Wednesday night Networking Suppers! If you are coming into the city early for the conference, and have no dinner plans, why not get together with some of your fellow attendees? Suppers are organized into groups according to interest. The groups consist of Admissions, Teachers, and Administrators. Space is limited at these suppers, so be sure to sign up early!

Friendly Reminder . . .

If you need help to complete either the OSS or the Group Header when ordering your score reports, we encourage you to call the CTP 4 Operations Office in Princeton, New Jersey for assistance (866-683-2335). Please remember that your requests for scoring as indicated on these scannable documents will be read and recorded by a machine. Inadvertent marks and omissions can result in costly reruns and scoring delays. When in doubt, call for assistance.

Special Note: Review your score reports as soon as they arrive since answer documents are destroyed 45 days after reports are shipped to schools.

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ERB is pleased to announce the availability of online presentations to our members. This new service will be of most help to those member schools that are not currently serviced by an ERB test consultant.

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Benefits:

- ♦Receive information in a timely manner at your convenience;
- ♦Save time and money by avoiding scheduling conflicts, delays and travel expenses;
- ♦Review the presentation prior to faculty meetings for answers to common questions;

- ♦Speak directly with ERB staff and have your questions answered during the presentation.

Arranging a Presentation

ERB has made it easy for you to inquire about an online presentation in a variety of ways! If you are interested in learning more about how an online presentation may benefit you, please contact Dr. Sid Barish at (800) 989-3721 x 308, or the test consultant for your area listed in the ERB catalog and website. You may also visit our website to fill out an online form to process your requests quickly and easily, or send an email to presentations@erbtest.org for a quick response!