Introduction

Leadership for Excellence in Learning

Each time we begin work on a new edition of this book, our first task is to ascertain the extent to which the theory and practice of school leadership have evolved since we last assessed the field. In the eight or nine years between editions, change is inevitable in a field that seems to be in perpetual reform mode. Of course, school leaders drive much of this reform themselves, because as conscientious professionals who care deeply about their schools, they continually seek to improve their practice.

An assessment of the field's progress during the past decade leaves no doubt that several external forces have been the major drivers of change. Much of the current reform push comes from states and the federal government, whose mandates can suddenly rearrange educators' priorities.

Demographic shifts and economic cycles also leave telltale marks on schools, and leaders must cope with the accompanying challenges. Even new technologies can add to the principal's set of responsibilities, of course with the promise, seemingly never quite fulfilled, that they will make the job in some way easier.

Those factors alone, however, cannot account for the extraordinary degree of change in this field since the previous edition appeared in 1997.

The most significant trend in school leadership over the past decade—and the reason for this book's new subtitle—has been the coalescing of attention on what is now unmistakably the profession's top priority: the need to improve student learning. For all of today's educational leaders, but especially principals, the work centers on enhancing learning opportunities for all children.

THE MISSION IS STUDENT LEARNING

The current emphasis on student learning owes much to the efforts of a variety of stakeholders, acting with a single-mindedness seldom before seen. Perhaps the most significant agent of change has been the standards for principals that the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) approved at the end of 1996. The theme of the

standards is evident in the first of seven ISLLC principles: "Standards should reflect the centrality of student learning" (Council of Chief State School Officers).

The consortium's chair, Joseph Murphy, stated that the "goal has been to generate a critical mass of energy to move school administration out of its 100-year orbit and to reposition the profession around leadership for learning." Through the consortium's partnerships with states, professional associations, universities, private firms, and other groups, the standards have become widely embedded in principal preparation programs, licensure, professional development, and evaluation. According to Murphy:

> The consortium maintains that the Standards for School Leaders—and the intellectual pillars on which they rest—provide the means to shift the metric of school administration from management to educational leadership and from administration to learning while linking management and behavioral science knowledge to the larger goal of student learning.

Another agent of change arose in 2001, when the federal government, following a decade of efforts by states to toughen academic standards, imposed its own blueprint. The No Child Left Behind Act, in the U.S. Department of Education's words:

> embodies four key principles—stronger accountability for results; greater flexibility for states, school districts and schools in the use of federal funds; more choices for parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds; and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been demonstrated to work.

In a synthesis of research on educational leadership, Kenneth A. Leithwood and Carolyn Riehl note the changed landscape of educational accountability:

> Pressure is on actors at all levels, from students themselves to teachers, principals, and superintendents. In these times of heightened concern for student learning, school leaders are being held accountable for how well teachers teach and how much students learn.

Amid all this daunting pressure, present and prospective school leaders at least can take heart from another development in recent years. While school leaders are performing their jobs in a constantly changing environment, researchers from one end of the country to the other are observing, writing, and publishing what they see. In this way, the knowledge base on school leadership keeps expanding, and school leaders gain progressively more guidance for their mission.

The body of knowledge about school leadership in years past has been known for conflicting theories and gaping holes in evidence to support effective practice. Today, there is still much that we do not know, but research is becoming a more reliable guide for leaders piloting their schools through uncertain skies. (Chapter 2, "The Effects of Leadership," summarizes the conclusions of several syntheses of this growing body of research.)

Additional help has come from professional associations, which have been aggressive in developing more specific leadership standards and other resources to help their members turn their schools into effective learning organizations. For example, the National Association

of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), in *Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do,* states, "Student learning must be at the center of what schools are all about and should drive all the decisions school leaders make."

The National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP's) detailed field guide, *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, shows its members how, through collaborative leadership, to increase the academic rigor of their schools while at the same time personalizing the learning environment for students.

The dramatic and ongoing changes in the field of school leadership briefly sketched here meant that this book had to change in step with the profession and offer content suitable for the job's many current challenges. Consequently, this edition incorporates much more than the usual revisions. This new and expanded edition draws from the growing knowledge base on educational leadership to give school leaders—and those preparing for the role—insight and wisdom they will need to meet the challenge of helping all their students learn.

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Everyone knows how necessary and important leadership is, but agreement becomes more tenuous when people begin to discuss *what* it is. Literally hundreds of definitions of *leadership* have been offered. Behind each definition, in turn, is a different theory about the source, process, and outcome of leadership. As Malcolm J. Richmon and Derek J. Allison explain, leadership has variously been thought of

> as a process of exercising influence, a way of inducing compliance, a measure of personality, a form of persuasion, an effect of interaction, an instrument of goal achievement, a means for initiating structure, a negotiation of power relationships or a way of behaving.

Linda Skrla and her colleagues note that several words and phrases stand out when defining leadership: "purpose, direction, individuals, groups, culture and values, shared strategic vision, priorities, planning change." These concepts, they say, point to several conclusions:

- If leadership is occurring, someone is following. You can't lead in an empty room.
- Leadership is purposeful and directional. It does not move aimlessly.
- The direction of leadership is always based upon priorities. Even good things must sometimes be set aside in order to pursue what is most important. Choices must be made.
- Significant leadership results in change.
- Effective leadership rests upon the integration of the ideas of the organization's stakeholders. (Skrla and others)

Some definitions differentiate between management and leadership. Carl E. Welte defined *management* as the "mental and physical effort to coordinate diverse activities to achieve desired results" and included in this process "planning, organization, staffing, directing, and controlling." In contrast, he saw leadership as "natural and learned ability,

skill, and personal characteristics to conduct interpersonal relations which influence people to take desired actions." John P. Pejza expressed the difference in simpler terms: "You lead people; you manage things."

This emphasis on personal relations occurs in many definitions of leadership. Fred E. Fiedler, Martin M. Chemers, and Linda Mahar noted that leadership includes "the ability to counsel, manage conflict, inspire loyalty, and imbue subordinates with a desire to remain on the job." Speaking more plainly, former President Harry S. Truman said, "My definition of a leader in a free country is a man who can persuade people to do what they don't want to do, or do what they're too lazy to do, and like it."

One of the best definitions of leadership was suggested by George R. Terry, who called it "the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group goals." A simpler and yet somehow more elegant way of putting the same definition was offered by Scott D. Thomson when he was executive director of the NASSP: "Leadership is best defined as 'getting the job done through people.'" This definition means that two things are necessary for effective leadership: accomplishment (getting the job done) and influencing others (through people). These two are intertwined. An ability to get things done makes leaders more influential.

Studies have shown that teachers are influenced most by principals who have "expert power," a term that simply means competence. Teachers are less influenced by the principal's power to punish, by his or her status or position, or even by the power to reward than by their perception that the principal is an expert, is competent, and can get the job done. One goal of this book is to give school administrators more of this expert power by helping them become more expert at what they do. A theme that recurs in many chapters of this book is that the leader's competence is most clearly manifest in the ability to inspire and empower others.

Competence alone, however, is not a sufficient qualification for leadership. Walter F. Ulmer, former president of the Center for Creative Leadership, advances the notion that leaders are able to gain, through ethical means, the followers' consent to be led:

> Leadership is an activity—an influence process—in which an individual gains the trust and commitment of others and without recourse to formal position or authority moves the group to the accomplishment of one or more tasks. (as cited in Kenneth E. Clark and Miriam B. Clark)

Leaders' influence over others, then, is a product of, in addition to competence, their integrity—or, more broadly, their moral foundation. Thomas J. Sergiovanni defines *moral leadership* as a form of stewardship that motivates people by appealing to their values. Moral leaders do not seek benefit for themselves but instead for the common good.

By their principled behavior, leaders earn trust and inspire loyalty. This is a vital lesson in an age when scandals and broken trust in corporations, financial institutions, and government agencies make daily headlines. Schools, certainly as much as any other institution, deserve ethical leadership.

For one last perspective, we turn to Marshall Sashkin and Molly G. Sashkin, who argued that the kind of leadership that matters transforms organizations and the people who work in them. It does this by instilling self-motivation and confidence in people and empowering them to develop their own competence to lead. Thus, leadership expands

throughout the organization and becomes the possession of not just an individual but of the organization as a whole. This transformational leadership, the Sashkins say, drives and sustains high performance.

In our view, a definition of leadership in schools should include the influence, competence, moral, and transformational dimensions. These are the critical processes and values that guide how leadership functions. Still missing is one more element: The definition should state the desired end to which leadership aspires.

Here, then, is the definition of *school leadership* on which this book is based:

> The activity of mobilizing and empowering others to serve the academic and related needs of students with utmost skill and integrity.

This wording may lack the simple elegance of some of the definitions of generic leadership noted previously, but it expresses well the key concepts of this book. Our intent is to lay out the knowledge, values, structure, mission, and skills necessary for a leader to inspire and empower all members of the school community to work together toward the goal of an excellent education for all students.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

The exercise of leadership involves people: a leader or leaders, a follower or followers, and the interaction of their personalities, knowledge, skills, and moral predispositions. It also involves a place: a group or organization, with its particular structure, culture, resources, and history.

Because so many variables of personality and context go into the workings of leadership, it is not surprising that people have observed and studied leadership from many different perspectives. Theories and models of leadership abound.

So the reader might know what to expect from this book, we set forth here our own assumptions about the nature of leadership in schools. At the same time, consistent with this book's method of information analysis, we cite many others who have written on the subject.

Leadership Expresses Itself in Varied Ways

Good leaders operate out of a clear understanding of their values, goals, and beliefs and also those of their followers. Leaders both influence and are constrained by the organizational context. Leaders may, with good results, use any of a variety of styles and strategies of leadership, including hierarchical, transformational, and shared (or participative), depending on their reading of themselves, their followers, and the organizational context.

Because leadership is multidimensional, affected by variables in both people and environment, it follows that there can be no single recipe for leading any organization, let alone an institution as complex as a school. Leithwood and Riehl stated, "Leadership functions can be carried out in many different ways, depending on the individual leader, the context, and the nature of the goals being pursued."

As Bradley Portin put it, in a report by the Center on Reinventing Public Education, "Individual styles, school-specific challenges, politics, and governance issues all produce different leadership stories in different schools."

For this reason, school districts should not "treat principals as easily interchangeable commodities" (Portin). Different leaders have different skills that suit them for different types of situations. Portin recommends that districts place principals in schools whose needs match the principals' experience and skills:

> A school with a stable staff, but a weak instructional program, may do well with a principal who was an experienced teacher. On the other hand, a school with high teacher turnover and a lack of confidence needs an institution builder who can set direction and motivate people. A school that is misusing its funds or wants to expand its physical plant may need someone who specializes in management.

One conclusion we can draw from the variable nature of leadership—and the needs of different schools for varying kinds of leadership—is that leaders who can draw from a wide repertoire of skills and styles of leadership will be at a premium in their school districts. Flexibility is an important quality in a school leader.

Schools Need to Be Both Managed and Led

If education executives had to choose between being regarded as leaders or as managers, we suspect most would pick the former. They know their schools need high-quality leadership, and they are confident they can supply it. In addition to this very practical reason, the thought may be in some executives' minds that more prestige comes with wearing the mantle of leadership.

Richmon and Allison speculate that leadership is receiving more attention in education today in part because of its positive connotations. Leadership, these authors point out, is seen as a dynamic activity associated with terms such as *honor*, *charisma*, *loyalty*, *respect*, and *greatness*. Administration, in contrast, is commonly thought of as having to do with the perfunctory tasks of running organizations and institutions.

In the press to develop strong leaders for schools, what must not be overlooked is the need for the right balance between good management and competent instructional leadership. A deficit in either one of these clusters of skills will be to the school's detriment. Here is how E. Mark Hanson described the damage that can be done by strong leaders who are weak managers:

> In education we often see this individual generating grand ideas about sweeping reforms or innovative new programs. He or she effectively whips up enthusiastic support on all sides. Unfortunately, ideas and enthusiasm are not enough, and not long after execution of the changes is attempted, the vision begins to crumble. By that time the strong leader, more often than not, has a better job somewhere else and is creating a vision for another audience. Meanwhile, those who were left behind are in deep water.

In actuality, much of what passes for leadership in schools is really management. This should come as no surprise, because school administrators are trained primarily as

managers, not leaders. Schools must comply with laws, establish consistent policies and procedures, and operate efficiently and on budget. But schools also need, in the words of Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, "purpose, passion, and imagination"—the products of a leader. "Particularly in times of crisis or rapid change," they said, "we look to leaders, not to managers, for hope, inspiration, and a pathway to somewhere more desirable."

Many principals would like to be relieved from some management duties to free time for involvement with instruction, and several alternative organizational arrangements have been proposed to do just that. But principals cannot use their management load to excuse a lack of instructional leadership. In today's climate of accountability, student learning is the number one priority, and true leaders will find a way to get the job done.

As NAESP's report on standards points out, principals must learn how to balance the roles of leader and manager:

> The trick is not to do more, but to rethink how and why you're doing what you're doing. And to keep a simple concept in mind: Everything a principal does in school should be focused on ensuring the learning of both students and adults.

Most school districts do not have the resources to hire for each school one person to manage and another to lead. So, by necessity, those who are trained to manage must also learn to lead.

But is it realistic to expect every school principal to do it all—both manage the school's many operations and lead the instructional program with the proficiency it takes to comply with world-class standards? No, said Vincent L. Ferrandino and Gerald N. Tirrozi, executive directors of NAESP and NASSP, respectively, in one of their paid columns in *Education Week.* They detailed the multiple expectations of school leaders in this era of school reform:

> Yesterday's principal was often a desk-bound, disciplinarian building manager who was more concerned with the buses running on time than academic outcomes. Today's principal must concern herself with not only discipline, school safety, and building management, but also must act as an instructional leader who knows how to use research and testing data to improve teaching methods, student achievement, and classroom management. Today's principal is a visionary leader who spends significant time working with faculty and interacting with students and rarely sees her desk. Today's principal coordinates staff development and community engagement. Today's principal wears far too many hats.

That school leaders continue to perform such varied duties with confidence and composure in these turbulent times should merit our respect. Perhaps they also deserve to be cut some slack. Michael A. Copland, writing about the myth of the "superprincipal," argues it is not reasonable to assume that every principal can live up to "*every* expectation that falls out of our literature-based conceptions":

> As certainly as there are a small number of .350 hitters in baseball, there are undoubtedly a small number of extremely gifted school leaders (or would-be leaders) who possess all the knowledge, skills, abilities, characteristics, and attitudes portrayed in various scholarly conceptions. However, we squander enormous

potential resources by setting the bar so high. Not only are we likely to fail to attract such rare persons, but they will never exist in the numbers necessary to staff the principals' offices of even a small percentage of America's schools. Rather, most of those positions will be filled by mere mortals who will fail periodically, who will recognize that they won't be able to do all, and who shouldn't be expected to do so.

The expansion of this book from the previous edition's 15 chapters to this edition's 19—to address the new skills and knowledge required of today's school leaders—itself testifies to the point Ferrandino, Tirrozi, Copland, and no doubt others are making. Not only do principals, especially those new to the job, deserve to be cut some slack, they deserve consideration by state and federal policymakers, who perhaps could better foresee the consequences of their mandates. And they need ongoing support from school districts, which must give principals resources and training in proportion to the higher expectations of them.

Until a way is found and universally applied to lighten principals' loads, the training must aim to elevate principals' skills as both managers and leaders.

Leadership Makes a Difference

After interviewing 60 corporate and 30 public-sector leaders, Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus concluded, "The factor that empowers the work force and ultimately determines which organizations succeed or fail is the leadership of those organizations."

Sashkin and Sashkin analyzed research from the business, medical care, and education sectors and found "clear evidence that transformational leadership matters." There are no guarantees, they acknowledge, but

we know roughly how much of a difference transformational leadership makes. In terms of bottom-line measures, our conservative estimate is that transformational leadership accounts for between 5 and 25 percent of performance results.

Every organization wants strong performance, but the value of transformational leadership does not end at the bottom line. An all-important additional benefit, the Sashkins say, is that "such leadership makes a practical, meaningful difference in people's lives." Helping people find meaning in their work lives is the ultimate reason transformational leadership matters.

Also commenting on the human benefits of leadership, Clark and Clark of the Center for Creative Leadership state, "The exercise of leadership accomplishes goals more effectively than the usual management methods of trading rewards for performance." Much of the power of leadership lies in its ability to inspire commitment, capture the imagination, and earn trust.

Summarizing propositions derived from research on leadership in corporate, military, governmental, and educational settings, the Clarks point to a range of effects: "(a) profitability of cost centers, (b) performance of work units, (c) quality of work output, (d) reduction of stress in the workplace, (e) worker satisfaction and morale, (f) reduced absenteeism, and (g) reduced accidents."

The positive impact of principals' leadership gained validation in the 1970s when researchers found that instructionally effective schools were led by principals who set clear goals, participated in the instructional program, and made it clear to teachers and students that they were expected to excel.

One reviewer of the early studies done on effective schools, Ronald Edmonds, found leadership to be a key factor. In his summary of the "indispensable characteristics" of effective schools, Edmonds gave highest priority to "strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can be neither brought together nor kept together."

As the research database expanded over the years, other reviewers affirmed the finding that effective schools have effective leaders. "Principal leadership can make a difference in student learning," said Philip Hallinger and Ronald H. Heck, who summarized a decade and a half of empirical research. By influencing their schools' policies and norms, teachers' practices, and other school processes, principals indirectly affect student learning. The studies Hallinger and Heck reviewed consistently point to one leadership behavior in particular that is tied to student achievement: "sustaining a schoolwide purpose focusing on student learning."

Leithwood and Riehl's synthesis of research, referred to earlier, led them to conclude, "Leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers' instruction." For more evidence that school leaders can make a difference in student achievement, see Chapter 2, "The Effects of Leadership."

Findings such as these provide the logical basis for holding school leaders accountable. After all, if leadership were shown to make no discernible difference in the performance of schools, it would be grossly unfair to sanction leaders when their schools fail to perform.

There is an important corollary to this observation, however. To be justly held accountable, principals must have control over those things that research has shown can make a difference. Portin explains that the type of governance structure school leaders work under can either free or constrain their ability to lead.

Portin's in-depth interviews with principals, vice principals, and teachers in 21 schools led him to conclude, "For principals to succeed, their authority and responsibility have to be inextricably linked." District rules and policies, legal decisions, and collective-bargaining agreements can restrict the ability of school principals in traditional governance structures to exert leadership in critical areas. Said Portin:

> In traditional public schools, principals were sometimes unable to exert much authority over leadership in areas like instruction (because the district drove the curriculum) and human resources (because of centralized recruitment and hiring).

If constraints such as these keep principals from being anything more than a middle manager, they cannot rightly be expected to make a difference, and their schools will be at a loss because of it.

There Are No Substitutes for Leadership

Devolution of authority and responsibility remains a vibrant trend in the nation's school systems as well as in corporations and governments. We expect this trend to

continue, as more schools establish site councils and more teachers, parents, and members of the community participate in school decision making. As in past editions, several chapters of this book recommend procedures for site-based management, distributed leadership, and community engagement.

None of these more inclusive governance processes replaces the need for leadership. Granted, the leader's role might change from a directive style to an enabling or facilitating style. But someone in a leadership position, presumably the principal, still must perform several essential tasks. A leader or leaders must be able to set direction, create networks, build teams, develop people's skills and empower them for action, resolve and creatively use conflicts, build consensus on the school's vision, secure resources, and, especially important, focus attention on the goal: student learning.

What about schools where teachers attain a high level of professionalism and form self-renewing learning communities? These teachers initiate their own improvement strategies, reflect on their work, share their insights with one another, and collectively enforce high standards of performance. Such schools, it may be assumed, can operate on autopilot. They don't need a leader, only someone to manage the buses and bells. In actuality, rather than having outgrown the need for leadership, strong professional communities require a commensurately higher caliber of leadership.

Self-renewing schools would appear to prosper with leaders who can "enhance the collective ability of a school to adapt, solve problems, and improve performance," which is the definition David T. Conley and Paul Goldman give for *facilitative leadership.* In addition to performing the tasks noted previously, facilitative leaders possess the abilities to channel teachers' energy toward common goals and stimulate teachers' readiness for change.

Schools going through the process of restructuring seem to require this same kind of facilitative leadership. Paul V. Bredeson interviewed principals of 20 schools where teachers were taking on more responsibility in curriculum decisions, professional development, community outreach, and other school-improvement activities. Many of the principals experienced a transition in their roles from traditional manager-oriented leadership behaviors to group-centered leadership behaviors:

> These adjustments included increasing attention to group needs, relinquishing control and responsibility for task completion to others, becoming consultants and facilitators, providing a climate of support, modeling leadership behaviors, and entrusting group maintenance and process problems to members of the group. (Bredeson)

Worth noting is that this facilitative style fits our definition of a leader as one who mobilizes and empowers people to serve group goals. With shared governance and professional community, the group, not the individual, becomes the primary work unit. Group work places a premium on leadership; it is easier to manage the work of a collection of autonomous individuals than to lead a group.

This observation reinforces the principal's unique role, which we must not minimize or take for granted in the quest for leadership as an organizational function. Principals may not be the only leaders in their building, but they are responsible for orchestrating and focusing the energy of everyone else, including other leaders, on the school's mission.

Leadership Can Be Shared

Once it is understood that shared governance and professional community do not reduce the need for leadership but actually require a purer expression of it than a hierarchically run school does, the question becomes, Who leads?

We find it hard to believe that a school could give birth to a vibrant professional community, self-initiating and self-renewing, without the active participation and encouragement of the principal. If teachers do take the initiative to form such a community, a principal who hasn't bought into the notion of faculty-as-change-agent is more likely than not to use his or her positional authority to sabotage the movement. The principal must actively support the process, either by taking a leadership role or by recruiting and supporting others who take that role.

Skrla and her coauthors put it this way:

One of the principal's primary objectives is to create conditions in which other leaders thrive. A second is to develop the leadership potential of others. The school, as a knowledge-work organization, requires that all its members be integrally involved in the problem solving and information process that drives the school forward. There are leader and follower roles for both principals and teachers in the leadership relationship.

Participants in a forum hosted by the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management noted that instructional leadership takes on different forms in different schools. Principals are closely involved with classroom teaching in some schools, whereas in others, they may designate teacher-leaders to work directly with teachers.

Leithwood and Riehl say that because "leadership is a function more than a role," those functions "may be performed by many different persons in different roles throughout the school."

The past decade's school-reform movement has given increased legitimacy to teacher leadership. Teachers engage in action research, perform staff development, serve as lead teachers or chair site councils, and so forth. Their craft knowledge is indispensable in the process of school renewal. When leadership is shared in this way, more might be involved than teachers' simply taking on leadership roles.

Marlene M. Johnson suggests that those who study and observe leadership have too readily assumed it is always the function of an individual. "The possibility of leadership as being a synergistic, interactive process created by numerous individuals within an ever-changing context has remained a 'blind spot.'" Studies of facilitative leaders lend support to the idea that leadership can become an organizational function.

Facilitative leaders beget other facilitative leaders, say Conley and Goldman. Facilitative leadership by the principals they observed induced teacher-leaders likewise to behave in a facilitative manner:

Teachers who took advantage of new leadership opportunities tended to involve others rather than hoard personal power. There was less fear of being excluded

from important decisions, or of needing to guard one's resources. The collegiality that occurred when many teachers interacted regularly and took leadership roles both reduced fears and presented many more forums for concerns to be raised. New leadership roles and structures were tools to solve problems, not merely maintain the status quo.

Facilitative leadership in these schools was contagious. Begun as an individual activity, it became collective practice and eventually characterized the manner in which the organization itself functioned.

Power Given Away Is Power Gained

The acquisition and use of power are prerequisites for successful leadership. Leaders rightly seek power, for it is an essential instrument for getting things done. How leaders wield their power, however, can make or break their effectiveness.

There is a paradox about the use of power, Sashkin and Sashkin say, that has three aspects. First, transformational leaders use power to benefit the organization and its members, not themselves. Second, and less obviously, once they gain power, they strive to "give it away." Effective leaders are secure in their own sense of power, which frees them from the desire to control others. Instead, they use power in a prosocial way to empower others, as the Sashkins explain:

> They spread power and influence throughout the organization. In this way, the organization becomes one in which everyone feels more powerful and everyone has a sense of being able to influence what happens. This sense of high control by organization members is characteristic of high-performing organizations.

The third aspect of use of power by transformational leaders is perhaps the most paradoxical, say the Sashkins. In addition to not using power to benefit themselves and instead using it to empower others, these leaders "show others how to use power and influence in ways that benefit the organization." As stewards of power, transformational leaders seek to develop in their followers "the same sense of stewardship, of prosocial use of power and influence, that they have themselves."

By sharing power and perpetuating the same ideal in others, these leaders help move their organizations toward peak productivity. Just as facilitative leaders can increase leadership throughout the organization, as we saw in the previous section, so leaders who empower others can increase the total power of the organization. Power is not a finite quantity allocated to only a few chosen people, but can grow throughout the organization, thus increasing its capacity to perform. A synergy occurs when leaders interact with and inspire other leaders.

In summary, the issue isn't desire for power, but the end to which it is used. The Sashkins quoted Lao Tzu, who wrote the classic *Tao Te Ching* to show China's warlords how to be better leaders: "Great leaders give others opportunities, not orders." "It is not too strong a statement," the Sashkins wrote, "to say that the very core of transformational leadership is based on empowerment."

Motive Matters

Our last assumption touches on a matter of the heart. School leaders must know why they want to lead. "What do I hope to gain from holding this position, indeed, from succeeding in this position?" Most individuals would readily answer, "To make a contribution to kids' learning."

But honest reflection might yield other answers, too, some of which a leader might be reluctant to admit: to enjoy the prestige the principalship affords; to attain all the rewards that come from success, such as the approval of colleagues and possible advancement to a bigger school or the superintendency; and to earn more income than is available to a teacher.

Now, prestige, the esteem that accompanies success, and money (honestly earned) are not venal desires. But they are self-centered when compared with wanting simply that kids learn.

Everyone performs a job for a mixture of selfish and altruistic reasons. In some careers, the motivation can be entirely selfish and probably not affect the quality of the job done. A school leader, however, must set a higher standard by demonstrating a commitment to serve the institution and its members before oneself.

Must leaders check their egos at the schoolhouse door? Not at all. Most successful leaders have a healthy ego that propels their desire to achieve and that followers are quick to admire. What sets successful leaders apart from others is how they employ their egos. Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great,* describes great companies that owe their success to what he calls Level 5 leadership. Collins reports:

> Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—*but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves.*

Humility and self-confidence are an attractive mix. In contrast to humble leaders with a healthy, appropriate dose of self-regard are flashy, charismatic individuals who seek leadership positions so they can be admired. The Sashkins refer to them as narcissists: "Their real concern is not for followers or the organization; their only concern is self-concern."

Sergiovanni distinguishes between two dimensions of self-interest. Individual self-interest seeks the greatest gain (or the smallest loss) for oneself. The second dimension— "too often overlooked in management theory and leadership practice"—is self-interest broadly conceived. The individual, realizing that his or her welfare is connected to that of everyone else, concludes his or her long-term interest is to promote the common good.

In other words, to live for the cause and for the advancement of others does not require that the leader adhere to an absolute altruism that denies all self-concern. Rather than subordinate all self-concern to the welfare of the group, the leader realizes that his or her success lies in helping others succeed.

Leadership theorists typically assume that leaders are motivated by their needs for varying amounts of affiliation, power, or achievement. We agree with Rabindra N. Kanungo and Manuel Mendonca, who argue that limiting the focus to these kinds of motivators ignores "the more profound motive of altruism, which is *the* critical ingredient of effective leadership."

The question is not whether leaders are motivated by the needs for affiliation, power, or achievement, but to what higher end? For instance, does a leader seek warm relationships with followers out of a need for their approval, or is the leader's motive to value them as partners in the enterprise—to put their ideas and skills to use in achieving the organization's mission? Does a leader seek power to aggrandize himself or herself or regard it as an instrument to serve the needs of the institution and its members?

These are fundamental questions that pierce to the core of a leader's character. How leaders—and more important, their followers—answer them ultimately governs the success or failure of their exercise of leadership. As Kanungo and Mendonca have said, "Regardless of the need that operates as the motive, the leader's effectiveness will ultimately depend on whether the behavior manifested by that need is a reflection of and is guided by the overarching altruistic need."

Altruism derives its power from the followers' perception that the leader is committed to their welfare. In reciprocal and paradoxical fashion, followers gladly bestow power on leaders who eschew it for themselves but use it to serve others.

Especially in education, where the product is knowledge, skills, and values instilled in young people, it matters a great deal whether the leader of a school or district is after self-advancement or the highest good for children. Dale L. Brubaker collects the life stories of principals who attend his graduate education class at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Many of his students express dismay at the increasing politicization of their jobs, as Brubaker explains:

> In the minds of many principals, good ol' boy superintendents as politicians have been replaced by smoother but equally political "sharks" whose self-interest is still more important than student learning and teachers' welfare. Such superintendents, principals argue, set the stage for like-minded principals to behave in similar fashion. These are the principals who always have the media in their schools, have glitzy bulletin boards without substance, and insist on public relations events for parents that often distract students from the learning that should take place in classrooms.
>
> For such principals, test scores are more important than students receiving a solid education. These principals build a system of rewards for "the star teacher," thus passing down to the teachers self-serving norms of behavior.

The proposition that motive matters may be impossible to prove, because self-reports—the only way to establish motive—are of questionable validity. But if we assume a connection between a person's reason for doing something and the extent to which that "something" dominates the individual's thinking, we may be able to infer motive.

Is there any evidence that principals' thinking patterns influence their effectiveness as leaders? We find some support for this notion in the findings of a study reported by Samuel E. Krug. He and two colleagues examined the ways in which principals thought about—reflected on—their activities during five consecutive work days. Five times each day, the principals responded to a pager that activated randomly.

Each time the pager beeped, the principals recorded what they were doing, whether it was relevant to instructional leadership, and what they felt or thought about the activity. Then Krug and his associates, having used another instrument to evaluate each principal's

instructional leadership, compared principals' thinking patterns with their performance as leaders.

"One of the most important conclusions of this study," Krug wrote, "was that, while all the principals engaged in very similar kinds of activities, they did not all think about them in the same ways. Principals who are more effective perceive and use these activities as opportunities for exercising instructional leadership."

Moreover, the principals' leadership scores showed a consistent relationship with student learning. "As leadership scores rose, student achievement scores rose; as leadership scores fell, student achievement scores fell."

The following statement by Krug underscores the link between thought and action:

> One principal saw a disciplinary meeting with a student as an opportunity to communicate the school's mission, monitor learning progress, and promote the instructional climate. A second principal saw the situation simply as an exercise in the management of discipline.

What is it that explains why these principals thought as they did? Did they think and act differently because their motives differed, one burning with passion to see every child succeed, the other consumed with adult issues of school politics? Or did they actually share the same passion to see their students excel, but one principal was simply quicker than the other to realize that any encounter with a student can serve an instructional purpose?

We cannot definitively answer these kinds of questions from Krug and colleagues' data or, for that matter, from any research study. The answers will come only as these leaders search their own hearts to discern the pulse of their beliefs and commitments.

Finally, to say that motive matters is not to say that motive is all that matters. Individuals must possess an array of technical and organizational skills and knowledge to be considered for a position of school leadership. This point is obvious, but it is worth noting if for no other reason than to highlight the opposite: Candidates' motives matter too little in most hiring decisions. Jim Collins told Carlotta Mast of *The School Administrator* that people with Level 5 leadership potential are everywhere, but too few of them are at the top of our institutions. "We keep giving the keys to the wrong people," he said (as cited in Mast).

CONCLUSION: A PASSION FOR LEARNING

Leadership springs from an internal set of convictions, action following thought in the manner declared by this proverb: "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." A principal whose thoughts center on bolstering his or her reputation will behave differently than a principal who passionately wants kids to learn and succeed. Outstanding school leaders start with a conviction about what schooling ought to be. This conviction gives birth to a vision, a mental image that guides these effective leaders in their daily routine activities and interactions with teachers, students, and communities.

We offer this book as food for the mind and nourishment for growth of the leader's conviction, passion, vision, and effectiveness.