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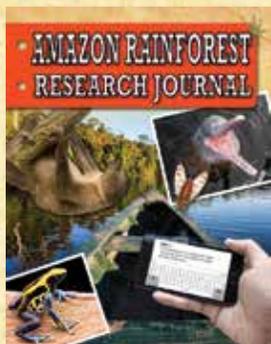
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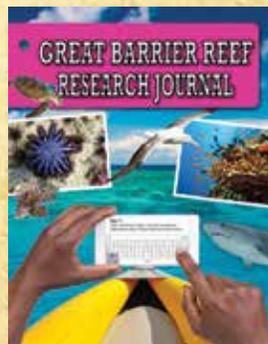
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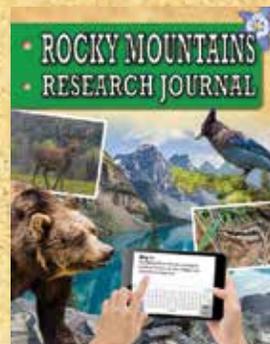
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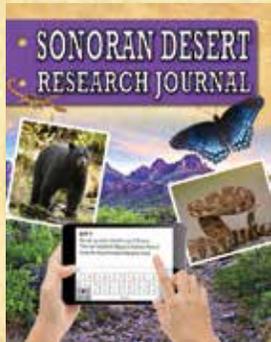
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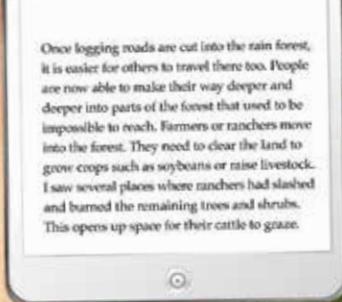
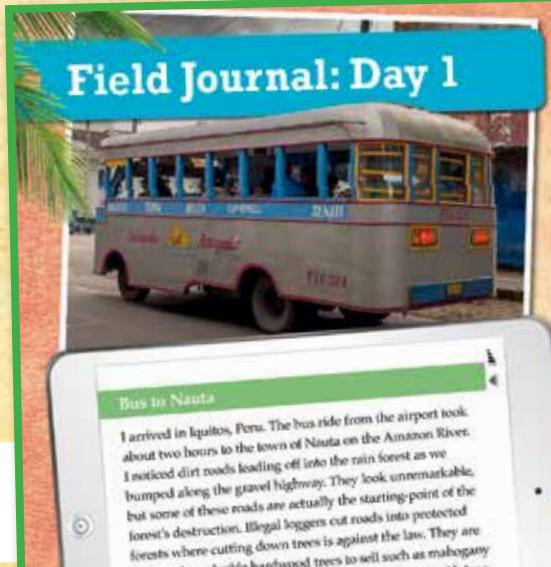
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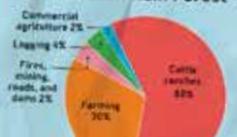
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Advertising Sales **DONNA BILLEY, NATALIE LESSARD**

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CAP JOURNAL is printed on FSC certified paper

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS Submissions on topics related to school administration and educational leadership are encouraged. Guidelines and editorial calendar are available at: www.cdnprincipals.org

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Cover images: ©iStock/erhui1979
CAP-T0317 | ISBN 1183-1995



Fall 2017

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Erratum: In the Spring Issue of the CAP Journal we mistakenly credited the article titled "Using Text-to-Speech and Speech-to-Text Technologies as Inclusive Reading and Writing Practices" to incorrect authors. The article was actually written by Michelann Parr and Kevin Wilcox.

Author Bios

Kevin Wilcox, B.Ed, is a first year Masters of Education Student at Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario. His masters research focuses on speech-to-text technology and its role in literacy practices and the process of technological integration amongst preservice teachers.

Michelann Parr, PhD, is professor at the Schulich School of Education at Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario. Her research interests include family-school engagement and well-being, text-to-speech technology and its impact on the reading process and writing as a way of fostering teacher-candidate understanding.

Greetings From the President



Kyran Dwyer

President, Canadian Association of Principals

By now you are all back to a new school year, hopefully after a restful and rewarding summer vacation. The busyness of our jobs often leaves little time for reflection and relaxing. However as Stephen Covey would say, always take time to Sharpen Your Saw and do something for yourself every day.

In July, I spent a day at the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) conference in PEI. There is much to celebrate about our education system in this country. The day allowed me time to chat with partner groups and highlight the critical role principals and vice principals play in Canada's education system. The partner groups I spoke with recognize the great contribution we make to the education system. CAP's role is to advocate and be a presence on the national scene. However to do this, we must remain focused on our members and ensure that through good communication, everyone's voice is heard and shared.

The CAP National conference in Saskatoon in May 2017 was a great opportunity for learning and networking. Thank you to the host committee for a tremendous job in planning the conference. Everyone is invited to St. John's Newfoundland to this year's CAP conference. It takes place from May 15-18. The theme Navigating Uncharted Waters: Keeping an Even Keel will hopefully provide lots of thought-provoking speakers to challenge us to continue to be the best we can be.

It is a privilege to be your CAP President for 2017-18. I look forward to working with President Elect Thomas Midbo and Past President Maxine Geller, the executive and the board. The input of as many principals and vice principals in Canada will make CAP a stronger, more focused and connected association to continue our work and to make our education system a place where every student can be successful.

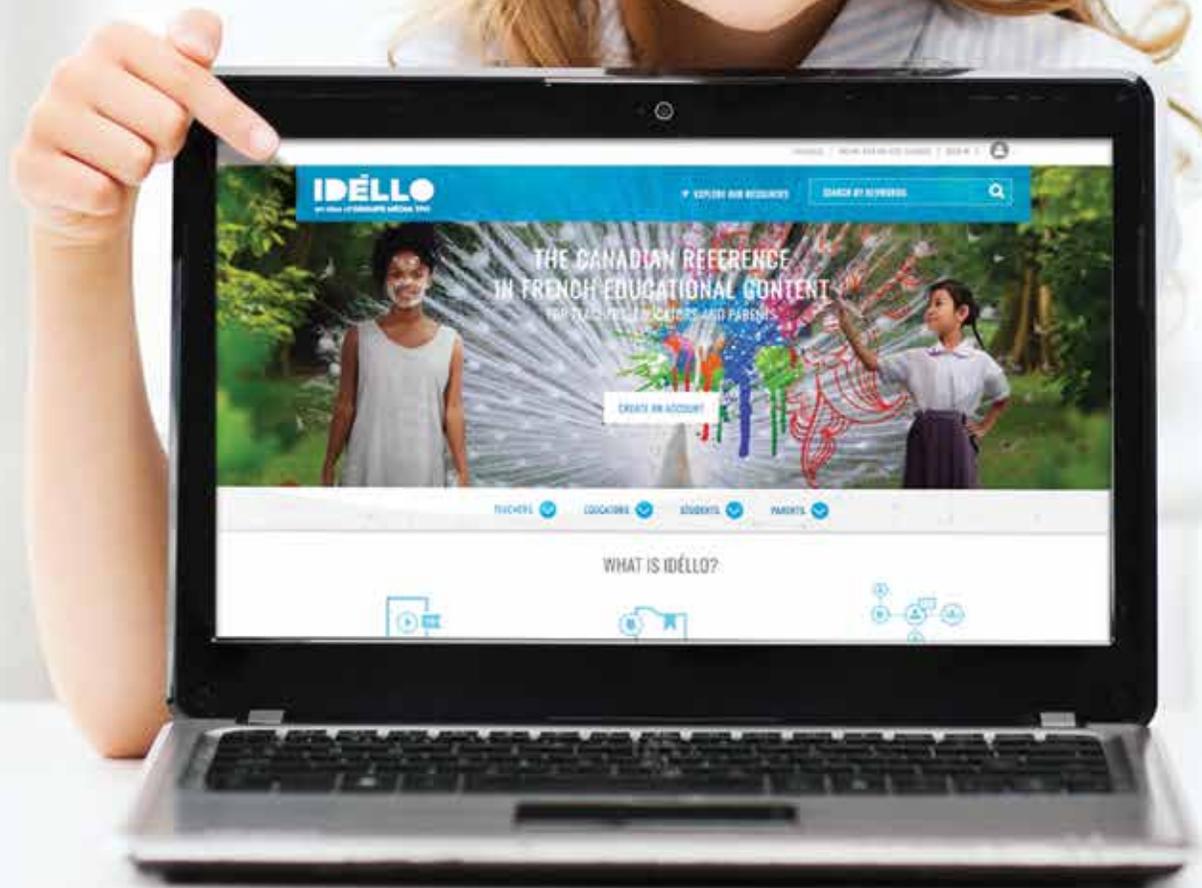
I wish you a very successful school year, one where students and staffs will keep our desire to be great leaders close to our hearts and mind.

Yours in Education from beautiful Newfoundland and Labrador,

Kyran Dwyer



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Editor's Comments



Terry MacIsaac
Editor, CAP Journal

Greetings!

As you are reading this, you have settled into another year and fondly remembering the summer days of past. I hope your year has begun smoothly with students and staff falling back into routine!

The topic of Managing vs Leading was an easy one to choose for this edition of the CAP Journal. The idea of being an educational leader instead of a building manager has been researched and proven to be one of, if not the most effective way to change a school and increase student learning. A number of the articles included in this edition echo this sentiment.

The reality of an administrator's job is that more and more building manager duties continue to dominate our days and limit our contact with those that matter most; our teachers and students. This is certainly a common issue among administrators from coast to coast, and one that requires our diligence in order to maintain our focus on student learning!

The article in the journal titled 'Why Belong to CAP' is important in order to realize what your membership does for you. The Canadian Association of Principals members are provided a quality journal comprised of works from Canadian educational researchers and leaders. The CAP journal serves as a source of professional information and knowledge for principals and vice-principals

Once again, I would like to thank all contributors to this edition of the CAP Journal. It is wonderful to have articles from coast to coast which allows us to see that the issues we are facing are indeed the issues that others endure as well.

Sincerely,

Terry MacIsaac
Eastern VP, CAP

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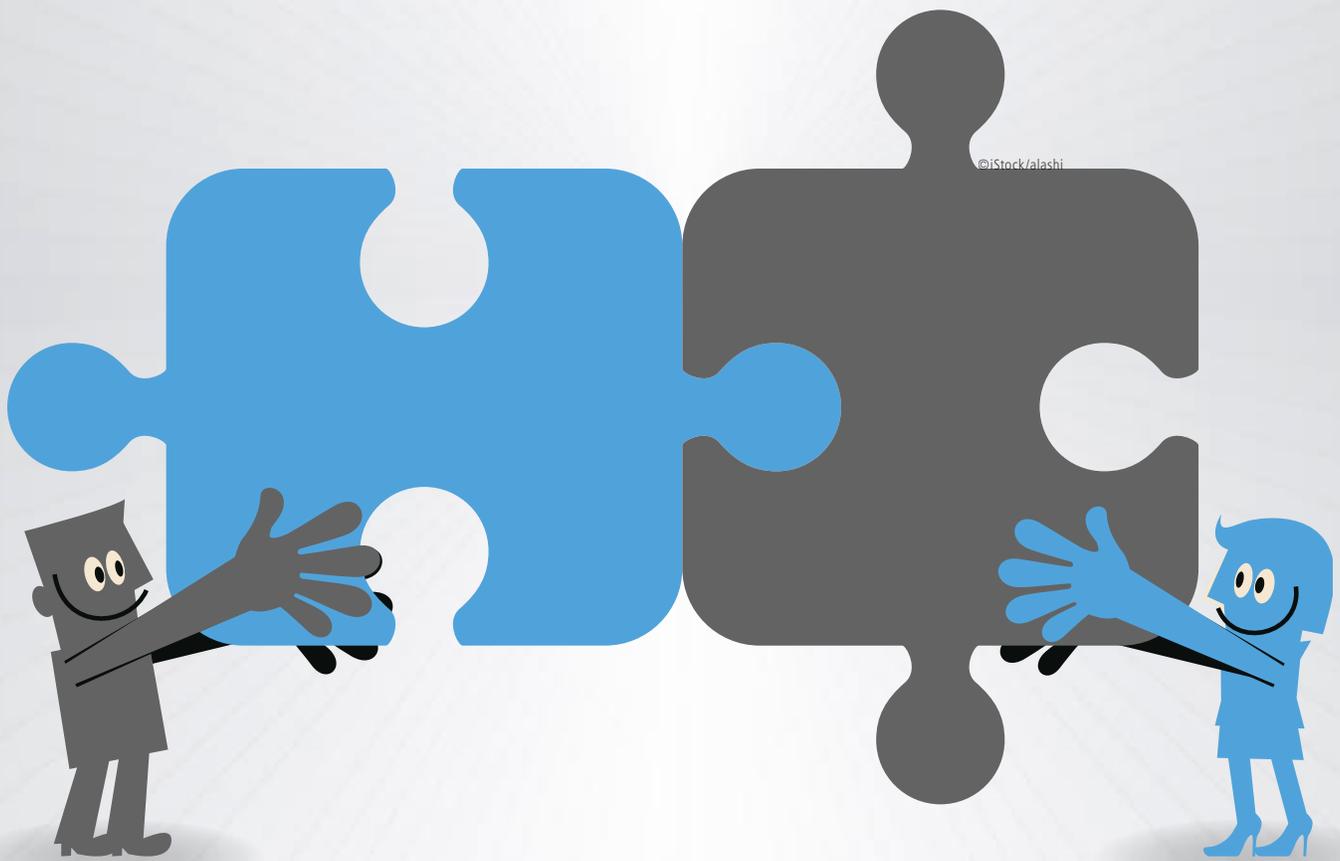
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The Managing/ Leading Puzzle Explored

Some Insightful Data and Observations

By Katina Pollock, Fei Wang and Cameron Hauseman



Introduction

Management and leadership are contested terms in the practical and theoretical literature; some argue that the two terms should be used interchangeably, while others argue that there is a firm delineation between the two. Generally speaking, there is lack of agreement over what each term entails and how they impact the contemporary principalship. Since 2012 our research team has conducted several studies on the changing nature of principals' and vice-principals' work in Ontario; using an online survey and qualitative responses, we discovered that practitioners feel they are spending too much time managing and not enough time leading in their schools. In our view, however, the tension they are experiencing is due, not to an incompatibility between these two important aspects of school leadership, but to work intensification.

Management Versus Leadership: What's in a Name?

Policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners have used the terms management and leadership to describe principals' and vice-principals' work. On the one hand, management is associated with allocating resources, doing paperwork, and following procedures. Leadership, on the other hand, is about creating a vision, promoting learning and influencing people. Not everyone agrees on these definitions, however. Some argue there is no clear distinction between managing and leading; this faction feels that it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate managing and leading in the work of school leaders.

From our perspective, any distinction between leading and managing resides in the intention behind the work—in other words, the purpose of the action determines whether the work can be considered leading or managing. For example, in the Ontario Leadership Framework Discussion Paper, Leithwood (2012) showed how timetabling can be a part of a leadership process or seen as an administrative activity. A principal who views timetabling as a managerial task will view it as technical procedure—required by the district school board and ministry policy—that can be checked off of a “to-do” list. A principal who approaches timetabling from a leadership lens, on the other hand, will view timetabling as an opportunity to maximize instructional time for teachers to interact with students or engage in strategic ongoing professional learning.

What our study findings demonstrated to us, however, is that the two theoretical terms have tangible, real impact on principal practice. According to the online surveys and qualitative responses from our study data, principals and vice-principals in Ontario are experiencing tension between what they perceive to be leading and managing; moreover, it appears that for most school leaders the pendulum has swung to the management side—an imbalance with which most participants were dissatisfied.

The Data: What Principals and Vice-Principals Feel

Hornig, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) have argued that school leaders spend a third of their time on administrative tasks—such as student discipline and filling out compliance paperwork—that do not relate to increasing student achievement or school improvement. Our data also reflected this trend. Overall, our findings indicate that principals and vice-principals want to spend less time per week on management-related tasks and spend more time focused on what they consider to be school leadership, whether that be associated with instruction or other learning-related goals. Principals and vice-principals in Ontario spend the greatest amount of their time dealing with student discipline concerns—7.6 and 8.3 hours per week, respectively. The participating principals and vice-principals from both studies indicated that they would like to reduce this number and concentrate on instructional leadership.

Ontarian principals also spend, on average, 7.5 hours per week on other management-related tasks. The majority of the surveyed sample (55%) indicated that they would like to spend less time on internal school management issues. On the other hand, the principals in the sample spend five hours per week on curriculum and instruction, a number that 82% would like to see increase. Almost half of the principals who participated in the survey would like to devote more time to walking the hallways, playground, and lunchroom than the current six-hour per week average.

In their qualitative responses, the surveyed principals elaborated on the tension they experience between what they perceive to be management and what they perceive to be leading in their schools. For example, one principal explained:

The focus of my work should be curriculum, instruction, delivery, programming, assessment, and evaluation. I try to spend as many hours on this a week as possible, but I get bogged down with running the school: facility repairs and maintenance; the costs of repair work; dealing with teachers who don't want to put in 100% effort, see students as a nuisance or have poor teaching strategies, don't want to learn from current research, employ technology in the classroom, have a poor work ethic, etc.

Vice-principals in Ontario also spend most of their time engaged in management-focused activities. As mentioned earlier, they spend most of their time managing student discipline concerns, which 42.7% would prefer to spend less time doing. The surveyed vice-principals also spend 5.7 hours per week being visible and supervising students, an area that 52.8% of participating vice-principals would like to increase.

On average, Ontario vice-principals are involved in curriculum and instructional leadership for only 2.7 hours per week. At 88.1%, the vast majority of vice-principals indicated wanting to spend more time on tasks and activities associated with instructional leadership. Similarly, participating vice-principals spent an average of two hours per week on classroom walkthroughs, an area where 86.9% would like to spend more time. One principal commented on the impact this imbalance has on his daily schedule:

I feel like I have two full-time jobs. The first is from 8:30–4:00, which is all about being "on-call" and responsive to things that come up every day—usually starting with, "Do you have a minute?" or "you are needed to deal with [student] in [teacher's] room right now"... Once the kids and teachers go home, then I have another full-time job—meetings, paperwork, e-mail, and other communications—let alone trying to be an instructional leader, too, and plan staff meetings, PA days, co-plan, co-teach sessions, and so on. We need help to support our kids and run our buildings if we are expected to be instructional leaders, too.

Overall, our findings indicate that Ontario principals and vice-principals are spending more time on managerial tasks than leadership processes in schools. Regardless of whether policy-makers and researchers agree on a firm terminological distinction—or lack thereof—between the two, our data shows that principals and vice-principals feel there is a difference, and the tension between the two is directly—and often, negatively—impacting their practice.

From our perspective, however, the main reason principals are experiencing not only a distinction between management and leadership, but a tension between them, is because of the work intensification Ontario principals and vice-principals currently experience.

The Impact of Work Intensification

In our research, we studied the changing nature of principals' and vice-principals' work; our findings indicate that their work is intensifying due to a number of trends (Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2015). These trends include pressures such as high-stakes accountability initiatives, national and international competitiveness, standardized curricula, and the centralization of power from local schools and districts with a simultaneous decentralization of work tasks from central offices to schools (Agbo, 2002; Arnove, Torres, & Franz, 2012; Ball, 1993; Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1996; Gidney, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994; Karlsen, 2000; Lingard & Douglas, 1999; Pollock, 2008; Rowe & Lubienski, 2017). These pressures are paired with an increased emphasis on parental choice, which has reduced principals' autonomy, changed their management tasks, and created an expectation of collaborative decision-making (Court & O'Neil, 2011).

Principals' current work is also complicated by rising expectations to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. Issues of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion continue to inform and alter principals' approaches to their work (DeMatthews, 2015; Pollock, 2016; Ryan, 2016; Theoharis, 2008). Technological advances that have also intensified principals' work by changing how they communicate and share information (Cho, 2016; Hvidston, Hvidston, Range, & Harbour, 2013; Sauer & Richardson, 2015). Finally, the changing nature of labour relations has altered the way principals in Ontario interact with other educators and staff; the expulsion of administrators from teacher unions Ontario has formalized the relationship between the two groups and made collegial enterprises more difficult (Wallace, 2010).

Work intensification does not discriminate between leading and managing. Our studies indicate that the volume of work associated with intensification contributes to the tension principals and vice-principals report around both managing and leading (Pollock, Wang & Hauseman, 2016). Many school leaders reported that growing accountability expectations from multiple stakeholders has resulted in increased accountability tasks (Pollock & Winton, 2015); the principals and vice-principals referred to this "paper pushing." However, the volume of work is not just administrative. It is also associated with leadership processes such as additional and different efforts to work more collaboratively with educators and parents and communities. School leaders are forced to deal with an increased volume of work, accelerated work pace, new and different kinds of work with insufficient resources, and all within the same 24-hour day.

Conclusion

Managing and leading will always be a part of a school leader's professional life; principals and vice-principals will continue to struggle to effectively balance the competing demands they face in their work, regardless if they understand the work to be either management, leadership or a combination of both. Thus, we need to consider how to support principals and vice-principals – to create a process that allows them to consider what to prioritize and why. ■

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AUTHOR BIOS

Katina Pollock is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Western University, Ontario, Canada. She is also co-director of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research (KNAER-RECRAE) and Director for Western's Centre for Educational Leadership. Her research explores work, leadership, and learning.

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D. Cameron Hauseman is a Ph.D. candidate in the Leadership, Higher and Adult Education Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto (OISE/UT). His research interests are situated in K–12 educational leadership.

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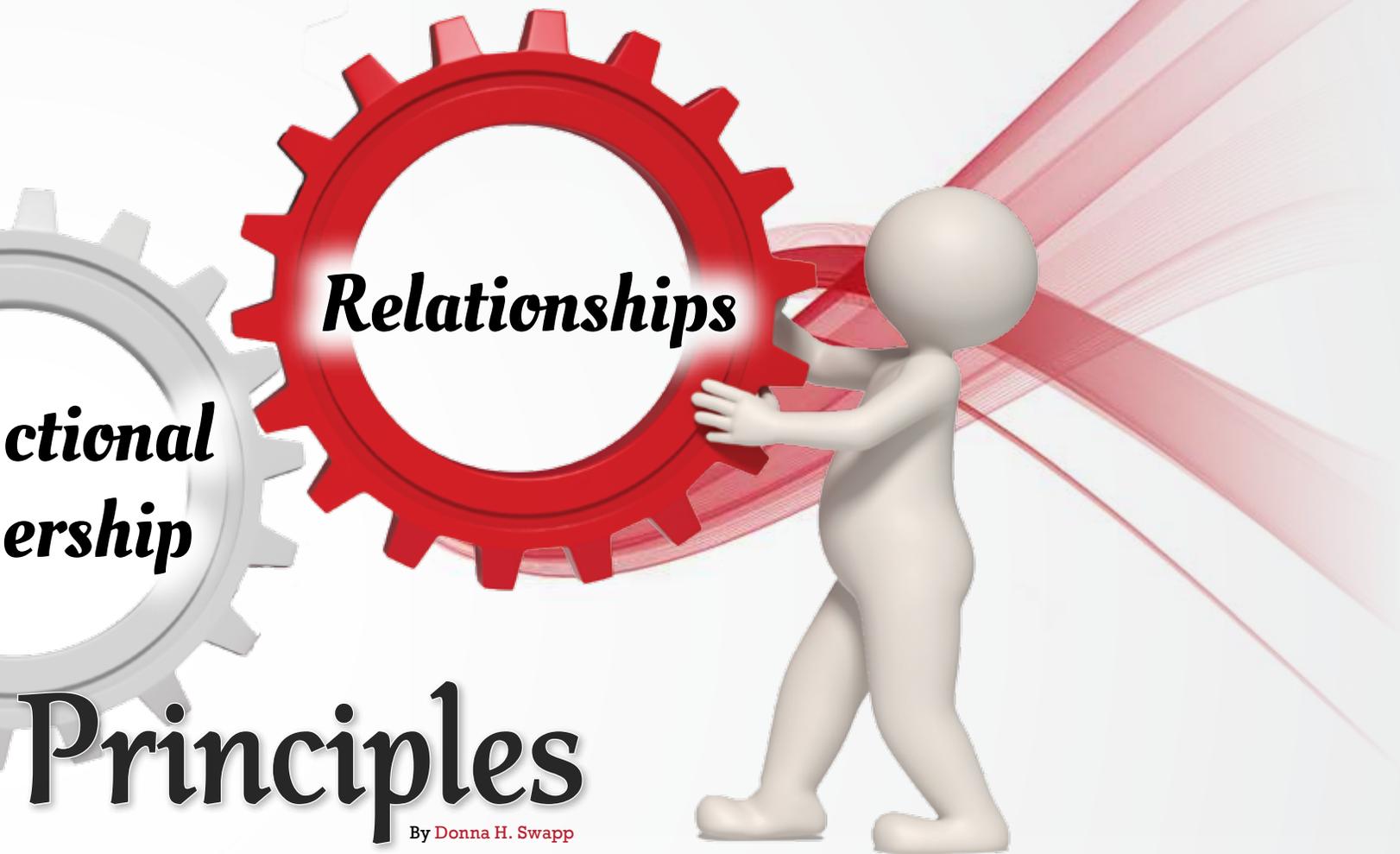


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School principals work in an environment of constant change.

Tighter accountability, high-stakes standardized and achievement testing, increased student diversity, strident teacher unions, heightened awareness of human rights issues, and national and global catastrophes are among the phenomena intensifying school leaders' daily work (Briscoe & Pollock, 2017; Lashway, 2006; Pollock, Murakami & Swapp, 2015; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). In Canada, the changing nature of school principals' work is receiving growing attention (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Pollock, Wang & Hauseman, 2017; other provinces). Principals in Ontario report taking on expanded roles and responsibilities, working within tight and seemingly impossible timelines, completing tons of paperwork including reading, emails, and reports, and experiencing increasing mental health issues (Pollock & Hauseman, 2015, Pollock, Wang & Hauseman, 2014). This article reports on a qualitative study of how one elementary school principal in Southwestern Ontario (Jane, a pseudonym) 'made sense' of her work. Jane's approach was to first understand that her goal as a principal was student learning, and then apply three core principles of leadership, namely communication, building relationships, and instructional leadership, to achieve this goal.

ent Learning:



Relationships

Instructional Leadership

Principles

By Donna H. Swapp

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Understanding as Pivotal to Success

Jane had 13 years of experience in school administration; three as a vice principal and, at the time of the study, four years as principal. Jane explained that amid the myriad initiatives, policies, and deadlines coming her way, she centered her fundamental work as student learning. “What I do is determined by priorities set by my superiors....my work is dictated by provincial and board policies and collective agreements...so there are certain priorities and deadlines I must attend to...But I am about making students love learning. Making parents want to send their children to this school”. During the school day, Jane prioritized emergencies and student safety, and mostly dealt with the ‘people’ aspects of her job. She attended to the ‘paper’ after; into the evenings and nights, and sometimes on weekends. Jane described such extended work as a problematic but inevitable part of being a school principal.

Jane conceptualized her work as a symbiotic undertaking of core managing and leading behaviours to promote student learning. It entailed a combination of instruction, management, and people relationships; sometimes, at some times of the year, much more management. There are also some tasks that are managerial but you won’t be able to do the instructional or leadership piece unless you do the managerial piece; unless you are developing people, building relations. So, like human resources; you’re not going to get great instruction in the classroom unless you are being a human resource manager...I had to hire a teacher last week; that was human resources...I wanted to get the program in place for those kids who were showing up every day and needed a teacher who can teach them and maintain continuity of the program – which was the instructional piece.

It was this understanding of her work, as a set of interrelated behaviours aimed at improving student learning, and the application of three core leadership principles, that fueled Jane’s day-to-day actions as principal.

Communication

Jane viewed communication as fundamental to building relationships and instructional leadership. She sought to promote “transparent and effective communication practices as much as possible between staff members, between administration and staff, and staff and students”. She articulated a clear vision to staff, parents, and the school community, connected this vision to the school improvement plan, lobbied staff for support, and followed up with continuous reiterations of the vision. Jane also encouraged an “open door policy”, adjusted her communication strategies as needed to reach all audiences, and engaged in periodic self-reflection to ensure she was communicating high but reasonable expectations.

Building Relationships

One of Jane’s greatest challenge was building relationships with staff. She explained that four years into the principalship, she was still building relationships.

You’re not going to be able to build relationships if you don’t have good communication strategies. Building relationships is not just about building relationships with staff... But as I shared with my staff, it’s about staff building relationships with their students, with the parents, and reminding them all the time that they are partners. They send their kids to school every day, their most prized possessions, so you [staff] need to build a relationship with the parents. I need to build a relationship with the parent community members, like the school council and the PTA.”

A strategy Jane employed in building relationships was to let her staff see her not just as their boss, but as also vulnerable and imperfect, a colleague who shared their vision of student learning, and who was committed to working along with and supporting them to achieve said vision.

I am there, I am visible. Visibility is a way to encourage people to approach you, make you accessible and approachable. There’s also, I’m not going to lie, visibility also has an accountability factor... But I still would like to think that people know what their roles are, know what’s happening because

there’s been good communication and go about doing their job. So, I show up, showing them I, too, am human. Share in their joys, their sorrows. I laugh. I cry. I show empathy... My strategy is pressure but also support.

In demonstrating these qualities, Jane made significant inroads in getting staff to support her vision of student learning, and work as a cohesive team in developing each other, the organization, and the instructional program.

Instructional Leadership

Jane described the instructional program as her “big passion”. She communicated this enthusiasm and commitment to her staff, encouraging them to foster learning environments that were inclusive and of high standards. Classroom walkthroughs was one main strategy Jane employed in gathering data on the progress of student learning.

The classroom walkthroughs... is one place that I collect my data so the staff know what things I’m looking for. And the last couple months have been learning goals and success criteria. And so when I come in, I’d be looking for that to be taking place in lessons. And at staff meeting I will share with the staff, “I’m not seeing learning goals and success criteria”, or, “I’m not seeing balanced literacy taking place in all lessons that I’m observing”... So that’s a general staff accountability piece that I’m saying “Ok, that needs to start happening”. And I’m also having one-on-one conversations with staff. I’m following up, and I’m saying “I’m not seeing the classroom walkthrough look-fors that we’ve talked about”. Or, “You’ve received professional development on this. How can I support you further? How can I help you?” I try to let [staff] know firmly but kindly that “You’re an employee here and we need to work together as a team”. So, in building relationships, in communicating expectations, I am holding everyone accountable for the instructional program, for student learning. All of this is not going to happen unless you communicate that to the parents, you have good relationships with each other – teachers, so you work together, share practices – and you always keep learning as the focus.

In conclusion, principal leadership for Jane was about holding a clear understanding that student learning was the goal of her work, and demonstrating a commitment to communication, building relationships, and instructional leadership in working towards this goal. Jane applied this overarching leadership approach in making sense of her day-to-day work; in informing her decisions, behaviours, and tasks, and interactions with the school community. ■

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Becoming a Leader:

Going Beyond Management

By Jennifer White



“Leadership without personal transformation is simply different forms of management.”

(Workman, Cleveland-Innes, 2012)

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As principals, we spend a large portion of our workday - and often our personal time at home - working on managerial issues. Duty schedules, bus routes, safety concerns, and the effective running of a building take a considerable chunk out of the daily workload. But these are not the things that make us leaders. Leaders set themselves apart from managers through their vision, and their ability to look at the bigger picture.

To be fair, any principal in the early stages of their career, does lean more heavily towards the management side of things. It manifests as survival. Becoming an effective administrator has a steep learning curve, and the earliest days of this endeavour come in the form of understanding the “hows” and the “whys” that make their building work.

Going Beyond Management

Last year, I began my career in administration as a teaching principal in a small school. I had substituted in the school a few years before, but had not spent any time there in the five years before accepting the position. I spent the summer before last reading blogs and books written by other administrators - trying to create my own identity from the information that I was collecting through my reading and, as always, in my reflecting.

Then September came. I stood in front of my staff - MY STAFF - and led my first meeting. While I knew a little about the school prior to beginning my time there, I really did not know the culture. As I looked around the room that morning, I decided that the year for me would be about "looking around before looking beyond."

That is exactly what it became. I focused a lot on management, but all the while I was glimpsing traces of ideas that could grow from the good things that were already happening in my building. Going in and making sweeping changes, erasing history, and making decrees would serve no one - and would make for a difficult transition for everyone involved. Learning the school culture was the beginning step in my personal growth as a leader. I spent a lot of time listening and learning, and as I did so, it became much easier to see the potential that I had to work with.

Getting through year one was mainly about getting from milestone to milestone. Fully understanding the intricacies of maintaining a building, meeting goals, working with a team of adults who have various backgrounds and

philosophies takes a lot of time and patience. Even knowing which form to fill out can be a challenge! Again, these are all management parts of the job - but the comprehension of these parts is a vital piece of the leadership puzzle. There cannot be one without the other.

Once some sort of routine been established, moving on to creating a vision for the school becomes easier. Administrators have the tools: data, staff, professional learning opportunities, community liaisons... the list goes on. It is what they do with these tools that determines their effectiveness as a leader.

Leaders have an intangible quality that sets them apart from others. They have the ability to juggle the day-to-day tasks with the long term prospects. They can make sure that the deadlines are met, all the while motivating students to work to their potential, to participate in extra-curricular activities, to lend an ear to the struggling child who just doesn't seem like themselves, and to have a quick word of encouragement with the struggling single parent who is having a hard time getting their angsty teen out of bed in the morning. Part of being a strong leader is fostering the relationships within the school community - between all the stakeholders.

On any walk of life, people seldom fit into any one category. They cannot be described as simply one thing or another. Humans are far too complicated to be so easily defined. The same is true of the school principal: they are neither just a manager nor just a leader. They are: spouses, parents, children, students, athletes,

artists, musicians, writers, creators, fashionistas, chefs, comedians - the possibilities are endless. They are so much more. We are so much more.

School principals are both managers and leaders; but they are also communicators, stakeholders, confidants, keepers-of-the-keys, knowers, and doers. They are complex, multi-tasking wizards who always have multiple tabs open in their brains and who always tuck seemingly insignificant pieces of knowledge away to be called upon later. To call a principal a manager of a school is to slight them, because that is such a small portion of what makes them the leader within their building.

Year two of my administrative career is underway. Yes, there will be more than one bump in the road - but that is not something that is exclusively the domain of the new administrator. Each new challenge brings a new opportunity to learn and grow. Each day strengthens the ties between me, my staff, my students, and their families. Balancing the maintenance with the vision will undoubtedly get easier as time passes; I will keep reading and learning - as much about myself as about the job I am tasked with doing each and every day.

And I will, more often than not, sit in awe of the responsibility of it all. At the end of the day a manager can close up shop and go home, thinking nothing of work until the next day. A leader allows themselves to be swept up in their work until it consumes them and becomes a vital part of their identity.

Then, and only then, does the manager become the leader. ■



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AUTHOR BIO

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Helping Teachers

go from

Good to Great

in their

Classroom Assessment Practices

By Authors Richelle Marynowski,
Carmen Mombourquette,
and David Slomp

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In many schools today, principals are being asked to be instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, Anderson, Mascall, & Strauss, 2010). In addition, much of the focus in schools in recent years has been on the integration of fair and balanced assessment (integration of assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning) into daily teaching (Earl, 2013). In order to provide support for teachers to effectively integrate fair and balanced assessment into their practice, school leaders not only need to be knowledgeable about assessment practices, they need to be cognizant of the demands of instructional leadership including the development of a culture that supports teachers (Timperley, 2011).

Over the course of the past year we were able to take an in-depth look at one small rural junior/senior high school that has been working for the past three years to fully integrate fair and balanced assessment into daily practice. What makes this school worth noting, is that during this three-year period when the school's new principal and assistant principal began working on changing the school's assessment culture, the percentage of parents, teachers, and students that were satisfied with the overall quality of education at the school rose from 78.3% to 88.7%. The percentage of students, teachers, and parents that believed that their school has improved over those same three years also rose from 84.9% to 98.8%. In addition, during this time, drop-out rates decreased from 4.4% to 2.7%. These numbers indicate that important changes were happening in this school during this time.

Good to Great Assessments

Our exploration of this school focused on the leadership practices employed to aide teachers in the shared quest to fully implement fair and balanced assessment. This case study provided valuable information around just what it takes to help lead school change through improved student assessment practices.

When asked about what supports were present in their school that helped them feel safe to try new practices and broaden their assessment repertoire, teachers commented on specific leadership practices that supported them in moving their assessment practices forward. There was surprising consistency woven throughout the teacher comments. The seven most frequently noted and highly valued leadership practices as articulated by these teachers, in no order of preference, were:

- 1 Leaders were present in classrooms:** school leaders were often present in the teachers' classes, not for evaluation purposes, but informally dropped in to see what was going on in the class. The presence of leaders in teachers' classrooms provided the leaders with opportunity to engage in open conversation with teachers about what assessment strategies were being observed. The school leaders then were able to provide other teachers on staff examples of what their colleagues were doing. The visits also provided leaders the opportunity to engage teachers with instant feedback about what they saw in the classroom: what they saw working, or suggestions of other strategies to try.
- 2 Leaders focused on refinement of practice:** in many of their public comments the leadership team acknowledged that teachers were already incorporating effective assessment strategies into their teaching. Their message to teachers was "how can we take what you are already doing well and refine it to make it better?" This allowed teachers to feel confident about what they were already doing and helped to negate the feeling of being overwhelmed about changes they might have to make. Teachers were more able to envision how to incorporate the suggestions with the message from leaders being about fine-tuning rather than an overhaul to practice.
- 3 Leaders reduced the accountability pressure on teachers:** the school leaders shielded the teachers from making changes to their practice based on accountability measures (like provincial examination or standardized test scores) instead encouraging teachers to make adjustments to their practice based on what the teachers wanted to achieve with their students based on the evidence they were gathering from the students themselves. One teacher commented, "There are still points of pressure to make changes. The pressure definitely comes back to how schools get measured. When changes get offered without those sorts of pressures, it's more about making changes on my own terms. If that pressure is too constant, the pressure can become negative. Our administrators have done nothing but, be positive, influencing good changes, removing those pressures." The school leaders focused on adjustment of practice for improvement's sake, not for the sake of external accountability measures and pressures.



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“Teachers were using fair and balanced assessment strategies throughout their practice; students, parents, and teachers were much more satisfied with the school; and leaders remained highly engaged in frequent and purposeful visits to the learning spaces in the school.”

- 4 Leaders introduced a common language regarding classroom assessment practices with teachers, parents, and students:** the language of assessment was introduced to the school community and used consistently within the community to talk about assessment practices at the school. Using common and consistent language to talk about what the teachers were doing with students gave the school community a way to move forward together. One teacher commented, “The kids know what assessment for, of, and as learning are. They know what it means when I say formative and why it’s still valuable even if they’re not getting a number or a letter grade on it.” With this common language and openness with the parent community, parents understood more clearly the purposes for each assessment and supported the teachers in making adjustments.
- 5 Leaders encouraged teachers to try new ideas:** the leadership team provided support for teachers to try out new assessment practices in their classrooms. By providing support for teachers to take risks in their assessment practices, the leadership team allowed teachers “to take [their] teaching to the next level. How can I go from good to great? Because it’s non-evaluative, there’s no stress.” Another teacher commented, with this leadership team “there is no fear of failing when you try something new. And I mean that’s what you want the students to do, but as teachers we’re also able to do that.” With teachers being supported and encouraged to experiment with their practice, they were not afraid of being reprimanded when their experimentation did not work.
- 6 Leaders got out of the way of the teachers:** the teachers noted that the school leadership team were supportive but that they also got out of the way so the teachers could do what they needed to do. The leaders did not prescribe what the teachers were to do but let them explore and go in the direction that the teachers needed to go. The leadership team opened up space for collaboration between teachers within similar subject areas and between subject areas. Through this new collaborative approach the teachers used data and student based evidence to help guide where their own practices required further refinement.
- 7 Leaders provided readings, both professional and research based, to promote conversation points:** the leaders provided the teachers with books and articles that reflected current assessment theory and effective pedagogy as talking points for professional development sessions and staff meetings. One teacher noted, “One of the things that we have done that has worked really well is we’ve been given an article that we have to sort of go through and pick out what the main ideas are, how we can apply them, so what works for our school and how is this professional literature, published literature, going to help us and guide us in what we do here at this school.” The leaders did not provide a large amount of reading to the teachers, but provided purposefully selected readings that supported the teachers in their development and moved their thinking forward. The readings were not just provided to the teachers, but were also integrated into staff meeting conversations and professional development sessions.

The seven key leadership practices noted followed the setting of clear goals by the administration team. The leaders then encouraged risk-taking by the teachers because they were also taking risks and serving as a buffer to external pressures that might have hindered teachers from moving forward. The administration team worked alongside their teachers with a supportive presence that included observations of strategies, discussions of practice, provision of resources, and development of a common language for the school and surrounding community. In the end, school change happened. Teachers were using fair and balanced assessment strategies throughout their practice; students, parents, and teachers were much more satisfied with the school; and leaders remained highly engaged in frequent and purposeful visits to the learning spaces in the school. ■

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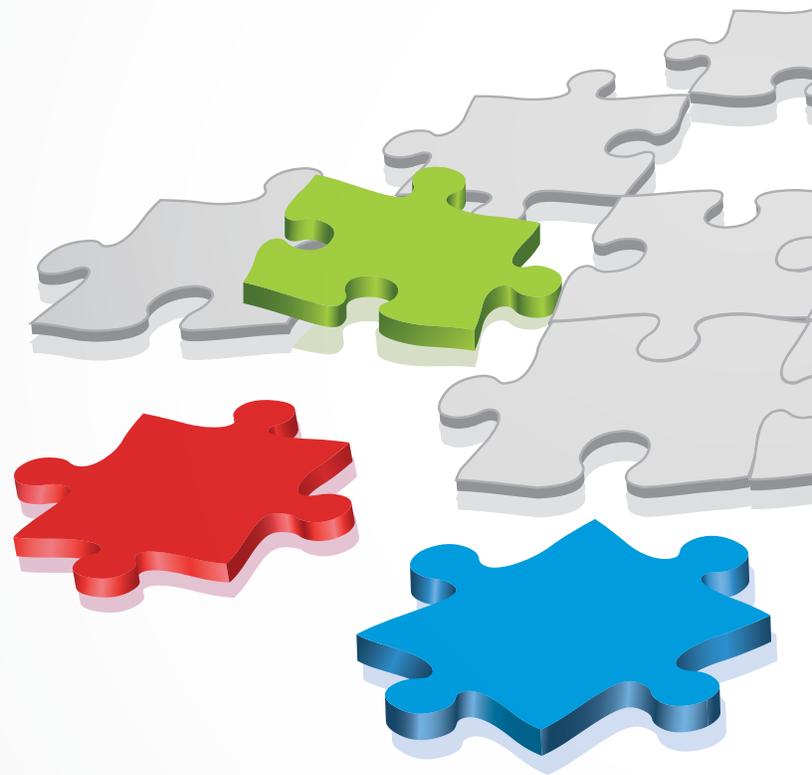
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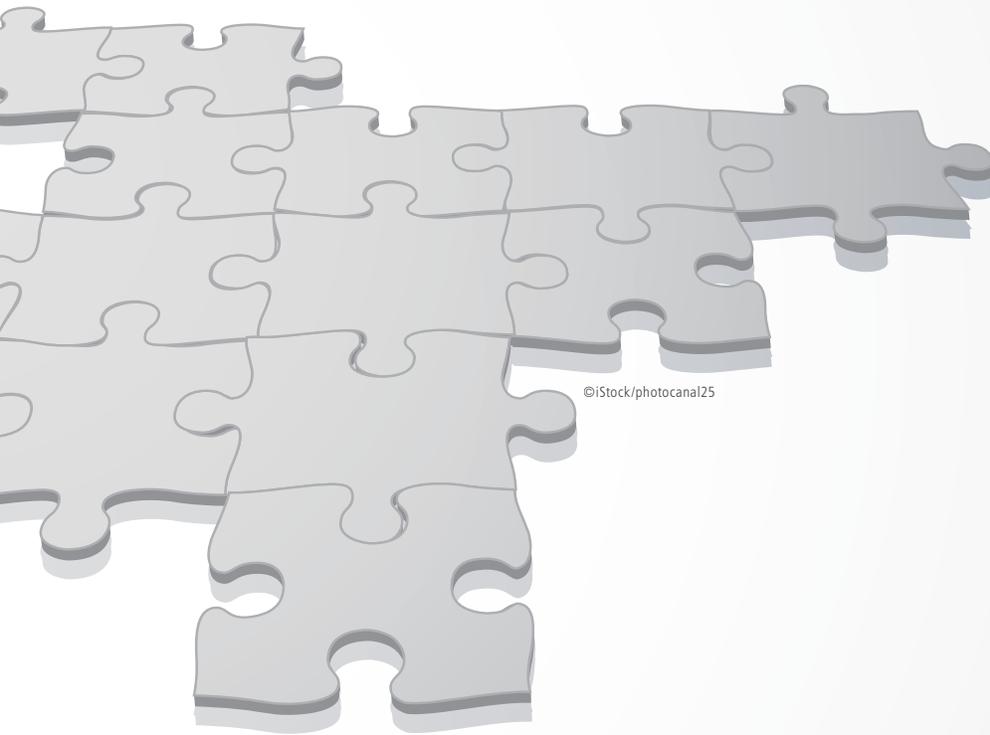
Three Enabli



Amazing things happen when a school staff shares the belief that they are able to achieve collective goals and overcome challenges to impact student achievement. Recently, Professor John Hattie ranked collective teacher efficacy as the number one factor influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2016) based on a meta-analysis by Eells (2011). Collective teacher efficacy refers to the “collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities” (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p. 190). Rachel Jean Eells’ (2011) meta-analysis demonstrated that collective efficacy and student achievement were strongly related with an effect size of 1.57. According to the Visible Learning Research (Hattie, 2012), this is more than double the effect size of feedback (0.75). Collective teacher efficacy is beyond three times more powerful and predictive than socio-economic status (0.52). It is also greater than three times more likely to influence student achievement than student motivation and concentration, persistence, and engagement (0.48).

Collective Efficacy ing Conditions

By Jenni Donohoo



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Collective teacher efficacy refers to the “collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities”

Collective teacher efficacy, as an influence on student achievement, is a contribution that comes from the school—not the home and not the students themselves. According to the Visible Learning Research (Hattie, 2012), it is more than double the effect of prior achievement (0.65) and more than triple the effect of home environment (0.52) and parental involvement (0.49). This supports Bob Marzano’s (2003) conclusion, based on his analysis of research conducted over thirty-five years, that “schools that are highly effective produce results that almost entirely overcome the effects of student backgrounds” (p. 7). Research shows that at the school level, collective teacher efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to the school’s level of academic success.

“...three enabling conditions for collective teacher efficacy to flourish”

Perceptions of collective efficacy however, vary greatly among schools. Some staffs believe that through their collaborative efforts they can help students achieve in measurable ways, while others feel that they can do very little to impact student results. The adaptive challenge is in shifting the latter group's beliefs. Although there is still much to be learned in regard to factors that contribute to collective efficacy, existing research provides guidance on three enabling conditions for collective teacher efficacy to flourish. While enabling conditions do not cause things to happen, they increase the likelihood that things will turn out as expected. Attending to these three enabling conditions will help in realizing the possibility of collective teacher efficacy in schools.



Advanced Teacher Influence

There is a clear and strong relationship between collective efficacy and the extent of teacher leadership in a school (Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Goddard, 2002; Knobloch, 2007). Advanced teacher influence involves teachers assuming specific leadership roles and, along with that, the power to make decisions on school-wide issues. Sherri Lewis (2009) suggested that “with more opportunity to participate in school decision-making, teams build more mastery experiences in this type of decision-making and experience social persuasion through colleagues' feedback” (p. 72). In order to advance teacher influence, administrators can identify areas that might be considered for school improvement (e.g. school environment, delivery of curriculum, professional learning, collective efficacy, parental involvement, etc.) and begin to increase opportunities for teachers to become involved in meaningful ways. Providing teachers greater autonomy and influence over important decisions will help to build collective efficacy.

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Goal Consensus

Having a clear set of goals is important to the success of any endeavor—including school improvement. Setting measurable and appropriately challenging school goals helps educators achieve purposeful results—especially when the staff reaches consensus on which goals to set. Terri Barber Kurz and Stephanie L. Knight (2003) found that consensus on school goals was a significant predictor of collective efficacy in their study which examined the relationship between the two. It takes a special skill set to lead a group in collaboratively developing, communicating, and gaining consensus on powerful goals that transform learning, teaching, and leading. Understanding why goal setting is important and having knowledge of how goal setting works is critical to the effective execution of this leadership practice. Viviane Robinson et al. (2009) identified three conditions that must be met in setting goals.

The conditions of effective goal setting required that:

- the team had the capacity to meet the goals;
- the goals were clear and specific; and
- the staff was committed to the goals.



Leaders can help build collective efficacy by communicating a strong belief in the capacity of the staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning and attain appropriately challenging goals throughout the goal setting process. Acknowledge joint accomplishments and identify and celebrate small and large wins that have resulted from team work.



Responsiveness of Leadership

In schools where leaders act consistently with the principle that it is their responsibility to help others carry out their duties effectively, leaders are responsive and show concern and respect for their staff. Responsive leaders demonstrate an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and protect teachers from issues and influences that detract from their teaching time or focus. This includes providing teachers with materials and learning opportunities necessary for the successful execution of their job. When principals demonstrate the ability to respond to the needs of the staff, teachers feel supported and they have a greater belief in their collective ability to affect student outcomes. Staffs respond positively by working more diligently. Responsiveness requires awareness of situations – the details and undercurrents in the school. Is anything preventing the team from carrying out their duties effectively? If so, how can leaders respond to the situation in a way in which the team will feel supported?



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In Conclusion

If educators' realities are filtered through the belief that they can do very little to influence student achievement, then it is very likely these beliefs will be manifested in their practice. Rather than leaving it to chance, it is timely and important to consider how collective efficacy beliefs may be fostered in schools and organizations. Three enabling conditions, identified from research on school characteristics associated with collective teacher efficacy, were outlined above. While there is no failsafe set of steps leaders can take, by attending to the enabling conditions, change leaders increase the likelihood that collective efficacy will be fostered. By strengthening collective teacher efficacy, teachers will develop the resolve to persist against challenges and realize increased student results. Given its effect on student learning and achievement, the importance of strengthening collective efficacy must not be understated or overlooked. ■

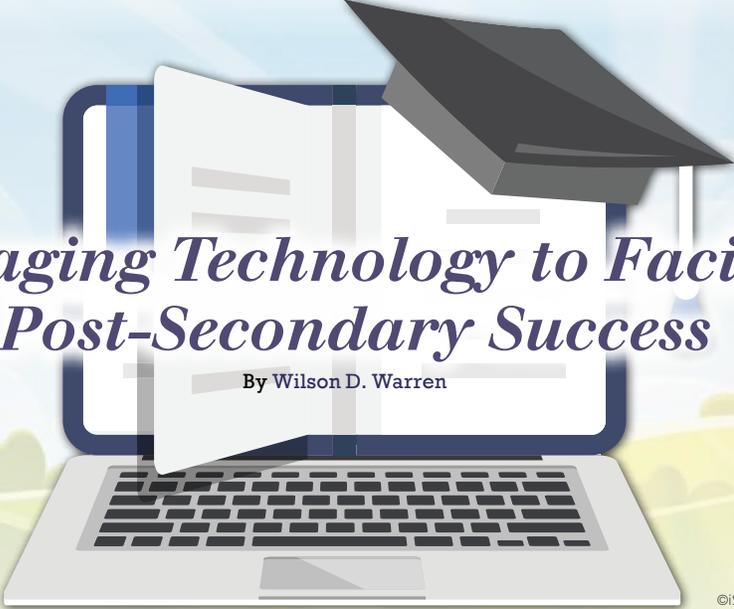
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AUTHOR BIO

Jenni Donohoo is a best-selling author and Corwin consultant with more than 15 years experience in leading school change. In her latest book, entitled *Collective Efficacy: How Educators' Beliefs Impact Student Learning* she outlines additional enabling conditions along with leadership practices, professional learning designs and protocols for fostering collective efficacy in schools. This book will be available this fall.

Rural Leadership:



Leveraging Technology to Facilitate Post-Secondary Success

By Wilson D. Warren

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Enhanced ICT Capabilities Playing Integral Role for Rural Students Transitioning to University

The topic of rural student success in post-secondary studies and ensuring that rural students successfully complete their secondary schooling and reach their post-secondary goals has been a research topic of interest for me my whole life. What was observed most prevalently in our area of the province was rural students were departing from their post-secondary studies within their first year of study without finishing any program. We have seen dramatic improvements with rural student success in post-secondary studies within the past five years and I believe strongly that it can be attributed to a number of tangible factors: specifically, the advancement in ICT capabilities within the rural communities and the subsequent skills learnt in taking high school courses via distance education offered through CDLI (Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation). Both of those factors have allowed rural students to finish their high school programs at homewhile at the same time providing the necessary study and work skills to be successful in post-secondary studies.

The unifying theme of research into student departure from post-secondary studies has been the idea that a student's involvement in the social environment is critical to success in their new academic surroundings (McLaughlin & Brozovsky, 1998). Tinto (1993) argues that a rural student's sense of academic and social belonging impacts on their persistence and subsequent graduation. These underlying themes have guided the many research studies that have been conducted over the last two decades.

Transition to the academic and social aspects of university can be a hard event for many rural students. Those that experience problems adjusting to their new surroundings tend to be of greater risk of departing (Tinto, 1987). Tinto argues that a rural student may find it difficult to integrate into their environment because they may find themselves unable to separate themselves from past associations (especially those from high school and rural communities) or because they feel at odds with the institution (experience a lack of fit with academic and/or social environment of the institution and the community of study). The inability of the student to find an individual (peer, professor or staff member) to identify with at the institution, is argued by Tinto as a major reason for departure of students. If a student is unable to establish a membership in a group on campus the more likely they are of separating themselves with the institution (this is especially true if they find membership in a group that has no connection to the institution).

Models of student persistence have consistently highlighted the importance of students' past academic achievements to their post-secondary persistence and success (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Cabrera, Nora, & Casteñeda, 1993; Tinto, 1987). Astin (1993) suggested that "the most 'dropout prone' freshmen are those with poor academic records in high school, low aspirations [and] poor study habits" (p. 45). Ramist (1981) argued that student motivation should be considered the sine qua non of persistence in post-secondary and, therefore, the most important factor in persistence research.

Rural Leadership

Even though, I could find no current studies that report significant difference between distance and non-distance students with regard to their high school achievement, it is possible that the students who complete high school distance education courses are more motivated to achieve and persist at university. This is consistent with earlier research which suggests that high school students who participate in on-line courses are often more highly motivated, self-disciplined and independent (Barbour & Reeves, 2009). It may also be possible that the experience of completing on-line distance education courses in high school prepared rural students for a more independent approach to learning. This aspect of the distance education course experience – asynchronous, independently motivated study – is consistent with the study skills that many students need to succeed in the university environment (Dodd et al., 2009).

One need not look any further than rural Newfoundland; particularly communities on the south west coast portion of the island as living proof of the benefits of advanced communication and technology and the positive impact of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI). The schools have progressed from offering one distance

course through telemedicine communication via a dial up connection to high speed fibre optic Internet connection offering its entire high school curriculum through CDLI. All the rural students who attended post-secondary within the past five years have graduated with success (either received a degree or diploma). Tinto (1987) noted that many students face difficulty in making the transition from high school to the post-secondary setting when they must move away from their families and established social networks to attend a post-secondary institution. This separation from their home community, which can be both psychological and physical, cuts students off from their established social support networks and norms, culture, practices and habits. Tinto suggested that the degree of difficulty experienced in making the transition is highly dependent on an individual's ability to adjust to a new life in a new environment, and to integrate into the culture of a new group (Dodd et al., 2009).

We found in rural communities on the south west coast that rural students' use of communications technology in their first year of post-secondary studies allowed them to maintain a connection between their place of study and their home life. These rural students were more comfortable with using computer technology and other communication tools through the experience gained in taking all their high school courses through CDLI, which allowed them to more easily keep in touch with their friends and family. The sustained social and family connections provided these students with enhanced social support, eased the difficulties of separation,

and made the transition to and continuation in post-secondary studies less difficult. These rural students cited the use of modern technologies such as face time, skype and messenger as important tools to keep them connected to love ones and friends from a distance.

The high speed Internet connection that exist today allows both rural students and even adults alike to stay within the communities for advanced learning through distance education. I am not only speaking as principal, teacher and community resident but also as living proof of what opportunities it provides for rural communities and its residents. I attended All Saints All Grade School as a student when there was no internet in the community or computers in the school to having advanced to the point where I was able to remain home and work while completing a Masters and Doctoral degree via distance education. Within the past three years, I have been able to continue to work in the community while teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses via distance education for both the University of Prince Edward Island and Memorial University. These advances have provided rural communities with the capabilities to stay virtually connected while offering its residents the opportunity for advanced skills and training. This was unheard of even ten years ago as rural communities had no access to Internet connection. Today we have high speed Internet and because of the ICT capabilities it is providing, we are seeing it generate rural student success in post-secondary studies both on site and through distance education through the enhanced social networks and connections with home that it provides. ■



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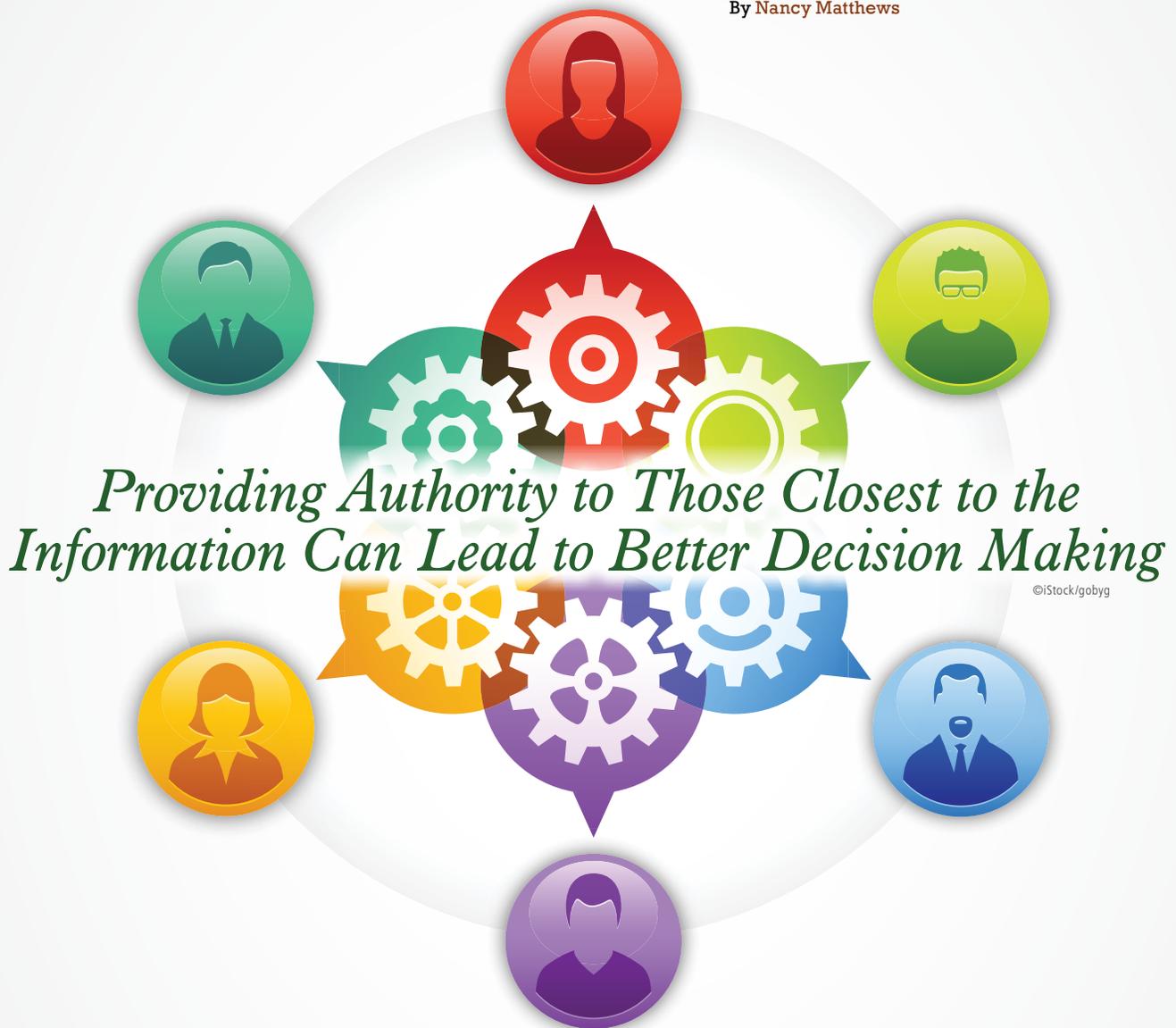
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AUTHOR BIO

Dr. Wilson D. Warren has been involved in educational leadership close to 20 years. He has presented at national conferences such as the AERA, the Small School Conference, as well as numerous in-services for school staff. He has won a number of awards for his educational leadership including the Distinguished Victor May School Administrator of the Year; Canada's Outstanding Principal; School Administrators Council's Distinguished Principal of the Year; WHSCC's Health and Safety Educator Award. Dr. Warren graduated from Dalhousie University with a Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Physical Education. He graduated with a Masters degree from Memorial University and a Doctoral degree from the University of Calgary. Dr. Warren is currently the principal at Whitbourne Elementary School in Whitbourne, NL. Prior to that, he was the principal at All Saints All Grade School in Grey River, NL.

Studying the Shared Authority Education Model

By Nancy Matthews



With good intentions, many theories are tried, many theories are tested; professional development is mandated, programs directed. For many educators, it can sound like a well-worn record skipping as we play the same tune repeatedly in education. It is time we altered our tune by examining the process of change and distributing the authority across each level of the education system.

Locating those closest to the information in education is like chasing a moving target. In a classroom, students are the closest to the information; in a school, teachers are the closest to the information; in a district, schools are closest to the information; and in a province, districts are closest to the information. Total authority at any level is not the answer; however, increasing authority at each level would strengthen the performance of the system as a whole, as more stakeholders become part of decision-making.

“Our lesson is clear: Instructional leadership must be a shared, community undertaking. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school”

Talk to any teacher and they will say that they feel a strong sense of responsibility for their students’ learning. The role of the teacher is very powerful; yet, when attempting to help teachers it is the educational leaders at other levels within the system who make most of the reform decisions. Those decisions however, are only as affective as their implementation. When the teachers pass that sacred door into the mecca we call the classroom, they essentially can follow their own prerogatives and be whoever they want. A random classroom visit by administration is not going to significantly change teacher practice as much as administrator feedback, collaboration with teacher teams on curricular and instructional best practices, student learning, and identification of necessary professional development. Along with continuous support, administrators must also trust that teachers are doing their very best. Essentially teachers have the final authority on how they are going to teach once behind closed doors, but even with all that authority within the classroom, teachers have little authority when it comes to what happens outside their classroom.

Many years ago, Owens (1998) talked of the importance of shared involvement in decision-making saying:

“Thus, empowering teachers and others to participate in decision making would be viewed by the administrator as losing power by giving it away to others... Modern, empowering administrators, on the other hand, understand that one gains power by sharing it with others because in collaborative effort the power available to the group multiplies.” (p. 238)

More recently, Owens and Valesky (2015) reinforced this point stating:

“Many present-day educational organizations, though still hierarchical, have developed collaborative cultures to such an extent that reverting to the autocratic model would be difficult; the administrator is not so much confronted with the issue of whether others will be involved in decision making but, rather, how and to what extent they will be involved.” (p. 298)

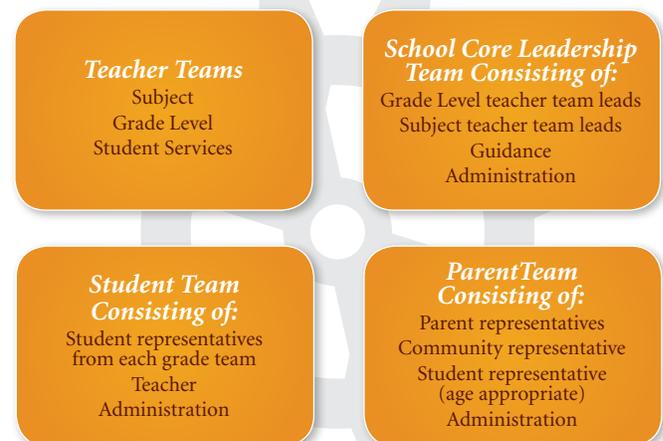
Similarly, Sinek (2014) says that leaders must give authority to those closest to the information and tells a story of David Marquet, a career submariner. Sinek quotes Marquet as saying,

“Those at the top, have all the authority and none of the information. Those at the bottom have all the information and none of the authority. Not until those without information relinquish their control can an organization run better, smoother and faster and reach its potential.” (p. 144)

This collaborative culture would be framed by teachers relinquishing some control in their classroom, principals relinquishing some control in the school, and districts and government departments relinquishing some systematic control. However, doing so at any level does not relinquish responsibility; giving more authority to students for their learning, the teacher is still centrally responsible for student learning; giving more authority to teachers for their teaching, the principal is still responsible for the decisions made at the school, and so on at the incremental levels in education. But with relinquishing some control, the daunting task for educators of ensuring that students learn can be made much easier when students are part of their learning and teachers are part of school decision-making through shared leadership. As Lambert (2002) states, “Our lesson is clear: Instructional leadership must be a shared, community undertaking. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school” (p. 37).

With that in mind, giving authority to those closest to the information lends itself to group decision-making with greater combined knowledge offering different perspectives and approaches. It also allows for more ownership. When there is more ownership, there is no thought of becoming complacent; there is a vested interest in a shared community. DuFour and Eaker (1998) explain the concept of teams within a professional learning community (PLC): having shared mission, vision, values, goals; collaborative culture; collective inquiry; action orientation; commitment to continuous learning; and results orientation. With the PLC concept, schools would have many teams so that all stakeholders are represented for decision-making (see figure 1).

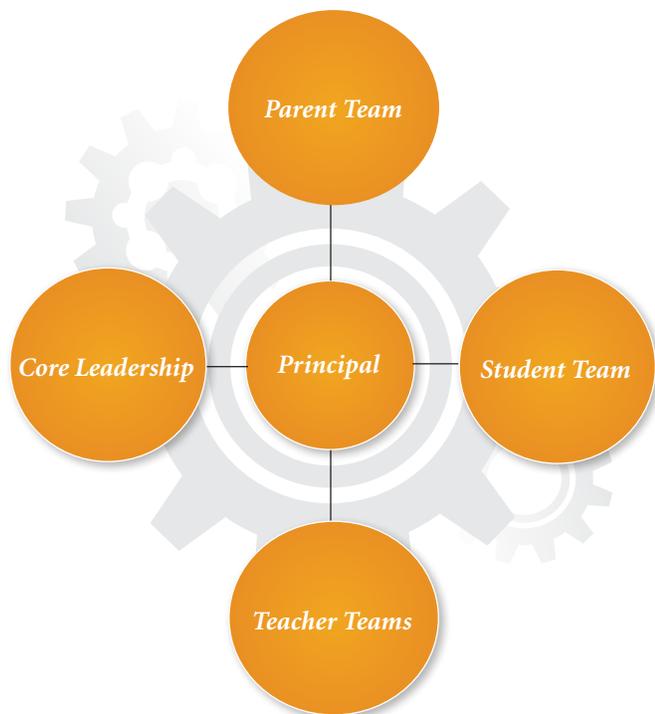
Figure 1: Sample School Professional Learning Communities



For these teams to be effective, there is first the need to get a benchmark on where schools are as a PLC. Williams, Brien, Sprague, and Sullivan (2008) report on their *Professional Learning Communities School Instrument* that provides schools with a tool to do just that; an opportunity to assess where they are as a PLC so that a school and its teams can pinpoint what they need to work on for the staff to work together better as teams. The survey assesses culture, leadership, teaching, and professional growth and development. As they point out, “this readiness assessment is intended to generate reflection on existing organizational practice rather than serve as an external evaluative measure” (p. 6). Thus, an instrument such as this allows for a non-threatening look at the current reality at a school, and complements and assists with a shared decision-making approach, keeping in mind the role of the principal.

Michael Fullan (2015) shares a system change strategy, “Leadership from the Middle’ (LftM), first identified by Hargreaves and Braun” with “the middle’ – the districts – to lead system change” (p. 22). As a principal, for the sake of considering if authority was provided to those closest to the information, I looked at the middle or the centre being dependent upon where you are in the system. Within the school, the principal is at the center of teams, receiving information. Thus, school teams would be like the spokes in a wheel, keeping the center, the principal, grounded with information for shared decision-making (see figure 2).

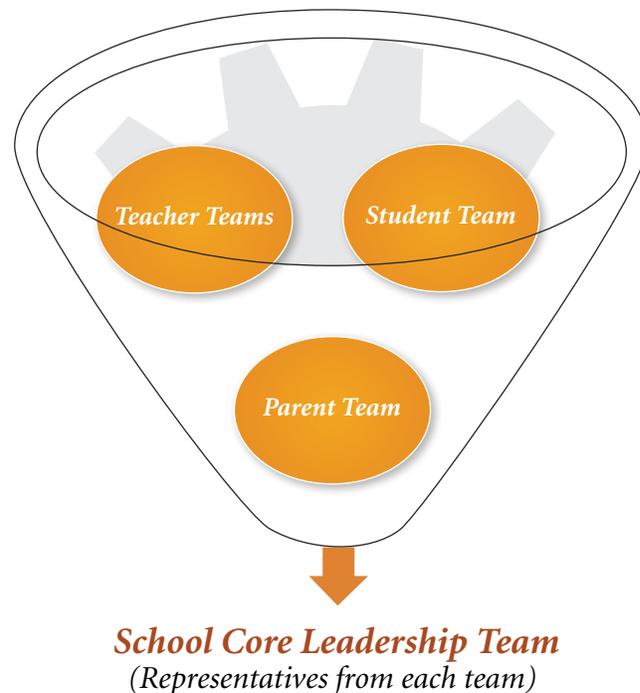
Figure 2: School Leadership from the Centre



With a process in place for all stakeholders at a school to be included, the principal is at the center, because of being part of all teams and having the responsibility for decisions made; however, with this process, the principal, along with the leadership team, has an opportunity to make clearly informed decisions at the school level with all involved. This transfer of

decision-making authority allows more of a process to unfold for school administrators to gather information from teachers, parents, students, and the community, with ownership and informed shared decision-making through the core leadership team (see figure 3).

Figure 3: School Funneling of Information for Shared Decision-Making



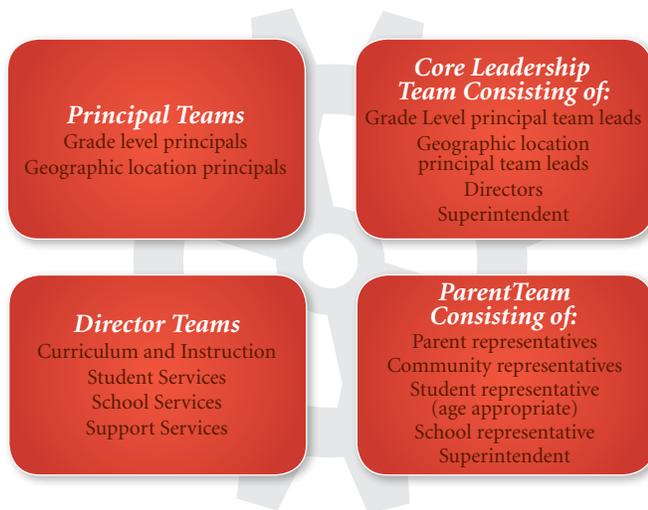
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Shared Authority

Figure 4: District Professional Learning Communities



If a school is well in tune with having teams and shared decision-making, it is reasonable for schools to be given direction, but not micromanaged by the district. Once the direction is given, the school principal and staff would decide what is needed to get there, including ongoing professional learning. If given some autonomy to accomplish the vision and if given support required along with ownership, schools can determine their needs and know what to solicit from districts for resources, professional learning, and support.

Just as great learning happens when principals are empowered to work with teachers and share information, principals can be empowered to work and learn together as well. Together they can determine what professional learning and support they require, share books with colleagues for learning, have professional dialogue, and so much more, thus taking ownership of their learning. Principals would lead their learning, just as teachers would lead their learning. It would transform professionalism in education and raise the competence and skill expected of leaders. And just as teachers are encouraged to use their professional judgement when evaluating students, principals would be encouraged and afforded the opportunity to use their professional judgement on what is needed at their school. Authority at the school level with built-in accountability eliminates the recipe of one size fits all in schools.

That is not to say that there is no need for a district or a government department of education and giving schools all the autonomy may lead to “have” and “have not” schools so that is not the answer. But it also does not mean that schools should not be given any authority. Schools would decide what is needed, whether it be resources, training, support, or any type of assistance, all while keeping the greater shared educational vision in mind. This was made clear in research done by Dickson and Mitchell (2014) with Ontario school district superintendents. In part of their research, they studied the importance of establishing a direct connection between the superintendents’ problems of practice and the principals’ and the teachers’ problems of practice and found that “it was, therefore, logical that they would determine student learning goals by way of the principal learning goals, who in turn would determine their learning goals by way of teacher learning goals, which is based on student learning outcomes” (p. 19). This represented a whole system approach to education.

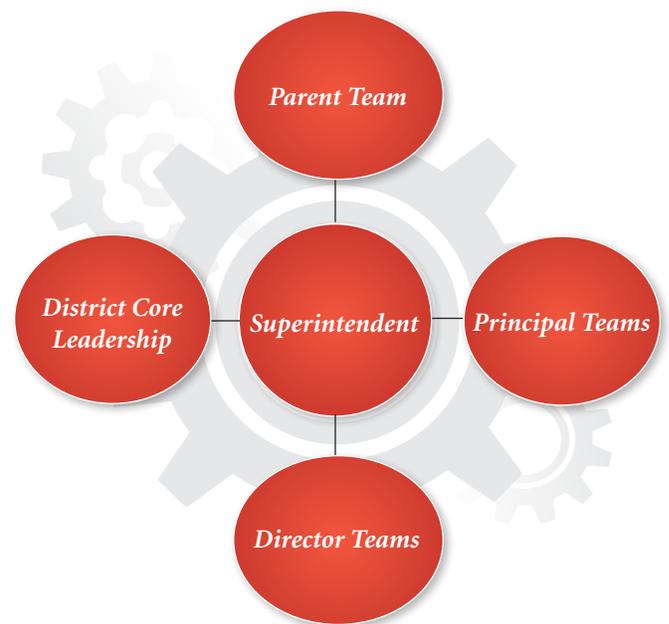
A Whole System Approach

In a paper on district-level influence on PLCs, Brien, Williams, and Briggs (2009) reported: “The conditions that define district culture can have an impact not just on the successful transformation of schools into PLCs; they can affect attempts for educational reform at the district level as well” (p. 4). They go on to say that the successful implementation and sustainability of this reform relies on the establishment of a PLC culture at all levels of the system—school, district, and province. With this in mind, as shown above with all stakeholders represented at the school level, this could be mirrored on a broader scale (see figure 4).

Like schools, with teams in place, districts would determine a benchmark of where they are as PLCs. Similarly, Williams and Brien (2008) shared information on their Professional Learning Communities Internal District Instrument that assesses a district’s culture, structure and operations, leadership, and professional development in relation to PLC principles. Again, like the school survey, its intention is to provide internal data for districts to use for reflection, growth, and capacity building throughout its operations.

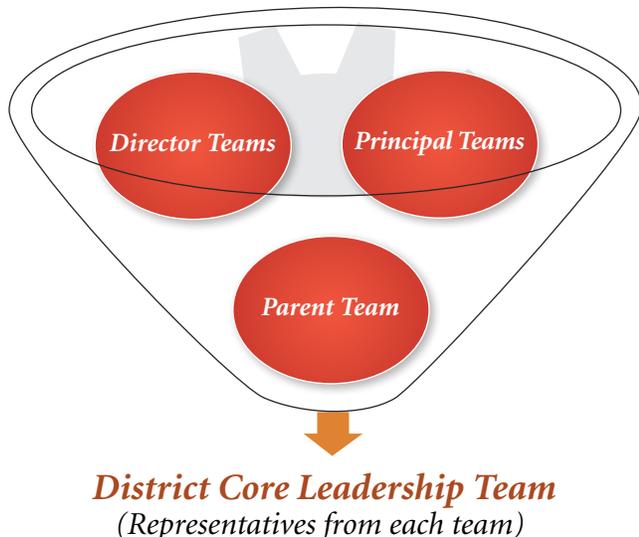
Similar to the school level, within a district, leadership is the professional work of everyone in the district. Within the district, the superintendent is at the center, the key player in decision-making when gathering feedback from all stakeholders, like the role of a school principal at a school, but on a larger scale (see figure 5).

Figure 6: District Leadership from the Centre



This collaboration image would include all voices being heard. If any stakeholder within the system is by-passed, then an important spoke is missing in the wheel of collaboration and trust. Expecting PLCs at schools, but not having it in districts, is an oxymoron. PLCs at all levels must be carefully handled, valued, and modeled. Again, this allows for ownership and shared decision-making through a core leadership team (see figure 6).

Figure 6: District Funneling of Information for Shared Decision-Making



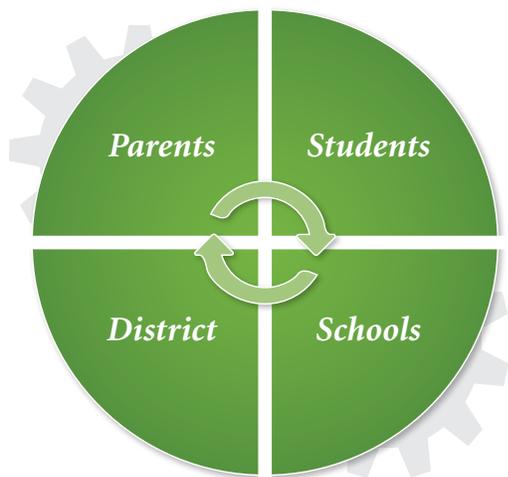
PLCs At All Levels In Education

This system could also be mirrored at the government level of education. Fullan (2005) refers to it as the “tri-level solution”:

In professional learning communities writ large, the system as a whole adopts the agenda of fostering deep learning communities. In other words, schools and communities explicitly pursue the development of new cultures of professional learning; districts, regions, and schools establish infrastructures to support and monitor such development; and states or provinces commit themselves to policies and strategies for systematically addressing the evolution of professional learning cultures. This is a tri-level solution because it builds capacity across the three levels. (p. 211)

With that goes continuous feedback, not perception feedback as a one-shot deal from a random survey or a one-shot discussion with random teachers or a few meetings with random principals. Continuous feedback is needed in multiple directions, from the district to schools, from the schools to districts, from the school administration to the teachers, from the teachers to the school administration, from the teachers to the students, from the students to the teachers, and so on. This allows for continuous growth, collaboration, trust, shared leadership, and decision-making at all levels (see figure 7).

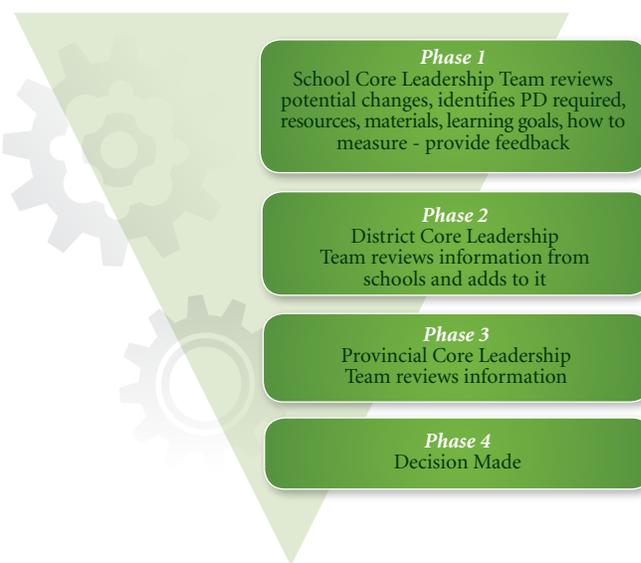
Figure 7: A Circle of Shared Decision-Making



Beyond Schools

Today there is still a chasm between education departments and districts on one side, and school and student learning in the classroom on the other side. How can that gap be bridged and is it possible to sustain those bridges? Overall decision-making in education requires a paradigm shift. Fullan (2008) says, “Capacity building entails leaders investing in the development of individual and collaborative efficacy of a whole group or system to accomplish significant improvements” (p. 13). As an entire system, a paradigm shift would mean that consideration of changes to accomplish significant improvements being first given to teachers and administrators for pondering, then to districts, then departments (see figure 8).

Figure 8: Paradigm Shift in the Education System



This shift would require courageous leadership at all levels, relinquishing control, allowing for true large scale collaboration in decision-making. It is a shift that would require a tri-level change in the culture of the education system. As we realize the significance of making such a change, the words of Brené Brown (2012) ring loud:

“Rehumanizing work and education requires courageous leadership. Honest conversation about vulnerability and shame are disruptive. The reason we’re not having these conversations in our organization is that they shine light in the dark corners. Once there is language, awareness, and understanding, turning back is almost impossible and carries with it severe consequences. We all want to Dare Greatly. If you give us a glimpse into that possibility, we’ll hold on to it as our vision. It can’t be taken away.” (p. 188)

This shift in education would certainly require more thought, conversations, and research, but oh what potential it holds if we dare to try. The issue we face is not to justify why authority should be given to those closest to the information, it is how we go about doing so.

Move – Get Off a Dead Horse

As with many complex issues, the changes we need to recognize are best understood by a story. In their illustrated storybook, *If You're Riding a Horse and It Dies, Get Off*, Grant and Forsten (1999) write:

*Do you think a bigger whip would help?
Let's visit some schools that are successfully riding dead horses.
Has anyone thought of using an electric prod?
Let's try a more experienced rider.
Let's assemble a committee to study dead horses.
I think we should raise the standards for riding dead horses.
I think testing the horse would help.
I think we should evaluate the horse's reputation.
What about implementing an Individual Equestrian Plan (IEP)
Why don't we try adding an additional saddle?
Let's try team riding.
We will categorically deny there is anything wrong with the horse.
The basic problem is the horse's parents-poor breeding!
Let's try throwing more money at the problem.
I think we should give the rider a competency test.
What I think is needed is federal assistance.
I know what to do! If you're riding a horse and it dies, get off the horse
...and try something new.*

Powerful words in a small children's book. We, as educators, have great intentions, but sometimes we need to take a deeper look at doing things differently. In education, it could start with giving more authority to those closest to the information. Especially when we take into consideration what our attempts affect: student learning. ■

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Using Standards of Practice to Drive School Growth:



STORIES FROM THE FIELD COMPETENCY SEVEN:

Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

By Carmen Mombourquette and Nicole Pesta



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In the last edition of the CAP Journal we shared insights about the managing of school resources core professional competency for principals which emerged during our research about highly effective school leaders in Alberta. In this edition, we continue to share our research findings on the evolution of the Alberta Education standards of practice for school leaders with the seventh of seven competencies, understanding and responding to the larger societal context. Read on to discover why and how this essential competency, which when practiced by education leaders will ensure optimum learning and development for all students.

Adhering to the Guideline

“The principal understands and responds appropriately to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting the school.”

(Alberta Education, 2009, p. 6).

Understanding and responding to the larger societal context captures the relationship between the school and community contexts which influence the role of the principal, and in turn are influenced by the principal. Alberta Education (2009) lists four main indicators which allow a leader to track their efficacy in this final dimension; (a) advocating for the interests and needs of students, (b) demonstrating a knowledge of educational issues and trends spanning from the local to the global scales, (c) assessing and responding to the community context while fulfilling the school's vision and mission and, (d) advocating for community support of education throughout the school, system, and provincial levels.

“The principals in our study showcased their ability to illuminate the social contexts of their schools while blending them into their visions, missions, and programming.”

Researchers have noted the need for principals to adopt a more receptive form of leadership to respond to the ever-growing identified needs of students, challenging them “to look beyond their own interests, values, and perspectives” and accommodate practices that recognize diversity perspectives of ethnicity, race, language, religion, and sexual orientation (Zaretsky, 2004, p. 283). In pointing to the growing heterogeneous student population, Riehl (2008), identifies three tasks of the principal: developing updated meanings of diversity, promoting inclusive school cultures and educational programming, and forming relationships between schools and communities.

While maintaining their knowledge of global trends in education, principals may depend more heavily on Ministry and districts to inform them of issues and their possible impact on local schools. Likewise, parents and community members can be helpful contributors when ascertaining diverse community needs and how the school should respond to them (Johnson, 2007; Ladky & Peterson, 2008). This connection to, and visibility within, the community allows the principal to, in-turn, shape external views about education, fostering trust and rapport between the school and community (Khalifa, 2012).

How Are Principals Measuring Up?

The principals in our study showcased their ability to illuminate the social contexts of their schools while blending them into their visions, missions, and programming. They succeeded in keeping the varying communities informed as to what school life entailed, and utilized media to ascertain public expectations of their schools.

Two of our interviewees provided examples whereby they not only developed programs that ensured impoverished students had enough food and climate-appropriate clothing, but also that the school became a place within the community where new Canadians could learn about the Alberta education system along with community supports and services to aid with their integration into society. To accommodate non-English speaking members of the community, their schools printed newsletters in multiple languages, translators were hired to ensure everyone could play a role in the educational planning process, and liaisons were brought on for home visits.

In less culturally diverse communities, our principals were able to advocate for children and education within the community through electronic means such as newsletters, school webpages, social media, blogs, etc. However, some of our leaders also cautioned about an over reliance on email, recommending that face-to-face and voice-to-voice interactions were also critical for effective communications.

By maintaining the roles of education advocates and school leaders, our principals effectively gave parents voices. One principal spoke of the elected parent representatives from each class who brought the voice of each classroom to school council meetings and reported the council news back to the parents. Whatever the chosen means for advocating for education, it was evident that the group of principals we interviewed knew their communities well, and spoke to the great value of that knowledge for developing highly effective schools.

Interview Conclusions

School and community contexts matter and serve as an influence on the role of the principal, and the principal in turn influences them. If one competency stands out to underscore the role of principal as “boundary spanner,” with an eye on global, national, and provincial trends impacting education, on what’s happening in the community, and on relations with central office, this is the one that demarcates where formal leadership differs from informal leadership. The principal carries the heavy pail of water on this dimension.

Principal beliefs also lead to change in school structures, which leads to improved student results when aligned with their dispositions such as passion, persistence, and commitment to social justice (Jacobson, 2011). In Canada, the issues of ethnicity, race, language, religion, and sexual orientation often frame various perspectives on diversity. Our sample of principals, even in small towns and rural settings, are learning to grapple with the challenges.

Attending to the advocacy mandate, the principal makes every effort to impact student learning. The mandate includes the principal’s role of community leader, when coupled with high visibility and advocacy for community causes, leads to trust and rapport between school and community. This sense of principal engagement, in turn, may lead to improved academic results for students. ■

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Embroidering *Leadership:* *Viewing School Management as One Thread in an Ornate Tapestry*

By Carmen Mombourquette and Pamela Adams



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We applaud the Canadian Association of Principals for selecting the theme “Leading vs Managing” as a focus for discourse in this edition of the CAP Journal. Discussion surrounding the constructs of educational leadership and school management has occurred since the inception of formal schooling in Canada. Throughout the early 20th Century, organizing and overseeing school operations was the prime responsibility of the principal, usually commensurate with his role as the head teacher. For example, the 1937 version of the Alberta School Act defined the principal’s role to, “prescribe the duties of the assistants and....be responsible for the organization and general discipline of the whole school” (p. 62).

The responsibility of organizing the school, as outlined in 1937, has changed markedly in the 21st Century description of the role as set forth in 2016 in the Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders in Alberta (PPCSLs). This document identifies the moral imperative of school leadership as, “The principal is an accomplished teacher who practices quality leadership in the provision of opportunities for optimum learning and development of all students in the school” (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 4).

Embroidering Leadership

Inherent in the PPCSLs are seven competencies that clarify the role of school leadership. As can be noted, managing school operations is but one of several key components of school leadership required to ensure “the provision of opportunities for optimum learning.” The seven competencies are:

- Fostering Effective Relationships;
 - Embodying Visionary Leadership;
 - Leading a Learning Community;
 - Providing Instructional Leadership;
 - Developing and Facilitating Leadership;
 - Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context; and
 - Managing School Operations and Resources.
- Instructional Leadership;
 - Clear and Focused Mission;
 - Safe and Orderly Environment;
 - Climate of High Expectations;
 - Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress;
 - Positive Home-School Relations; and
 - Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task.

The competencies direct practitioners of school leadership to view the role as holistic and all-encompassing, not to reduce and compartmentalize the responsibilities into disparate separate boxes. In this sense, management is integrated into leadership; they are entwined and often interdependent in optimizing student learning.

Larry Lezotte, a guru of the effective schools movement, penned a series of leadership responsibilities that he referred to as the Correlates of Highly Effective Schools (Lezotte, 2001). These correlates weave the

responsibilities of management throughout and Lezotte called upon school leaders to think more broadly about the impact they and their organizations have on student learning. The correlates bear remarkable similarity in scope and nature to the PPCSLs found in Alberta. The correlates are:

In a study conducted by Mombourquette and Bedard (2016) into the ways in which principals in Alberta were fulfilling their mandate of leadership as described by the PPCSLs, a number of findings emerged about the interplay between leadership and management. In the study, principals from schools described as highly effective were compared with principals of schools with similar socioeconomic profiles in which students were described as underachieving. Bedard and Mombourquette (2016) noted the following about the interplay between leadership and management:

■ Principals in highly effective schools had a clear and well-articulated vision for education; had a no-nonsense approach to fostering healthy and productive relationships; didn't back away from ensuring that student learning was at the forefront of school initiated actions; spent frequent and purposeful time visiting the instructional spaces of the school; taking what they learned from the visits to lead enhanced delivery of educational services to students; and provided for the management of the operation in an almost invisible way. One such principal was described as “simultaneously being everywhere and nowhere.”

■ Principals in highly effective schools found ways to distribute much of what was classified as management tasks to others, while still maintaining support to ensure that this was done in manner that complemented educational delivery. They did not allow management tasks to create road blocks to teachers' efforts to improve student learning.

■ As a group, principals from less effective schools were hyper-focused on items best described as task completion, or ‘doing leadership’. These included activities such as student discipline, budgeting, organizing the timetable, or scheduling the hours of work for the non-professional staff. They did not attend to issues of relationships, vision, leading learning, instructional leadership, or items associated with building a healthy and productive school culture with a view to maximizing student learning. These principals approached the latter activities as mandated administrative requirements rather than as blended and coordinated activities to lead learning. When asked about their focus on management, they often referred back to their belief that the most important element of their leadership job was to “keep the school organized.” Only when they felt that the school was organized and functioning well did they feel they could turn their attention to other matters such as instructional leadership.

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In our own work with school leaders in Alberta, we have come to realize that there is a strong hesitancy to adopt school leadership practices and there is still a perception that management functions must first be attended to before items like instructional leadership are addressed. Upon further examination, we note that much of the hesitancy is associated with a lack of efficacy in principals' knowledge of how to go about actualizing the competencies outlined in the PPCSLs. This past year, for instance, we were able to survey close to 250 practicing principals, vice principals, and central office leaders around their readiness to implement the competencies. Roughly 30% of principals and 40% of vice principals indicated that they were not ready to effectively enact the competencies in their daily lives as leaders. Their lack of readiness does not come from a place of unwillingness to implement, but rather just the opposite. These school leaders indicate that they know what is entailed in the PPCSLs to be highly effective, but they are just unsure how to go about it. We are now working with them to implement an Awareness and Readiness curriculum that will address their individual and collective areas of need.

As university researchers, we have been fortunate to work with school leaders throughout a number of jurisdictions in Alberta where we operated alongside central office leaders to develop the instructional leadership abilities of school and system leaders. This work was done around a construct we refer to as Generative Leadership that incorporates the highly effective skill of facilitating a generative dialogue. Independent results from three school jurisdictions reveal that after school leaders participated in a process to hone their generative leadership competencies, roughly 95% felt comfortable that they could meet the PPCSL requirement to optimize learning for all students. Not only did they feel confident to do this work, they reported through focus groups and surveys that they believe they had increased their skills to do the work. In all three cases, the process resulted in positive upward trends in student achievement data; parent, student, and teacher satisfaction; and provincial accountability measure results. In each of these jurisdictions, school leaders moved away from viewing management as an isolated skill involving task completion and 'doings things' to the unified view of school leadership as an all-encompassing whole involving making decisions about people and context. ■

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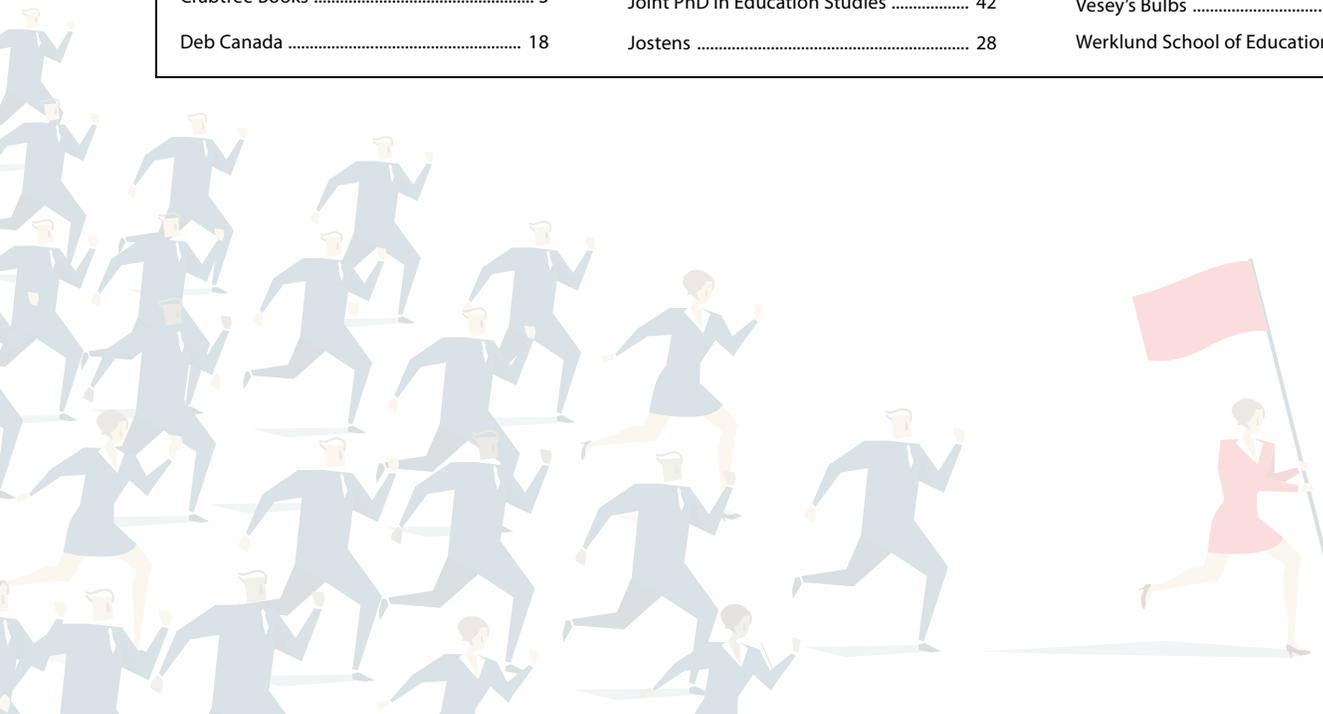
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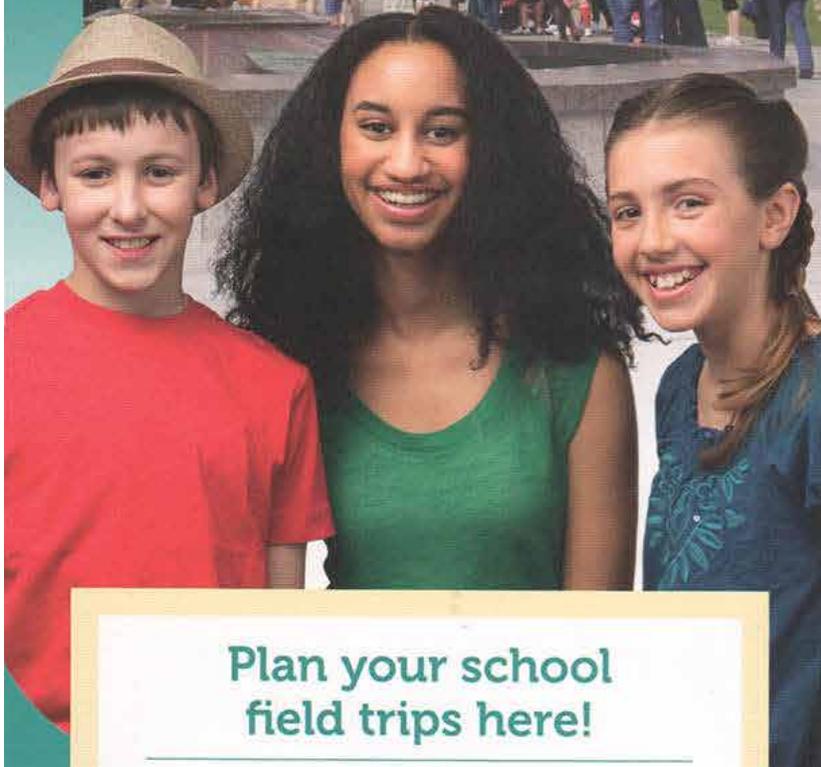


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