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PREFACE

Linda K. Lemasters

Inside of this sixteenth volume, the second issue, are four articles related to planning and change. Once more there are several persons that are due appreciation for their assistance with getting the journal ready for publication. First and foremost would be *Glen Earthman*. He has continued to make sure that the printing and mailing are done in an effective and timely manner. Most importantly, he is always nearby for advice and consultation. The Editorial Review Board assisted with the juried reviews, as well as two guest reviewers: *Carleton Holt* and *Tim Toops*.

I especially would like to thank the authors of the articles; they accepted the suggestions of the reviewers and revised their work in a very timely manner. Appreciation goes out as well to the ISEP Board and the membership for their support and willingness to help.

Please review the work that is featured in this issue. Those readers who are teaching in leadership programs especially may be interested in the article by *Bob Beach* and *Ron Lindahl*. These authors have thoroughly examined the approaches to educational planning and effectively linked the models to the school improvement process. Although it was not a planned issue on the school improvement process, *Barbara Mallory* and *Charles Reavis* had submitted their document on the potential for sustained school improvement within schools and its dependency on a democracy-centered school culture. I am not sure which document I would read first, but they certainly compliment one other.

Chen Schechter and *Ilana Tischler* begin their document with a classic example of what leadership practitioners face daily in our schools—leadership succession. Mid-management and building leaders constantly have this challenge, and it is appropriate that a journal with emphasis on planning would address this problem. *Peter Litchka*'s article provides us with the very practical reminder that leadership succession is just one of the challenges that the educational professional must be willing to face—and just one of the myriad of potential reasons that recruitment into the profession may be so difficult.

This journal is a venue in which we would like to showcase meaningful research on planning and change. The International Society of Educational Planning encourages the readership to submit their research documents and articles. School leadership is experiencing success in student achievement because of planning and making changes based on strategic thinking. We need to get this word out, as certainly all of us are bombarded with the news when success is not achieved.

There is another line of reasoning that I have considered over the past few months while reading articles for this journal as well as the NCPEA yearbook. My thought processes were culminated when I reread Joseph Jaworski's *Synchronicity: The inner path of leadership*. We talk about planning, teach the models, and exhibit the processes in our business and professional lives. Our students and colleagues, however, should not get the idea that this is simply a mechanical process. We want them to know that planning for sustainability, strategic thinking, and strategic action is all very "subtle" or, as Jaworski stated, "...the most subtle territory of leadership." What we are doing is attempting to create the conditions for predictable outcomes, or in some cases (again, as Jaworski suggested) "predictable miracles."

The authors have added to the body of knowledge in planning and change. The journal will continue to pursue this topic, as this pursuit is essential for continuous improvement and deep, meaningful, sustained change. It has been a pleasure to work with the authors and reviewers; please enjoy the product of our collective efforts.

About the Editor

Linda Lemasters is an associate professor and Program Advisor for the Masters/EdS in Educational Leadership and Administration, Department of Educational Leadership, Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University. She has collaborated with Glen Earthman on a textbook and numerous articles and is editor of the 2007 Yearbook for the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration: *At the tipping point: Navigating the course for the preparation of educational administrators*.

ABOUT THE GUEST REVIEWERS

Carleton Holt, EdD, has served as a band director, coach, and school administrator in the public schools in Iowa and South Dakota for over thirty years. He has had articles published by the *Educational Research Quarterly* and *School Business Affairs*. In addition, he is the author of a textbook for educational leaders entitled *School Board Success: A Strategy for Building America's Schools*. (cholt@uark.edu)

Timothy R. Toops, EdD, is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Division of Education at Florida Southern College. He is in demand as a speaker is in the field of reading and curriculum; however, as a former teacher, principal, superintendent, and consultant from the State of Ohio, he has significant expertise in leadership. (ttoops@flsouthern.edu)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert H. Beach and *Ronald A. Lindahl* are professors in Alabama State University's Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Law. They have worked in educational settings in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, England, Spain, and Malawi. Over the past 20 years, they have authored numerous articles and book chapters on educational planning. (rbeach@alasu.edu and rlindahl@alasu.edu)

Peter R. Litchka is an Assistant Professor of Education at Loyola College in Maryland, where he is also the Director of Graduate Program in Administration and Supervision. He has more than 34 years of service in education, including being a teacher, director, assistant superintendent and a superintendent of schools in two districts. (prlitchka@loyola.edu)

Barbara J. Mallory is an assistant professor at Georgia Southern University in the Educational Leadership Program. She is a retired high school principal from North Carolina, who now teaches in the principal preparation program at GSU. (bmallory@georgiasouthern.edu)

Charles A. Reavis is Goizueta Visiting Professor and Director of the Georgia Center for Educational Renewal.

Chen Schechter, Ph.D., is at the Department of Educational Administration and Policy, School of Education, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel. His main research interests are organizational learning, educational policy, educational change, educational leadership, organizational theory, system thinking. (chen_s@macam.ac.il)

Ilana Tischler, Ph.D., an elementary school principal, Netanya, Israel. Her main research interests are leadership, leadership succession, and educational change.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING MECHANISMS AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION: KEY ELEMENTS OF PLANNED SCHOOL CHANGE

Chen Schechter
Ilana Tischler

ABSTRACT

The growing complexity of schoolwork in the current turbulent and unstable environment requires schools to plan for both structural and pedagogical changes. Planning for school change, however, has been increasingly hindered by leadership succession that dramatically affects organizational stability. Although a common phenomenon in our competitive educational realm, leadership succession during school change process has been under-explored. This article illuminates both processes of leadership succession and Organizational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs) as key elements in planned school change. It is argued that institutionalizing OLMs (arenas where knowledge can be analyzed and shared by individual members and then become the property of the entire organization through dissemination and changes in standard routines and procedures) can support the development and retention of a school's memory; thus sustaining the change efforts subsequent to the departure of the original reformer(s).

INTRODUCTION

Seven years ago, the owner landscaped the place. He wanted a no-maintenance garden with beauty bark, perennials, and shrubs. Three years later he moved, just as the garden was beginning to develop. The next owners, avid gardeners, wanted a Victorian garden with flowers galore. They ripped out shrubs, got rid of the beauty bark, and planted more flowers. They stayed two years, and then I moved in. I wanted a no-maintenance, shrub-and-flower garden. Over the past two years, I've planted some of the same shrubs as the first owner had, brought in a little beauty bark, dispensed with some of the flowers the second owner put in, and planted a few more perennials. Had we been able to coordinate the garden design (which, of course, we could not) the whole thing would be lushly full by now. (Wasley, 1992, p. 65)

Leadership succession is gaining attention as a significant factor affecting organizational performance and student achievement. Leadership succession becomes even more critical as educational systems place a higher value on change processes that influence the entire school community (Brock & Grady, 1995). Nevertheless, this transition period in the leadership role heightens organizational members' sense of uncertainty, which limits the ability to implement change (Cuban, 2001). An important way to help administrators and teachers overcome their sense of uncertainty can be careful planning. Guskin (1996) stresses the importance of planning a transition, rather that just letting it happen, suggesting that we should "plan a brief leadership transition period beginning with the previous [principal]'s announcement of intention to leave, allowing the institution to acknowledge its loss, and setting the stage for healthy, productive new relationships (p. 12). This is especially important during times of change. In order to maintain the change, learning patterns should be ingrained in the organizational culture, pedagogical practices, and leadership. Yet, such qualitative patterns are complicated and often compromised by the occurrence of leadership transition during the change process.

Many studies in education deal with change processes and leadership. The actual leadership succession during a change process, however, is under-explored. Thus, there is still a gap in the specific area of the impact of leadership succession on an ongoing school change process. More specifically, the literature that does exist is more commonly centered on executive transitions in public organizations. In the field of education, there has been some limited research on superintendent transitions and teachers' perceptions of succession. This literature, however, tends to focus on the process of searching for new leadership, the organizational effects of leadership succession, and the different reasons for a transition in the leadership role (e.g., retirement, board dissatisfaction), rather than on the transition phase itself. It appears, then, that a neglected but important subject of inquiry is the question of how a successful change can be sustained subsequent to the departure of the original reformer.

Our basic assumption is that the majority of change processes do not take the transition period fully into consideration, not only from the logistic perspective, but also from the knowledge management perspective that supports the retention of an organization's professional excellence while building an institutional memory. Thus, the lack of attention paid to the period of leadership transition represents a critical omission of an important process during times of school change.

This article introduces both concepts of leadership succession and organizational learning mechanisms (OLMs) as key elements in the context of school change. Both concepts are explained, followed by some suggestions for theorizing the interrelationships between leadership succession and OLMs. Finally, further inquiry regarding these interrelated processes is suggested.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

Leadership succession is the actual transition period, during which one school principal takes over the position of another. Fox and Lippitt found that one of the main "[d]ifficulties that mitigates against the most effective involvement of the state organization included rapid turnover in leadership" (1967, p. 2). Similarly, Hargreaves and Fink (2000), 33 years later, reviewed two schools' failure to sustain their innovative character, and found that "both schools experienced problems with leadership succession" (p. 30). These problems in leadership succession are due to the creation of other forces of change (Kirkland, 1991), as well put by Miskel and Cosgrove:

> Succession is a disruptive event that changes the line of communication and relationships of power, effects decision making, and generally disturbs the equilibrium on normal activities. During the succession period, relationships are formed and negotiated, expectations between parties are confirmed or disconfirmed, conflicts may be confronted and resolved, and new leaders are accommodated or not in their work role and the new environment. (cited in Hart, 1991, p. 452)

It appears, then, that leadership succession is a complex process encompassing both individual and organizational features. Thus, whether a leader's departure is long anticipated, or announced as he or she walks out the door, it is a dynamic, often a disruptive, event for those who remain (Briggs, 2000).

Leadership succession can dramatically affect organizational stability. In fact, changes in leadership are commonly used to initiate educational changes. Concurrently, Wasley (1992) suggested that leadership succession can impede a change process already underway, arguing that "good efforts at change are dismantled and a new plan constructed, only to be taken apart when the next leadership transition occurs" (p. 64). Thus, there is a link between the concepts of leadership succession and educational change. So, what are the organizational strategies used to cope with transition and change? Sheppard and Brown (1999) argued that a precondition for successful change is that principals initiate structures that encourage distributed collaborative leadership. These structures, routines, and behavioral regularities, based on information processing, become a source of stability and change during leadership succession.

SCHOOL LEARNING MECHANISMS

School capacity for innovation and reform relies on its ability to collectively process, understand, and apply knowledge about teaching and learning (Louis, 1994). This argument is supported by Spender and Grant's (1996) criticism of schools' over-emphasis on what should be learned, instead of the process of knowledge acquisition, creation, dissemination and integration. Focusing on gathering and processing information within and between schools, according to Barnes (2000), requires establishing opportunities for teachers to collectively think and share information on a sustained basis. Therefore, schools need to establish "system structures, processes and practices that facilitate continuous [collective] learning of all its members" (Silins & Mulford, 2002, p. 444).

With this said, Huber (1991), Marquardt (1996) and DiBella, Nevis, and Gould (1996) classified five phases of the information processing (learning) cycle: (a) information acquisition: the process of obtaining knowledge. This includes experiential learning (organizational experiments, organizational self-appraisal, such as action research), vicarious learning in which organizations attempt to learn from strategies and technologies of other organizations, grafting-recruiting new members who possess knowledge that is not available to the organization, and searching and noticing the environment; (b)

information distribution: the process of sharing information that leads to understanding; (c) information interpretation: the process in which the distributed information is given meaning. The more learning, the more interpretations are developed; (d) organizational memory: the processes and means by which organizational experiences are stored and coded into organizational memory; and, (e) retrieving information from memory for organizational use.

Although these five phases of information processing are ordered progressively, learning is perceived as a cyclical and interactive process. To operationalize organizational systems from an information processing perspective, Popper and Lipshitz (1998, 2000) have proposed a structural approach to organizational learning. The structural approach posits that organizational learning entails the existence of Organizational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs) that are structural and procedural institutionalized arrangements for collecting, analyzing, storing, and disseminating information that is relevant to the performance of the organization and its members (see also DiBella, Nevis & Gould, 1996; Huber, 1991; Marquardt, 1996). OLMs are concrete arenas where knowledge can be analyzed and shared by individual members and then become the property of the entire organization through dissemination and changes in standard routines and procedures. The structures and processes of OLMs serve as an analogue to the individual nervous system and explain how the organization can learn in a non-metaphorical and non-paradoxical way (Lipshitz & Popper, 2000). Consequently, learning around OLMs relates learning by individual members to learning by organizations.

Beyond the scope of this manuscript, there are various barriers to OLMs based on collective information processing. For example, an important barrier can emerge when organizational OLMs are *controlled* by higher levels in the hierarchy, using them as a leverage to sustain power and status-quo. Information processing through OLMs also can blind an effective scanning of the environment and produce blindness that may result in crisis (Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984).

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION AND OLMS

Leadership succession and OLMs are important and interrelated processes, however, often unexplored, especially in light of renewal efforts. Therefore, exploring these processes may contribute to the field of planned educational change. With this said, below are some suggestions for theorizing the interrelated processes of leadership succession and OLMs.

Integrative structures (e.g., weekly grade-level meetings) that enable a process of collaboration are essential for effective leadership succession (Galbraith, 1977; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Lipshitz & Popper, 2000). Going through a transition period in leadership, it should be relatively easier to implement and sustain change programs when information is scanned, interpreted, and shared by the majority of members (Ellis & Maidan, 1997). Especially at times of administrative turnover, organizations with a high intensity of using structural learning mechanisms, when they are systematic, participative, flexible, and dynamic (Bell, 2002), show more shared knowledge (congruence among members' mental models) that reflects the message of change. In this regard, peer observations, monthly departmental meetings according to subject areas, monthly whole faculty meetings, and monthly meetings of teachers with the subject's superintendent, to mention only a few learning mechanisms, form the basic building blocks for the successful continuity of school change through the leadership transition. In other words, learning spaces, based on professional discourse, create a collective memory that has a more powerful impact on organizational members than the often turbulent period of leadership-administrative succession. As OLMs represent a distributed knowledge throughout the entire organization, rather than confined to a central location of one (e.g., principal) particular knowledge system (Walsh & Ungson, 1991), the information shared by teachers represents qualities of schools. Similarly, studying leadership succession at the school level reflects the continuous attempts to break out from analyzing a school's members and functions as isolated to capturing the dynamic and interrelated school processes embedded within the complex phase of leadership succession. In this way, perceiving the interrelated processes of leadership succession and OLMs as school level attributes represents the need to approach school change from a more holistic and participative perspective.

Principals are key players in introducing reflexive spaces-forums-mechanisms into the ongoing school structure. Whereas schools are still perceived to operate according to hierarchical and rational

bureaucratic models (Sheppard & Brown, 1999), OLMs in schools demands leadership that "is about learning together and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively" (Lambert, 1998, p. 5). Principals need to establish OLMs (time and space) that systematically continue after the principal initiator is no longer around. In other words, principals need to conduct ongoing learning processes within the staff that continue after the transition. In this way, innovative practices are less affected by the transition because teachers' knowledge and shared memory with regard to organizational practices become the infrastructure of the reform.

The transition should be communicated, explained, and prepared ahead of time. Each individual in the school must be treated as a unique person experiencing a significant change in his or her own professional life. The new leader should meet with the staff on a regular basis, and discuss the main issues each individual experiences before and after the transition process, on the personal as well as the professional level. Such discussions act as a valuable source of information for the staff and for the new leader alike.

There should be a mandated overlap period for any transition in leadership position. The time of overlap may vary, anywhere from two weeks to two months, depending on the circumstances. Even when the leader is fired, he or she is still expected, and even obligated as part of the contract, to properly hand the leadership to the new leader. The baseline assumption is that the transition period has a major impact on the organization, and as such must be handled with care in order to create the most efficient process toward nurturing the school memory. In doing so, an overlap period prevents time and cost involved in starting over 'from scratch.' It is recommended that the predecessor and the successor be on site together during a transition, helping to clarify the process for both the leaders and the faculty.

PHASES OF LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION DURING PERIODS OF SCHOOL CHANGE

The following phases are suggested as a means of nurturing the school memory during times of change. These phases cannot be perceived as linear, but rather as symbiotic and closely interrelated.

- Introduction of systematic and participative modes of collective learning based on information processing;
- An initial change process, categorized by principal's modeling of how to approach and express the new knowledge. The information pertaining to the change is shared and analyzed in concrete arenas of OLMs and then becomes the property of the entire organization through dissemination and changes in standard routines and procedures. Thus, OLMs create a collective memory of the building blocks of the reform;
- A transition period that includes preparation for the actual transfer of authority. The new leader has to learn about the history, values, traditions and assumptions of the 'old' school by inquiring into the standard routines and procedures before, during, and after the overlap period; and,
- A post-transition period featuring continuity and alteration of school culture and pedagogical practices as communicated through OLMs.

The phases, as described above, enable the school to sustain its successful reform, while staying open to new and alternative ideas as communicated by the new leadership through OLMs.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER EXPLORATION

School change efforts are generally a response to a perceived failure and/or problem. It can be assumed that the pressure associated with responding to failed events directs cognitive attention toward seeking immediate causes, during which participants cannot let down their defenses and open themselves up to exploring and questioning themselves and others. These change efforts often inhibit schools from becoming learning organizations, increasing professional saturation, distraction, and cynicism among practitioners (Brooks, Placier, & Cockrell, 2003). Nevertheless, in light of the complex and uncertain environments in which schools operate, effective planned change and adaptation occur when learning takes place throughout the organization (West, 1994). Planned school change needs to be based on the networks of social processes among community members (Marks & Louis, 1999), which encourage a more systematic and less biased inquiry into learners' mental models.

Rosenholtz (1989), in this regard, found that developing schools, wherein teachers learned from

each other through a collective enterprise, was more effective than 'stuck' schools that had difficulties implementing changes. This was supported by Wohlstetter, Smyer and Mohrman's (1994) findings that "the most significant common element across actively restructuring schools was the extent to which organizational mechanisms were in place that generated interactions for school-level actors around issues related to curriculum and instruction" (p. 278). The growing evidence suggests that an extensive use of collective learning mechanisms (OLMs) related to curriculum and instruction promotes greater teacher commitment and student engagement in school practices (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Rowan, 1993). Moreover, teachers' collegial learning enhances faculty tendency toward experimentation and innovation in the context of planned change. Thus, collegial learning increases teachers' inquiry into instructional materials and practices within school, which in turn, facilitates the use of innovative pedagogical methods that are consistent with school change efforts (Bidwell & Yasumoto, 1999; Camburn, 1997; Marks & Louis, 1997).

As collective learning processes are in contrast to teachers' pedagogical isolation-autonomy, which so often prevails in schools, particularly in secondary ones (Printy, 2002), the principal's role should focus on providing the context (time and space) for dialogue. Principals are responsible for establishing and consistently using processes in which teachers, students, administrators, as well as parents work, together on professional problems as the seeds of any planned change. In this regard, these structures, routines, and behavioral regularities, based on information processing, become a source of stability and change during leadership succession. As OLMs represent a distributed knowledge throughout the entire organization, rather than confined to a central location of one (e.g., principal) particular knowledge system (Walsh & Ungson, 1991), planned change efforts can be more effectively sustained despite leadership succession. Another aspect of such can be found in the role of the new principal to not only initiate collective learning mechanisms as a means for negotiating and planning future school change, but also to consider the collective memory and learning routines established by the former principal(s).

The process of leadership succession during times of school change is one that has been neglected and under-explored, calling for further conceptualization and empirical research. More specifically, how is it that components of change are implemented in such a way that they become basic assumptions of the organization, remaining stable even in the midst of a leadership transition? What is the relationship between leadership succession, extensive use of OLMs, members' mental models, and pedagogical practices? What is the contribution of these collective spaces of information processing to the overall change process during administrative turnover? Furthermore, from a political perspective, how does the extensiveness of OLMs affect the new administration's legitimacy to either sustain or alter the change? During times of leadership succession, can the school benefit more from informal channels of information processing than from formal ones? And finally, there is a need to conceptualize and operationalize the principal's role in creating organizational learning structures in the context of leadership succession.

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PLANNING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: CLOSING THE GAP OF CULTURE WITH DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Barbara J. Mallory
Charles A. Reavis

ABSTRACT

The gap of school culture is the first gap that principals need to address before and during implementation of school improvement strategies. The authors posit that building a school culture of democracy-centeredness is a means to close the culture gap. The democracy-centered school is equipped to deal with external realities internally in a way that is perceived as engaging and participative. Applying Friedman's analysis of context, narratives, and imagination to schools, this paper presents correlates of democracy-centered schools. The overlooked gap of school culture can be filled by democracy-centered leaders, who build capacity for school improvement using democratic principles. Although barriers are identified, including challenges for university principal preparation programs, the potential for sustained school improvement within schools is dependent on a democracy-centered school culture.

INTRODUCTION

Planning to implement school improvement strategies to close achievement gaps begins with an often overlooked gap, the school's culture (Levine & Lezotte, 1995; Peterson & Deal, 1998). Schein (1992) defined culture as: "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 12). As Deal and Kennedy (1982) stated, culture is "the way we do things around here" (p. 4). How the school perceives and addresses improvement is critical to the school renewal process. One of the challenges is how to elicit sustained focus and effort in constant renewal (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). What, then, is the gap of culture, and how do democratic principles close it?

CULTURE OF THE SCHOOL IN AN ERA OF ACCOUNTABILITY

In this era of school accountability, with many state and federal interventions impacting schools, many principals are questioning if it matters how the local school operates. The culture of the school has been invaded by external mandates about "how to do things." For example, the most recent federal influence on public schools, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, has greatly impacted the culture of public schools. In a recent study conducted by the Public Agenda for the Wallace Foundation, Farkas, Johnson, and Duffett (2003) report that 58% of principals surveyed believed that inadequate funding and implementing NCLB were the most pressing problems they had, and 81% of the principals expressed that complexity of regulations regarding special education had become "worse" in recent years. Since the passage of NCLB, schools have been pressured by more centralized control and management to comply with curriculum and testing expectations. Many principals question who is in control of the "way we do things around here."

The School's Culture within the Organizational Structure

The local school, as an open system, is vulnerable to many external influences that impact the culture of the school, leaving principals to question their role of middle managers. The school and school leadership must develop strong internal systems to manage and control the external influences. There is a "gap" in school culture if the school does not have strong internal systems to deal with external demands of the school as an organization.

In the 21st century, it is imperative that all schools have strong systems for the way things are done within the school, as societal and political influences are not going away. Hoy and Miskel (2005) explained that schools, as open systems, should expect to receive and will always receive external environmental pressures. "Technological and informational developments, political structures and patterns of legal norms, social conditions and cultural values, economic and market factors, and population and demographic characteristics influence school structures."(p. 239). How each school addresses these

changes is dependent on the unique culture of the school, but there has been little systematic research that explains institutional cultures of effective schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). What we do know is that each school is expected to adapt to the changing environmental demands.

Schools are expected to adapt to change and improve within. If the culture is strong, the chances for school improvement initiatives are high (Wagner & Hasden-Copas, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2005). The culture provides a bridge from previous to future achievement. Cultural leadership devalues the need for external bureaucratic control structures, accepting the power of work groups to assume accountability for decisions made and progress achieved within the school (Kunda, 1992, p.218). Not paying attention to the culture of the school, "as the way we do things around here," may impede the process of adapting to change and improving.

Another way to view the gap of the school's culture is to understand how schools traditionally work. Cuban (1988) believed that many school improvement changes remain at the organizational periphery, rather than embedded in the structure of schools. Spillane described how articulation across the school as an organization is fragmented and given to individuals who often have little interaction with others. (Spillane, 1998). Elmore (2000) described how the school system hierarchy has remained relatively unchanged throughout the 20th century, with teachers working in isolated classrooms, managing the technical core of the school. Schmoker (2004) explained that despite goals and innovation, teaching and learning practices can remain largely static, with no improvement results. Lunenburg (2001) described the culture gap as an incompatibility between the technical core of the organization, teaching and learning, and the organizational "periphery," which is the "infrastructure surrounding the technical core" (p. 7).

Elmore (2000) discussed this feature of the school as a loose coupling, drawing on the ideas of Weick (1976). He distinguished between the technical core of the school and the administrative superstructure. The technical core is about teachers' work in the classroom, including the essential features of teaching and learning—making decisions about how to teach the curriculum, how to work with students, how to plan for learning, and how to assess student achievement. The administrative superstructure that surrounds the technical core is the management feature of the school's organization, "the 'glue' that holds loosely coupled systems together" (Weick, 1982, p. 675). School improvement addresses both the superstructure and the technical core, and a school must have a strong culture for school improvement initiatives to make a difference. If the superstructure and the technical core are being invaded by external influences, the school that has a weak culture will not be able to sustain school improvement.

This loose coupling feature of the school as an organization poses another problem, as described by Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004):

> The theme of the loose coupling argument, as it relates to education, can be stated as follows: the technical core of education systems is weak, disordered and uncertain, largely because of doubts about the status of teachers' professional knowledge. Teachers and administrators alike resist incursions into the technical core, preferring to leave essential decisions about teaching and learning to individual teachers who generally work in isolation. The surrounding administrative arrangements thus carefully contrive to ignore the fragile core of practice, shielding it from external scrutiny and criticism while creating an appearance of orderly management. In loose coupling theory, management of the structures and processes that surround the technical core of education is quite separate from management of the core itself. Although it may seem that educational management is about managing the processes of teaching and learning (the technical core), it is, in reality, nothing of the sort. Educational management, according to this theory, manages things like student grouping, school organization, timetabling and major school events, but leaves the technical core of teaching and learning to the idiosyncratic practice of individual teachers who are 'buffered' from outside interference by the very structures which, ostensibly, were set up to manage their work. This buffering has the effect of falsely reassuring the public that all is well at the technical core. (pp. 35-36)

They argue that assuring teacher quality and facilitating school improvement will best be achieved when teachers and administrators work together in a climate of respect for the complexity and depth of teachers' professional knowledge and practice. In other words, a healthy culture of respect of the people, by the people, and for the people within the organization who are closest to the major work of

the school, teaching and learning, is essential to improvement (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2004). Engaging stakeholders external to the technical core to focus on school improvement with teachers and students is essential in ongoing renewal of the school.

Closing the Gap of Culture

If a disconnect, or gap, exists between the organizational structure and the teaching and learning core of the school, school improvement is very difficult, if not impossible. For school improvement to occur, there must be a strong connection across all levels of the organizational structure and technical core (Lunenburg, 2001). It is the culture of the school that provides the means for the congruence of an effective organizational framework, a strong technical core, and energy and motivation to sustain the renewal (Sergiovanni, 2005).

From a careful scrutiny of the literature of effective schools, Sergiovanni (2005) surmised that the school is an organization both "tightly coupled" and "loosely coupled" (p. 140). He explains that successful schools that are tightly coupled are "closely organized in a highly disciplined fashion around a set of core ideas spelling out the way of life in the school and governing the way in which people should behave" (p. 140). Successful schools are also "loosely coupled" in that there is also a sense of autonomy "so that people can pursue these themes in ways that make sense to them" (p. 140). The combination of tight structure around clear themes and a sense of autonomy results in successful schools, which are schools that implement school improvement initiatives and sustain change with energy and commitment within the school.

If the school's culture is strong, the school is better able to achieve its school improvement goals. (Sergiovanni, 2005). The Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory identified ten capacities for initiating and sustaining school improvement at the elementary level, one of which is strengthening the culture of the school (2000). Schein (1992) argued that the most important aspect of leadership is creating and managing culture and working with it to meet the needs of the organization. Therefore, a principal who works to build a strong culture may provide the means to generate the kind of energy necessary to initiate and sustain school improvement.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES WITHIN SCHOOL CULTURE

So, how does a principal build a strong culture? The authors posit that a school culture based on democracy-centered principles is essential to continuous school improvement. As schools have a long tradition of preparing students for roles within democratic society, it is the school as a host culture of democracy-centeredness that has great potential for creating engagement and commitment to the school improvement process. A democracy-centered school has great potential for filling the gap of school culture and school improvement. According to Darling-Hammond, schools that have restructured to function democratically "produce high achievement with more students of all abilities and graduate more of them with better levels of skills and understanding than traditional schools do." (1997, p. 331). In planning for school improvement, the school with democratic principles has potential to become a learning organization in action. A learning organization, as described by Senge (1990), is a place "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3).

Content, Narrative, and Imagination within the School

Let's examine the potential of democracy-centeredness in schools by first looking at the potential of democracy within a country. Thomas Friedman, in his book, *The World is Flat: A Historical Perspective of the 21st Century*, described how India has the second largest Muslim population in the world, yet there is no evidence of that population's involvement in world-wide extremism. Although India is a vast Hindu-dominated country, he described how Indian Muslims have enjoyed sustained democracy within their country. Although there have been isolated examples of interreligious conflicts, Muslims in India realize opportunities of freedom and participation to fight for their beliefs within their democratic government. In contrast, where Islam is embedded in authoritarian societies, for example in Pakistan

right across the border, "it tends to become the vehicle of angry protest" and extremism. (Friedman, p. 559) Friedman offered an explanation for the difference in Muslims' behaviors in terms of context, narrative, and imagination.

By *context*, Friedman referred to the social, political, religious, and economic environment of the society in which they live. Sustained democracy, economic opportunity, and a culture of tolerance for expression of ideas exists within Indian society--not all without tension, but all within a democracy that has survived without manifesting anger, extremism, and disenfranchisement. This *context* provides positive *narratives* about how one makes progress, gets ahead, and provides for family. In turn, these *narratives* lead to the development of positive *imaginations*—expectations for the future and how one might be successful. Thus Friedman's view, and the view of M.J. Akbar, the Muslim editor of the *Asian Age*, a national Indian daily newspaper, is that the *context* in which Indian Muslims live (which is democracy-centered) and the *narratives* they share (ones of progress, possibilities, and a good life in which they can practice their beliefs) stimulate their *imagination* of a world in which they want to live—not destroy. Muslims in India enjoy the *context* of a democratic government, where the current President is a Muslim, a female Muslim sits on the Supreme Court, and the wealthiest man in India is Muslim, all within an Indian society largely Hindu, but within *context, narrative, and imagination* of democracy.

Applying this analysis to schools, one might ask what context is experienced by students and teachers, those closest to the technical core of the school. Results from a national survey conducted by First Amendment Schools (www.FirstAmendmentSchools), regarding students' and teachers' experience with democracy within their schools, revealed the following percentages regarding participation: (1) civic responsibility, 31%; (2) freedom of expression, 50%; (3) freedom of religion, 59%; (4) freedom of the press, 23%; (5) broad-based participation, 23%; (6) civic mission to the public, 50%; (7) parent participation, 45%; (8) student government, 27%; (9) curriculum engages students, 27%; and, (10) service learning, 56%. Without information on respondents or school level, one can only examine the percentages at face value to find that some schools do not have widespread engagement. This profile of percentages reflects the *context* experienced by some students and teachers in the responding schools. Regarding the *context* of these schools, what might be the narratives from the respondents? The *narratives* generated from this *context*, and from the *context* where external controls dominate the culture, might be stories of disengagement and disenfranchisement. One might hear comments such as, "It's no use to try; they won't listen." "They asked for input, but it really doesn't matter." "They only care about the rich, white people in this school." Just give me the pacing guide, and I'll teach it however you tell me." "Only the good students catch a break in this school." "Just teach to the test and don't make waves." "If I hear test scores one more time. . ." From these narratives, what *imagination* might develop?

The imagination of teachers and students with these kinds of narratives might lead to life looking better outside the school—rather than inside the school. Aggression, vandalism, and /or even apathy may have more appeal than rules and external control. Doing the minimum, just getting by, "five more years to retirement," may be the imagination of teachers who share such narratives. Students also may see school as a place to escape, rather than a place to learn.

In schools where there is a disconnect in the technical core and organizational infrastructure, the imagination of teachers and students within the school may be left to isolated situations, leading to a deeper level of disenfranchisement. The student, teacher, or administrator may experience random acts of excellence in isolated cases, creating narratives, such as, "If you want to learn, you better get into Mr. ABC's class," or "I demand that my child be placed with Mr. ABC, because he's the best teacher in sixth grade." These narratives lead to imagining that success is possible for those students who have influential parents or whose "luck" determines one's fate. Worse yet, it leaves those who are not very familiar with the "way we do things around here," even more disenfranchised from the opportunities of teaching and learning.

In schools where democracy is practiced and embedded in the culture of the school, where the infrastructure and the technical core are both tightly structured and loosely structured, there can be a *context* of autonomy and freedom that co-exists with state accountability and external demands. In 2001, ASCD joined forces with Freedom Forum's First Amendment Center to launch an initiative designed to transform ways in which schools model and teach rights and responsibilities of a democracy. Many

examples of such schools may be found at their website (http://www.firstamendmentschools.org/).

A Democracy-centered School

One elementary school that endorsed the First Amendment Schools ideals of democracy-centeredness turned their culture around in order to improve student achievement and to improve engagement of teachers, students, and parents in the school improvement process. The host culture of democracy-centeredness is embedded at Fairview Elementary, one of the 97 First Amendment Schools. The school is described as a high minority school in a neighborhood troubled by drugs. English is a foreign language for many of the parents. Working to implement First Amendment and democratic practices, the school's culture became more inclusive, and, soon, the *narratives* began to change. Parents felt included in the school, students became more engaged, and *imagination* of those within the school demonstrated hope and success. In the last two years, suspension rates have dropped, their "graduates" in sixth grade have averaged a "B" or better, test scores have doubled, and the students were able to reverse a dress code through democracy in action.

Although this is the narrative of one school, there are many such examples at the First Amendment web site. What is clear to principals is that planning to implement school improvement initiatives involves engaging teachers, students, and parents within the context of the school. The narratives and imagination derived from the culture of the school are very insightful during planning and implementation of school improvement initiatives.

On the other hand, there are examples of schools that have achieved higher test scores through bureaucratic, tight controls on the teaching and learning core. Bureaucracy and management can produce higher test scores. In the NCLB environment, many schools are responding to external controls and demands that have placed principals in a middle manager position. Teachers are told how and what to do. Morale is low, but test scores are improving. Federal and state controls have demoralized the efficacy of the school. Although there are success stories in the literature of schools improving test scores with tight controls and no democracy in action, the capacity for schools to sustain improvement and go beyond improving test scores remain within the capacity of the school's culture. Even though bureaucracy and external controls provide a means to raise test scores, to sustain school renewal without a culture of engagement within the school is difficult.

In assessing the culture of the school, a principal might determine the state of the school's culture by observing the context and listening to the narratives of all of those within the school—not just the "best" students and the "best" teachers and the "best" parents. A principal may ask "What if?" to determine aspirations and dreams of those within the school. Friedman advocates thinking about how we stimulate positive imaginations. He related advice given to him by an IBM computer scientist about encouraging people to focus on productive outcomes, to minimize alienation, and to celebrate interdependence. Friedman, in viewing the global society in which we now live, advocated focusing on "'inclusion, rather than exclusion,' openness, opportunity, and hope, rather than limits, suspicion, and grievance" (p. 545).

In schools focused on aspirations, principals who espouse practices of democratic principles and values within their schools have great potential to sustain school improvement. For example, Fairview Elementary developed a First Amendment School Leadership Team, with parents, students, community members, teachers, and administrators sharing access to the school's policies and procedures. The function of the team was to ensure that the policies and procedures reflect the democratic ideals they promoted. Democracy-centered leadership is at work in all of the decisions made within the school, with the students reversing a school dress code. Even as NCLB pressures have become part of their environment, they have a culture of democracy in action, as "the way we do things around here" are embedded in engagement, evidenced by their context, narratives, and imagination.

Correlates of Democracy-centered Schools

So, what exactly are democracy-centered schools? First of all, the literature abounds with the rationale for public education, which usually includes the purpose of educating youth for citizen participation in democracy. In his book, *In Praise of Education*, Goodlad (1997) argued that the purpose of education is to develop individual and collective democratic character**.** Apple & Beane (1999) identified central

ideals of democratic schools to include: open flow of ideas; faith in individual and collective capacity of people for resolving problems; use of collective capacity of people for resolving problems; use of critical reflection to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies; concern for welfare of others and the common good; concern for dignity and rights of individuals and minorities. Maxcy (1995) discussed democratic values as those that are based on: a dedicated belief in worth of individual and importance of individual in participation and discussion regarding school life; a belief in freedom, intelligence and inquiry; a persuasion that plans and that solutions should be results of individuals pooling their intelligent efforts with communities.

So, what does a democracy-centered school look like in comparison to some schools in regards to democratic practices? The following components (see Table 1) of a democracy-centered school, while not exhaustive, provide a framework by which principals may question the extent of democracy-centered practices within their schools. The features of a democracy-centered school are contrasted with what might be current conditions in some schools:

Table 1
Correlates of Democracy-centered Schools

Current Practice	**CORRELATE**	Democracy-centered Practice
Compliant students are valued. Conformity is desired. Good students are recognized and privileged within the school. Grades are used to sort and select.	**1-The individual is valued and respected.**	All students are valued. Individual identity is valued, and individual student progress is monitored and recognized. Continuous student progress is valued. Assessment for learning is the focus.
Students witness unequal application of policies and procedures. Classes are "dumbed down" for some students. Some students are more equal than others. Homogeneity of representation is practiced.	**2-Equality and equity are core values.**	Students witness democratic values and practices in policy development and application. Equity of instructional practices is demonstrated within classrooms and across classrooms. Students develop a healthy respect for all. Heterogeneous representation is practiced.
Dissent is discouraged. Those in power develop rules, procedures, and consequences. There is an imbalance in the common good and individual rights. The common good is enforced by authoritarian practices.	**3-Civility, decency, and justice are practiced.**	Dissent is expected and respected. Conflicting viewpoints are considered and provided a means to influence rules, procedures, and consequences. Rules, procedures, and consequences are developed by all who will be affected by them. The common good is balanced by individual rights.
Freedom is restricted, even feared. Questioning and thinking are discouraged, especially in some classrooms.	**4-Freedom is valued.**	Freedom is expanded/ encouraged. Questioning and thinking are valued/ stimulated in all classrooms.
Some students, teachers, and parents participate in school.	**5-Civic obligation/ participation is expected.**	Opportunities for involvement across the curriculum extend to every student, teacher, and parent.
Student/teacher government is perfunctory. Parent involvement limited. Faculty/ staff engagement limited to 'small' matters. Competition is encouraged to defeat.	**6-The circle of meaningful engagement is expanded.**	Student government, parent organizations, and faculty/staff involvement is meaningful to decision-making and accomplishing shared goals. Competition is encouraged to improve.

Although not an exhaustive list, these correlates can be used to assess the democracy-centeredness of the school's culture. As the school transitions into a democracy-centered place, the host culture of democracy as "the way we do things around here" has potential for students to become more energized, parental involvement more meaningful, and faculty and staff more committed, loyal, and engaged. The context of democracy-centered schools has the potential to create narratives, such as "we worked together to design senior projects," "we decided to use early dismissal time for professional learning

communities." "In developing our new inclusion teams, we identified ways to create time for ongoing planning." "The student government decided to work on strategies to discourage cheating." "Lots of students and teachers attended our forum and participated in interviews when we were gathering information." From such narratives, the imagination concerning school is that school life is meaningful. Rather than escape, students participate. Rather than waiting for retirement, teachers develop a sense of efficacy that motivates their work. Parents understand their access to the school. Cooperation, teamwork, and the feeling that "I make a difference" may become operational.

Challenges and Barriers to Democracy-centered Schools

It may seem illogical to school leaders to relinquish power in an era of accountability that holds the principal ultimately responsible for student performance as indicated by "test scores." Distributed leadership and widening the circle of engagement in a school setting, however, create a context that is necessary to do the work of school in this era of accountability and 21st century challenges. In the current climate of change, it is becoming necessary for knowledge workers to be in a continuous learning mode. The real reform, then, lies within the school's capacity to be democracy-centered, with the leader recognizing the school as a learning community with democratic values and access to and participation in decision-making within the school.

Furman and Starratt (2002) caution that just establishing an environment of democratic participation is not sufficient. Democracy requires "the ability to listen, understand, empathize, negotiate, speak, debate, and resolve conflict in a spirit of interdependence and working for the common good" (p. 116). The celebration of diversity--rather than the desire for homogeneity and conformity--evolves from a school that employs democracy-centered leadership. Engagement of all involves more than getting a few to address minor problems. Democracy-centeredness can only be achieved when the structural and inherent features of the system are changed to reflect the capacity of access, capacity for contributions, and capacity for benefits from all who are within the democracy. The school created from the need for democracy-centered participation is real reform only if the "accessed" develop the practices and procedures that they choose to be governed by *within the school*. It is difficult work.

The challenge for university preparation programs is developing the means for deep development of principal interns. In contrast to the assortment of courses found in the typical preparation program, deep development provides opportunities to face typical challenges through a virtual school to practice decision-making and interventions associated with democracy-centered leadership.

Initially, educators borrowed their models of leadership from management studies. In doing so, they promoted and adopted organizational arrangements that invested particular individuals with power so that the latter would be able to force, motivate, or inspire others in ways that would help schools achieve the comparatively narrow ends of efficiency and productivity (Ryan, 2006).

If the principal intern enrolled in a preparation program sees the leadership role as hierarchical, based on the image of the school leader as a manager, then real reform may be problematic. As Sergiovanni (2005) suggested, the principal's role in developing a community of learners is a challenge, not only of efficiency and productivity but also of moral choices. Building the capacity of future school leaders to develop confidence in and comfort with democracy-centeredness requires deep development.

Another challenge to the practice of democracy-centered school leadership is federal, state, and local intervention in schools, forcing compliance with procedures designed to address adequate yearly progress (AYP). The resulting confusion over power and authority may lead to the absence of a support culture for democracy-centeredness. Absence of trust makes the development of democracy-centered schools harder work, but even more necessary work.

Recently, the authors conducted a pilot study in which the Jung-Myers-Briggs typology test was administered to 25 elementary and secondary principals from three school districts. This test measures preferences, not abilities or skills. Individuals tend to be guided by their preferences and be more comfortable with actions that are compatible with them, however, even though they may be able to exhibit other types of behavior. The following results were obtained from this pilot study: (a) 100% of the high school principals and 79% of the elementary principals scored a preference for Sensing. Sensing types take information in through the senses and prefer tangible reality. Their focus is on

the present. They are interested in what *is* rather that what might be. Key phrases that define their preferences are: facts, present, experience, practicality, realism. What these findings suggested is that the typical principal may have great difficulty in leading a democracy-centered school, which rests on more intangible factors (for example, permitting students to reverse a dress code as occurred in Fairview Elementary might appear to such principals as a short term risk, their being disinclined to visualize the collateral benefits to instruction of a more democratic emphasis). (b) 71% of secondary principals and 21% of elementary principals scored as Introverts. They prefer to work independently and may experience working with others as painful. Key words are quiet, private, few, deep, inward. This finding suggested that they would have difficulty in working with and negotiating with groups, which is the essence of democratic practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRINCIPAL TRAINING

While the results were from a pilot study of 25 principals in three school districts, they are supported by other studies of principal preferences and, given the high percentages, suggested that these findings may be characteristic of principals, generally. In light of the preference for Sensing and the high percentage of secondary principals who scored as Introverts, a much more robust training program will be needed to support principals as they learn to manage their preferences in order to engage in democracy-centered school practice. Currently, principals experience training that features information supplemented with discussion, analysis of cases, and projects at their home schools. These training approaches have enjoyed wide support in the literature. They are not likely, however, to be sufficiently robust to alter deeply held preferences.

We propose a process of "deep development," the focus of which would be to aid principals in moderating the influence of their preferences as described above to prepare them to lead democracy-centered schools. Such training has been piloted with students in a course in school leadership. A scaffolding approach has been followed, starting with the presentation and discussion of a democracy-centered school and how it fits with current theory of effective organizations. Following this, and supplemented with discussion in which they can raise questions and express doubts, they are presented with cases, which they discuss in terms of moving the school toward democracy-centered practices through their handling of that case.

From here, and this is where the deep development occurs, the students are placed in a "hot seat" where they must deal with, in real time, a situation in a "virtual principal's office." Other class members have cards, red signaling that they feel the student in the "hot seat" has not moved the school toward democracy-centered practices or green to signal that they agree that the student has done so. Then "red" and "green" students are paired to discuss how they arrived at their decision and report back to the class. The student in the "hot seat" also has an opportunity to discuss his rationale for the way he handled the situation and why he thinks it moved the school toward democracy-centered practice. The professor then provides his analysis of the response of the student. Over time, students have been able to implement democracy-centered practices in a variety of hypothetical situations. Research is on-going on the transfer of these practices and preferences into school settings.

SUMMARY

School improvement is a process which begins within the culture of the school. The "gap" of school culture is often overlooked, making school renewal difficult. Closing the gap begins with an understanding of "the way we do things around here." Schools as open systems are vulnerable to external environments, which make change inevitable and ongoing. Schools are expected to adapt, but school improvement changes may remain at the organizational periphery, the impact not to be felt at the teaching and learning core of the school. For school improvement to occur, there must be a strong connection across all levels of the school as an organization. The culture can be the "glue" that binds the school improvement initiatives and practices across the school. Building a school culture based on democratic principles has great potential for transforming the school. The context, narratives, and imagination of those within the school can be used to generate the energy, commitment, and accountability necessary in school improvement.

The challenges of 21st century life and the need for all students to achieve provide the motivation for democracy-centered school leadership. The correlates of democracy-centered schools provide a vision of what schools might begin to look like in the process of becoming more democratic. Barriers to the process, however, may initially come from within the school. Teachers may resist involvement because of the confusion over power and authority. Democracy-centered schooling also requires hard work both inside and outside the classroom. Students may resist because of the risk of engaging in what they may perceive as the "adult" world. Other barriers include the general malaise typical in a bureaucratic organization that leaves faculty, staff, and students feeling powerless, especially in educational decisions that have been so influenced from district, state, and national control. University training programs for principals will need to redesign to insure the deep development required of leaders of democracy-centered schools. Whatever the internal barriers and external challenges, however, they can be addressed within the school, beginning the transformation of the school as a host culture of democracy-centered practices.

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THE ROLE OF PLANNING IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Robert H. Beach
Ronald A. Lindahl

ABSTRACT

Henri Fayol is generally regarded as a foundational author on classical management theory. He enumerated five basic functions of management: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. Consistent with Fayol's model, over the past half-century, planning has generally been recognized by administrative theorists as one of the major functions expected of administrators, including school administrators. This article examines various approaches to educational planning, including the rational, incremental, mixed-scanning, and developmental models, and discusses how they can be used to guide large-scale school improvement processes.

INTRODUCTION

Henri Fayol, a French mining engineer whose 1916 book, *General and Industrial Management*, is generally regarded as the foundational work on classical management theory. In this work he enumerated five basic functions of management: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. Although these functions have been challenged as being too structured to portray the true, chaotic nature of the administrator's role (Mintzberg, 1973), they do offer a useful framework for understanding the responsibilities of management (Barnett, 2006). Consistent with Fayol's model, over the past half-century, *planning* has generally been recognized by administrative theorists as one of the major functions expected of administrators, including school administrators (American Association of School Administrators, 1955; Carroll & Gillen, 1987; Drucker, 1974; Gardner, 1990; Gregg, 1957; Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Johnson, Kast, & Rosenzweig, 1967; Knezevich, 1984; Newman, 1950; Newman & Sumner, 1961; Quinn, 1980a; Sears, 1950; Urwick, 1952).

Fayol defined planning, *prevoyance*, as the forecasting of future trends, the setting of objectives, the determination of means to attain those objectives, and the coordination and harmonization of the organization's efforts to achieve those objectives. He called for the development of timelines, action plans, and budgets or resource requests necessary for the execution of the plan. He advocated flexibility in planning that would allow management time to react to changes in circumstances. Fayol recognized that planning, as with the other functions of management, was "neither an exclusive privilege nor a particular responsibility of the head or senior members of an organization; it is an activity spread across all members of the 'corps social'" (p. 13). He advocated, however, the creation of a long-range planning group charged with setting directions for the next ten years and providing lower-level planning units with a broad set of assumptions, guiding principles, and long-range targets to be met through shorter-term, more focused plans (p. 22). Although written almost a century ago, many of Fayol's ideas on planning provide foundations for *best practice* in educational planning today (Lindahl, 1998).

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING TODAY?

Planning is clearly an essential management function in all schools, regardless of geographic location or grade levels served. Although principals may no longer be formally prepared with knowledge of planning models and practices (Beach & Lindahl, 2000), they utilize a variety of such models intuitively (Beach & McInerney, 1986; Cooper, 1990), with varying degrees of success. The reduction of principal preparation programs' attention to planning as a management function (Beach & Lindahl, 2004b) may well be attributed to the failures of past planning practices and the distaste left by the amount of time and resources that had been committed to those practices. During the 1960s and 1970s, educational planning was a highly formal, exhaustive, comprehensive process conducted by top level administrators and technicians. These processes typically produced voluminous plans, most of which were never implemented and did little more than collect dust on the school's, district's, and state department of education's collective shelves. In the subsequent two decades, one specific model of planning, *strategic planning*, dominated schools' planning agendas and practices; in many cases it was mandated by the state or by the school's accrediting agency (Beach & Lindahl, 2005a). It, too, was highly demanding

of time and resources, often without identifiable results. Consequently, it is not surprising that the word *planning* has taken on negative connotations in many school settings.

This failure in plan flexibility, excessive comprehensiveness, and the misunderstanding of the planning process itself has caused an apparent contradiction: planning is an essential managerial function in all schools, yet it is held in low regard. Why is this? Simply, planning is a highly complex managerial function that must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each school and must be properly integrated with the other management functions. To help orient the proper use of planning in schools, this article examines the circumstances under which it is appropriate to engage in planning, the various models of planning that should be considered, and how planning should be integrated into the overall school improvement process.

The perspective that was often held by planners tended to be one that viewed planning as the totality of the process of organizational improvement: if you plan it, it will be! The recognition that planning is only one aspect of a complex, highly interwoven set of processes was generally lacking. Developing a wonderful plan is one thing; implementing that plan—creating change, and seeing that that change is institutionalized and stable across the organization, and through time, is something else again. Concerns for implementation and institutionalization must be recognized in the planning process. As Figure 1 illustrates, planning is just the front end of the process of organizational improvement.

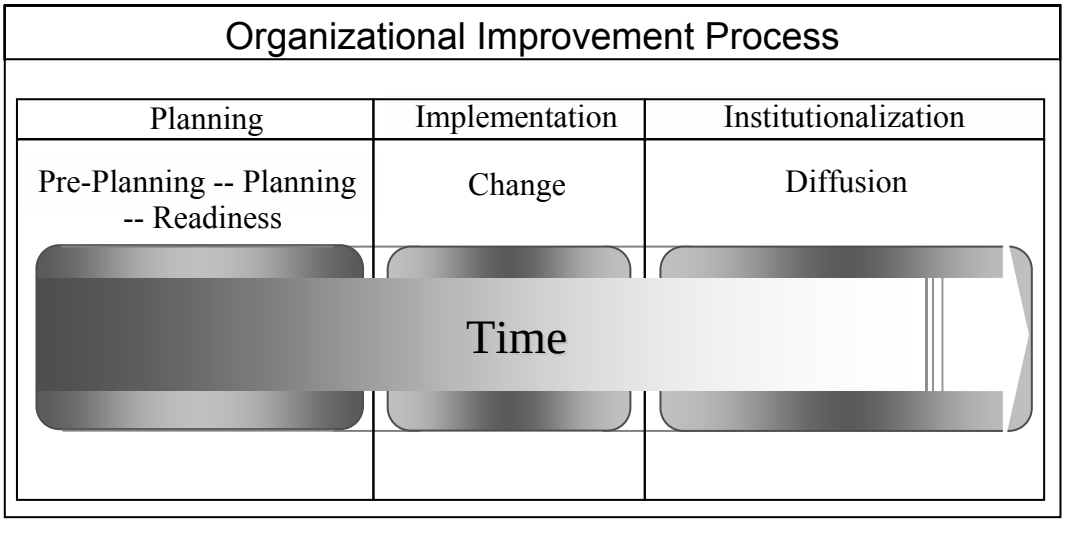

Figure 1. The organizational improvement process.

WHEN IS PLANNING NECESSARY?

Change and, hopefully, improvement are constants in schools; however, planning is not necessary for all changes or improvements to occur. For many of the more routine changes, schools already have a repertoire of strategies and processes established (Beach & Lindahl, 2004b). For example, few would argue that the classroom teacher is the single most crucial element in the educational process; consequently, the hiring of each new teacher represents an essential change in a school. Because this is a change that occurs with relative frequency, however, schools do not need to plan for it; they already have established policies and procedures in place to guide the process. Similarly, the selection of textbooks can represent a significant change for both curriculum and instruction for a grade level or subject area within a school. However, as with teacher selection, planning is not required because schools face this change with sufficient regularity to have established a repertoire of policies and procedures that are generally effective in guiding the changes.

Other changes in schools are handled through administrative decisions, either by the principal or a designated individual or team. When a hurricane rips the roof off two of the school's classrooms, a change is required; however, the urgency and relatively small scale of the situation calls for an administrative decision rather than a formal planning process.

On the other hand, external mandates from the district, state, or federal governments may require large-scale changes in the school curriculum and/or instruction. Certainly, some of the accountability measures of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the move to further inclusion of special needs children into regular education classrooms promoted by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990* and its subsequent revisions required extensive changes in schools. Changing societal expectations, e.g., the integration of technology throughout the curriculum, required large-scale curricular, instructional, facilities, and resource changes. Other large-scale changes arise from the discernment of *best practice*; for example, many high schools have moved to block scheduling as a means of promoting student achievement, a change with significant effects on the school's curriculum, instruction, staff development, scheduling, policies, etc. Other schools have attempted to implement more prescribed reform programs, such as *Accelerated Schools* (Hopfenberg & Levin, 1993; Levin, 1987) or *Paideia Schools* (Adler, 1982, 1984). In yet other cases, internal scanning by a school may reveal significant changes in the demographics of the school's student body or the disaggregation of standardized test scores may reveal unacceptable variations in performance among groups of students. These, too, may imply the need for large-scale school improvement A depiction of several major alternatives available for implementing school change, and subsequently school improvement is, illustrated in Figure 2. In all these circumstances, some form of planning becomes necessary. Understanding the alternative planning models is essential if the school is to be effective and efficient in guiding change.

MODELS OF PLANNING

The broadest categorization of educational planning models separates them into three modalities: *rational, incremental,* and *developmental.* This by no means implies that *incremental* or *developmental* models are irrational. Rather, *rational* models are those that begin with the articulation of goals and the selection of a possible solution from the set of possible solutions that will lead to achieving the goal (Beneveniste, 1991; Brieve, Johnston, & Young, 1958; Kaufman, 1972; Simon 1955, 1957, 1982, 1997), whereas *incremental* models do not substantially challenge or expand existing goals and do not call for evaluation of and selection from extended lists of alternative means.

Developmental models are oriented to the overall improvement of the organization within its shared culture and focus on goals only later in the planning process (see Clark, 1981; Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1989; McCaskey, 1974). Developmental models focus more on identifying and institutionalizing commonly shared values, beliefs, and visions and then on encouraging and supporting individuals to pursue these in ways that capitalize on their own personal and professional abilities and strengths. Although there must be a clear, shared directional thrust, specific goals and prescribed actions yield in importance to developing and strengthening a healthy organizational culture. Obviously, with such different foci, these three basic categories of planning models offer distinctive strengths and weaknesses and are appropriate in significantly different organizations and circumstances. Even within the category of *rational* planning models, sufficient differences exist to warrant careful consideration as to the appropriateness for specific situations. The sections that follow explain each model briefly and give examples as to when it might be the appropriate or inappropriate choice for a school or district.

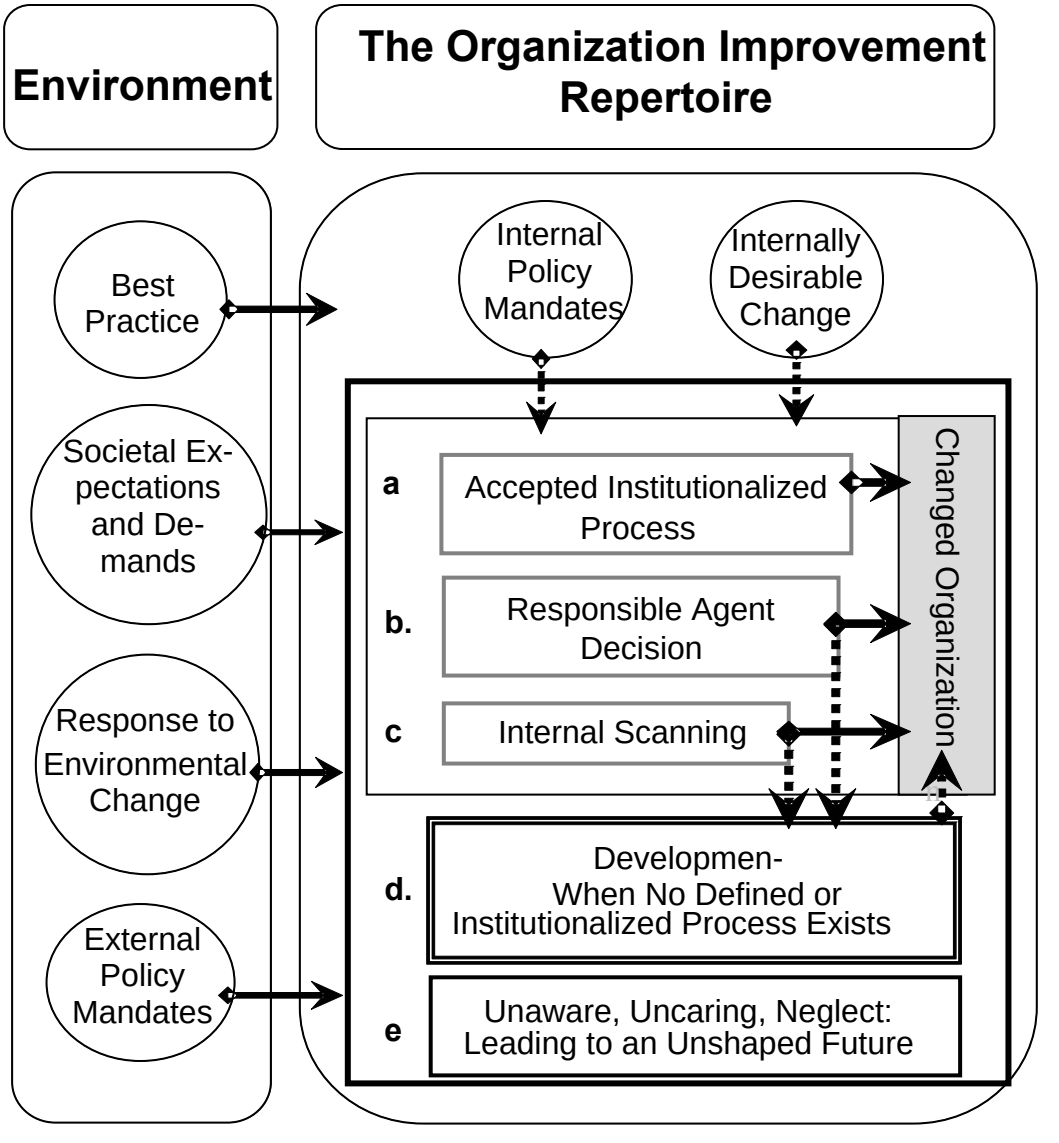

Figure 2. Organizational improvement repertoire.

Rational Planning Models

Rational models begin with one or more goals. These are just the desired outcomes of the change process. Goals are the purpose of the change. When the goals have been articulated, the process shifts toward a search for processes or set of activities that will achieve the goals. These are the set of alternatives from which one process will be selected. A classic rational planning process is illustrated in Figure 3.

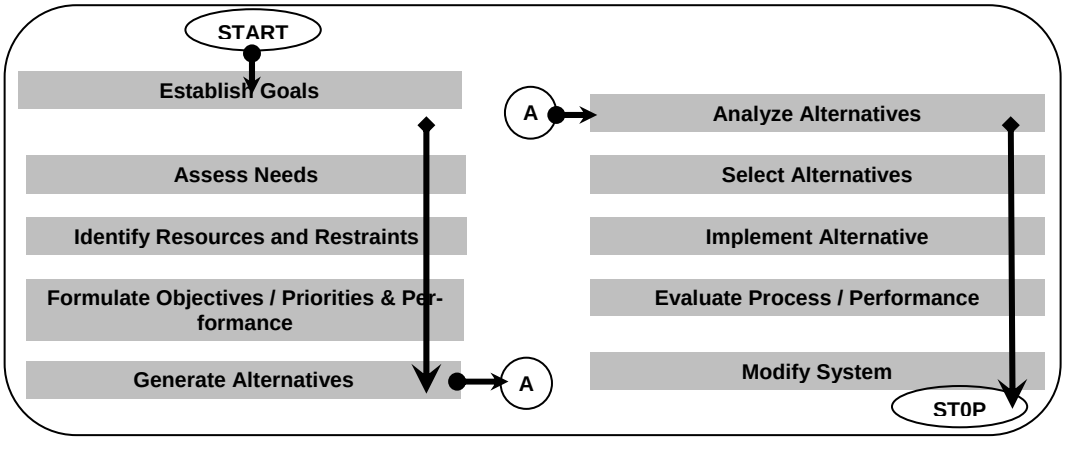

Figure 3. A typical rational planning process.

A range of models comprise the *rational* category. Although all call for the rational selection of goals and actions from among competing alternatives, they are differentiated primarily by the degree of comprehensiveness employed in identifying those alternatives and in making a rational selection from among those alternatives. Rationalism, as used here, relates to the search for alternatives that yield potentially positive outcomes; this is a process of generating rational consequences. As is illustrated in Figure 4, the more comprehensive an approach the model takes to identifying potential alternative goals and actions, the more resources, particularly time, data, and expertise, are needed for the planning process.

It is easiest to explain the three basic rational models (*comprehensive rational*, *mixed scanning*, and *bounded or limited rational*) by beginning with the most complex (comprehensive rational) model of the continuum. Because the comprehensive rational model represents the conceptual epitome of this category, it is useful to introduce it first.

The Comprehensive Rational Model. As discussed, the basic steps of this model are to: (a) identify appropriate goals for the organization, (b) identify appropriate alternative actions to attain these goals, and (c) make an appropriate, value-maximizing selection from among these alternatives in choosing a plan of action for the organization (Allison, 1969; Banfield, 1959). All three of these steps are couched in the concept of rationalism, which subsumes such factors as feasibility, effectiveness, and efficiency (see Benveniste, 1991; Brieve, Johnston, & Young, 1958; Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, & Usdan, 1980; Jacobson, Logsdon, & Wiegman, 1973; Kaufman, 1972; Kimbrough & Nunnery, 1976; Knezevich, 1984; Morphet, Johns, & Reller, 1974; Orlosky, McCleary, Shapiro, & Webb, 1984; Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, & Thurston, 1980; Simon 1955, 1957, 1982, 1997; Tanner & Williams, 1981).

At initial glance, this may appear to be a rather simple, straightforward process. In reality, the complexities of each school's changing environment, internal strengths and weaknesses, readiness for change, culture, needs, and stakeholders make this a vastly intricate process. It is further complicated by a need for broad participation; such participation allows for a wider range of perspectives and information to be brought to the analysis and promotes higher levels of commitment to decisions and outcomes.

Issues of both logistics and dynamics, however, quickly surface and expand geometrically as larger and larger groups of stakeholders are invited to participate.

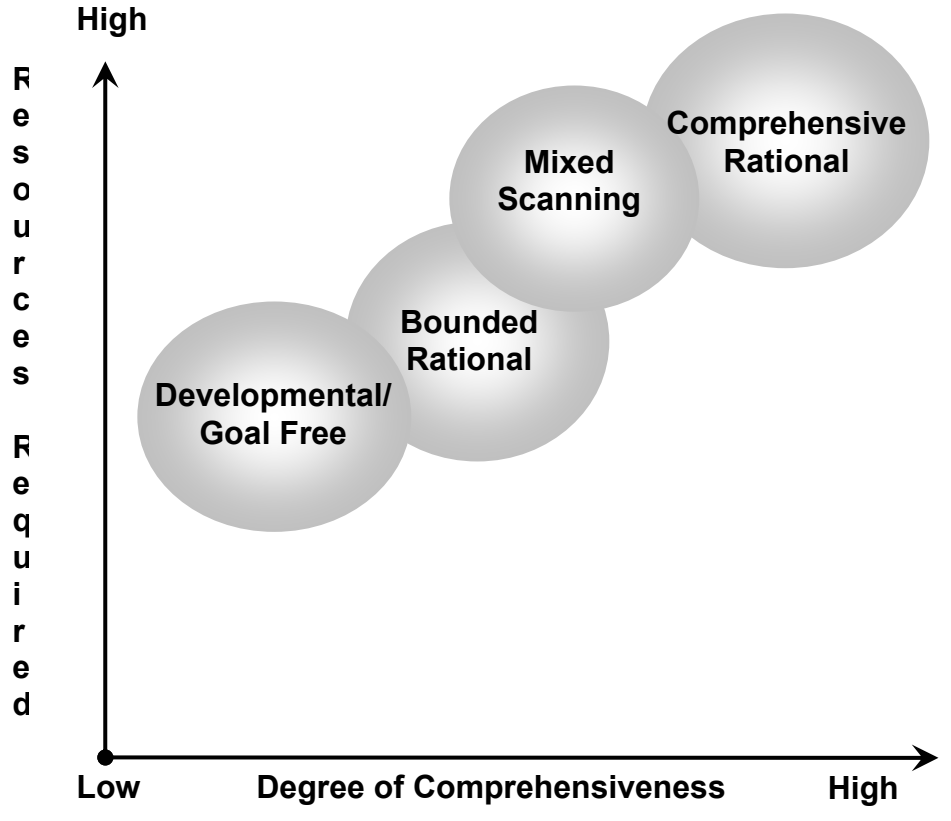

Figure 4. Rational planning models, by degree of comprehensiveness and amount of resources needed for the planning process.

The term *comprehensive* is applied to this planning model because of its underlying principle that it is essential to fully understand the environment and the organization and to consider and select from a maximum range of goals, strategies, and actions. To this end, the typical opening gambit of each phase of the model is some variant of *brainstorming*, a technique whose primary rules are that all ideas are equally valuable for consideration and that no attempt at censoring or limiting ideas should be made until all ideas have been brought forth. Once all ideas have been generated, the *rational* aspect of the model assumes a pre-eminent role. Criteria are established and decision-making tools, e.g., the *nominal group* or *q-sort* techniques, are employed to arrive at a criteria-based prioritization of those ideas.

Although there are many variations of the comprehensive rational model, over the past three decades the most common version has become known as *strategic planning* (see Beach & Lindahl, 2004a; Bryson, 1995, 1996, 1999a, 1999b; Cook, 1990; Mintzberg, 1994). Schools across the world use this model, some every three to five years, others annually, and others as the initial stage of a large-scale school reform or improvement process. Although considerable variations of the strategic planning model exist, the differences tend to be more in the exact number and nature of the steps explicated rather than in true conceptual issues.

Perhaps the most widely known version of the strategic planning model is that presented by Cook (1990). His simplified, step-by-step materials and widely attended workshops have facilitated the spread of the popularity of strategic planning in schools. The basic steps to his model are:

1. Identify shared beliefs
2. Define the school's mission
3. Establish the parameters for the plan
4. Conduct an internal analysis of the school
5. Conduct an external analysis of the school's environment
6. Define the objectives for the plan
7. Identify and select strategies for attaining the objectives.

The strengths of this model are its comprehensiveness and provision for the participation of a wide array of stakeholders; however, these very strengths can be debilitating weaknesses when time and resources are not abundant or when there is not a need for such a broad organizational and environmental scan. For example, how often do traditional public elementary schools really need to engage in profound reflection on their mission? Their missions are well-established and generally immutable; why devote time and resources to revisiting them? Even the goals of most schools tend not to vary extensively over time. Similarly, school resources tend to be so limited, federal and state regulations so restrictive, and parental and community expectations so fixed and powerful that brainstorming and consideration of alternatives beyond a restricted range can be more frustrating than fruitful.

When, then, can strategic planning be used most appropriately? Certainly, in designing the focus of schools with more flexibility to fill distinctive roles, e.g., alternative, magnet, charter, or private schools, strategic planning might offer considerable benefits. When there are tumultuous changes in communities, e.g., extremely rapid shifts in size, wealth, or composition, it can also be very useful. If little consideration has been given to the external and internal environments of a school for an extended period of time, e.g., a decade, it may be useful to engage in this more comprehensive process to renew understandings and commitments. However, in situations of relative stability, like those surrounding most public schools, the use of a comprehensive rational planning model may be akin to assembling the armies of Genghis Khan to repel a lone invader.

The comprehensive rational planning model, however, represents only one extreme of the rational planning model continuum. Other options exist for conditions that do not call for that degree of extremity. Today, most planners would consider Comprehensive Rationalism to be unusable and the term rationalism has come to mean Bounded Rationalism.

The Bounded (Limited) Rational Model. As Simon (1982) explained, true comprehensive rational planning or decision making is so complex that it exceeds the time, resources, or abilities of most individuals or organizations (see, also, March, 1994; March & Simon, 1959; Simon, 1997). He noted that, although rationality requires a complete knowledge and anticipation of the consequences that will follow each choice, knowledge of consequences is always fragmentary and, in many cases, unknowable. Second, because consequences lie in the future, imagination must replace experience in attaching values to them, but values can be only imperfectly anticipated. Third, rationality requires a choice between all possible solution alternatives, but in actual behavior only a few of these possible solution alternatives ever come to mind (Simon, 1957). Furthermore, it is very inefficient to brainstorm and to consider alternatives that clearly lie beyond the organization's reach. For example, although the Reading Recovery© program may yield positive results in improving the reading performance of a select group of students, its highly labor-intensive design might make it financially infeasible for most schools to consider as the primary delivery system for all reading instruction in the school. In other words, it lies well outside the financial boundaries of the school and does not merit the consideration that should be focused on alternatives that lie within those boundaries.

As a result of these constraints, March and Simon (1959) proposed modifications to comprehensive rationalism that have become known as *bounded or limited rationality*. Although bounded rationalism does not restrict choices to as limited a range of diversions from the status quo as the incremental model, neither does it promote the exemption from limitations inherent in the comprehensive rational model. Instead, it posits that, in most cases, attention is best focused on a restricted set of core issues, conditions, and alternatives that lie within the range of feasibility of the organization and its stakeholders. A school might well benefit from cutting its pupil/teacher ratio by 75%, but this is such a financially infeasible

alternative that exploring it merely frustrates participants and wastes time and effort that would be better allocated to exploring other alternatives. Although many forces may be interacting in the school's environment, from globalization to global warming, federal legislation (e.g., *No Child Left Behind*), state regulations (e.g., new high school exit exams), or shifts in the demographics of the school's student body may represent such immediate and potentially serious issues as to warrant excluding the more global issues from a school's planning discussion at a given point in time. Although imposing such boundaries or accepting intuitively self-imposed limitations may result in a less than optimal decision, the organization and its members may choose to *satisfice,* trading off savings in time, effort, and resources for a feasible and potentially reasonably effective plan rather than for an optimal one.

The bounded rational model would be least effective in a situation where a school is faced with dire consequences for failing to produce specific results after repeated planning efforts. Such a situation may require breaking boundaries or perceptions and limitations and seeking radical solutions that would normally lie outside the limits of bounded rational planning. For example, several large urban districts have surrendered control of their problematic public schools to privatization; others have placed individual schools under the direct control of a local community board rather than the district's school board. Other schools have closed, dismissing or re-assigning all faculty and staff, and then re-constituted themselves with entirely new faculties and staffs. Virtual high schools have been created that use computer-based distance education as their primary delivery system, with vastly different administrative structures and policies than traditional schools. It is unlikely that any of these alternatives would have been considered when using a tightly bounded rational model. For example, however, if the school reform effort is designed to increase the reading performance of a school's or district's students, bounded rational planning would be a highly feasible choice. It would allow the reform leaders to consider a variety of proven reform models designed to accomplish this one, specific goal, to compare and contrast their previous successes, resource demands, compatibility with the school's faculty and culture, etc., without considering the wider range of reform models that extend well beyond this focused reading improvement goal.

The Incremental Planning Model

The *incremental* planning model, which Lindblom (1959) termed Successive Limited Comparisons and which is commonly known as "the art of muddling through," minimizes the amount of information and decision making needed. Decision makers arrive at their choices after considering only a limited number of options. Basically, the incremental planning model accepts the status quo as the baseline and calls for small (incremental) advances in the direction of previously-established organizational goals (Chadwick, 1978; Lasserre, 1974; Mann, 1975; Swanson, 1974). Once general agreement is reached among the key stakeholders, the planning process proceeds to implementation. It actively strives to deviate only marginally from past practice (Beach & McInerney, 1986). A strong advantage of this planning model is that it requires relatively little participation, time, or resources for the planning process. Perhaps even more significantly, it is a model that preserves the vast majority of the status quo, thereby reducing the magnitude of change asked of organizational members at any given time. Because the majority of organizational members can be expected to resist large-scale change, and because large-scale changes present a far greater risk of chaos and failure than smaller, incremental change, this model offers certain intuitive levels of comfort. Superintendents frequently use this as a budget planning model, requesting an annual budget that presumes the previous year's budget as a baseline and calls for an incremental advance of X% to cover inflation, salary or fringe benefit increases, district growth, and new programming (see Wildavsky, 1975).

One great disadvantage of the incremental planning model is that it is incapable of producing rapid, large-scale change. If a school has been producing failing scores on state-mandated examinations and is about to suffer embarrassing corrective measures unless a sharp improvement occurs within the next school year, the *incremental* model would be an improper choice. Consequently, this model would likely not be an appropriate choice when initiating a large-scale school reform effort. It would, however, be a more appropriate choice for fine tuning the on-going action or operational planning during the implementation phase of such a school reform effort.

Other flaws of the incremental model center on its ability to maintain a focus on viable organizational goals. Organizational goals tend to change over time; because of the slow pace of change previewed by this model, it is possible that goals will change before being attained. Also, unless extreme care is taken to constantly focus on the goals of the organization, the slow pace of change can lead to a phenomenon similar to that of hikers in a desert who have no meaningful landmarks to steer their direction. Because one leg is typically marginally stronger than the other, hikers will tend to walk in an extended circle, rather than being able to follow a linear path. However, for schools in highly stable environments, for many planning tasks these flaws are not fatal, and incremental planning can be an excellent approach to annual budgeting for ongoing expenses, such as transportation, utilities, and insurance. In most schools, even departmental, grade level, or classroom budget planning is generally done on an incremental basis rather than on a more detailed rational basis, e.g., zero base budgeting.

Budgeting is not the only area for which *incremental* planning is an appropriate choice. Under stable conditions and when the school is in the late implementation or institutionalization phases of a specific reform effort, schools may elect not to revisit earlier planning decisions, but rather merely to seek an incremental increase in specific test scores, attendance rates, graduation rates, or similar output measures. This may imply only minor adjustments to existing curricular or instructional processes, with little or no change in school structures or policies.

The Mixed-Scanning Model

Etzioni (1967) saw the value of combining the concepts of the incremental and bounded rational models in an organization's overall planning process, capitalizing on the strengths of each. This *mixed-scanning* model reflects Etzioni's recognition that an organization's planning process need not be monolithic. There are aspects of the planning process that may best be served by the incremental model; however, there are other aspects that merit more extensive consideration and may require more than *incremental* change; for these, a bounded or comprehensive rational planning process is more appropriate. This combination is known as mixed-scanning. An example is illustrated when a district maintains a continuing survey of pending legislation (the scanning) and becomes very focused or comprehensive in dealing with concerns revealed when that scan uncovers legislation that can have a serious impact on the district.

Through frustrating episodes of trial-and-error, many school-based planning teams have discovered the efficacy of Etzioni's mixed-scanning model. After attempting to address all planning through even a bounded rational model, such teams often find themselves devoting seemingly limitless time and energy to issues that have not been previously problematic. This has often led them to the axiomatic conclusion, "If it isn't broken, don't fix it!" In other words, teams should use an incremental planning approach to those issues and reserve the more comprehensive or bounded rational approach for key issues that warrant greater attention and which the school-based planning teams feel are satisfying and useful to explore. As this model is essentially incorporates elements of two other rational models, some planning theorists no longer consider it a separate model, but rather a philosophy illustrating the wisdom of combining various planning models in order to capitalize on their unique strengths and weaknesses.

The planning models above are all essentially goal-based and rational in nature. A significantly different approach, one far more organizationally culture-based than goal-oriented planning, exists – the *developmental* planning model.

The Developmental Planning Model

The *developmental* planning model focuses less on identifying highly specific, quantifiable, organizational goals and taking unified actions to attain those goals than on identifying the shared positive values and beliefs of the organization and promoting a variety of individual and group efforts that are consonant with those values and beliefs (see Clark, 1981; Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1989; McCaskey, 1974; Senge, 1990). In an effort to distinguish developmental from rational planning, Clark (1981) referred to this model as *goal-free*; however, this term can be deceptive to school leaders not well versed in this model. Organizations that employ developmental planning have goals; they are just less specific than in those organizations using more rational planning models. To differentiate these broader goals

from their counterparts in rational planning models, McCaskey (1974) referred to them as *domains* or *directions* rather than goals. For example, as elementary schools might choose the direction of improving students' reading abilities while encouraging a love of reading, a middle school might choose to work in the domain of promoting students' integration of content across subject areas, or a high school might pursue the direction of student mastery of content at high levels of the cognitive taxonomy.

The developmental planning model recognizes that individual teachers, teachers from different subject areas or grade levels, or teams of teachers might well prefer to approach these directions or domains differently, yet each might be quite appropriate and potentially successful. Rather than using a rational approach in selecting from among these approaches or prioritizing among them, the developmental model would encourage all of them as long as each is faithful to the defined, shared, positive values and beliefs of the organization's culture.

For example, a school's culture may include a strong value for challenging each student to attain to the maximum of his or her individual ability level. As long as a teacher's efforts promote student inquiry at high cognitive levels, then such efforts would be supported as being consonant with the developmental plan. One group of teachers familiar with the development of higher level thinking skills might opt for an action research project as part of their staff development. The principal might select key readings on higher level thinking skills and lead, or appoint a teacher leader to guide, a group of less experienced teachers in discussions of those readings and how they might be applied in the classroom. Such attention to individual needs is a factor that tends to differentiate developmental from rational planning models.

Although the developmental planning model clearly arises from the field of organizational culture, it overlaps with the field of organizational development as well. For example, a school might have the shared values of promoting student participation across the full range of the school's curriculum and of providing individual, continuous teacher communication, encouragement, and feedback to each student. Planning discussions, however, might reveal that the school's structures do not currently align well with these values. As part of their developmental planning effort, the school might choose to pilot a structural change in which the student body and teacher corps are sub-divided into relatively independent teams, with teachers of each team sharing a common planning period to conduct staffing discussions on student performance and progress, to plan integrated lessons and assignments, and to plan for team teaching, etc. Essentially each group of students would remain together through all their classes, acting as a cohort within the larger school. They might be assigned an advisor from among the teachers serving their team. Each team might approach this restructuring somewhat differently, with the school's directional goals and value system providing the basic parameters within which they could operate. The principal would encourage experimentation within these parameters and provide opportunities for discussions among teams to share the successes and failures of ongoing faculty and organizational development.

Obviously, the developmental planning model is far less rigidly structured than its rational counterparts. It requires great professionalism on the part of organizational members and demands cultural insight and leadership skills on the part of school leaders. It is potentially most useful in stable school environments with capable and committed faculty and staff. It is also useful in situations where it is unlikely that a group of faculty could agree upon the goals of more rational planning model or on alternative actions or when time and resources do not favor more extensive, rational planning. Its focus is on the long-term *evolutionary* learning of the organization, what Senge (1990) termed *the learning organization.* As such, it is not a model that lends itself to situations in which there is great, immediate pressure from the environment or considerable pressure within the school itself. In short, it is perhaps better suited to situations calling for school improvement or evolution than to those calling for school reform. In healthy school cultures, it is a model that can be used continually for certain aspects of the school planning, in conjunction with rational planning models for other specific issues.

With three basic planning models, all of which are appropriate for schools to choose under specific circumstances, the question arises as to how to best choose among them, other than through the administrator's native intuition. The sections that follow attempt to provide a partial answer to that question, framing the planning function within the larger context of the school improvement process.

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

For purposes of simplification, the school improvement process is presented in three phases: planning, implementation, and institutionalization, with cybernetic feedback loops linking all phases (see Figure 1). These phases correspond to Lewin's (1951, 1997) paradigm of *unfreezing* the organism from its current status, *moving* the organism to its desired status, and *refreezing* the organism at that status (see Figure 5). Clark, Lotto, and Astuto (1989) referred to these as *adoption, implementation,* and *institutionalization.*

Again for purposes of simplification, these three phases are presented as sequential; in practice, true linearity seldom occurs. Instead, because many of the challenges schools face are somewhat ambiguous and highly complex (Leithwood, 1994; Nir, 2000), have multiple correct solutions (Wagner, 1994), and must be solved in contexts that are highly variable (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1994), the school improvement process must be somewhat flexible (Lane, 1995). Consequently, there are often overlaps between the three phases and schools often find it necessary to return to the planning phase after implementation has begun, as new information or feedback from the formative evaluation of the implementation process (Scriven, 1991) become available. Also, because schools are open, organic systems (Burns & Stalker, 1961), they remain susceptible to external pressures and internal changes; such pressures or changes may occur in the midst of a planned school improvement process. When this occurs, it becomes necessary to revisit the planning phase to factor these changes into the plan.

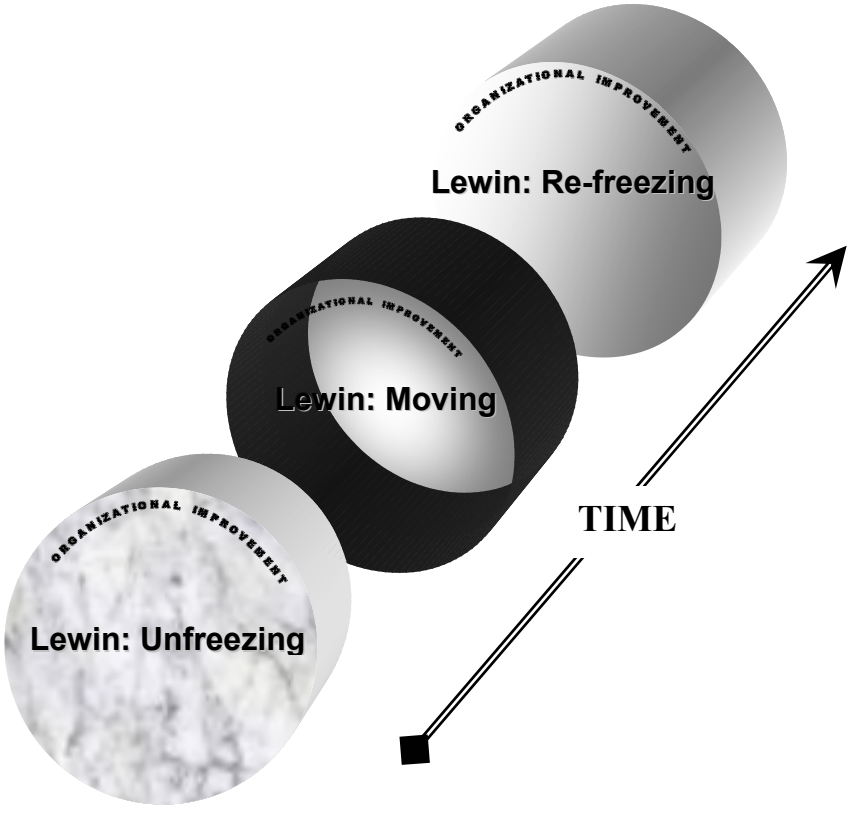

Figure 5. A depiction of Lewin's change phases.

The Planning Phase of the School Improvement Process

Typically, this phase begins when the school's leadership recognizes that a need exists for significant organizational change(s) and that the nature or scope of this change lies outside the school's standard

repertoire. In such a case the principal must then consider initiating a formal school improvement process. One of the earliest decisions that must be made is which planning model(s) would be most appropriate vis-à-vis the nature and urgency of the contemplated change(s) and the school's culture, climate, history, and current conditions.

For most large-scale school improvement processes, the use of a combination of bounded rational and developmental models is appropriate. The first step in the bounded rational planning process is for the principal to determine the membership of the planning team. Membership on this team should be based on a variety of factors, such as the individual's unique knowledge or expertise related to the planning process or to the contemplated change areas, the availability of the individual to participate in the planning process (e.g., teachers often do not have sufficient free time or flexibility in their schedules to permit their participation unless special accommodations can be made), the overall size of the team (sufficient to provide diversity of thought but not so large as to preclude each member's active participation), representation of divergent opinions and approaches (to avoid what Janis, 1982, termed *Groupthink*), and representation of the leadership of key stakeholder groups (to facilitate implementation and institutionalization).

The first determination to be made by this planning team is precisely what problem is being faced. It is essential in this process to clearly separate *means* from *ends* (Simon, 1957). This helps to avoid identifying an appealing solution and then framing a problem to justify implementing that solution.

Once the nature of the problem has been properly defined, the planning team can project the nature of the change that would need to be made to address the problem. This can lead to the establishment of goals for the school improvement process. However, before the planning team proceeds to the identification of alternative approaches to pursuing those goals, certain internal and external evaluations should be conducted. The first of these is a simple Force Field Analysis (FFA), based on the theoretical work of Kurt Lewin (1951, 1972, 1997).

Lewin's FFA has become accepted as a decision making tool for policy makers and administrators seeking systems approaches to increased efficiency in problem solving, change, program planning, or Total Quality Management (Brassard & Ritter, 1994; Caroselli, 1992, Chambers-Corkrum, 1998; Doyle & Straus, 1986; Higgins, 1994; Kayser, 1994; Moody, 1983; Perry, 1997; Phillips & Berquist, 1987; Quinlivan-Hall & Renner, 1990; Sanders, 1977; Stratton, 1991; Viability Corporate, 1994). The underlying premise of Lewin's theory is that needs keep a system in tension. As individuals' and groups' needs are satisfied, that tension is released (Lewin, 1951, pp. 5-6). Individuals or groups continually act to satisfy their needs; their behavior is determined by the tensions acting on them at each specific point in time (p. 19). Over time, the tensions change, as do behaviors.

To better analyze these tensions and behaviors at specific moments and across time, Lewin developed the FFA model, defining a force field as a "distribution of forces in space" (p. 39) and recognizing that each analysis should be confined to those forces oriented in relation to the same goal (p. 40). To examine social force fields, Lewin posited that it is necessary to ascertain the strength and direction of the forces relative to the needs and group's goal(s).

Lewin viewed all force fields as being in equilibrium or quasi-equilibrium at any given moment in time. He characterized this phenomenon as a series of opposing forces pushing toward a goal (driving forces) or inhibiting movement toward that goal (restraining forces)(p. 259). Figure 6 depicts these opposing forces.

Although it is possible to use FFA for snapshot analyses of an operating force field, it is particularly useful as a diagnostic tool for orienting planned change. Lewin wrote:

> This technical analysis makes it possible to formulate in a more exact way problems of planned social changes and of resistance to change. It permits general statements concerning some aspects of the problem of selecting specific objectives in bringing about change, concerning different methods of bringing about the same amount of change, and concerning differences in the secondary effects of these methods. (p. 234)

In analyzing force fields in the planning stage, Lewin advocated assigning numerical weightings to each set of opposing forces, to indicate the relative strengths of these forces in maintaining equilibrium at that level (as in Figure 6). These numbers, in turn, provide insight into which sets of forces might be

most significant in attempting to *unfreeze* the system. Lewin (1972, p. 67) noted that this change could be brought about by increasing the set of driving forces or reducing the restraining forces; however, he advocated the latter approach on that grounds that it would decrease tension within the system, whereas increasing the driving force would likely increase that tension. In Figure 6 the forces have been assigned an estimated strength. The sum of the driving forces is 14, while the total restraining force is 16. That is, the restraining forces are slightly stronger, raising questions about the ability to make effective change.

Brassard and Ritter (1994, p. 63) identified the strengths of FFA as its ability to present both positive and negative aspects of a situation in a manner that would allow comparison, thereby forcing people to think of all aspects of the desired change, encourage people to agree on relative priorities among factors, and to engage in honest reflection on the underlying roots of a problem and its solution. Chambers-Corkrum (1998, p. 114) recommended a basic rational approach to the use of FFA.

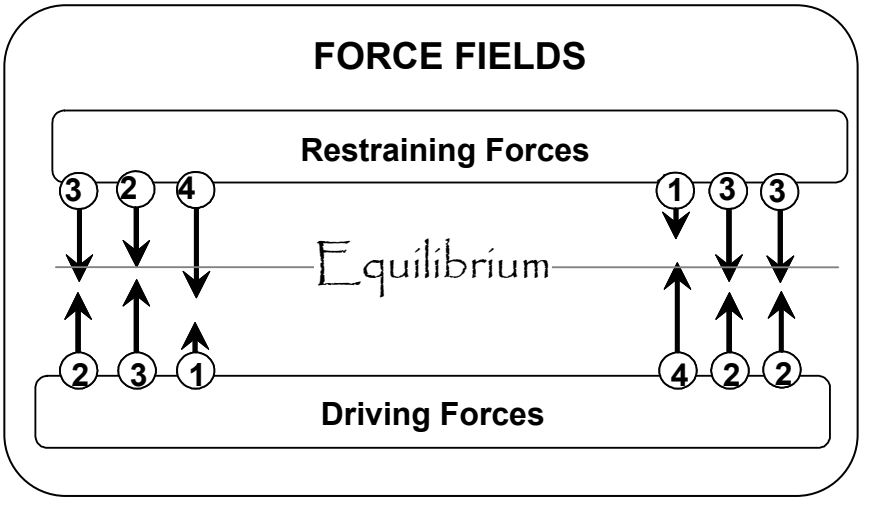

Figure 6. A depiction of Lewin's force-field concept, showing relative strengths of driving and restraining forces.

An internal evaluation that must be made at this point in the planning process is of the school's overall readiness for change (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Beach, 1983; Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Bishop, 1977; Cunningham et al., 2002; Evans, 2001; Fullan, 1991; Hall & Hord, 2006; Hopkins, 1990; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Kotter, 1996; Louis & Miles, 1990; Pond Armenakis, & Green, 1984; Purkey & Smith, 1993; Rosenblum & Louis, 1979; Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988; Schmuck & Schmuck, 1988). The concept of organizational readiness for change has a direct link to Lewin's FFA model, as Lewin (1972), himself, noted: "The study of the conditions for change begins appropriately with an analysis of the conditions for 'no change,' that is, for the state of equilibrium" (p. 65).

Assessing an organization's readiness for change is generally considered an indispensable early step in any organizational improvement process (Armenakis et al., 1993; Beach, 1983; Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Cunningham et al., 2002; Fullan, 1991; Hall & Hord, 2006; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990; Pond et al., 1984; Prochaska et al., 1994; Prochaska et al., 1997). Beckhard and Harris (1987, p. 59) advocated that this assessment begin with the identification and establishment of priorities within the full constellation of possible change that might be undertaken, followed by an analysis of which organizational subsystems might be most affected by the change. The final step in this assessment process would be to evaluate the readiness and capability of those subsystems for the contemplated change.

Fullan (1991) examined schools' practical and conceptual capacity to initiate, develop, or adopt a given innovation and determined that such readiness was derived from both individual and organizational factors. On the individual level, Fullan found that people were most ready to accept change if they perceived that change to address a perceived need, found the change to be reasonable, possessed the knowledge and skills needed to implement the change successfully, and perceived that they had sufficient time in their work schedules to engage in the change. On the organizational level, he found that those organizations whose culture is compatible with change, and those who have sufficient facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies to implement the change, and those who are not undergoing other major change efforts or crises are most likely to be successful in implementing the desired change.

These findings are very similar to those of other researchers. For example, the demonstrable need for change was cited in Armenakis et al. (1993) and Cunningham et al. (2002). Fullan's individual factor of perceiving the change as being necessary ties closely to the Concerns-Based Adoption Model of Hall and Hord (2006) and to the models of Prochaska et al. (1994) and Prochaska et al. (1997). Armenakis et al. (1993) and Cunningham et al. (2002) also cited an organizational culture in which people participate in the change process, a sense of self-efficacy to accomplish the change (see, also, Pond et al., 1984), and a perceived positive benefit/risk ratio for implementing the change. These authors, as well as Huberman and Miles (1984) and Louis and Miles (1990), echoed Fullan's emphasis on participant competence to implement change and added the need for the organization to have good relationships among its members and a strong social support system, factors also cited by Beach (1983), who compiled the work of Bishop (1977), Hopkins (1990), Purkey and Smith (1993), Rosenblum and Louis (1979), and Schmuck and Schmuck (1988). Beach's list of organizational variables promoting successful change included leadership, staff stability, curriculum articulation and organization, staff development, district support for the change, organizational climate, institutional history with change efforts, collegial relationships, sense of community, clarity of goals and expectations, order and discipline, teacher demographics (age, gender, educational level), ability for participants to observe the innovation in other settings prior to implementation, and the flexibility of the planning process. Table 1 presents a summary of some of the major research findings on individual and organizational readiness for change.

If the planning team determines that the school is essentially ready to change, it may proceed with its planning process. If it determines that the school is not ready for change, it must decide whether to conduct some capacity-building interventions to increase the school's readiness prior to implementing the change(s), or to postpone or forego the changes, altogether. As an example, consider a district having problems in the area of reading. After a little scanning, a confirmation is made that the current reading methodology is not producing desired results. A change would seem to be in order. Yet, the literature offers few suggestions for improvement and the methodology used in other districts is similar to the one now in use. It will, therefore, be difficult for teachers to become familiar with the processes needed for improvement. The teachers, however, are reluctant to change in any case and have little understanding of more current approaches to reading. It would be problematic to proceed directly with the implementation of a new reading program. The district must decide against change (a problem in itself), or proceed with change in the face of probable failure. An alternative does exist. This is to build organizational capacity aimed at improving teachers' understanding of modern reading initiatives while reducing teacher concern. The Concerns Based Adoption Model of Hall and Hord (2006) offers an outstanding model for issues of this nature.

If the team decides to proceed with its planning process, the next step is to utilize the results of the FFA as a foundation for generating alternative means of attaining the goals, capitalizing on the driving forces and reducing the restraining forces as much as possible. As March and Simon (1959) noted, it is not necessary for this list to encompass all possible alternatives; it may focus on a more limited range of alternatives that appear to be capable of producing the desired changes, lie within the resource constraints of the school, and appear to be compatible with the deepest elements of the school's culture. The team may choose among these alternatives or bring them to the full faculty and staff of the school for their opinion. Again, the chosen alternative(s) need not be proven to be the absolutely best choice; it merely needs to satisfice.

Although the planning phase is by no means completed at this point, it is crucial for the team to

forecast the implementation and institutionalization phases before proceeding to build its operational or action plan for implementing the change. Much is known about the implementation and institutionalization processes, but failure to incorporate this knowledge into the action plan can readily doom the potential success of the school improvement process.

Table 1
Factors Influencing Organizational Readiness for Change

Factor	Supporting Knowledge Base
Scope and reasonableness of change	Armenakis et al., 1993; Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Cunningham et al., 2003; Fullan, 1991
Commitment of organizational members to the change	Hall & Hord, 2006; Huberman & Miles; 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990; Prochaska et al., 1994; Prochaska et al., 1997
Leadership	Beach, 1983; Kotter, 1996
District and administrative support for the change	Beach, 1983; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990
Organizational culture and climate	Armenakis et al., 1993; Beach, 1983; Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Cunningham et al., 2002; Evans, 2001; Pond et al., 1984
Staff skills and staff development	Armenakis et al., 1993; Beach, 1983; Cunningham et al., 2002; Fullan, 1991; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990
Institutional history and current involvement with change efforts	Beach, 1983; Fullan, 1991; Louis & Miles, 1990
Collegial relationships and sense of community	Beach, 1983; Cunningham et al., 2002; Huberman & Miles, 1984
Clear vision, goals, and objectives	Beach, 1983; Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Cunningham et al., 2002; Kotter, 1996; Poza, 1985
Ability to observe innovation in other setting and access to consultants	Beach, 1983; Huberman & Miles, 1984
Adequate resources, facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies	Fullan, 1991; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990
Communication	Kotter, 1996; Louis & Miles, 1990; Poza, 1985
Adequate time to implement	Fullan, 1991; Rossman et al., 1988
Rewards for changing	Poza, 1985; Rossman et al., 1988
Flexibility of the plan	Beach, 1983

Order and discipline	Beach, 1983
Staff stability	Beach, 1983
Curriculum articulation and organization	Beach, 1983
Degree of conflict re: change	Louis & Miles, 1990
General organizational preparedness	Huberman & Miles, 1984
Jobs that empower	Cunningham et al., 2002

At the heart of the implementation and institutionalization phases is the fact that large-scale school improvements call for changes that will have pronounced effects on human beings. Because human beings are both emotional and cognitive in their reactions to change, it is crucial to preview how the change will affect the individuals and groups who comprise the school (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 1991; Louis & Miles, 1990). For example, as Hall and Hord (2006) explained, members of the school will not address the change uniformly; rather, they will experience the *stages of concern* at different times and in different strengths. The lowest stage of concern on Hall and Hord's hierarchy is *awareness.* At this stage, although the teacher is conscious of the proposed change, he or she has not made a personal commitment to become involved with the change. The next stage is *informational*; in this stage, the teacher expresses a general awareness of the change and an interest in learning more. This gives way to the *personal* stage, in which the teacher begins to experience some concerns about his or her ability to effect the change successfully. In the *management* phase, the teacher becomes more proficient with the new processes and tasks and begins both to gather and to utilize information and resources to become more proficient with the new challenges. During the *consequences* stage, the teacher focuses on the impact the changes are having on the students and their performance and seeks ways to employ the new processes to improve the benefits for the students. In the *collaboration stage,* the teacher goes beyond his or her personal implementation of the change and seeks collaboration with other teachers and administrators to enhance the effects of the new processes on the students, faculty, and school. Finally, in the *refocusing* stage, the teacher attempts to gain a comprehensive overview of the changes and their effects, so that this insight can guide future changes or actions.

The early pioneering work by Rogers on the implementation and diffusion of innovations developed much of the ground work for understanding how change unfolds. Rogers' (2003) work led to the finding that 2.5% of the individuals in organizations are the types of people who actively seek and promote new approaches; these are the *innovators*. Their lead is followed by a group (13.5%) of *early adopters*, who have a propensity to recognize the potential of the new ideas and to take the risk of being among the first to experiment with them. Together, these two vanguard groups provide the modeling and mentoring necessary to convince another 34% (the *early* majority) of the organization's members to implement the change(s). Over time, this half of the organization and the successes they have with the new approaches influence yet another 34% (the *late majority*) to join in the implementation, leaving only 16% (the *laggards*), who may not ever really implement the changes. Joyce and Showers (1988) found similar patterns but labeled their groups as *gourmet omnivores*, *active* and *passive consumers*, and *reticents*. The action plan developed by the team to close out the planning phase of the school improvement process must take into account these stages of concern and adoption and incorporate activities to encourage and inform progress accordingly. It must be flexible and cyclical enough to allow individuals or small groups to acquire the necessary information, skills, or staff development as they, personally, experience that stage of concern or begin to implement the change(s), rather than assuming that the school's members will all reach each stage together.

Similarly, much is known about the institutionalization process. For example, Datnow, Hubbard, and Mehan (2002) identified a variety of factors that influence the extent to which changes become

institutionalized in schools. These include: (a) the need for the change to be introduced authentically, rather than forced through top-down coercion; (b) the need to build commitment and ownership of the change(s) among the teachers; (c) the need to be flexible in implementing the change(s), rather than imposing one means for all teachers and students; (d) the need to ensure that sufficient resources, including the precious resource of time, are available to implement the reform effectively; (e) the need to ensure that the change(s) are compatible with and support the school's efforts to perform well on high-stakes accountability measures such as standardized testing; and (f) the need to align policies and procedures with the changes to be implemented. These are factors that can be incorporated into the operational or action plan, if the planning team is conscious of them and gives them the attention they demand.

With these forward-looking considerations in mind, the planning team is ready to convert into an actual document its decisions about which primary alternatives to pursue. This would include a discussion of the mission, goals, values, etc., that have been established, as well as an overview of the process(es) to be utilized and the specific outcomes expected. This would be followed by some form of task analysis, which would lead to the articulation in the plan of the specific steps or activities that must be undertaken to achieve the desired change. This tool utilizes a backward mapping approach in determining what tasks must be undertaken by starting with the final objective and working backward to the beginning. A simple example of this is represented in Figure 7. This process starts with the basic goal or objective, Level 1, and then *breaks* this objective down into a second level of basic components necessary to obtain the Level 1 objective. This is then repeated for each of the components in Level 2, etc., until the planner is comfortable that each of the final level's components can be considered in terms of the simple activity, or small set of activities that can be assigned to individuals for completion. Note that each level defines the totality of the objective. Therefore any single level, and only one level, can be used to define what is required for completing an action plan. The number of levels and the degree of detail in each is arbitrary and at the discretion of the planners. In this process the planner arrives, finally, at a sufficiently detailed set of activities that can be undertaken in creating the initial objective. This is a rational process that requires significant decision making as it progresses.

This process would create the information that flows into an action plan that details what steps must be taken, when, by whom, with what resources, and how their progress is to be measured (National Study of School Evaluation, 1997). Such planning tools as Gantt Charts, Budgets, and even PERT Charts can be very useful in laying out action plans, especially for large-scale, complex improvement initiatives. The task analysis itself would not generally be considered to be part of the plan. The action plan, however, is an integral part of the planning documentation.

An important part of the Action Plan is the provisions it contains to ensure timely formative evaluation throughout the implementation phase, as well as its provisions for the information gleaned from those evaluations to be incorporated into the revisions of that action plan, as necessary. As these actions occur during the implementation phase, it is appropriate to conclude the discussion of the planning phase of the school improvement process and move to the planning undertaken during the implementation and institutionalization phases of the change effort.

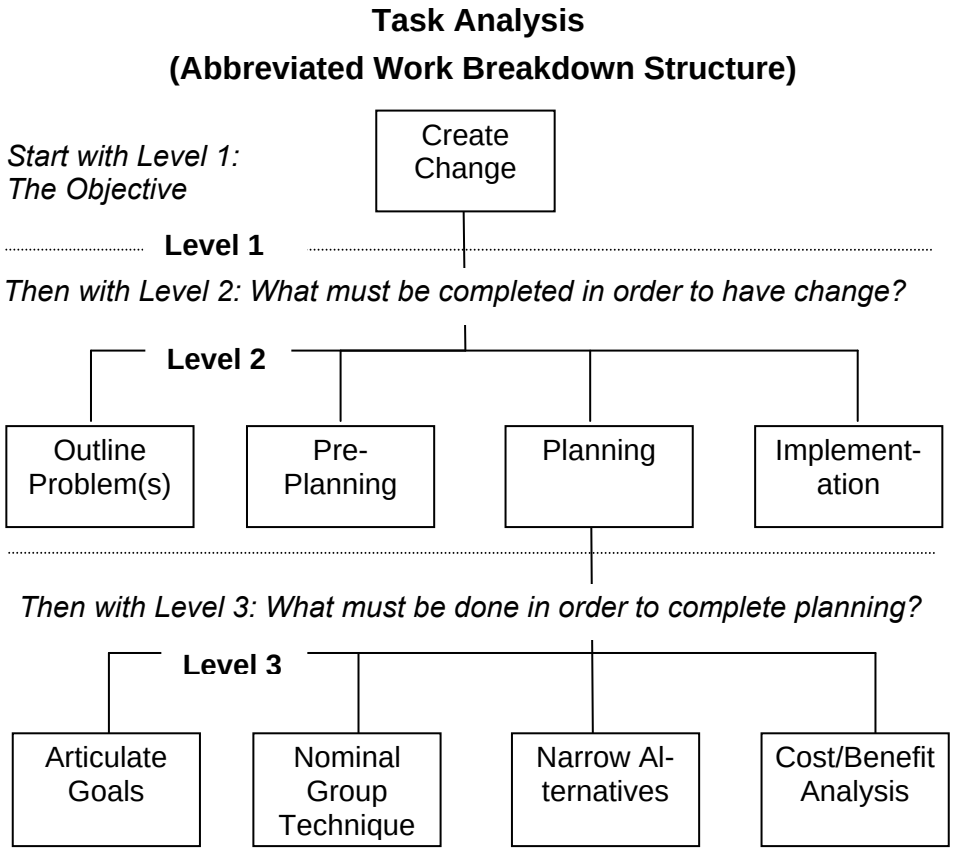

Figure 7. A basic task analysis.

Planning during the Implementation and Institutionalization Phases

As stated previously, the Action Plan developed during the planning phase of the school improvement process must be considered a living document, subject to change as new information becomes available or as significant changes occur within the system or its environment. To inform any changes in the action plan, it is essential that a solid formative evaluation system be designed during the planning phase and rigorously implemented throughout implementation and even periodically after the changes have become institutionalized. The National Study for School Evaluation (1997) recommended that monitoring of a plan be carried out as an ongoing process throughout implementation and that a formal review of progress be undertaken annually (p. 6-1). Because the improvement of student learning is the ultimate purpose of all school improvement planning, all data on student performance should be reviewed on an ongoing basis during implementation, to determine as soon as possible if there are trends in improvement or declines that might be associated with the planned interventions.

In addition, it is essential that the planning team gather qualitative information to guide any revisions in the action plan. The National Study for School Evaluation (1997) provided an excellent set of guiding questions for these formative evaluations:

1. Which action steps contained in the school improvement plan appear to have been successful? Does the effectiveness of these actions steps hold implications for other school improvement objectives? How can the school build on the success of these action steps?
2. Which action steps contained in the plan that originally appeared to be promising did not fulfill their expectations? How can these action steps be most appropriately modified without compromising the goal of achieving the objectives of the school improvement plan?

3. Are there any additional action steps that need to be incorporated in the school improvement plan to achieve the objectives for improvement?
4. Have there been any surprises? If so, what lessons have been learned?
5. What are the insights that have emerged thus far in the school improvement process? What is the school learning about its own capacity to improve?
6. How does the school plan to sustain the commitment to continuous improvement? What steps have been taken to support the ongoing process of school improvement?
7. Have any new or emerging targets for improving student performance been identified by the school? If so, how will these school improvement objectives be addressed in updating and refining the school improvement plan? (pp. 6-1 - 6-2)

The information gleaned from these evaluations must be utilized to refine or adjust the process (The National Study for School Evaluation, 1997) in as timely a manner as possible, yet the planning team must be realistic in its expectations of changes in student learning. Improvement takes time!

Complementary Developmental Planning

Parallel to the rational planning process, it is appropriate to conduct a complementary developmental planning process. Rather than focusing on the goals of the school improvement process, developmental planning seeks to resolve the tensions that naturally arise from school improvement efforts and that can readily inhibit the desired changes (Beach, 1993, pp. 651-652). In essence, developmental planning involves shaping the school improvement process to be maximally compatible with the healthy aspects of the school's climate and culture and improving the less healthy aspects of that climate and culture to be more supportive of the desired changes (Lindahl, 2006).

Although a few critics (e.g., Allen, 1985) question the importance of climate and culture in the school improvement process, some have questioned whether it is feasible to change an existing climate or culture (Quinn, 1980b; Sathe, 1985; Wilkins & Patterson, 1985). The majority of the authorities in the field, however, recognize the pivotal role that climate and culture assumes in large-scale organizational change and contend that climate and culture can be shaped through careful assessment, planning, and administrative actions (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Deal, 1985, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Harris, 2002; Hopkins, 2001; Rosenholtz, 1989; Sarason, 1996; Stoll & Fink, 1999).

Even in healthy school cultures, some resistance to change can be anticipated, especially if the change requires changes in beliefs, assumptions, or core values (Connor & Lake, 1988; Wilkins & Patterson, 1985). Less functional school cultures, e.g., those with an inward focus, short-term focus, low morale, fragmentation, inconsistency, emotional outbursts, and subculture values that take precedence over shared organizational values (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Deal & Peterson, 1994), can make successful large-scale organizational change virtually impossible. Although such organizational cultures can be changed over time, the more entrenched, dysfunctional, and widely shared the culture, the more time and effort required to accomplish this. In such cases, it is necessary to focus on the specific key values or assumptions most paradoxical to the proposed change(s), rather than attempting to modify the entire school culture (Harris, 2002). It is also important to recognize that school cultures are not necessarily monolithic; sub-cultures may well be present and have stronger allegiances than the overall school culture (Cooper, 1988; Louis, 1985; Thompson & Luthans, 1990).

Planned changes to the school's climate and/or culture can be brought about through revolutionary or evolutionary means, or through a combination of these approaches (Wilkins & Patterson, 1985). It is far easier to change the climate of a school than the culture, for the culture is much more deeply embedded, therefore making it more difficult to both diagnose and alter (Connor & Lake, 1988; Lindahl, 2006; Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1992). Culture involves philosophies, ideologies, concepts, values, and norms (Connor & Lake, 1988; Kilmann, Saxton, & Sherpa, 1985; Wilkins & Patterson, 1985), all of which can be very deeply and tenaciously held by individuals, sub-groups, and the school as a whole. It is for this very reason that planned school improvements that contain elements in conflict with a school's culture are less likely to be successfully implemented or institutionalized than changes that resonate with that culture.

There are occasions, however, when the changes needed are not fully coherent with the school's culture. In such cases, developmental planning must accompany the rational planning, for the school leaders must shape the culture as part of the school improvement process. If new behaviors, attitudes, values, and/or beliefs are required, they must be planned for and actively shaped. Concurrently, such cultural changes may also require accompanying changes in the school's structures, reward system, technology, or tasks (Datnow et al., 2002).

To modify a school's climate and culture, leaders must help to clarify its shared beliefs and values and the extent to which these are consonant with the proposed changes (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbeck, 1999). Leaders must consistently model any new beliefs and values associated with the proposed changes (Deal & Peterson, 1993; Schein, 1992). They must establish the conditions for teachers, staff, and students to experiment with the new processes without fear (Allen, 1985; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Harris, 2002; Leithwood et al., 1999; Maher & Buck, 1993). They can selectively choose specific stories to tell, highlighting heroes or heroines whose actions reflect the new values and beliefs and support the planned improvements (Deal, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Schein, 1992). They can also create new ceremonies or rituals to celebrate accomplishments with the new changes or to emphasize new values, assumptions, or beliefs (Deal, 1993; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Deal & Peterson, 1993; Schein, 1992). In short, through constant interactions, modeling, and planned interventions, school leaders can support the rational planning process through developmental planning and interventions.

CONCLUSIONS

In retrospect, Henri Fayol's (1916) views on planning as a management function remain consistent with *best practice* in schools today. Although he described an essentially rational planning model, his observance of the need for management to help harmonize the organization's efforts to meet the plan's goals can well be interpreted as a tacit advocacy for complementing that rational planning process with a developmental planning counterpart. He clearly recognized the need for stakeholder groups to be represented in the planning process, a strategy that remains essential today for political, implementation, and institutionalization reasons. He also stressed the importance of ensuring that the operational aspects of the plan be specified in a detailed action plan, and that this action plan be grounded in broader-level, longer-term considerations. Integrating the planning function with Fayol's four other management functions (organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling) helps to ensure that the plan would lead to implementation and, hopefully, to institutionalization of the improvements into the school's culture and day-to-day activities.

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NO LEADER LEFT BEHIND: PLANNING TO PREPARE EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN THIS ERA OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Peter R. Litchka

ABSTRACT

The release of A Nation at Risk (NCEE, 1983) was a most significant event in creating a movement of reform in education across America. This report was very critical of the status of education in America and helped to spawn the standards and accountability movement in education, which is in existence today, including standards and increased accountability for educational leaders. While there is much research available on educational leadership and its evolution since A Nation at Risk was published, there also appears to be a growing body of research that suggests a shortage of educational leaders is occurring throughout the nation, both at the building and district level, in urban, suburban, and rural districts, and in each geographic section of the nation. It is essential, therefore, that current and future educational leaders have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead our schools and school districts in a manner so that all children can achieve and be successful. It also means that the educational community must be willing and able to provide the appropriate amount of support and resources, so that there will be an adequate supply of excellent educational leaders now and in the future, and that such leaders will not be left behind as victims of the stress and politics of the contemporary landscape of educational leadership in America. This paper examines the depth of the shortage of educational leaders, the reasons for this shortage, and offers a recommendation that reflective leadership be an integral part of training, preparation, and support for present and future educational leaders.

INTRODUCTION

In *School Leadership That Works* (ASCD, 2005), Marzano, Waters, and McNulty suggested that, "at no time in recent memory has the need for effective and inspired leadership been more pressing than it is today. With the increasing needs in our society and in the workplace for knowledgeable, skilled, and responsible citizens, the pressure on schools intensifies. The expectation that no child be left behind in a world and economy will require everyone's best is not likely to subside" (p. 123). It is essential, therefore, that current and future educational leaders have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead our schools and school districts in a manner so that all children can achieve and be successful. It also means that the educational community must be willing and able to provide the appropriate amount of support and resources, so that there will be an adequate supply of excellent educational leaders now and in the future, and that such leaders will not be left behind as victims of the stress and politics of the contemporary landscape of educational leadership in America.

The release of *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983) was a most significant event in creating a movement of reform in education across America. This report was very critical of the status of education in America and helped to spawn the standards and accountability movement in education, which is in existence today. As the demand for school accountability intensified throughout the years since the release of this report, so did the development of state and national standards in areas of curriculum, assessment, data-driven decision making, and improved achievement for all students. Subsequently, a significant amount of pressure has been placed upon educational leaders to improve the quality of education, at all levels and across all disciplines. Today, educational leaders are faced with the challenge of meeting these demands for higher levels of student performance in an environment of increased accountability by policy makers at federal, state, and local levels. While there is much research available on educational leadership and its evolution since *A Nation at Risk* was published more than two decades ago, there also appears to be a growing body of research that suggests the educational community will need to focus its efforts on developing leaders with new and different types of skills to lead our schools. The Institute for Educational Leadership, for example, states, "Schools are changing. . .no one can say for certain how the schools of this new century will differ from those of the past century-but, there can be little doubt that these schools will require different forms of leadership" (2000, p. 1).

THE PROBLEM: A SHORTAGE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Just as there exists in literature support of the need for effective leadership in education, there is also an abundant amount of research to suggest that the nation today is facing, and most likely well into the future, a critical shortage of educational leaders. The Educational Research Service (1998), in collaboration with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), found that there existed significant shortages of qualified candidates for the principalship at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, and that this shortage occurred in urban, suburban, and rural districts as well. In 1999, the New York City school system began its new school year with 195 principal vacancies and another 144 schools being led by interim or acting principals (AACTE, 2001). Also in 1999, 20 percent of the principals in Vermont either resigned or retired (Hinton & Kastner, 2000), and the Institute for Educational Leadership, citing a study completed by the University of Minnesota, predicted that 75% of all school principals in Minnesota will resign or retire by 2010 (IEL, p. 5). Furthermore, the National Association of Elementary School Principals in its *NAESP Fact Sheet* (2003) provided the following data:

- A ten-year study from 1998 indicated that not only will principals be retiring earlier, but, more than half plan to retire as soon as they are eligible, continuing the 40% turnover rate well into the next decade.
- More than 66% of NAESP members indicated that they will retire during the next decade, according to a 2002 NAESP survey.
- Of the responding principals in a New York state survey, 48% of the principals plan to retire by 2007. (NAESP, p. 1)

The shortage of potential school leaders also is occurring because, even those who are qualified and have the appropriate certification, are simply not applying for leadership positions. Orozco (2001), for example, found that less than 40% of qualified school administrators in California actually decided to move into school leadership positions (p. 1).

To compound this issue of a shortage of building level leaders, The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) indicated in a recent study that the quantity of qualified leaders needed to replace those who are leaving is decreasing and that finding leaders to help turn-around underperforming schools is becoming an even greater challenge (Bottoms, 2003). The Wallace Foundation (2003) posited that "districts and individual schools perceived as having the most challenging working conditions, the largest concentration of impoverished students, the lower per pupil expenditures and lower salaries, find it hardest to attract principal candidates" (pp. 4-5).

This shortage of educational leaders, however, is not limited to the schools only. There is very strong evidence to suggest that school districts are and will be facing a shortage of superintendents as well. Studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s began to suggest that such shortages were beginning to occur and would continue well into the future. According to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), it is predicted that nearly 70% of superintendents are at or near the age of retirement and that more than two-thirds of those surveyed were over the age of fifty (AASA, 2001). There are more than 700 superintendents in New York State alone, and according to the New York State Council of School Superintendents *Snapshot V* (NYSCOSS, 2004), "more than 50% of responding superintendents indicated that they will retire by 2007 and 81% will retire by 2011" (p. 10). A study completed by Auburn University's Truman Pierce Institute found that "close to 90% of superintendents and close to 70% of principals in Alabama plan on retiring by the end of 2007" (Salter, p. 1).

REASONS FOR THE SHORTAGE

Wanted: A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure chronic second-guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of paper and work double shifts (75 nights a year out). He or she will have carte blanche to innovate, but cannot spend much money, replace any personnel, or upset any constituency (R. Evans, Education Week, April 12, 1995).

Several themes occur throughout the review of the literature regarding why there exists a shortage of educational leaders in our schools and school districts. While compensation is frequently mentioned,

other issues such as stress, time, politics of the position, and the ever-changing role and expectations of being an educational leader in America today appear to be as prevalent. According to ERS (1998), the top three reasons for teachers not wanting to become principals was the lack of compensation, stress, and time. Boehlert and O'Connell (1999) found that experienced principals were reluctant to apply for positions of higher authority due to their perceived lack of experience, inadequate compensation, the amount of stress, and the amount of time needed to perform the duties of these positions. Research by the Montana School Boards Association (1999) found that factors such as salary, stress, and time were often mentioned by teachers as reasons for not wanting to enter school administration. Groff (2001) found that the rise of charter schools and vouchers and the perception that the public is not generally happy with education are factors that impede educators from becoming school leaders.

The perception that the job of the principal has changed over time has become a factor in why some educators may not wish to take on the responsibilities of school leadership. Orozco (2001) posed the subtle question: "School leadership--is it even doable?" (p. 1), citing issues such as the size of schools; shortages of teachers; higher accountability; constant changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and, having less support staff. Lovely (2006) offered that the following factors help to dissuade educators from becoming leaders: time and work overload, stress, salary, and interference from inside and outside the organization. Natt (1999) pointed to the decreasing gap between principal and teacher salaries, especially when time and amount of responsibilities are factored in. Moore (1999) found that the reasons teachers are not intending to become principals is due to time constraints on personal life, interference from both the educational bureaucracy, politics from outside groups, and the ever-increasing demands on accountability. Warchol and Batts (2000) suggested that longer work days and weeks are placing more stress on those who are presently in leadership positions at both the school and district level, and can be a primary reason why potential leaders in education decide not to apply for leadership positions. The Maryland Task Force on the Principalship (Maryland State Department of Education, 2001) found that the job of the principal was perceived by many in the field of education as being too stressful, underpaid, and requiring too much time.

The reasons for the shortage of superintendents are similar. Cunningham and Burdick (1999) found that there exists a relatively low supply of candidates for the position of superintendent due to board interference and micromanagement, time, stress, and the higher levels of accountability combined with fewer amounts of resources. AASA (2000) found that the reasons for the superintendent shortages included inadequate funding of education, too many demands on the time and efforts of the superintendent, and the ever increasing mandates from local, state and national policy makers. Almost 90% of the superintendents in New York State agreed that the job of superintendent was stressful, an increase of 7% in only three years (NYSCOSS, 2004). According to this report, "the demands on the superintendency are becoming more intense and causing superintendents to think about retirement sooner-rather than later" (p. 28).

Superintendents are also leaving their positions earlier as well. Czaja and Harman (1999) found that superintendents who voluntarily left early did so because of new job opportunities, family reasons, and personal reasons, while those who left involuntarily did so because of problems with the school board, union issues, and "moral and ethical discord" (p. 2). Cunningham and Burdick (1999) found that the reasons for superintendents leaving their position was due to board interference, diminishing financial resources for the school district, loneliness of the job, amount of time involved, and stress. Salter (2000) found that the two main reasons that superintendents were leaving in Alabama were school board micromanagement and time/stress. In "Career Crisis in the Superintendency" (AASA, 2000), it was noted that 90% of the superintendents felt that districts should provide them with more help and support to ensure their well being and success (p. 33). In unpublished research, Litchka and Polka (2006) found that superintendents in Georgia and New York State felt very lonely, isolated, angry, and to a certain extent depressed, when they were confronted by school boards that victimized them professionally and personally.

LEADING THROUGH REFLECTION: HELPING SCHOOL LEADERS PERSEVERE, SURVIVE, AND SUCCEED

If you understand others, you are smart; if you understand yourself, you are enlightened.

-Lao Tzu, in Tao Te Ching

We had the experience but missed the meaning.

-T.S. Eliot, in Four Quarters

In 1996, the Interstate School Leaders Consortium (ISLLC), under the direction of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), adopted a set of voluntary national standards for educational leaders. Six standards were adopted, and for each standard a definition was provided as well as a listing of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that educational leaders should possess. According to the authors of the standards, "one intent of this document is to stimulate vigorous and thoughtful dialogue about quality leadership among stakeholders in the area of school administration" (ISLLC, 1996, p. iii.). Since 1996, more than 30 states have adopted these standards, professional development programs have been aligned to these standards, university programs for leadership preparation have been revised according to these standards, and many professional organizations across the nation are using these standards to help support leadership development in education (Murphy, 2001).

While these standards guide the development of educational leaders in areas of visionary leadership, instructional leadership, resource management, collaborative leadership, ethical leadership, and political/community leadership, it is rare to find programs of study, staff development, or support programs that address one of the most fundamental causes of the current and future shortage of educational leaders: the stress and loneliness of being an educational leader, either at the school or district level, particularly during these times of high accountability, resource depletion, and the interventionist politics of local boards of education and interest groups. Consider what Miller (1984) implies with regards to leadership and the Lone Ranger:

> Problems were always solved the same way. The Lone Ranger and his faithful Indian companion (read servant of somewhat darker complexion and lesser intelligence) come riding into town. The Lone Ranger, with his mask and mysterious identity, background, and life-style, never becomes intimate with those whom he will help. His power is partly in mystique. Within ten minutes the Lone Ranger had understood the problem, identified who the bad guys are, and has set out to catch them. He quickly outwits the bad guys, draws his gun, and has them behind bars. And then there is always the wonderful scene at the end. The helpless victims are standing in front of their ranch or in the town square marveling at how wonderful it is now that they have been saved, you hear hoof beats, then the *William Tell Overture* and one person turns to another and asks, "But who was that masked man?" And the other replies, "Why, that was the Lone Ranger!" We see Silver rear up and with a hearty "Hi-yo Silver," the Lone Ranger and his companion ride away. It was wonderful. Truth, justice, and the American Way protected once again. What did we learn from this cultural hero? Among the lessons that are now acted out daily by leaders are the following:
>
> - There is always a problem down on the ranch (read plant, office, building, etc.) and someone is responsible.
> - Those who get themselves into difficulty are incapable of getting themselves out of it: "I'll have to go down or send someone down to fix it."
> - In order to have the mystical powers need to solve problems; you must stay behind the mask. Don't let the ordinary folks get too close to you or your powers may be lost.
> - Problems get solved within discrete periodic time units and we have every right to expect them to be solved decisively. (p. 34)

Thus, the issue may become, what happens to those principals and superintendents who believe or are pressured into believing that they should live up to the standards of being a leader described by Miller? If educational leaders are perceived by policy makers and the public as being someone who must have all the answers, must resolve all of the problems (educationally and societal as well) quickly and effectively, what happens to these leaders when they do not have the immediate answer or solutions? Unfortunately, leaders may become confused, apprehensive, become mistake-prone. Then, adversity or

crisis may occur. According to Ackerman (2002),

> School leadership can take a person from an inspired moment to a crisis in an instant. Things happen unrelentingly, and a leader is expected to know or do something at the moment. Beneath the surface tension, wounding is often felt at a deeper and more personal level, where a leader's decision, motive, and integrity are impugned by others. (p. xii)

Tirozzi (2004) referred to the profession of the principal a *Profession in Crisis* in which he stated:

> The bottom line is that not only is it difficult to attract qualified candidates, but [also] the training that candidates receive from administrator preparation programs is often inadequate, and ongoing professional development is episodic at best. Many university programs for school administrates are not closely aligned with the instructional and real-world demands principals face, and the use of post certification development programs is the exception rather than the rule. (p. 43)

Patterson and Kelleher (2005) implied that such adversity is a "Metaphor of Storms":

> Significant and unplanned disruptions to expectations for how life will unfold-and the storms of school leadership and life are also exceedingly varied in kind and intensity-predictability and unpredictability. (pp. v-vi)

Murphy (1994) suggested this "role overload" (p. 24), which ultimately leads to a "personal sense of loss for principals, a loss of control and a loss of professional identity" (pp. 24-25). While improving the achievement of all students must remain the forefront of all that is to be done in education, including that which is expected of educational leaders, it is imperative that the emotional health and well-being of these leaders be addressed as well. The works of Argyris (1982), Schon (1983, 1984, 1987), Kolb (1984), and Mezirow (1991, 1995) have contributed to the knowledge, understanding, and application of learning, reflection, and action. These studies support the position that leaders in education that have reflective thinking skills are more adept at recognizing that problems and difficult decisions as solvable, providing a foundation for effective planning, and helping the leader address the issues of fear and isolation when it comes to decision-making (Schon, 1983). Smith (1995) suggested that reviewing events can enhance the practice of effective leadership by avoiding situations that were not handled properly in the past, and will allow leaders as practitioners to deal with situations that may be unique to leadership itself. Schon (1987) advocated the idea of reflective leadership in which the leader is reflecting and being mentored throughout the entire process. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) posited, among other things, that:

> School systems take a fresh approach to professional development, mentoring, coach and peer support networks, and that the unprecedented, unnecessary, and unproductive stresses placed on today's principals need to be alleviated by reconfiguring and supporting the primary role of the principal as leader for student learning. (pp. 12-13)

Ackerman (2002) advocated a new kind of leadership in which:

> A conscious and skillful development of a supportive environment that learns to manage and adapt to its problems collectively--that is a culture that truly depends on the knowledge and leadership of the group, rather than always pointing a finger at someone else, especially and only toward the leader, the school can be remolded to reflect a culture of shared responsibility of what happens, as well as what does not happen. (p. 131)

Lovely (2004) proposed a number of ways in which the principalship can be improved, including the position that:

> The work of principals must be valued and recognized at every level of the school district. Socialization activities to help principals combat job isolation and overload are important. Principals need structured opportunities to reflect upon problems and ponder solutions. (p. 4)

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Reflection is often used as a method by which to mentor and support leaders. Reflection is essential for the leader to think about and improve one's leadership abilities. In particular, reflective thinking will allow educational leaders to identify the gaps in their knowledge base and practices, including but not limited to decision-making and problem solving. Beatty (2000) reports that there exists a climate of "denial of emotionality" (p. 335) within the educational leadership environment, and this can have the

effect of having leaders "limiting the potential for professional renewal and synergy" (p. 335). While it might be that reflective practices may be natural in all humans to a certain degree, perhaps a more formal understanding and application of reflective leadership may help to alleviate the stress and anxiety of being a leader in today's educational environment. Gosling and Mintzberg (2004) proposed, " Study after study has shown that leaders work at an unrelenting pace, that their activities are characterized by brevity, variety, and discontinuity, and that they are strongly oriented to action, and actually dislike reflective activities" (p. 151). Thus, deeper questions may need to be posed: Do educational leaders have the knowledge and understandings, skills, and dispositions to be able to adequately reflect? And if so, do they have the time, support, and resources to use reflection to improve their leadership skills and abilities? Researchers such as Ackerman, Bolman, and Deal, Greenleaf, Patterson, Sergiovanni, and Wheatley are but a few who suggest the importance of reflection and reflective leadership. Reflective practices involve the thoughtful processing of how individuals, teams, and organizations carry out their work. This approach makes mindful the impact of relationships with the children and families served by our programs, within all levels of the organization and with collaborating partners within our communities. Organizations and teams employing the use of reflective practices create a safe environment in which to share, reflect, support, and provide information, and make decisions. Staff members listen, observe, find capacities, question, and share multiple perspectives.

Thus, the issue not the lack of available research and support mechanisms to help our educational leaders cope with the emotional stress of being a principal or superintendent, but how often are leaders--both current and aspiring--exposed to the theories and applications of being reflective and of being a reflective leader. To meet the challenge of providing educational leaders with the knowledge, dispositions, and performances necessary to be reflective leaders, it is recommended that the following be considered for planning purposes:

1. Reflective leadership is identified as a critical component of the institution's framework for leadership preparation.
2. Reflective leadership is integrated within both the scope and sequence of the institution's leadership preparation program.
3. The curriculum is based upon current research, applications of reflective leadership, and research and practice that are linked.
4. An integral component of reflective leadership training should include practical applications in the "real world" environment of contemporary educational leadership.
5. The individual needs of educational leaders are addressed through continuous professional development activities, with the institution making a concerted and continuous effort to "reach out" to practicing educational leaders. Training in reflective leadership cannot be a "one time occurrence" that may occur in one course or workshop, but on a consistent basis with reinforcement and support.

Loyola College in Maryland has initiated a process of infusing reflective leadership in its graduate programs in the areas of business, education, and pastoral counseling. In training educators, including those for leadership positions, the education department has adopted three learning outcomes: competence, conscience, and compassion, and within these, refers to reflective practice and the care and development of the whole person (*Cura personalis*). While reflective practices are found throughout the education department's curriculum, the concept of reflective leadership has not been formalized. Thus, the initiative being undertaken has the opportunity to have reflective leadership practices put into effect both within the department and across the college as well. Facilitating reflective thinking can help to reduce isolation and improve the leadership skills of school leaders. It is anticipated that this collaborative effort will allow the college not only to meet its mission of "inspiring students to learn, lead, and service in a diverse and changing world" (2006, p. 6), but also to play an integral part of resolving one of the issues that is causing the shortage of principals and superintendents across the nation--stress and emotional toll of educational leadership in contemporary America.

Bolman and Deal (1995) suggested that: "Leaders who have lost touch with their own soul, who are confused and uncertain about their core values and beliefs inevitably lose their way or sound an uncertain trumpet" (p. 11). It is critical, therefore, that if principals and superintendents are to provide

the necessary leadership to ensure that no child is left behind, then it is just as critical that those same leaders are provided with opportunities, resources, and support to better understand themselves and the dimensions of educational leadership in the 21st century. Hopefully, the theories, practices, and application of reflective leadership will help to resolve the shortage of educational leaders and also ensure that no educational leader--now or in the future--is ever left behind. As Blackburn (1999) suggested, "Reflection matters because it is continuous with practice. How you think about what you are doing affects how you do it, or whether you do it at all" (p. 7).

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