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## ABSTRACT

Several trends in education are affecting administrators on a daily basis. This paper attempts to heighten understanding of a few of the current trends in administration. The first trend that is increasingly coming to the forefront is the lack of personnel willing to pursue a career in administration. Personnel in schools are not willing to take on the job of administration due to the lack of control, high stress level, and what is perceived as inadequate compensation for the job. Another trend is the number of administrators leaving their current positions. They do not want the added responsibility that has come with school accountability. If these trends continue, there will be a severe shortage of administrators in the next few years. The question we must now ask is why. Another trend is the changing role of administrators. While no school should become stagnant, administrators are constantly confronting additional responsibilities. The roles of administrators are now as diverse as the administrators themselves. Administration and the trends affecting it are changing with the times. Hopefully, we will be able to fill the administrator positions in the future with qualified candidates. (Author/WFA)

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# Tomorrow's Leaders: Who Are They and How Will They Lead?

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## Tomorrow's Leaders: Who Are They and How Will They Lead?

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## **Tomorrow's Leaders: Who Are They and How Will They Lead?**

There are several trends in education that are affecting administrators on a daily basis. This paper will attempt to bring an understanding to a few of the current trends in administration. The first trend that is increasingly coming to the forefront is the lack of personnel willing to pursue a career in administration and the number of administrators leaving their current positions. If this trend continues there will be a severe shortage of administrators in the next few years. The question that we must now ask is why. Another trend in administration is the changing roles of administrators. The roles of administrators are now as diverse as the administrators themselves. The role of an administrator cannot be stagnant, but must keep changing with the times.

### **Who Will Lead Us?**

#### ***The Principal Shortage***

Many administrators are feeling pulled away from what they feel is their primary role, being facilitators of teaching and learning. According to the article *Good Principals, Good Schools*, fifteen-hour workdays, unending paper work and school board politics are a few reasons it is harder to find principals (Adams, 1999). They report that while many have the credentials for the job, few are applying for the positions. The administrator jobs that would have in the past produced as many as seventy-five applicants are now producing just four to six letters and resumes.

A survey of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies was conducted in April of 1999. All ELPS students who had earned the California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential during the past five years were sent a survey form. Forty-two percent

responded to the survey. The respondents consisted of fifty-nine percent female and forty-one percent male. Over half of the respondents were between the ages of 25 – 40.

Of the respondents thirty-eight percent currently hold some type of administrative position. Twenty-six percent of the respondents that currently hold an administrative position report that they are considering leaving that position. Some want to leave the education profession, while others report that they would rather be back in the classrooms. The reasons they give for wanting to leave their administrative position are as follows: salary, hours, inadequate support, demands of the job, and lack of time for family.

The sixty- two percent who are not currently holding an administrative position had interesting reasons for not applying for administrative positions. Forty-six percent proclaimed greater job satisfaction in their current positions as teachers and coordinators. They did not feel the job of administrator would be as rewarding due to the political environment, long hours, lack of support, and inadequate compensation. However, when asked about their careers in the next five years, sixty-six percent were looking to be in an administrative position. They did seem optimistic about changes in administrative roles and conditions.

Many school districts are also considering placing assistant principals or co-administrators to the staff of larger schools. Some districts that cannot afford the added expense of the extra staff have established funds called “principal support money”. The principals are able to use the money in any way that will support the practices of the school.

With the success of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Project in California, they are now considering the same type of program to provide support for new administrators. Other programs being considered in California are release time and fiscal support for administrators to participate in Academies and Institutes and California School Leadership Modules. Participation, they feel, would keep principals updated on new information and give them time to develop needed skills to deal with ever changing situations by sharing experiences with other administrators.

Another perspective of this situation, is to “grow your own” administrators. Some districts are looking for in-house talent. They have begun mentoring programs for aspiring administrators. The districts are providing in-services, and hands-on experiences in many situations.

As indicated by the article, *Who Will Lead? The Principal Shortage*, the shortage is becoming a national crisis (Groff, 2001). “Many students across the nation returned to schools last fall without full-time principals. In Vermont, one out of every five either resigned or retired at the end of the school year. Washington state saw 15 percent of its principals do the same. In New York City, students in 163 schools started the school year with a temporary principal. The shortage is becoming a national crisis. Students already facing numerous challenges are now attending schools that have no leadership.”(Groff, 2001,p.16)

The legislature has in recent years worked to improve the school system by putting into place stringent testing practices, accountability standards, and recruitment and retention of qualified teachers. What they have failed to work on is the shortage of principals.

Studies show that in order for a school to do well it must have a strong leader, who is able to lead teachers and staff, in order to provide a quality education for all students. The studies in this article report that the shortage of principals is due to: the lack of qualified candidates, the constantly changing role of administrators, the difference between the amount of responsibility and the amount of pay, and the lack of preparation and professional development offered to candidates (Groff, 2001).

Another problem that will be facing school districts is the high number of principals who are reaching retirement age. It is estimated that over the next six years nearly forty percent will be eligible to retire. The level of frustration and financial rewards for staying are not enticing administrators to stay beyond retirement age. As soon as they can retire, most of them are doing so.

The New Jersey Legislature is looking at an alternative for addressing the current situation in their state. A representative has proposed that each school should have a principal to work with teachers and provide instructional leadership, while also employing a business manager to make sure things run smoothly at the school.

### ***Mentorship***

Groff (2001) also indicated that mentorship programs would be greatly needed and appreciated by administrative candidates. Many mentorship programs are being implemented across the United States. These mentoring programs will help in the development of well-prepared principals. "Principals need to be prepared to handle the various situations they face in a day. Theory is important, but aspiring principles must be shown that most of what they will be facing will not come out of a book. They must be

prepared to be open-minded and handle each situation as it comes. Working in collaboration with school districts to create mentoring programs is important. Principals need a network of peers to alleviate the isolation and helplessness many feel,” said Thomas Sergiovanni, executive director of the Center for Educational Leadership (Groff, 2001,p.19)

### ***The Revolving Door – Principles Come and Go***

The article *The School Leadership/School Climate Relation: Identification of School Configurations Associated with Change in Principals* discussed the relationship between low performing schools and the change in principals over a period of time. The research showed that there was a correlation between low performing schools and a high principal turnover rate. Most schools that had a high turnover rate were those schools that were already considered “at risk”. No one stayed long enough to really make a difference.

The question now becomes how do we entice teachers and other professionals to become principals and once they are principals, how do we keep them? “Legislatures need to look at ways to provide state incentives for teachers to become principals. The impact of the principal shortage on education and how it can be addressed must be brought to the forefront of the entire education reform movement,” says Delegate Rudolph. (Groff, 2001,p.19)

The experts suggest the following solutions to the problems facing recruitment:

- Change their perception of the position.
- Examine the current structure of the job.
- Improve training programs



- Create incentives for recruiting teachers, women, and minorities
- Develop higher standards for licensing.
- Revamp retirement packages to allow principals to continue to work without sacrificing current or future benefits (Groff, 2001, p.19).

### **How Will They Lead?**

According to the article *The Changing Shape of Leadership*, the roles of principals, superintendents, and other education leaders have expanded during the past decade to include a larger focus on teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making, and accountability (King, 2002). Administrators must be willing to do whatever it takes to be an effective administrator. The diversity of the student body and needs of the student body and teachers will direct the administrator in the direction he or she needs to take.

Every school and every district will have a different social, economical, and racial identity. With this in mind, it is understandable that every school or district must be handled according to those demographics.

The principals of today must be instructional leaders. In order to be an effective instructional leader the principal must be able to lead learning, focus on teaching and learning, develop leadership capacity, create conditions for professional learning, use data to make informative decisions, and use resources creatively.

Today's principle must be able to lead their learning community. They must participate in professional learning experiences and work along side of their teachers.

Knowledge of the current curriculum and professional development are necessary to work cooperatively with teachers and staff alike.

Principals must also be able to bring focus to teaching and learning. In order to achieve this mandate, principals should help teachers improve their instructional techniques through appropriate professional development. Student achievement must also be addressed and made a priority when determining what professional development is needed.

Development of leadership capabilities is also a necessary task. In order for a principal to develop leadership capabilities he or she must be willing to give up some of the power associated with his or her title. The development of leadership capabilities in others, however, can be very rewarding for a principal. It gives the principal the ability to stand back and observe the processes. In developing these capabilities the leadership is shared with the whole school community and therefore provides a sense of ownership in the school. "Distributing leadership in this way goes beyond merely delegating responsibilities for a task: it provides regular opportunities for everyone in the school community to share what they are learning about their own practice"(King, 2002, p.62).

A principal needs to create conditions conducive to professional learning. A professional learning community should be established. A professional learning community is defined as "an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as they work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone"(King, 2002, p.63). Teachers should be given time to collaborate about teaching styles and techniques they have used in their own classrooms.

Principals must be able to use data to make informative decisions. The schools are bombarded with all types of data throughout the year. The data used for accountability procedures is enough to intimidate an unprepared principal. The principal should be able to collect and analyze data to make informative decisions.

“In the current context of performance standards and accountability, instructional leaders know they must develop the skills to collect and use data from a variety of sources to make informed school improvement decisions. They work with parents, school board members, and other interested groups to share and interpret achievement results about what students are learning, areas that need improvement, and plans for improvement effort”(King, 2002, p. 63).

Using resources creatively is also a requirement that an effective leader must meet. These resources include people, time and money. Effective principals use all of these resources to support school improvement. In regards to people and time, a leader should help arrange schedules so that they are more productive to all stakeholders involved. The monetary aspect of using resources creatively is always a challenging one. The focus of the budget should be to improve student learning.

### ***Technology and Administration***

The article entitled *The Potential Impact of Information Technology on the High School Principal: A Preliminary Exploration* looks at the impact of information technology in regards to the high school principal (Telem &Buvitski, 1995). The principal's role, as far as technology is concerned, has changed enormously over the past several years. Many schools have installed school management information systems in

order to better manage the daily activities of school life. With this system in place, the principal's role has had to change accordingly.

The research conducted for this article was conducted to see what kind of changes principals have had to make due to technological advances. "A new type of principal has emerged: a principal who manages the school's large amounts of data and uses information and statistical analyses provided by a school management information system all the five domains of his or her role. The most significant changes occurred in the instructional process, in instruction administration, and in the domain of interaction between groups and individuals. Changes were less noticeable in the domain of interaction with groups and institutions in the community and the least noticeable I school finance and logistical support"(Telem & Buvitski, 1995, p.287).

### ***Principal or Marketer***

With the introduction of school choice, principals will be held even more accountable for student achievements. The theory is that of Darwin, "only the strong will survive". Political leaders in some states are pushing for and had received in some instances legislation that would allow families to use public money to attend private schools.

Robenstine (2000), *School Choice and Administrators: Will Principals Become Marketers?*, examines the theory of school choice and its affect on administrators. With a school of choice program the administrator would be in control of the budget and would have to continually attract new students while retaining students currently at the school in order to keep the school financially stable. The article implied that in order for school choice to work the principal must handle the school like a corporation, which would

require a different kind of leadership. The focus and style of leadership in schools would change tremendously. “With regard to focus, principals become responsible for the survival of their schools – a concern that requires a number of key tasks. First, within this market framework, principals need to ensure that their schools are responsive to consumers – that is, parents. Second, principals become responsible for retaining – or even developing, if need be – a competitive edge over other schools. Third, they are responsible at the same time for managing the budget efficiently and cost –effectively, a task that includes making decisions about the hiring, use, and dismissal of faculty and staff, as well as the purchase and use of physical resources. Fourth, principals face the task of managing and resolving any conflict arising out of their new roles” (Robenstine, 2000, p.96). The style of leadership by administrators would also face changes in a school of choice program.

... in addition we can come to understand changes in style by distinguishing the role of the principal-as-professional from that of principal-as-manager. The principal-as-professional values collegiality, fairness, and a public service ethos. The process of decision-making is committed to the standards and values of equity, caring, and social justice; emphasis is on collective relations with faculty and staff; cooperation is a core value. By contrast, the principal-as-manager is primarily customer focused and is driven by efficiency rather than by abstract professional standards. For the principal-as-manager, the decision-making process is likewise committed to efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and finding the competitive edge; emphasis is on individual relations with faculty and staff; competition is the core value (Robenstine, 2000, p. 96).

The focus of the school of choice movement is supposed to produce more efficient school, however, this could be the demise of the public education system. The only children left at the poorly performing schools will once again be the “at risk” students who will still be without a choice due to transportation issues among other things.

### ***Urban Principalship vs. Rural Principalship***

Administrative roles in urban settings were examined in the article *The Changing Urban Principalship*. According to the article, urban principals and the changes they are currently undergoing were compared to the changes rural principals are experiencing. With this in mind, it was stated that the urban principalship had characteristics that made it challenging (Portin, 2000). Among the challenging characteristics were larger bureaucratic districts, higher per pupil expenditures, less local revenue, and higher percentages of students at risk for school failure, living in poverty, and with limited English proficiency (Portin, 2000). However, the differences between an urban school system and a rural school system are not always apparent. “One must be careful not to place too many assumptions on the degree of challenge in our urban schools as distinct from those in our suburban or rural areas. For example, a review of recent high-profile school violence incidents indicates that school violence and intense student need may occur in any community in our country”(Portin, 2000, p.496).

The research for this article was conducted in Washington state in the mid 1990's. A questionnaire was sent out to 2,431 principals and assistant principals throughout the state. Only 840 principals or assistant principals returned the questionnaires. This gave the study a 34.6% response rate. The results of the study included both expected and

unexpected results. “These data suggest that principal perceptions revealed some variability between school levels and community type. For example, a higher percentage of secondary principals reported more effort toward monitoring truancy, and a higher percentage of elementary principals indicated more efforts expended on establishing site-based councils, and more efforts on school-community relations than did rural principals”(Portin, 2000, p.498).

In the interviews conducted with principals from urban school systems, many of them mentioned the complex social and economic needs of the school.

“I think kids now, particularly kids who are less advantaged to start with, have more of a sense of hopelessness... They can't find jobs in their field. So I think there is a change in the dynamic, the Paradigm, whatever you want to call it. Our society is not necessarily able to offer that sense of hope.”(High School Principal B) (Portin, 2000, p. 501)

The principals were also asked what was the most vexing problem facing their schools today. They cited the social ills of our society: drugs, hopelessness, and crime.

“Our job is not a job of education anymore, most of the time I feel like I am fighting crimes.... There is more evidence of drug culture. This produces more cars being stolen, more cars being broken into, theft from the building. I had not anticipated having to deal with these problems.... A principal has a multifaceted role- you have to be a principal, parent, a counselor, an arbitrator, a negotiator - you have a lot of different audiences to serve.”(High School Principal C) (Portin, 2000, p.501)

Responses were also cited in the area of coordination of noninstructional needs. Many principals felt that they were now responsible for many of the student's needs that are considered noninstructional.

“The job is becoming more and more unrelated to education. Your plate gets more and more on it. Because of conditions in society, I know we have to provide breakfast and lunch, condoms, and AIDS awareness-those are things when I grew up that the parents did.”(High School Principal C) (Portin, 2000, p.500)

Another relevant theme was finding financial resources in order to keep the school at a functional level. Many principals find this part of their job difficult at best.

When one principal was asked how to deal with budget problems his response was, “You pray and hope. Well, that's what we've done over the past few years is we've tried to develop relationships with corporate America. We identified a number of outside sponsors who have adopted our program”(High School Principal F) (Portin, 2000, p. 502)

According to the article, *Change and the School Administrator* (Ediger, 1998), administrators are responsible for most changes that take place in their school. However, with more emphasis being placed on accountability, teachers from Eau Claire, Wisconsin High Schools have developed the following criteria, which included a five-point scale, to evaluate the effectiveness of a principal.

1. Follows up on student referrals in a punctual manner.
2. Performs effectively in stressful situations.
3. Informs staff about responsibilities.
4. Recognizes the achievements of individual staff members.
5. Uses authority in a firm, consistent, but compassionate manner.



6. Finds time to interact with faculty and staff.
7. Supports staff fairly in confrontations with students and parents.
8. Evaluates programs objectively.
9. Evaluates personnel objectively.
10. Encourages free and open flow of comments, suggestions, and recommendations.
11. Makes timely, cooperative evaluations of assigned staff members' performances.
12. Provides instructors, when appropriate, with positive/constructive feedback in regard to the teaching profession.
13. Prepares a budget for a fair, predetermined, and well-understood criteria that reflect the identified needs of the school.
14. Establishes a long range for expenditures.
15. Provides adequate time for setting/expanding the budget.
16. Attends extracurricular and other school sponsored activities.
17. Provides teachers with the support they need.
18. Maintains good working relationships and rapport with staff.
19. Evaluates staff fairly and effectively, constructively, and in a nonthreatening manner.
20. Admits mistakes and works toward a reasonable solution.
21. Encourages staff involvement in decision-making.
22. Assists various departments in realizing their goals.
23. Carries out agreements with staff.

24. Reaches administrative decisions objectively.
25. Considers departmental recommendations in personal decisions.
26. Is a positive influence on staff behavior.
27. Understands my curriculum area.
28. Conducts supervision follow-up promptly.
29. Gives a high priority to curriculum development.
30. Conducts staff meetings that support the curriculum.
31. Conducts staff meetings that support the classroom.
32. Creates a positive school environment.

(Bickel, 1995) (Ediger, 1998, p.546-547)

A principal being formally evaluated by his or her faculty and staff is a change in itself. Usually teachers are not given the opportunity to evaluate their administrators, so therefore, do not give the idea much thought. When teachers are given the opportunity to evaluate an administrator they may develop a stronger sense of ownership in the school.

Principles and teachers should be able to communicate freely. Principles should work with teachers in order to develop a program that will meet their students' needs.

Along with communication involving students, parents, and faculty, the principal must keep up to date with current trends in education. Current trends that administrators should be aware of are as follows: teaching students in heterogeneous grouping, school and university collaboration in developing professional schools, clinical supervision, cluster schools, hands-on approaches in learning, open enrollment, working with disruptive students, safety in schools, at risk instruction for pupils, multicultural

education, prevention of pupils dropping out of school, and the increased responsibility of schools in educating pupils (Ediger, 1998)

### *A London Perspective*

As cited by Jones (1999) in the article *The Changing Role of the Primary School Head*, the United States is not the only country dealing with the ever-changing role of administrators. In the research it was stated that most primary heads found their roles had changed significantly over the past decade. They felt like they were more pressurized, more stressed, and more accountable.

They related that the relationships with stakeholders had changed over the past decade. These stakeholders include teaching staff, governors, the deputy head, parents, children and advisors.

The relationship with the teachers have changed in that the teaching staff is now more involved in setting the budget and planning activities, but the last decade has also brought with it more paperwork, lowering of morale and lowering of staff's confidence.

Parents have become more critical and confrontational, according to the primary heads, when asked about their relationship with the parents. On the other hand, many primary heads have had to become a social worker/counselor for the parents of many of their students. "I've got to be a social worker... I sit down and listen if I don't know what problem the parents have, I don't understand the children's problems. This social worker role has increased and is virtually 80% of my job at the moment and I'm not trained for that"(H 10) (Jones, 1999,p.448)

The primary heads stated that the relationship with the students had not changed much during the past decade, but their opportunities to interact with the children have diminished in the same time period.

The relationship between primary heads and their advisors had undergone a great change, according to the primary heads questioned. The schools now had to pay the advisors, whereas before there was not a fee involved. This was putting a financial burden on the schools. "Yes, definitely changed...in the past my advisor would pop in four or five times a year and I thought that was good. Now their roles have changed completely, they only come out now when they're being paid. We don't get the support from the advisory staff that we used to have... schools can't afford it"(H 12) (Jones, 1999, p.449)

It is apparent that the United States is not the only school system where the administrative roles have changed.

Groff (2001) gave an insight to some of the changes in administration in the article, *Who Will Lead? The Principal Shortage*. Colorado Senator Norma Anderson stated, "The job has become enormous. Dealing with personnel issues; monitoring school budgets; ordering supplies; coordinating bus schedules; monitoring the cafeteria, hallways, and playgrounds for safety; disciplining students; and working as the liaison between the school, parents, and the community, as well as being the instructional leader of the school, are expected tasks for today's principals. The responsibility put on them is more than one person can handle" (Groff, 2001, p.19). The article also stated that along with these responsibilities, principals are faced with the lack of authority to lead.

"Control from above on how to run schools makes it even more difficult for principals to

be effective leaders. School boards and other policy makers have to become more innovative in the way they structure the leadership. The principal has to have more control” (Groff, 2001, p.19).

### *Conclusions*

The trends in education that are affecting administrators are many. The trends include; the lack of personnel willing to pursue a career in administration and the number of administrators leaving their current positions; and the changing roles of administrators.

Personnel in schools are not willing to take on the job of administration due to the lack of control, high stress level, and what is perceived as inadequate compensation for the job.

Administrators are leaving their positions for many of the same reasons. They do not want the added responsibility that has come with school accountability. They feel that, while they are being held accountable for the test results at their school, they are not given true control of the situations at their school. School boards and other policy makers make many of the decisions that affect their school.

Administrators also face ever-changing situations. While no school should become stagnant, administrators are constantly confronting additional responsibilities. Usually new programs are implemented without the needed support. In today's world many principals are facing situations they would have never dreamed of facing. Principals have to serve the students not only as a principal, but also as a parent and counselor in some instances.

Administration and the trends affecting it are changing with the times. Hopefully we will be able not only to fill the administrator positions in the future, but also fill them with qualified candidates.

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