Educational Leadership by Kirk Widra M.Ed.

Introduction

The following paper was co-authored by Sofia Farone, Elizabeth Heuisler, Corrie Lapinsky, and Kirk Widra to identify to aid an ailing fictitious high school, Fairbridge High School, in the selection of a leadership model that could be used to lead them in building a knowledge-based organization. Fairbridge High School located in a well-to-do suburb of Fairlane County; GA. Fairbridge is among the better schools in the locality and shares a very good relationship with the staff and community. In the past couple of years, however, several issues have troubled the school and lately, things have reached a stalemate. The School Board held a meeting to discuss the issues plaguing the school.

Several concerns were raised during the meeting. These are listed below:

1.   The school has consistently met state standards for the past three years. However, there has been no improvement in the student achievement level.

2.   Over the past two years, several experienced teachers, including the principal, have quit due to various reasons. Some of the new teachers are not as effective as the older teachers. Consequently, student achievement has dropped and parents have been demanding that these teachers be replaced.

3.   The new principal believes that teachers should "learn on the job" and has turned down teacher requests for professional training workshops. Consequently, several teachers are unhappy and have petitioned the school board for help. To make matters worse, the principal has now put in his papers.

4.   The school has been receiving bad publicity in the local media due to the loss of experienced teachers. One reporter even went to the extent of saying that the school is unable to retain knowledge within the school. This has led to a drop in new enrolments.

The board is now considering several candidates for the post of principal. Most members support the appointment of Dr. Philip Hawthorne, a well-known advocate of school restructuring. Dr. Hawthorne served as the principal of Greendale High in a neighboring district and led the school successfully. He has recently quit the job to relocate to Fairlane County to be near his ailing mother. Dr. Hawthorne is eager to take up the job, as he loves challenges.

The meeting ends with the decision to offer Dr. Hawthorne the post of principal. The board also decides that a knowledge-based organizational structure will solve several problems the school is currently facing. A week later, Dr. Hawthorne accepts the job and is apprised of the decision to turn the school into a knowledge-based organization. He agrees and recommends that an external team of leadership consultants be brought in to provide an impartial analysis of the school's problems and suggest possible solutions. He recommends a Leadership Task Force (LTF), comprised of the aforementioned authors, as perfect for the job. The following are the task forces view and solutions for the scenario presented.

Leadership Model

The leadership model selected by the LFT to guide Fairbridge High School toward success is Transformational. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that defines as leadership one that creates voluble and positive change in the followers. A transformational leader focuses on encouraging change in others to "help each other, to look out for each other, be encouraging, harmonious, and look out for the organization as a whole in order to foster a sense of ownership in school improvement" (Gorton & Alston, 2009). In this leadership, the leader enhances the motivation, morale and performance of his follower group. In practice, transformational leadership manifests itself in "three elements: (1) a collaborative, shared decision-making approach; (2) an emphasis on teacher professionalism and empowerment; and (3) an understanding of change" (Gorton & Alston, 2009, p. 15).

Beliefs and Values of the Transformational Leader
Transformational leaders believe effective leadership is a relational process with intention rooted in strong self-understanding that inspires others to participate in the learning community and in the defining of the culture. Transformational leaders demonstrate an ethical approach that respects the worth of each person and their ability to contribute to the whole.

Transformational leaders give empathy and support by; encouraging open communication and placing challenges in front of followers. Transformational leaders demonstrate respect and celebrate the individual contribution that each follower can make to the team. The transformational leader believes followers have a will and aspirations for self-development and have an intrinsic motivation for their tasks.

The transformational leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits followers' ideas. They stimulate and encourage creativity in their followers, and they nurture and develop people who think independently. For the transformational leader, learning itself is a value and even conflict and discord are seen as opportunities to learn. The followers are encouraged to ask questions, reflect, and figure out better ways to execute their tasks.

Needs Assessment by Task Force and Stakeholders
The LTF engaged the stakeholders of Fairbridge High School, including the school board, district-level and school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and members of the broader community, in dialogue about the problems facing Fairbridge. The LTF sought input from the various stakeholders as to their primary concerns, their personal and professional goals, resource needs, and their views regarding the mission and vision for the school. Although there was a great diversity of perspectives and personal goals among the stakeholders, all were able to agree on the critical importance of transforming the school to create a learning environment and culture that would help students learn and improve their academic achievement in order to enable them to reach their highest potential. After meetings in which the knowledge framework and the benefits of a collaborative professional learning environment were explained to the various stakeholders, the school leader and the stakeholders were guided by the LTF in the creation of a shared mission and vision statements to guide the change effort.

Mission Statement
Because we believe in the vital role of education in society, we at Fairbridge High School are dedicated to the education of our students and to the development of an inclusive learning community of professionals, teachers, students and parents. The learning community's ongoing mission is to foster
a culture of education that promotes continuous growth and sustainability from within that prepares our students and extended community for a
lifetime of learning.

Vision Statement
Fairbridge High School's vision is to create an educational program that fosters mastery of subject matter and concepts, professionally applicable skills, intellectual capacity, and conceptual development. We will accomplish this by creating a knowledge-based organization of educational leaders within the school and the community we serve to ensure continuous improvement driven by integrity, teamwork, and innovation. The school's transformation into a knowledge-based organization will result in improved teacher effectiveness, improved student achievement, and a culture of continuous learning throughout the Fairbridge High School community.

Skills and Knowledge Required for Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership "is a form of consensual or facilitative power that is manifested through other people instead of over people" (Gorton & Alston, 2009, p. 15). As such, transformational leaders use their communication skills to provide a communal framework to articulate the vision and purpose of the school and define the values and norms that give meaning to the work of achieving them. Additionally, transformational leaders must be highly skilled in conflict resolution and relationship building within the immediate and extended learning community. This can only come from a deep understanding of the knowledge framework and the ability to identify and address issues. Once identified the transformational leader must guide the facilitation of skills for continued professional development for the faculty and staff to meet the needs of the issues identified and further utilize web-based initiatives to communicate and invite participation where appropriate for the extended learning community as a sign of commitment to the knowledge-based learning community. The visionary aspects of transformational leadership are supported by communication skills that make the vision precise and powerful. The followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks when they are encouraged, optimistic about the future, and when they believe in their abilities. It is the leader's job to lead by example; the transformational leader's actions are principled, pragmatic and, above all, purposeful.

Transformational Leadership – Character, Motivation, and Ethics
The essential personal character of a transformational leader is one that views leadership from a strong moral center but whose actions are motivated by
the desire to maintain the defined high ethical standards within the community they lead. The transformational leader does not confuse their personal morals with ethics.

Leadership roles at Fairbridge High are focused on promoting ethical conduct and social values for the benefit of the learning community, not furthering individuals' interpretations of personal morals or religious perspectives. Fairbridge High recognizes the importance of education within the learning community and is committed to creating and maintaining a knowledge-based culture that is dedicated to providing the necessary tools for self empowerment for all the stakeholders that allow them to participate fully in the educational community. Fairbridge leaders are committed to building an inclusive organization where stakeholders from across the community spectrum can work together effectively and productively to ensure success for its students and extended community.

Building a Knowledge-Based Organization
The LTF has established that problems at Fairbridge High School are caused by two main failures, a failure in leadership and a failure to create an effective school-learning environment. One failure stems from the other. The LTF has determined that the solution lies in creating a knowledge-based organization. When the school board creates a knowledge-based organization headed by the principal, it demonstrates leadership within, and a commitment to, the school and its community. The question then becomes: how are knowledge-based organizations created? To create a knowledge-based organization, it is essential that the process of "knowledge acquisition, knowledge management, and knowledge implementation" (Curtis, 2009) be used as the framework.

First, to implement knowledge acquisition (KA), the LTF must form specific teams to address and analyze challenges facing the school. Information must be gathered from dependable sources using reliable research. The information can then be interpreted and shared with the group to ensure all are aware of situations and problems. "A successful organization will share a passion for something and interact on a regular basis to learn how to do it better" (Wenger, 2003, p. 4).

The teams would be formed to develop norms, practices, and ways of approaching issues that are significant to the

institution. Gathering and analyzing the information, the method of distribution and availability of this information would be decided by this group with input from the school community as a whole. The team would acquire information on various resources available to administration and faculty including knowledge about shared vocabulary, school routines, training secessions, and best practices of individual teachers. Including best practices of teachers would be a way of highlighting and recognizing outstanding instructors, counselors or just about anyone at the school who goes above and beyond. More importantly for the knowledge-based organization, highlighting best practices allows the other teachers to benefit from the knowledge and use it to improve teaching and learning. In order to accomplish this, the next step in building a knowledge-based organization is managing the acquired knowledge.

Development of a management system for acquired knowledge, or knowledge management (KM), is the second part of the knowledge framework. Just as in industry, where the departments of a company need to share information, so it should also be in education. All involved in student education must be fully aware of what is needed throughout the organization to make it fully functional. A system of document control and central location would be key to successful cross-departmental sharing of information. This would need data management as the school's information increases; both removing old outdated information and adding new information are imperative for success. What we are looking for is KM that can be useful to all and effectively used by all. One approach is to think of the school as a domain that is the shared interest of specific members of the community. The community is the administration, staff, faculty, students and parents. To achieve a cohesive community, we need to set up various forums that, though dialogue, will ensure the knowledge necessary for the domain to be functional and shared (Hiscock, 2005).

The LTF also recommends establishing a web-based system for knowledge management. A crucial part of KM is the creation of a storehouse of best practices and lessons; this should be in the form of documents that can be downloaded and printed, as well as available electronically. Creating an electronic database and training on its use will be demanding, but the rewards of readily available information to faculty and staff is far reaching.

Using both web-based and in person delivery of information will increase the speed and the sharing of information throughout the school. We must consider convenience and availability of knowledge: once an electronic lesson is prepared, instructors can update material as it is available and keep it as current as possible. Lesson plans also would be available electronically and easily retrievable for emergency situations, such as instructor illness, in order to maintain classroom stability. Setting up ongoing professional development and enrichment podcasts for instructors to view on their own schedules gives the instructor the flexibility to improve and learn at any time (O'Hanlon, 2007). Many believe the potential benefit of podcasting in education is not only unique, but also necessary. Clark and Walsh stated that "listening is instinctual, [but] reading and writing are not" (2004, p. 5). Scenarios of classroom management problems should be looked at and studied in the context of KM, and successful resolutions could be posted in a KM database for others to use or evaluate. New problems arise, and many are similar to or a combination of previous ones; this knowledge can then be available where and when needed (Anzai, 2007). Links to outside resources, web-based professional learning communities, and web-based training can also be built into the knowledge management system.

Knowledge implementation (KI) is the third part of the knowledge-based equation. After knowledge is acquired and effectively managed, the final stage becomes how and when the knowledge is shared and implemented throughout the school. Only by enriching the individual learning of organizational members can we build an environment that fosters learning. Everyone must be an active and interested participant. To have a successful knowledge-based organization, individuals within the community must engage in continuous professional learning

and be encouraged to function as a whole and not just as individuals. "Study after study demonstrates that leaders whose focus is on developing people are more successful over time" (Ulrich & Lake, 1991). Therefore, there is an obvious need to put into place organizational systems and processes that will enhance each individual's development into part of the organization's collective community.

We cannot just implement guidelines for members to follow; this must be a living-working structure involving not only the administration and faculty but also the students and community. "Professional learning, including developing mentoring and coaching relationships, must be embedded into the organization" (Dixon, 2000). Mentoring programs pairing novice teachers with experienced teachers benefits not only the new instructor but also the experienced teacher who becomes more informed about newer technology and advancements in instructional practice. An ongoing forum must be provided for all members to discuss and interpret information so that teaching and learning will be based on the new knowledge that is shared throughout the organization. Above all, evaluation of the implementation of each stage in the process is crucial to ensuring that knowledge is acquired, managed, and distributed in a way that is relevant, functional, on time, and efficient. Discussion should be ongoing within the development team and also among all the participants involved in the organization.

Rationale for Success of the Change Effort
The three-stage process (KA, KM & KI) of the knowledge-based framework is used to build an organization's capacity to grow and be effective. Organizations cannot be static or they begin to fail; knowledge-based organizations should constantly evaluate and reinvent their processes to accommodate new research, continuous technological progress, changes in culture and economics, and to meet the challenges of local and regional competition. Effective use of the knowledge-based framework will improve the overall school culture, employee morale, and learning through knowledge and collaboration.

Special features of the knowledge-based organization that will help to ensure the success of the change effort at Fairbridge include a school community that embraces and works toward a shared vision, a school culture of trust and mutual respect, and ongoing learning through the collaborative acquisition, management, and implementation of knowledge. All of these features will combine to create a positive learning environment in which the school uses the collaborative professional learning of the teachers to enhance student learning and achievement.

Leader's Behaviors and Qualities for Change Effort
One of the key factors in any change effort is the "collaborative creation and widespread communication of a shared vision and goals throughout the organization" (McGovern, 2001). Therefore, one of the most critical behaviors that the leader of Fairbridge High School must demonstrate is open communication with all stakeholders. Open communication must begin with communicating the need for change and then engaging the teachers, staff, parents, school board, district-level administrators and broader community in dialogue to share their desires, ideas and goals for the school. A shared vision is one that is articulated by the school leader but that emerged from the input of all stakeholders so that it "represents the strivings and desires of the organization as a whole" (McGovern, 2001, p. 18). In order to implement the creation of a knowledge-based organization, the school leader must also articulate the methods by which knowledge will be acquired, maintained, and distributed. Communication and feedback throughout the process will be critical for identifying issues, solving problems, and evaluating the impact of changes as they are implemented.

Through communication and relationship building, "the leader must nurture a culture in which individuals are given support, encouragement, and courage to build relationships at all levels that will foster the acquisition,

maintenance and sharing of knowledge" (Sparks, 2009). The school leader will have to model personal openness to change and demonstrate the collaborative, "knowledge-sharing behaviors in which teachers, staff and students will be expected to engage" (McGovern, 2001). Another new behavior that must be displayed by the leadership at Fairbridge High School is the sharing of responsibility and decision-making authority. When learning becomes the focus and shared goal of all stakeholders, and the teachers and staff are empowered to take responsibility for achieving the shared goal, "the school will become a more effective learning environment for students and teachers alike, and student achievement will improve" (Neuman & Simmons, 2000). Finally, the school leader must demonstrate the commitment and ability to provide the necessary resources to implement the shift to a knowledge-based organization. "Change requires leaders who are committed to ensuring that those engaged in change have the necessary knowledge, skills, support, and opportunities to learn" (Hirsh & Killion, 2009, p. 466).

In order to successfully communicate and implement the proposed shift to a knowledge-based organization, the leader of Fairbridge High School will need to demonstrate qualities of a transformational leader. One critical quality that has not been apparent at Fairbridge is visionary leadership. Transformational leaders have a clear vision for the future, developed through a collaborative, shared decision-making approach (Gorton & Alston, 2009). Another important quality is enthusiastic optimism, which enables the leader to focus on possibilities and solutions rather than on obstacles and problems. Enthusiastic optimism also enables leaders to "inspire and motivate others to embrace change, maintain a positive attitude, and persist in spite of the challenges of change efforts" (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders also have high expectations of themselves and others, demonstrating their high regard for excellence and best efforts. Additionally, "transformational leaders demonstrate a willingness to take risks in order to accomplish change" (Bass, 1985). Student achievement should be the primary goal and indicator of success for a school, and the stagnant and recently declining student achievement levels at Fairbridge High School indicate that its leadership has not been willing to undertake needed change. The transformational leader will recognize that change is an ongoing process rather than a "one-time event, and will foster a culture of innovation, creativity and change that is knowledge-driven" (Bass, 1985).

Current Practices that are Barriers to Collaborative Knowledge Use
One of the primary barriers to the promotion of collaborative knowledge use at Fairbridge High School is a failure to communicate among all stakeholders in the school community. The experienced teachers do not communicate with the newer teachers, and it is likely that even the experienced teachers operate in isolation from each other. Another significant barrier is the absence of a sense of community within the school. The school climate is one of isolation and mistrust, and a school's climate can "have a major influence on morale, learning, and productivity" (Gorton & Alston, 2009, p. 170). Similarly, the school's culture is bureaucratic rather than collegial, and the current principal actually refused teachers' requests for professional development. Improving a school's climate and establishing a culture of trust and mutual respect can take a long time, but the change to a knowledge-based organization will be an ongoing process that will foster collaboration and community. Finally, since the school has not valued communication or collaboration, there is no established infrastructure for the type of web-based programs that can facilitate the acquisition, maintenance, and sharing of knowledge.

Likelihood of Changing Patterns of Individual Knowledge Sharing
As part of the planning for any significant change effort, school leaders should assess whether or not it is realistic to expect the changes in individual stakeholder's behaviors that will be required in order to successfully effect change. Given the severity and visibility of the many problems being faced by Fairbridge High School, all stakeholders should be able to recognize the need for significant change. If the school leader is successful in engaging the stakeholders in creation of a shared vision and goals focused on learning, there will be two elements critical to success: (a) persuading the stakeholders that changing the school to a knowledge-based organization will

help them to achieve the shared vision and goals, and (b) persuading the stakeholders to believe that they can each help effect the necessary change by engaging in collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Once those two critical elements are accomplished, the school leader must engage the stakeholders in development of a culture, norms, and practices that support the change effort.   The school leader must also provide the resources for teachers, students and staff to acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviors that will support the knowledge-based framework. When everyone, "engaged in the change effort believes in the vision and has the knowledge, skills, and practices needed to accomplish the vision, the change effort has great potential for success" (Neuman & Simmons, 2000). Therefore, the LTF believes that if the change effort is properly planned, communicated, and implemented, the expectations for changing patterns in individual knowledge sharing are realistic.

New Practices to Support the Change Strategy
A key foundational practice recommended by the LTF is the creation and nurturing of a new culture at Fairbridge High School. The school leader must engage all stakeholders, including school administrators at the district level and the school board, the teachers and staff at the school, and the students, in creating a culture in which open communication fosters trust, mutual respect, and the building of strong relationships that will allow all stakeholders to engage in the sustained change necessary to accomplish the shared vision and goals. One very important aspect of the new culture would be communication by school leadership that teachers are expected to engage in continuous collaborative learning to increase their knowledge and effectiveness (Hord & Hirsh, 2009). Another important part of the new culture would be the sharing of responsibility for helping to implement the change effort and empowering the teachers to engage in decision-making. Embracing a more distributed leadership model will not only enhance the teachers' feelings of professionalism and ownership of the change effort, it will enable the school to benefit from the diversity of knowledge, skills, and experience of the various leaders, thereby promoting the overall vision (Neuman & Simmons, 2000).

Another essential new practice recommended by the Leadership Task Force is the incorporation of professional learning into the daily lives of the teachers, staff, and administrators of Fairbridge High School. Research has shown that one effective way to embed continuous learning into an organization is to create professional learning communities, small groups who work together to gather new knowledge, engage in reflective practice, and share best practices for teaching and learning (Neuman & Simmons, 2000). Professional learning communities would provide a safe, collaborative learning environment for teachers to engage in the knowledge acquisition, maintenance, and sharing that is required in a knowledge-based organization. When collaboration is new to the school culture, school leaders must provide professional development that will help teachers develop the skills necessary for collaboration and joint work, such as dialogue and discussion skills (Hord & Hirsh, 2009). The school leadership must also provide professional development opportunities aligned with the curriculum and instruction in order to enable the teachers to gain content knowledge and improve their instructional practice (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Developmental relationships, such as mentoring or coaching relationships, could also be embedded into the organization to facilitate knowledge and skills acquisition. Additionally, there will likely be a need for specialized training in skills such as the use of technology related to the knowledge-based system framework. Research has shown that training is most effective when it relates directly to the working needs of the organization and when leaders at all levels of the organization facilitate the training sessions (McGovern, 2001). The school will have to modify its schedule to accommodate the time required for utilizing the knowledge-based framework.

As previously discussed, the LTF also recommends implementing a practice of using web-based technologies to support the acquisition, maintenance, and sharing of knowledge. Web-based technology can facilitate knowledge acquisition through Internet research, web-based instruction, document sharing, chat rooms, and online learning.

Finally, the LTF recommends implementing the practices of reflection, formative assessment, and evaluation to facilitate the shift to a knowledge-based organization. These practices will enable the school leader and the various stakeholders to interpret and evaluate the knowledge they are acquiring and sharing, as well as the effectiveness of the new teaching and learning practices that result from the shared learning (McGovern, 2001). Further, the practices of reflection, formative assessment, and evaluation will enable the school leaders to recognize problems earlier and engage in collective problem solving to ensure that the change effort is producing the intended results and accomplishing the shared vision.

Cultural Features Affecting Discussion of Key Issues

As we have previously discussed, the current school culture is bureaucratic, in which the existing principal has actually discouraged professional development. The existing culture is characterized by mistrust, isolation, and a fear of innovation, all of which inhibit discussion of important issues. A critical first step in the change effort will be transformation of the culture of the school. The culture of Fairbridge High School will undergo a makeover as it transitions into this new knowledge based organization led by their new leader who focuses on transformational leadership. The main aspects of this new culture include creating a cohesive learning community, which fosters the education and development of all members, developing students who will be assets to their community and making sure that Fairbridge has an environment that thrives on open communication.

As previously mentioned in the discussion of new practices for supporting the change effort, cultural features that will encourage discussion of important issues include a sense of community, a shared vision, trust, mutual respect, and collaboration in professional learning communities that will enhance the teachers' ability to implement effective teaching and learning (Hord & Hirsh, 2009). It will also be important for the school's new leader to encourage the teachers and staff to take responsibility for helping to implement the knowledge-based framework and to engage in shared decision-making with the school administrators. This will enhance the teachers' commitment to the change effort and will promote the success of the change effort by fostering discussion and ensuring that the school benefits from their diversity of knowledge, skills and experience (Neuman & Simmons, 2000).

Norms and Practices to Support Participation

The school leader will focus on making the school community one that is inclusive, values the contributions of its team members, creative, reflective, and open. Communication is the key and will be the basis of change in the community. The new environment will foster creative, continuous learning and be built on the input of all community members and groups. It is necessary for all to be included in the decision making process when it comes to the rules and regulations of the school as well as what the environment will be like. The environment must be open enough so that everyone feels that their opinion matters and their opinions will be taken into account when implementing change in the school. All influential groups must be heard from, including community members, parents, students, teachers, support staff and administration.

In order for everyone to be heard and recognized, it is suggested that a group be formed to create a community of those engaged in supporting school change. This group could be called something along the lines of the "Fairbridge Alliance for Education" whose purpose is to provide a forum for diverse voices to be heard regarding the implementation of the knowledge framework at Fairbridge High School. It is similar to what has been developed at other schools (2006-2007 Annual Report). It should also be integrated into school board meetings as this is the voice of the people. People must be ready and willing to get involved and unafraid to speak up. As the community gets more involved then the attitude towards Fairbridge High should improve, boosting school morale,

and helping to fix the problems (such as bad press, teacher resignation, multiple leadership changes, etc.).

The LTF also wants to create an environment that makes Fairbridge High School the "place for learning." Therefore, the school will have to shift from a culture that discourages knowledge acquisition and sharing to one that expects and encourages continuous professional learning and collaborative teamwork. The participants in collaborative learning communities establish norms, or values, of interaction and standards of learning. For example, professional learning communities in education often adopt norms of shared responsibility for individual growth, valuing learning over autonomy, and embracing innovative instructional practices (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). It is important to create a positive and motivating learning environment so the students will enjoy going to school and will become lifetime learners. Creativity and individuality in the sharing and creation of knowledge need to be focused on, and success should be acknowledged and celebrated. To further encourage the involvement of students in their school community, the school should establish a student council that would participate in the change effort and work with the school board to make sure the students' voices are heard. This plays into the transformational leadership model as the leader of the school truly is encouraging the best from all stakeholders.

As mentioned before, the Fairbridge Alliance for Education will play a large part in bringing the Fairbridge community together, and also it will support the participation of multiple different groups. The transformational leader will support and inspire the followers to be their best and increase performance (for students this means academically, for teachers or administration it means professionally). In addition, there must be enough support made available. There will be increased training for teachers, increased help available for students as to create a level of teamwork that was not seen before. The communication must be open, recognized and acknowledged and include the input from all levels, students to superintendents. Fairbridge High School has a shared vision to create a knowledge-based organization and, after successful implementation of the change effort, Fairbridge High School will be where students want to go, teachers want to teach, and a school of which the community members can be very proud.

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*Reflections on Educational Leadership or Instructional Leadership
The preceding paper was chosen to highlight an awareness of current leadership models and how they can be used in the development of substantive change within school culture. It is no secret that schools today are facing challenges like never before and that the need for leadership is now an imperative due to NCLB and alike legislation. Truly effective leadership is only possible when the situation is diagnosed properly however, which is to say until a school can critically analyze itself and its particular issues no substantive change can take place. A good leader knows this, their role is to guide the community to first look at itself critically, perhaps for the first time, and honestly assess where it is and where it wants or needs to go. From there it can begin to redefine itself, with the help of a leader, and to build a culture on their own terms. A leader's style and approach are important and so is their skill set that today needs to have a depth that far surpasses previous generations, however many fail to realize that sustainable change is the result of a shift in culture that although is initiated by leadership is sustained by the community.

The potential benefits of greater collaboration, according to some observers, are a better school climate, greater

career satisfaction for educators, and higher retention of qualified teachers and administrators (Fine, 2010). Yet there are some within education who fear, "collaboration may raise concerns about dilution of individual accountability, infringement on independence in the classroom, or a lack of clear management hierarchies or responsibilities" (Fine, 2010) may occur. Regardless of what side someone falls on this argument the need for leadership is made clear however "Change requires leaders who are committed to ensuring that those engaged in change have the necessary knowledge, skills, support, and opportunities to learn" (Hirsh & Killion, 2009, p. 466). In the socioeconomic constructs known as education today many leaders may find that challenge alone insurmountable. The bottom line is that school communities must be willing to embrace and sustain change within themselves if any hope of reform or achievement is to be realized. Too many look to the leaders and administrators of the educational community to solve all their problems and confront their issues. Students and parents must take responsibility for their part; they must be active in educating themselves and working with schools to create a community of learners. To that end, as highlighted in the paper submitted here, the first step is to help the stakeholders look at themselves objectively and then allow them to participate in addressing the issues they face. This sense of ownership is a vital component towards true reform because this allows a transformational approach to leadership to facilitative a consensual "power that is manifested through other people instead of over people" (Gorton & Alston, 2009, p. 15).

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