

Chapter One

Preparing Principals in the Age of Accountability

Marc S. Tucker, Judy B. Coddling

Why would anyone want the job of principal? Many school principals we know have the look these days of the proverbial deer caught in the headlights. Almost overnight, it seems, they have been caught in the high beams of the burgeoning accountability movement. Now as never before, the public and all the organs of government are insisting that student academic performance improve—and fast. The federal government is putting ever-increasing pressure on the states to that end. The states, in their turn, are busy creating incentives for local boards and superintendents to raise school performance. And the local boards and superintendents are wasting no time in putting as much pressure as they can on the principals. And there it rests.

The principal experiences this set of pressures as a vise that is closing fast. The expectation that the principal will lead the school to levels of student achievement that are unprecedented for that school, for students from that social background, for children for whom English is not their native language, with budgets that meager—all this seems to be the stuff of fantasy for the principal in the vise. If the principal and faculty had known how to produce unprecedented improvements in student performance before, they would have done it. What, they want to know, makes anyone think they can do it now, with little or no more money than they had before?

This enormous challenge is the icing on a cake that is, on the whole, not very appetizing to begin with.

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The life of the principal is very different from the life of an average faculty member (see Chapter Eight). The typical principal supervises thirty professionals and fourteen support staff. There is no assistant principal in his school. This means that the average principal is responsible for a span of control six to ten times what is normal in private industry.

All day long, faculty, staff, and parents are making a beeline for the principal's office to resolve the problems they face. The result is a day—say, for a typical high school principal—that is a headlong dash that begins at 7:00 or 7:30 A.M. and does not end until 10:00 or 10:30 P.M. The principal's daily diary reflects a calendar set by everyone else. Typical entries would contain entries like these: “met with angry parent,” “served with lawsuit,” “met with grievance panel,” “met with parent demanding that her son's grades be raised to level needed to get into college,” “met with fire inspector on safety code violation,” “attended expulsion hearing,” “met with parent demanding that her daughter have a different English teacher,” “visited classrooms (interrupted after fifteen minutes by emergency, unable to return)” . . . and the list goes on like that through dinner until the varsity basketball game is over in the evening.

Note that precious little of this day has to do with instruction. Principals refer to themselves as “one-minute decision makers” because they have a minute to decide one issue before they are confronted with the next one. Besides having to deal with the stress produced by this situation, the typical principal works an average sixty-hour workweek, compared to forty-five hours for the typical teacher.

So you would expect the principal to make comparably more, right? Wrong! Because principals have less political power and public support than teachers, teachers' salaries have been rising faster than principals' salaries. So although it looks as though principals earn more than teachers when you compare annual salaries, when you take into account the fact that principals are generally on a full-

time schedule and the teachers generally work ten months a year, the hourly salary rate for principals is often actually lower than for teachers.

As the years have gone by and public trust in professional educators has turned to public disgust, the support that the principal used to get from parents and the community has evaporated, replaced by what seems like a constant battle, an endless series of demands that often easily escalate into abuse, from which there is no escape.

Over the past decade or so, many states have adopted some form of school site governance. The lofty goal was to relocate control of the school from the central office to the school itself and to share the enhanced power at the school level among a wider group of constituencies, to give them a greater sense of ownership and make the school work better. But the principal, a wry smile playing on her face, will tell you that it did not work out that way. The central office has as much control as ever over the budget, the curriculum, hiring, firing, and the assignment of key leadership positions in the school. The only difference from how it used to be is that the meager power the principal used to have must now be shared with a school site council composed mainly of teachers and parents who are happy to exercise whatever power they can get but who will take none of the responsibility for the outcome. So the principal has even less authority than before while being expected to accept much more responsibility.

The result is predictable. Principals are bailing out, and the pool of candidates willing to replace them is drying up at an alarming rate. Some schools with which we are familiar have recently gone six months or more without a principal because no one with even the bare minimum qualifications could be found for the post. This is not because no one has the formal qualifications. Getting the qualifications is one of the easiest ways to advance on the salary scale as a teacher or assistant principal. So there is a large pool of people who have the formal qualifications but who do not want the

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job. And who can blame them? Who would want a job that appears to be impossible, is thankless, and pays no more than other jobs in the same field that make more modest demands on one's time and psychic energy?

This situation would be regarded with alarm in the best of times. That is, it is always a problem when the supply of people seeking a key position falls below the demand. The only options available are to make the job more attractive, typically by raising salaries or lowering the qualifications. In education, time out of mind, we have usually done the latter, rarely the former. But consider where the country is right now. What we need are not just people who are willing to do the job and meet the minimum qualifications, even though these criteria would be hard enough to meet in many places at the moment. No, the job is no longer simply to "keep school," the job we have trained principals for over the decades. Today we need people who can do a job we have never advertised before, a job that currently serving principals were never expected to do. We need people who can lead and manage the school to much higher levels of student achievement at little or no increase in cost, in an environment in which they have much less control over the key factors that determine the outcome than similarly situated leaders and managers in most other fields. That is a very tall order.

Having said that, we are now in a position to break the challenge apart into its constituent components.

Making the Job Doable

First, the job itself must be made doable. This challenge has at least two dimensions: the structure of the job and the authority that it carries.

We have run focus groups of principals from many different kinds of schools and communities. The message is clear: the principals now in the job believe that they ought to be instructional leaders—that shaping the instructional program and providing

effective guidance to the faculty in making the instructional program as effective as possible is the heart of the job. But the principals we talked to from the most advantaged communities told us that they could not possibly spend more than 40 percent of their time on instruction—too little, they think, to do what now needs to be done. And the principals of schools serving low-income inner-city schools just laughed. They spend all of their time dealing with emergencies. Attending to instruction, they say, is a luxury they cannot afford.

The fact is that one person can no longer do all that needs to be done. It is best then to talk about the “principalship,” a function carried out by two or more people that involves providing the leadership the school now needs as well as the management needed to organize and administer the school at the top level. Among the possible configurations in a small school is providing the principal with a business manager who takes over many of the administrative duties. In a larger school, the job might be divided among a principal, a chief academic officer, and a chief of operations, or it might be given to a principal (or teacher) assisted by a business manager and a chief of staff. In a very large high school, it might involve multiple principals: one who is responsible for the physical plant and administrative services and a number of others, each in charge of an autonomous academic program, assisted in each case by a chief of staff or business manager.

There are many other possible configurations for the division of responsibilities among two or three individuals, but almost any conceivable arrangement is going to cost more money, which will have to be offset by savings made elsewhere in the system.

Note that the principal is the instructional leader in most of these configurations but not all of them. This is very important for everything that follows in this chapter. When we speak of the principal as instructional leader and when we describe a curriculum intended to develop the skills and knowledge needed by the principal acting in the role of instructional leader, we hope you will bear in mind this idea of the principalship and the possibility that the

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role of instructional leader may be played by someone other than the person who holds the title of principal. We have already noted that the environment in many urban schools is that the principal, no matter who is at his right and left hand, will have little time left for instruction after dealing with the inevitable daily ration of emergencies. A school district that ignores this reality and requires its principals to personally be the instructional leaders in every case may do so at its peril. Nevertheless, no matter which member of the leadership team performs this function, the principal should get the training for instructional leadership that we describe here, because it is essential that the principal understand this function and be able to support it knowledgeably, even if someone else is actually doing it.

Making Authority Commensurate with Responsibility and Accountability

There is another respect in which the job must be made more doable: the principal must have authority that is commensurate with her responsibility and accountability.

Imagine that you are the principal, this person who is being asked to produce great improvements in student achievement. You cannot select your staff. You cannot fire anyone who is already on your staff. You cannot award or withhold a bonus from anyone. Seniority rights for teachers means that overnight, you can lose people you have made an enormous investment in and have them replaced by people who couldn't care less about your agenda. You may have little control over the instructional materials that are used. Someone else controls the training agenda. Someone else controls how all but a small amount of your regular budget is spent. Someone else controls how the federal program money will be spent. Some people who work in your school report directly to people in the central office rather than to you. In some systems, you do not even have the right to assign teachers to classes because

teachers' seniority rights govern assignment. Yet despite all this, if your students do not make progress on the state accountability measures, your school is likely to be put on a public list of low-performing schools. If performance does not improve, your school could be closed, the faculty disbanded, and you fired. You will be held responsible for the whole mess.

It is absolutely unreasonable to hold the principal accountable for student performance when that person has little or none of the authority needed to get the job done. No major corporation that expected to stay in business, no military unit of any size, no government agency that has earned the respect of the public would expect its executives to function successfully without the authority to get the job done.

State legislatures and school districts will have to deal with these issues, and it will not be easy, because others will have to cede authority to principals for this situation to be rectified. And it won't happen overnight.

So what can be done now to address the problems we have described? In answering this question, we should bear in mind that the low pay relative to teachers, the heavy supervisory load, the long hours, and much else that we have described as characteristics of the job have been with us for quite a while, though most of these problems have slowly been worsening in recent years. What has brought the situation to the crisis point has been the enormous anxiety and burdens brought on by the public's demand for greatly improved student performance.

A Historical Parallel

At first glance, the idea that schools and principals in particular should be held accountable for greatly raising student performance without the prospect of commensurately large increases in school budgets is simply unreasonable and should therefore be dismissed. But before we come to rest on that conclusion, it is important to

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remind ourselves of the situation that American business faced in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

American corporations virtually overnight found themselves facing unprecedented challenges from first Europe and then Asia. Their foreign competitors were bringing products to our shores that were of higher quality, were typically much more customized to individual customer needs and requirements, came to market much earlier in response to swiftly changing consumer tastes, and to the astonishment and dismay of American companies, often carried prices that were lower than the cost to the American firms of manufacturing the product, not counting the additional costs of marketing, sales, inventory, and transportation, to say nothing of profit.¹

The short of it was that the American firms either found a way to greatly increase quality and bring their new products to market faster and do it all for a lower cost and price — or go out of business. Some went out of business, but many figured out how to produce higher quality at lower costs, and they did it very quickly.

So the experience of American business in the 1980s shows that it is in fact possible to greatly raise quality without significantly raising costs. But that same experience shows that this can be done only by rethinking the way the organization works, coming up with new strategies and processes, and then driving those strategies and processes through the whole organization using a new conception of executive development.

Firms found that they had to work hard to be very clear about their strategic goals. They had to translate those goals into standards of quality that they were going to meet. They had to come up with measures that would enable them to determine the degree to which they were meeting their standards and goals. Then they had to figure out how to empower the people who made the product or rendered the service to design whole new ways to get the job done. This process of redesign (they called it *reengineering*) of the basic processes pervaded these firms. To properly support the redesign process and the implementation of the new systems, the firms had to create new corporate cultures.

The Strategic Value of Executive Development in Business

And they had to bring executive training from the shadows of the periphery of the firm right onto center stage.² Firms engaged in reengineering their basic processes quickly discovered not only that they had to have clear corporate goals and strategies but also that it was to no avail if the only people who knew about them and were dedicated to reaching them and using them were at corporate headquarters. If the goals and strategies didn't reach all the way down to the factory floor, they would fail. If the people on the front line did not know what to do and how to do it, the firm would inevitably go under. It was this realization that led firm after firm to establish corporate universities in this period. The top leaders of the corporation became the senior "professors" in the corporate university. They taught the next level down and so on in a "cascade" until the bottom of the pyramid was reached. In all the years that Jack Welch led General Electric, it is said that he never missed his biweekly teaching assignment at GE's corporate university at Crotonville, New York.

In this way, corporate strategy got out of the boardroom and into the bloodstream of the whole organization. One might ask why the corporations did not turn to the business schools instead of going to the trouble and expense of creating their own corporate universities. The answer is in part that the corporations had been quite critical of the university business schools for years and also that the corporations needed to be able to put their own corporate spin on the education and training that their executives received.

Whatever the reasons, the universities acknowledged both the threat and the opportunity, and they reached for the opportunity. All over the country, business schools began or greatly expanded their executive development programs. Whereas their M.B.A. programs enrolled individuals and usually applied the usual academic admissions criteria for determining who was admitted, the executive development programs typically reached out to firms, with

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which they made training contracts. The firms were asked to select teams of executives to participate in these programs. They defined projects that would be a focal point of the training program and that would be of real value to them. And the firms also contributed executives who would serve as part of the faculty for the program, ensuring that the firms' goals and values and "way of doing things" were reflected in the training. The business schools offered their best faculty for these programs and went out of their way to put together programs tailored to the needs of the firms.

The business schools made what in elementary and secondary education would be regarded as immense investments in curriculum and technology-based delivery systems (in some cases \$1 million or more per course). In return, they reaped very large fees from the firms, which the firms were prepared to pay because their very survival was at stake.³

In a moment, we will compare the executive training in business to the training of school principals. But first, we need to discuss executive training in the context of the larger system of which it is usually a part—the system that most sectors of the economy create to develop their supply of capable executives. The case we have chosen is the case of the United States military.

The Iron Triangle

Virtually everyone we talked with in business and military education told us that they could not conceive of successfully doing their job unless certain systems were present in the place where the people being trained worked or would work.

We will illustrate the point using the military as an example.⁴ Officers in the armed forces either move up at a predetermined pace or are expected to leave the service. Progress through the ranks is determined by promotion boards, which decide, on the basis of the written record, whether the officer goes on to the next stage of his career. That decision is made on the basis of the assignments the individual has had, how he has done in those jobs, the training he

has had, and how he has done in that training. Promotion to the next step is both a promotion to a new rank and job and also the right to take the next appropriate training regime. In this system, jobs and the training for those jobs go hand in hand. Careers are laid out as a series of progressively demanding assignments. All officers are expected to counsel the officers reporting to them through this system and to participate in their education as coaches. Promotion depends in part on how well one has performed this function. The military does not simply send an individual to a particular school or training just because she wants to go any more than it would give that person an assignment simply because she volunteered for it. The qualifications for each job and career are known. One has to have the requisite training and previous assignments to qualify, along with the recommendations of one's superiors and, frequently, the right sort of results on the relevant diagnostic tests and so on. In short, the military sees job training and job assignments as two integral and highly related elements in a unified, coherent system of career advancement.

This "iron triangle" of carefully calibrated relationships among job training, job assignments, and career advancement is largely missing in American school systems. The pool of people from whom candidates for principals' positions come is made up of people who have selected themselves into that pool. Most people would agree that certain characteristics that are desirable in principals are inherent in the person's personality and that others are trainable. If that is so, then any sensible school district would do as the military does: identify the ones who have the right personality characteristics and make whatever investment in them is required to develop the trainable skills. It would create a carefully staged set of leadership positions in the school of increasing responsibility and step the potential executives through those positions, providing at each step the education and training appropriate for that stage in the progression, with strong mentoring along the way. They would make sure that this education and training was not just generic—addressed to what any principal in any American school district

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should know and be able to do—but also specific to the culture of that district and its own strategy for raising student achievement. This is what the military and many American business firms do, but few districts do it.

Good training has value in and of itself. But a good training system will produce much better results if it is mated to a sound executive development system. As you focus on the training of school leaders and managers in the rest of this chapter, we suggest that you keep this in mind.

We have told you something now about what the principal's job is like and how the challenges presented by the pressure to raise student performance are combining with other factors to cause a worsening shortage of people who can lead our schools to high performance. We have suggested that when facing a similar challenge to greatly improve organizational performance, American business created the modern form of executive development program as its chosen method for driving its survival strategies deep into the organization. And we have used the example of the military to show that such programs, though they may be essential, are not sufficient. We are ready now to examine the way principals are trained, with a view to understanding how and why that approach to training has to be changed to meet the challenges we have described.

The Training of School Principals Today

Most states require that people hired as principals have at least three years of prior service as a teacher.⁵ Seventeen states require that the candidate pass an exam to get a state license to be a school administrator. But many of these tests are just basic skills tests and are generally quite easy (though not all candidates pass them).

Almost all states require that principals have a state-authorized credential or an advanced degree in educational administration (some states require both). The programs leading to these credentials and degrees are typically offered by departments of educational

administration in schools of education in universities. Some non-degree programs leading to the credential are offered through professional associations, county offices, and school district training.

Recruiting for these programs typically does not involve selection criteria related to the candidate's potential as a school principal. Candidates are not generally interviewed. The schools offering the programs typically make no effort to identify potential school leaders. The result is that the pool of candidates from whom the districts select principals is generally composed of people who may or may not have any aptitude or desire for the job or be regarded by their employers as suited for it. Indeed, some have a well-developed distaste for it.

The doctoral programs offered by the universities, on the one hand, often have little or no coherence.⁶ In too many cases, very little is expected of the students in these programs by way of performance that would shed some light on their suitability as school administrators. The state-approved credential programs, on the other hand, are often "hyperrational." Categories of skill or knowledge are specified, means for achieving them must be documented, procedures for supervised fieldwork must be specified and are audited, and periodic program reviews are undertaken. Notwithstanding all this, however, the substance of these programs is typically very thin indeed. And there is typically very little connection between the curriculum as taught and the actual demands, conditions, and problems of everyday practice.

The educational administration departments of many schools of education at the state universities and state colleges where credential and nondoctoral work are the norm are generally regarded as "cash cows" by the university.⁷ That is, they are expected to produce a substantial surplus that can be used to fund programs that the school cares more about. One consequence is that almost anyone who meets the most minimal academic qualifications will be admitted, and an absolute minimum of effort on the part of the student will be accepted by the faculty to earn a grade that will enable the candidate to obtain the necessary certificate or degree.

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In their effort to keep costs down, these schools rely heavily on adjunct faculty. The adjunct faculty, often practicing or retired school administrators, frequently offer anecdotes from the world of practice that students find a refreshing antidote to the theory expounded in their other courses, which often seem quite irrelevant to the problems they actually face. But anecdotes from the past are not going to prepare these students for a future shaped by the new and much higher expectations of the accountability movement. And they are no substitute for a carefully thought out curriculum combining the disciplined acquisition of craft knowledge with the conceptual underpinning that these students need.

So all in all, it is no surprise that when principals who are succeeding in leading their school to substantial gains in student achievement are asked to identify some connection between their capacity and the way they were initially prepared for the job,⁸ they are unable to do so, pointing instead to personal characteristics and what they learned on the job and from colleagues.

The programs made available to practicing principals by the graduate school administration programs are, on the whole, no better than those for aspiring principals. Scattershot and lacking in coherence, they are only rarely connected in any significant way to the specific goals and strategies of the districts in which the principals work. We found nothing comparable to the kinds of executive development programs common in business and the military.

In fact, the connections between the academy and the employers in the field of public education can in most cases be described as tenuous, standing in strong contrast to the relationships between some graduate schools of business and the modern industrial corporation or the very close links between training units and operational units in the military. By and large, it is still the case in education that the customers of the graduate schools are individuals, not school districts. The faculty of the graduate school of education determines what the curriculum will be, with little or no input from the employers of the executives being trained. If this had continued to be the case in business, as it has in education, few

executive development programs would have survived in the business schools; the corporate universities would have done the job themselves, hiring individual university professors as consultants as needed.

There are programs that do not answer to this description.⁹ We know of some that have been using the case method for years and others that work hard to make strong connections for their students between their courses and the actual challenges of practice. We found some graduate programs that do not rely overmuch on adjunct faculty and some certificate programs that are paying attention to the new demands on school leaders posed by the standards movement. There were some that were clearly valued by their students for the knowledge and skills they provided and some that worked hard to screen out individuals who they thought would not profit from them.

But these are the exceptions that prove the rule. As one would expect, some of the most effective programs can be found at a handful of elite institutions. Stanford pioneered the use of the case method in education administration. The Harvard Graduate School of Education, among many examples at that institution that might be cited, makes wide use of cases it has developed as well as cases developed by the Harvard Business School, the Kennedy School, and other institutions. The University of Wisconsin uses cases, simulations, and role-play to base its program in situations that mirror the kinds of problems that practicing school administrators face every day. And programs like those at Wichita State and the University of California at Fresno also expect their students to get deeply involved in problems of practice and use many of the techniques of the best executive development programs (like action research and problem-focused curricula). Some of the most promising programs we found were in the form of collaborations between universities and particular jurisdictions, like the collaboration between Teachers College and Westchester County, between the Chicago School Administrators Association and Northwestern University, or between the San Diego Schools and San Diego State

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University. These programs involve both aspiring and practicing principals, are generally very intensive, focus on leadership and problem solving, and are deeply embedded in the work of particular school districts and the strategies they are using to raise student performance. Here as elsewhere, we see the result of the insight, drive, and charisma of a handful of leaders.

But when we looked at the most promising programs closely, we found more often than not that they were built on too small a scale, many had too little institutional support, and they were typically poorly funded. Virtually all suffered from lack of investment in the development of powerful curriculum materials. None had all the elements one would look for in a program that is likely to meet the full scope of the challenges we have described here. And there are far too few of them.

Why Have the Universities Failed?

Without question, there are a growing number of people in our universities and in the other organizations responsible for training the next generation of school leaders and managers who are very much aware of the shortcomings of the programs we have described and eager to do something about them. We have met many of these people and have come to admire their determination. We shall describe some of the challenges they face and some of the policy changes that must be made to improve their chances of success.

The question as to why the universities have, on the whole, failed is crucial. Our universities have at least their share of people of good will who are committed to public education and who want to do the right thing. There are no villains here. So if that is the case, it is likely that the problem lies in the situation in which the schools of education find themselves, the policy environment they face, and other incentives to which they must respond. If that is so, the answer lies in changing that environment and those incentives. One could argue that the current system has evolved in response to the incentives governing the relationships among the universities, school districts, and state departments of education, as follows.

First, the universities are accountable to the states for approval of their degree programs and certificate programs. To the extent that these programs are not equipping school leaders for the world we have described, the state shares some of the accountability.

Second, the people who sign up for these programs are full-time teachers who are taking the courses to entitle them to an automatic pay raise given for courses taken. It is likely that a large fraction have no intention of becoming school principals. One could say that they only want their ticket punched. More charitably, for many young people who have taught for several years, this appears to be the only viable way to stay in the profession and earn more money. They are simply responding to the incentives they face. But the result is that they are typically angry when the people who teach these courses make any serious demands on them.

Third, some adjunct faculty members lower their expectations of their graduate students in education administration programs when those students threaten to drop the course, because the faculty members are compensated on the basis of student enrollment.

Fourth, because there are no clear quality distinctions among programs and because these students already have full-time jobs (and often family obligations), they tend to select the programs that are least demanding of their time and energy. This puts pressure on programs to lower their standards to maintain enrollment.

Fifth, given the low expectations of the students in these courses, it turns out to be relatively easy for many universities to hire adjunct faculty to teach the courses at very low cost.

Sixth, at the major public research universities, reduced state support in recent years has combined with the formal incentives and informal academic norms in these institutions to push faculty to seek research grants and publish in journals rather than make useful connections to school practice and practitioners that could strengthen their teaching. This does not necessarily signal a lack of interest in making these connections, but it has the same result.

Thus we have a situation that meets the needs of all of the actors involved *except* the students who will be taught in the schools where the graduates of these programs serve as principals.

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The tired teachers taking the courses get their automatic pay raises for very little investment of real effort. The university makes a profit on each person occupying a seat in the program and is not disturbed by anyone from the state inquiring as to the quality of the professional education offered. The people running the program do not have to go to the considerable effort and expense that would be required to develop and teach an appropriate curriculum, to say nothing of the expense and effort that would be required to really connect the program with the actual practice settings that would give it life and meaning.

There are policy measures that could be taken to address at least some of these issues. The states could impose tough licensure standards that reflect the changed nature of the job and administer equally tough performance assessments to the candidates. Under current conditions, that would absolutely guarantee that the trickle of people into the principalship would dry up completely unless the state at the same time substantially increased principals' salaries, abolished school site councils, sharply curtailed the scope of teachers' bargaining rights (thus giving principals more scope to choose their staff, reward individual faculty members, and get rid of poor performers), and much more. You may or may not think that these are good ideas, but they are, we think, responsive to the analysis we just presented, and anyone who wants seriously to address the problems we have described must either entertain these ideas or come up with others that have an equal chance of meeting the challenges. Our point here is that much of the general failure of the universities to address these challenges is attributable to the policy environment in which they work and is not likely to change much until that policy environment changes.

The states are slowly adopting a set of administrator licensure standards recommended by the Council of Chief State School Officers (those of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, or ISLLC) as well as an examination administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). These are not performance standards. They are necessarily very general, because their design-

ers intended them apply to everyone from school principal to big-city superintendent. It is as if the same standards applied from second lieutenant to four-star general. No less important, they were constructed by analyzing the job as it has long been done by experienced educational administrators, which means that they do not reflect a determined focus on the greatly altered current environment and therefore the job description with which this chapter began. It is therefore not surprising that although the ISLLC standards include instructional leadership, they do not feature it. Nor are they a good guide to the kind of training that would equip the principal to be an effective redesigner of his school to get much higher student performance at little or no increase in cost, the heart and soul of the new job description. Nor is the ETS exam designed in a way that is likely to encourage the development of principals of the sort we described in the introduction to this chapter.

There is one policy development that we do think may have promise. The National Policy Board on Educational Administration has stimulated an effort to create for school principals an institution with a mission parallel to that of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Its role would be to create performance standards for board certification of principals who are accomplished practitioners of their profession. The existence of such a certification program could be an incentive for many principals to participate in a demanding program designed along the lines of the business schools' executive development programs, if the brief history of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is any guide. But that will be true only if school districts and states provide an incentive to principals to make the investment of time and money necessary to prepare themselves to meet the certificate standard and take the examination.

There are two other points to be made in connection with the question as to why the universities have not done better in this field. One has to do with money. Good business schools, like good medical schools and good law schools, have very ample budgets. Their budgets are ample because they can charge handsome fees.

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They can charge handsome fees because their graduates have the potential to make very high salaries that are connected in part to which graduate school they attended. These graduate schools honor their applicants by admitting them to their programs, and their graduates honor their alma maters by giving them generous gifts. There is no such virtuous circle in educational administration. Which graduate school you went to makes little difference as one goes up the ladder. And there is no pot of gold there anyway. Few school administrators of any rank make enough to have a university building named after them. That is not likely to change.

There is an irony here. The virtuous circle for business schools results in those schools' having the funds to make significant investments, as we have pointed out, in the development of powerful curricula for their students, which in turn enables them to provide successful programs that get their students ever more powerful curricula. One of the more interesting trends is the development in business schools of opportunities for candidates for the M.B.A. to focus on the education industry. Presumably, this reflects the development of education as a major business opportunity in the American economy, but it could presage major capital investments by business schools in the development of education leaders and managers of a kind that the education schools have never been able to make. Here again, state policy and private philanthropy could put the education schools on a more equal footing with respect to capital investment if they choose to do so.

The last reason the universities have not done what needs to be done has to do with a choice that graduate schools of education made many years ago. That was the choice to model themselves on the schools of arts and sciences, not the professional schools. Graduate schools of education below the top rank are often populated with professors of education sociology who yearn to be members of the sociology department in the school of arts and sciences and professors of mathematics education who are not really accepted as equals by the professors in the mathematics department of the fac-

ulty of arts and science and have nowhere else to turn to find out where they stand in the status hierarchy.

We are pointing to some of the deepest cultural differences within the university. The incentives in the modern graduate school of education to reach out to the world of practice are weaker than they should be and weaker than they need to be, though many individuals in these institutions are working hard to make those connections despite the lack of formal incentives to do so. The people who lead our universities will have to work to change those incentives if they want to see their institutions play the role they should be playing in educating and training our school leaders in the years ahead.

The District-Level Lack of Management Development Systems

Summing up, then, we can say that while the modern school district faces much the same kind of challenge that American business and the military faced beginning in the late 1970s, it lacks some of the basic structures that are needed to do the job, structures that have long been taken for granted in business and the military.

Both sectors decided that they had to make enormous changes in strategy and culture. Both knew that the only way to drive those changes through their organizations was by using training strategies. But in both cases, there were certain well-developed basic infrastructures in place that they could count on.

Among these structures is the modern system for identifying, training, and selecting leaders and managers to make sure that there is at all times a strong pool of candidates available, as noted earlier. Another is the carefully defined sequence of positions that aspiring senior managers have to go through that enable them to systematically develop the skills and knowledge that senior managers need, as described earlier, and at the same time, the sequence of formal courses that provide the “just in time” education, training, and

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professional development they need both to do the job they have and to prepare them for the next step in the sequence. Military officers typically also have access to a well-constructed mentoring system. Such systems can also be found in the private sector—for example, in law firms, where each partner is usually responsible for mentoring a group of associates. Rare is the district that has any of this in place. We know of very few school districts that come close to having all the components of a well-designed management development system.

It is also true that the infrastructure for the initial preparation of leaders and managers and for their continuing education and training was in better shape in the business sector and in the military than in public education. The fact that the corporate university evolved in partnership with the university graduate schools of business is a testament to the responsiveness of the business schools. The corporate university, a recent innovation, might otherwise have evolved to largely replace the university as a source of continuing education and training for experienced corporate leaders and managers. In the case of the military, the war college system is the corporate university, and it has been both healthy and around for a long time.

In the case of the military, the employer and the trainer are the same organization. Just as in the business case, the employer decides what the employee needs and either provides it in-house or buys it from another source, often the university. In any case, the management development system provides the standards to which the education and training will be done. As we have noted, it is because the standards are universal within the system that officers in charge can reliably make plans even for people they have never met, knowing only what their formal qualifications are, because those qualifications incorporate universal standards. Only the ISLLC standards are available to perform this function in education, and we have described the shortcomings of those standards.

One's instinct is to assume that these ills are unique to the American education system and to look for someone or some class

of institutions on whom to blame the problem. But the assumption is dead wrong. The broad institutional weaknesses reported here are endemic to elementary and secondary education systems throughout the English-speaking world and probably beyond (see Chapter Seven).

Starting with the People on the Job

The question is where to begin to address those weaknesses. The normal instinct is to attend first to the initial preparation of school leaders. There are good reasons for this. Here, as elsewhere, it makes more sense to do the job right at the beginning than to have to pick up the pieces later. But our judgment is that if resources are limited, the first priority should go to addressing the problems faced by the school leaders who are already on the job.

The case for giving initial priority to the school leaders already on the job is much the same as the case for businesses' giving priority to the development of their executives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Recall that the business world, when its competitive position was attacked as never before from abroad, attended first and foremost to the executives already on staff. These were the people they had to rely on to turn the firm around. These were also the people who, because they were already on board, were most subject to the influence of the corporation's agenda, as opposed to the agenda of university professors who may or may not understand and be sympathetic to the goals and strategies of the firm.

The analogy holds. The agenda of standards-based reform that is now driving government's agenda for greatly raising student performance is far more deeply embraced by school districts, especially large school districts, and even more particularly big-city school districts, than it is by the faculties of graduate schools of education. That is hardly surprising, because school districts are under far more pressure to implement strategies to raise student performance than the schools of education are. Thus giving priority to strategies for greatly improving the skills and knowledge of practicing school

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leaders—as opposed to aspiring school leaders—makes sense in public education right now for all the same reasons that it made sense in business in the late 1970s. They have the greatest incentives to pay attention to the substance of the training. Investing in them is the most efficient strategy, because everyone who is trained will be employed as a school leader (indeed, they are already so employed). And the training will pay off immediately, not years in the future, for the same reason.

But this is no argument for ignoring the initial preparation of school leaders. In the long run, much depends on making strong progress in this arena. Clearly, those who have the resources, the will, and the mandate to focus on initial preparation should do so. But in the rest of this chapter, we will address ourselves mainly to the preparation of those who are already on the job for the challenges they now face. We turn now to the question of design. What should be done and how?

Examples from Abroad

In Great Britain, the challenge of training school leaders has been accorded the highest priority of any social goal. Tony Blair, the prime minister, has personally led a national initiative to address the problem. To ensure that the government had access to the best thinking about school leadership anywhere in the world, Blair directed his staff to benchmark international practices and bring some of the world's leading experts on the topic to London to advise the government. Deciding to bypass the nation's universities, the British government established a national quasi-governmental agency to address the issue and has provided the agenda and operating budget to get it started, as well as a handsome capital budget to house the operation. The government conducted a national competition among its universities for the honor of hosting the new institution. It is still too early to tell whether this approach will produce the results the Blair government has in mind.

The Hong Kong government, equally determined to address the problem, has embarked on a similar course of action.

But each of those governments operates a ministry of education that sets education policy and controls the schools. That function, in the United States, is performed by the states, although no state as yet has all the functions performed by ministries of education in other countries. States could in fact choose to create a quasi-governmental agency to train school principals. States could create not-for-profits to do so or fund existing organizations. Or they could fund the development of state institutions to train incumbent school leaders at their universities, subject to whatever criteria and conditions they choose to impose. Or they could employ any combination of these strategies that seemed appropriate.

First Principles

Whatever strategy is chosen, however, the philanthropies or governments funding the work and setting the rules should, we believe, be guided by certain principles.

First, the focus should be very clear: preparing school leaders to lead and manage schools that can consistently produce steady gains in student performance without substantial increases in school budgets.

Second, no institution should be funded to educate and train school leaders unless it has the same kind of relationships with school districts that the executive development programs in most graduate schools of business have with the major firms that supply their students. The school districts should play a major role in determining who the candidates for training will be, what the form of the training will be, and what the major action projects will be. They should also be responsible for providing mentors and part of the faculty for the training programs.

Third, any program offered should have to demonstrate that it has carefully benchmarked best practices in education and draws widely on the best that leadership and management training in business and the military has to offer as well. Any such program will have to represent a bigger investment in curriculum development than any program of which we are currently aware.

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Fourth, no single institution or type of institution should have a monopoly over the provision of programs that individuals or school districts can turn to for the provision of powerful education and training for school leaders. The standards for such education and training should be made clear, and a healthy climate should be established in which the principals' professional societies (see Chapter Ten), other nonprofit institutions, for-profit training organizations, and universities can vie with one another for the favors of this market. One way to establish such a market is to give the money for the training not to the provider institutions but to their customers, the school districts, subject to the kinds of conditions spelled out here. That is basically what happens in business and the military, which is a significant part of the reason that leadership and management training is so much more powerful and relevant in those sectors.

Imagine for the moment that such programs were actually available in many places in the United States. How might they be structured? What teaching strategies would work best? What sort of curriculum might they offer?

Teaching Adults: The State of the Art

Let us look at the way a wide range of other professions go about developing an effective curriculum for the training of leaders and managers, as well as what has been learned from an equally wide range of professions about the most effective ways of teaching adults what they need to know to be effective in their profession (see Chapter Six).

Before the late 1970s, executive education in business was largely focused on the functions of the executive—finance and so on—but is now focused on strategic leadership and organizational change, mainly because the task is not to make steady improvements in a stable organization but rather to cope with a rapidly changing scene in which the prize goes to the firm that reads the situation right, sets the right goals, and comes up with a superior strat-

egy for achieving them (an exact parallel, as we see it, to the current situation in education). At the same time, and for the same reasons, the content of the training is moving steadily toward ever-greater customization to the needs of the individual firm, within the scope of a program that has a core standard curriculum. As we noted, it follows from this that the faculty for the training increasingly includes executives from the firm as well as university academics.

Executive education has been case-based for decades, but it is now adding to the cases the element of action learning, with constant feedback to the participant. This means projects that are an integral part of the training regime but whose topics are set by the firm, not the faculty. And it means feedback on the work of the project as it progresses, by both faculty and firm executives.

It is only a slight extension of these trends to the next one—the idea that the firm will send whole teams to be trained as a group. Allied to this is the idea of training cohorts so that all of those who enter a class stay together through the course of the training and become a support group for one another then and thereafter, within firms and across firms. This simple idea can greatly and quickly increase the organization's capacity to absorb, disseminate, and implement new ideas.

Finally, there is the notion of cascading learning communities, meaning that the people at the top of the firm combine learning with a developing strategy for the firm as the basis for a kind of learning community formed among themselves; each layer of management below them then does the same thing in a way appropriate to the managers' own responsibilities in the organization. The firm, over time, develops an approach to continuous learning in which each of these learning communities takes responsibility for developing the agenda for the community just below it in the hierarchy and coaching its members through that agenda—the cascade.

In this way, the top executives in the firm develop a very efficient method for driving their agenda and strategies for achieving

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their goals right straight throughout the firm, from top to bottom, using the professional development system as the agent.

From the engineering profession we might take the idea of developing short, modular courses, designed to be intense, organized in time blocks of various lengths. These courses are designed to complement the core curriculum and can be taught in nontraditional settings, as needed, by nontraditional instructors. Many are intended to reflect the practical and human side of engineering. In executive education in public education, much use is made of short courses, but what is often lacking is the close connection to the actual demands of the new accountability-shaped environment and the goals and strategies of the individual districts in which these education leaders work.

It turns out that there is a real ferment in the forms of professional education for the ministry. Of greatest interest to us is that after their initial training, the participants move directly into practice settings, where they access learning materials through technology and design their learning around the work they are doing, with support and guidance from the faculty in the seminary. They rarely visit the campus of the institution offering the instruction; their learning is almost entirely based in the field. Here, too, as in the business realm, there is great interest in the development of cohort learning communities.

There has been a revolution in medical education in recent years, one that has many parallels to the revolution we think is needed in the preparation of education professionals. Medical education used to be almost completely based in the disciplines, moving to a clinical setting only after the discipline-based education was complete. Now, increasingly, professional education in medicine is driven by real problems, as presented by real cases. There are set courses in the curriculum designed to convey core material to the students in a standard lecture format, and these play a very important role in the process, but a substantial part of the available time is taken by students' finding out what they need to know to diagnose and address particular cases presented by actual patients.

Here again, the cornerstone of the design is a small cohort group, which works on cases together. There is extensive use of technology to deliver instruction and assessments.

A lot of attention in this field has been devoted to the design of assessment. In this case, the form that it takes is to ask the participant to respond to questions about cases, generate hypotheses and alternative treatment plans, and respond to factual and conceptual questions in an oral examination. There is a lot about this approach to assessment that appears to have direct application to the education and training of school leaders and managers.

Finally, it turns out that the emerging form of medical education has managed to turn what could have been a big problem into a big asset. The problem is that the sum of the cases that actually present themselves in the problem-based part of the program do not naturally lead to all of the disciplinary knowledge that the beginning doctor ought to have, even after the students have completed the required lecture courses. There are usually big gaps that have to be filled in somehow before the candidate takes the medical boards. The solution? The cohort groups figure out what they do not know and need to know and divide up among themselves the task of finding the answers, which they then teach to each other, with their professors serving in the role of mentors. In so doing, the students accommodate themselves to the notion that no initial preparation will ever give them everything they need to know and therefore to the idea that they have to be prepared to keep learning throughout their whole career. Most important, they are actually required to figure out what they need to know and where and how they can get the knowledge they need. In other words, they have to develop a strategy for learning to learn and for doing it in the company of colleagues who have the same needs. This is a crying need in the education and training of school leaders and managers.

In many of these fields, e-learning is combined with the discipline of instructional design to produce Web-based forms of instruction, typically combined with face-to-face instruction, that both require and merit substantial capital investment. The investment

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can be spread across many more students than would normally participate in a conventional course.

In this way, carefully developed case studies can be presented in text form and augmented with videos of key actors in the cases as well as tools that can be used to analyze certain aspects of the cases, video commentary on the cases from participants and experts, and links to related cases, articles, and Web sites. Simulations and action projects can also be used to engage the participants and bring them into the world of the practicing professional in powerful ways. Group software makes it possible for groups of participants to learn collaboratively and for teachers and mentors to interact with their students and mentees no matter how separated they might be in space and time.

The e-learning world is clearly evolving very quickly in ways that make it vital for individuals who are providing learning opportunities for tomorrow's school leaders and managers to participate fully.

The High-Performance Curriculum

The points made in the preceding section have mainly to do with pedagogy. But what about curriculum content? We focus here not on what aspiring principals should know but on what the curriculum should be for principals who have some experience, the people on whom the district is most likely to rely to turn around performance in its schools now.¹⁰

The Educational Challenge

One would think that it would hardly be necessary to explain to the modern school principal the challenge that the principal faces. Who but the principal could be more expert on that point? But we have come to think otherwise. The public opinion research that has been done shows clearly that American educators have only the haziest understanding of the ways in which the rapid globalization

of the world economy has dramatically raised the level of academic skills and knowledge needed to lead a life beyond the threshold of economic struggle. Nor do they understand the extent to which educators hold different expectations for wealthy, majority students than they do for those from minority, low-income backgrounds and the corrosive effects that this difference in expectations has on the academic performance of these groups of students.

The starting point for the curriculum, we think, has to be a deep understanding of the circumstances that have led to the expectation that schools will produce greatly improved student performance at little or no increase in cost, a realistic estimate of the specific obstacles that stand in the way of reaching that goal, and an acceptance of the challenge to get every student ready for college without remediation by the time she leaves high school. Absent that understanding and acceptance, it is hardly likely that the principals will be able to produce among the whole school community the moral commitment to the vision that will be needed to achieve it.

Standards-Based Instructional Systems

The federal education legislation passed in the early days of 2002 (HR 1, the “No Child Left Behind Act”) makes official the commitment of the nation to an educational policy based on standards-based instructional systems. But few principals have more than a superficial understanding of the nature of such systems or the degree to which they hold the key to producing great improvements in student achievement without significant increases in cost. Principals will need to understand the different kinds of standards and assessments available, the appropriate uses of each, and the relationships among them. Similarly, they will need to understand the structure and function of curriculum frameworks and the ways in which curriculum and instructional materials can be analyzed for fit with the standards. Last and most essential, they will need to grasp the overriding importance of aligning all of the parts of the

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instructional system to make it internally coherent and consistent and the role of the principal in making that alignment a reality.

The Principal as Strategic Thinker

But understanding the essentials of standards-based systems of instruction will avail little if the principal does not have the skills to think strategically about the challenges he faces and to put together a clear and powerful strategy for addressing these challenges. Educators on the whole think tactically and operationally but rarely strategically. That is no great handicap when tomorrow looks much like yesterday and the challenge is simply to keep school, but when the challenge is to reach a goal that the school has never attempted before, the ability to think strategically may make all the difference. Much of the best literature and best practice in this field comes not from education but from business and the military, and the powerful curriculum that principals now need will have to draw heavily from those arenas.

The Principal as School Designer

Organizing all of the resources of the school to produce high achievement requires looking hard at all aspects of the life of the school and redesigning them so that they all contribute to a powerful and coherent program. Not only does the instructional program of the school have to be fully aligned, but every other aspect of the life of the school must also be aligned with the redesigned instructional program, from the master schedule to the budget to the way before- and after-school programs are configured.

This is what is meant by school design. All schools can be said to have designs, in the sense that something is in place. But those designs are rarely the result of a conscious, deliberate attempt to conceive of how a school might function with all aspects of its program operating in harmony with one another. Rather they are the result of years of incremental decisions, many of them made with

little or no consideration of the effect a new program or project might have on the ones already in place, with the result that many end up working at cross-purposes with one another.

So it will be very important to introduce the principal to the essentials of school design, because it is the principal, more than anyone else, who has to have the overall architecture of the school's program constantly in mind as a road map for the work ahead. Whether the school chooses to contract with another organization to provide a design or to come up with one itself, its leaders must know how to recognize a good design, improve one that needs help, and assess the adequacy of the one they already have.

The Foundations of Effective Learning

School design, including all the work needed to achieve high performance, is built on the core principles of teaching, learning, and curriculum. A deep and detailed knowledge of all of the relevant research literature is the result of years of concentrated study, which is well beyond the scope of any program of the sort we have in mind. What is required here is a careful distillation of that literature into a form in which it becomes useful to the practicing principal as a guide to the redesign of the instructional program of her school in the context of the framework provided by the new standards and accountability systems. And it is clear, too, that the new curriculum for principals will have to provide an opportunity for the participants to make these distilled principles of learning, teaching, and curriculum their own, practicing applications in the kinds of situations they actually face.

Leadership for Excellence in Literacy and Mathematics

Principles of the kind we have been discussing are important and valuable, but they are usually couched in a way that is independent of the subject being taught. If the principal is to be a true instructional leader, he will have to be more conversant with the essentials

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of teaching literacy and mathematics than most principals are today. This is, in the end, what it will mean to be in touch with and in command of the core business of schooling. Principals will need to be able to recognize best practices in literacy and mathematics, to judge the quality of programs (including their own program) and instructional materials in those subjects, and to assess the quality of instruction in the classroom by talking with students, looking at their work, and observing the interactions between students and teachers. They will have to know how to align the other aspects of the way the school functions to support their literacy and mathematics programs and will have to be able to provide leadership for the development of effective literacy and mathematics programs. The analytical skills that principals need to examine and improve their literacy and mathematics programs will be no less valuable when they turn to the other aspects of the curriculum for which they are responsible.

Promoting Professional Knowledge

One of the most important aspects of the new curriculum for principals is promoting the professional knowledge and skill of the faculty. Principals will have to know how to establish a culture in which every professional on the staff is expected to be learning all the time, in which professional development is not simply a personal matter, episodic and random, but is seen by the faculty as the most important tool by which they acquire the skill and knowledge they need to implement the strategies and designs that the school has adopted for improving student achievement. And the principal will need to develop the skills required to design and implement a system for organizational learning that will permit the staff, in a disciplined way, to benchmark best practices elsewhere and to learn from their own practices in the school over time. Much of the adult learning in the school will take place in teams that the principal will need to establish, and the curriculum will have to include the

skills needed to establish and supervise effective faculty teams, as well as the skills needed to coach both individuals and teams to ever-greater effectiveness. The principal will also have to learn what to look for as she walks around the school and observes classrooms, mentoring teachers to help them become more effective in a standards-based environment.

The Principal as Instructional Leader

Much of the knowledge and skill needed by the modern school principal to be an effective instructional leader has already been included in the curriculum elements described earlier. But not all. Here the principal stands back from the trees to observe the forest, coming to understand how the job of the school principal in the United States came to be disassociated from the work of teaching and learning and why the same person must now make instructional leadership the heart and soul of the job. Among the topics in this part of the curriculum are ways in which the responsibility for instructional leadership can be shared by the principal with a number of other faculty members, how time can be freed up from other responsibilities for the work of instructional leadership, and how the instructional leadership role relates to other roles of the school principal.

The Principal as Team Builder

As we just implied, the job of leading and managing the school is not something the principal can do alone. But most principals try to do just that. Much depends on their capacity to do what successful leaders and managers in other fields have worked hard at doing—building effective teams. The curriculum here is focused on developing the knowledge and skills needed to define the goals for teams, recruit and select their members, and motivate and coach them to success.

Creating a Culture That Is Ethical, Results-Oriented, and Professional

The principal is above all a moral leader and a builder of culture. Culture is “the way we do things here.” Because young people are shrewd observers of adult behavior, if the way we do things here is not ethical, the students will see that right away, and the faculty will lose them right away. Hence this part of the curriculum will need to focus hard on what it means to be a moral leader and how it can be done, as well as how one can analyze school culture and the steps a principal can take to build a school culture that is ethical, results-oriented, collaborative, and respectful of everyone in the school community. Earlier we addressed the need to be results-oriented and to create a school that nourishes the continuing growth and development of the faculty as a community of professionals. Here, too, the leader will fail unless he succeeds in building these goals into the culture of the school.

The Principal as Driver of Change

There is a large literature on organizational change in general and school change in particular. But the literature on managing change to produce results in schools is much smaller. And that is the topic in this part of the curriculum that we recommend. The aim is to provide the principal with the knowledge and skills needed to lead, design, and drive a change process calculated to lead to steady improvement in the achievement of the students in the school. Here the principal learns to analyze the motivations of the various participants in the process, to identify friends and foes, and to maximize the former at the expense of the latter over time, moving steadily from small wins to substantial gains. The principal should also learn how to identify root problems and causes, gather intelligence and formulate a plan on the basis of appropriate data, set performance targets, select strategies, and develop sound implementation plans.

Managing for Results

Here the curriculum pulls together much that has gone before to put the emphasis on the principal's role as the driver for results. This last part of the curriculum begins with a focus on the crucial role of data in the drive for results, from the careful setting of targets to the collection, display, and analysis of implementation and outcome data to the use of data for setting goals, monitoring progress, allocating and reallocating resources, and managing the school program. But it does not stop with data. This part of the curriculum would return to the beginning, reemphasizing the crucial role of the principal in providing a vision of the results worth achieving and keeping that vision constantly in front of the school community, allocating responsibilities to everyone involved for realizing that vision, and holding everyone accountable for doing his part, not excepting the principal herself. It is here that the participant would come to understand that the principal must be the keeper of the flame, the person whose eyes are never off the results that are desired and the results actually achieved.

This curriculum design emerged from our analysis of the role the principal must play in a standards-based system focused on getting all students ready for college without remediation, on the one hand, and from our reading of the literature on leadership and management in the fields of business (see Chapter Four), the military, and education, on the other hand. We offer it for consideration by anyone who wishes to build a modern and relevant program for the training and development of school principals. It is the design that we are using to build the curriculum for the National Institute for School Leadership (see Appendix A).

Reprise

We return here to the question with which we began: Why would anyone want this job? The reason, of course, why good people seek this job and stay in it, despite all the problems we have catalogued,

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is that, as Jerry Murphy has observed, it always has the potential for being one of the most rewarding jobs on the planet. Few jobs, in fact, provide such great opportunities for exhilaration, learning, personal growth, and the richness of spirit that comes from helping others.

Notwithstanding all the obstacles, we have known principals of schools serving mostly students from low-income families who have led their schools from despair to hope, from 5 percent of their students meeting state literacy standards to 60 percent meeting those standards in just two years. Those principals do not have to go to bed at night wondering whether they have made a difference. They know that students who leave elementary school not reading well account for the overwhelming majority of young people who drop out of school, use drugs, commit crimes, and end up in prison again and again. They know that they have made it possible for the children in their care to turn an enormous corner, to reach for the stars, to succeed.

Not all schools are in such dire shape, and not every case of improvement is quite so dramatic. But much now depends on the creation of a whole generation of what business calls “turnaround artists,” people who can walk into their own school or another school and work with its faculty, students, parents, and community to turn it around, make it sing, and enable all of its students to succeed at levels few thought possible before. If the standards and accountability movement succeeds, it will be because the United States has figured out how to make it possible for its school leaders and managers to get the job done.

Notes

1. There are many books that tell this tale well. One that we particularly like, by Gary Jacobson and John Hillkirk, *Xerox: American Samurai* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Macmillan, 1986), describes the challenge that Xerox faced and how its leadership decided to respond to it.

2. This account of the rise of the modern executive development program is based on conversations with faculty members and administrators at the graduate schools of business at Harvard University, Stanford University, and Dartmouth College.
3. An associate dean at Harvard Business School told us that the school typically invests \$800,000 in the development of a course for its M.B.A. program and an additional \$1 million to convert the course into a form suitable for Web-based delivery. This is exclusive of the cost of the salaries of the professors involved. Most of the costs of the development process cover the time of the professional case developers. It is important, of course, to keep the relative sizes of the respective enterprises in mind as we compare the investments made by business schools in executive education to those made by graduate schools of education. The average size of the Fortune 500 firms is more than *thirty times* that of the five hundred largest school districts, and the research and development budgets of the largest firms are often as large as the entire budgets of comparably ranked school districts. Still, what we are describing is a sea change in the structure of business schools in response to the challenges business faced in the 1980s, compared to very modest changes made to help American schools and districts face the leadership challenges of the 1990s.
4. We are indebted to two former provosts and one incumbent provost of the National War College at Washington, D.C., who spent hours introducing us to the military's approach to executive development. One of these men, Robert Hughes, is the coauthor of Chapter Five.
5. Our description of how one gets to be a principal and of the training that principals receive is drawn from many sources, including Chapters Eight and Nine.
6. This lack of coherence appears to be a distinguishing characteristic of most programs. In our interviews, we asked the

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respondents to nominate programs that they believed to be the best school administrator preparation programs in the nation, which we then visited. The one most nominated was taught by a half dozen professors from the distinguished school of education in which it resided, as a series of short courses in an intensive summer session. When we asked the director of the program how the topics to be taught were chosen, he responded, after considering the question as if for the first time, "The topics are chosen by the professors who agree to participate. They can teach whatever they like." It was enough for him, evidently, that these well-known professors had agreed to participate in the program.

7. This description, and much of what follows, is based on extensive interviews with principals and with deans of graduate schools of education. A dean of the graduate school of education of one of America's most prestigious universities concluded our interview by verifying our conclusions and warning us against expecting any changes in the conditions portrayed here for the foreseeable future.
8. As we did in all our focus groups with principals.
9. Some of these programs are described in Chapters Eight and Nine. We identified others in the course of our research.
10. The ideas for curriculum presented here draw heavily on the work of Peter Hill, Tom Sobol, and Marie Eiter, the authors of Chapters Two, Three, and Four, respectively, and on the deliberations of the members of the National Advisory Committee of the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL), whose names appear in Appendix B. The curriculum described here is the curriculum currently offered by NISL to the jurisdictions with which it works.