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# Private School *Monitor*

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## Leadership

### Notes From the Editor

*Lyndon G. Furst*

The study of leadership has found resurgence among educational administrators in recent years. Of most interest has been the contrast between transactional and transformational leadership. In the former, there is an unstated but well recognized agreement between leader and follower to accomplish the work of the organization in return for certain rewards. In most institutions this works well.

However, more recently, students of the subject have come to believe that leadership that transforms the individual as well as the institution is more effective in the long term. Here, leaders and followers work together to accomplish a common goal. The leaders' goals are the followers' goals. Usually such leaders possess a certain element of charisma that transcends the institution.

*continued on page 23*

### CONTENTS

Notes from the Editor.....	1
A Leadership Challenge.....	1
Educational Leaders in Jewish Schools.....	6
Are Lay Catholic Principals Prepared.....	13
Leadership in Decentralized Schools.....	17

### A Leadership Challenge for Mercy Schools

by

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What does Mercy secondary education truly cost? "Cost" is first a money word. So let us start there. We all know there are financial costs. It would come as no surprise, for example, to speak of the fact that in many of our schools there is a specific financial cost to lay teachers because salaries are not as high as public school salaries. Although there may be positive trade-offs, this is nevertheless a cost. And it is a cost which often enough has to be explained, even defended, to family and friends, and sometimes not just once but repeatedly.

There is often a cost to Sisters of Mercy connected with salaries as well. In many of our schools, the salaries which the Sisters receive are not on par professionally with their lay colleagues. This plays itself out differently in different schools. In some schools, for example, the RSMs simply receive a standard stipend. In others, their salaries are on the books at par but a certain percentage is "returned" to the school, or really not ever actually taken, and thus becomes "contributed services."

In still other settings, the RSMs simply aren't always credited with their full credentials or years

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of experience, thus their salaries are less than they would be if they were lay persons. In the situations just described, the cost is not usually a personal cost to the individual RSM. Rather, it is a cost to the regional community. It is in effect a kind of subsidy to the school because this money stays in the school and thereby does not come into the central fund out of which the regional community operates.

There are also other ways that the schools cost the regional community financially, even though it may be by choice. Often enough, a regional community takes seriously its sponsoring relationship to the school and provides funding on a regular or on an intermittent basis for operations or for special projects. This funding can take various forms, ranging from ministry grants for which a school must apply to outright contributions on a regular basis, often for something like tuition aid to needy students.

But let us move into the issue of financial cost on a different level. There is the straightforward matter of the amount of money it takes to operate a high school today, particularly a school which strives to be as good as or better than the schools around us, and to fit our students for heaven as well as for earth. During the last 15 to 20 years, our schools have acknowledged this accelerating demand for dollars by a specific major action: the establishment of development offices and development programs. Still further, for these programs to be what they're supposed to be, they must be in continual acceleration and expansion. They demand more and more focus. Do not underestimate this shift.

Let us look at some of the particulars. We know, for example, the truism that it takes money to make money. We must, of necessity, spend money in the development arena. There are even standard formulas to tell us what ratio should exist between how much we spend and how much we bring in. But what other challenges, costs, if you will, are entailed in this shift?

Let us look at what might be the most dramatic but could almost go unnoticed: a shift in the focus of power. The attention of the head of the school shifts in significant measure from the educational mission of the school to the concerns of development. Now this happens in different ways.

A school can move to the president/principal model of administration, with the president obviously assuming the development focus and the principal running the educational institution. Or the responsibilities of the principal can shift, with greater emphasis going to development and more delegation of other responsibilities to administrative colleagues. But notice, whichever of these approaches is used, the focus of the person in the ultimate position of power shifts to development.

I would like to suggest that this shift puts the leadership at greater risk--because the demands of a development focus of necessity remove the power position away from intimate working contact with the lived reality of the educational mission in action. The fundamental risk is in not staying in profound contact, because development exists only for the sake of mission.

We must move more and more into this world of raising major money, but it should be a little frightening to us--not because it is hard work, which it is, but because the potential lure of power and money should always be frightening to us. The temptation to use people simply or primarily for the sake of financial gain, the temptation to compromise inappropriately because big dollars could be involved, the temptation to express who we are in ways that fudge the truth--these kinds of temptation should always be a little frightening to us.

Do not misunderstand me. These risks are not exclusive to the president or principal. They shift throughout the school in small and large ways. Most particularly they present a challenge to personnel in development and public relations. I include public relations here as development's intimate counterpart. However the work of public relations is structured in a school, whether it is explicit or implicit in positions or role descriptions, development rides in part on a school's public relations. That is, whatever perceptions of a school its various publics have will influence the success of its development endeavors. The more explicit and direct a public relations program is, the greater the risks. And so the risks we've been speaking of must be owned in a special way, although not exclusively, by personnel in development and public relations. And there is cost in this ownership.



Perhaps, we should first ask what does it take to negotiate all this--this traveling in the world of relative high finance and development as a Mercy school? It takes intelligence--or better, intellectual cunning, if we understand that correctly--and it takes integrity. And what does this cost? At the very least it costs us exceptional attention, vigilance, and faithfulness. I will not explore but I do wish to point out that the first of these actions and the one upon which the other two are built--that is, attention--is a religious practice. The religious phenomenon of attention-- is found in some form in most great religious traditions of the world. It should be noted that the attention, vigilance, and faithfulness of which we speak here are not only individual matters. They assuredly are that, but for an institution to be faithful, the exceptional attention and vigilance required is corporate as well as individual. It must be done together.

These costs should not really surprise us. They move us toward looking at the question through another lens--the lens of particular values. What does Mercy secondary education truly cost? That is, what does it cost to do secondary education as a Mercy school? In a Mercy school? In the tradition of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy?

The first response of one of my colleagues to this question was that it costs time. She gave as an example something that had happened the morning of the day we spoke. She had one free period before her next class and was on her way to a spot to do some work. She came upon a student crying. She knew that it was important to stop, to spend some time with the student rather than just refer her to someone else. This student was in emotional pain because of a very upsetting situation in her home the night before.

Toward the end of the period, because this teacher really had to take a few minutes to get something ready which was needed for her next class, she contacted one of the vice principals whom she knew to be familiar with this student's family situation, so that the student would not be left alone. And somehow she managed to alert the student's adviser that the girl was in distress, so that the adviser could try to be in touch with the student as soon as she had the opportunity.

On face value, this looks like a simple story, the kind that most of us have been involved in more than once. But there is more embedded in the story. As my colleague pointed out, there are other time costs than taking the time to talk with a distressed student. It takes time, for example to absorb the tradition which underlies our approach to education--in classrooms and outside of classrooms; it takes time to understand what it means and what it requires. And there is no checklist for this, no simple do's and don't's. This is true for a teacher new to a Mercy school; coming to understand the tradition takes time. And it takes time on the part of veteran faculty to share the tradition with new persons.

### **Personal Investment**

But there is more. This is not just a matter of persons who "have it" sharing it with students and new faculty. The continuance of the tradition is a dynamic and ongoing process. It could be likened to a conversion; it doesn't happen just once and for all. We continually pass it on to one another reinforcing, challenging, enlivening one another. This is a dynamic without which the tradition would atrophy, would disappear.

This conversion element, this dynamic on the horizontal level, is necessary because, to put it simply, what the tradition asks of us isn't easy. Sometimes it takes careful insight, sometimes it takes deliberate effort, which is why we need to remind and reinforce one another. It should be apparent by now that the cost of all this is not only time, but also a significant personal energy.

This time and this energy yield a mutual communication of values. There is a sense of belonging that happens when people communicate values to one another. This sense is vital if the tradition is to thrive and be passed on. There is the sense of community we often speak of. The Mercy community is bigger than the Sisters of Mercy. It is something born of people understanding the tradition, valuing the tradition, working together out of the tradition, and contributing to the continuance of the tradition. This brings us to a third cost: personal investment.

Personal investment involves a decision, choice. Initially this choice may be implicit; a person may simply resonate with what she or he



finds in a Mercy school. But at some point it becomes a decision. Because of believing in it, valuing it, a person makes a decision to be a part of it and to pass it on. Being part of the tradition is not a personal gift, that is, not a gift to the individual. It must be passed on; the person must contribute to moving it ahead. Still further, as with conversion, this is a choice that continues to be made. Each of us needs to take stock periodically and ask: Are we truly being what we say we want to be, who we say we are?

Let me say something very important about these costs--of time, energy, and personal investment. These costs are no different for a Sister of Mercy or a lay person. These costs are no different.

But there are implications of costs in the foregoing discussion beyond us as individuals and as individuals working together. There are costs implied for the institutions. The demands of time, energy, and personal investment just delineated ask something of the structures, processes, and atmosphere of the school. A highly structured, regimented environment would not allow for having or using time in the way we have suggested is vitally important. A school whose structures and processes do not consciously value and facilitate a working together, a collaborating, on the activities of education inside and outside the classroom, will by default work against what we have just asserted as critical. If the atmosphere does not explicitly and implicitly support and encourage what we have just described, it will in truth erode the flourishing of the tradition.

### **Some Concerns for the Future**

So where are we now in the exploration of our question? I think we are at the point of shifting from the present tense to the future tense. What will it cost to move Mercy secondary education into the future? Even more specifically: What will it cost to extend Mercy secondary education through the first quarter of the 21st century? Assuredly it will continue to cost in all the ways about which we have just spoken. But there is, I believe, much more to be said.

Let us focus on where we are historically. Up to this point the thriving of the Mercy charism--the gift which was given to the Church through

Catherine--its thriving in Mercy secondary education has been primarily supported by the Sisters of Mercy. Not the particular individual RSMs, mind you, at least not as individuals, but the Community standing behind them and in some ways acting through them. This support has obviously been in concrete, material ways; but equally or more important, it has been in spiritual ways.

Ultimately, the spiritual support is the most important because it underlies what we are all about. But the median age of the Sisters of Mercy is 67 years. The median age of RSMs in secondary education may be a bit younger, but I am sure that it isn't 27, or even 37. What does this mean for the future of Mercy secondary education? At the very least it means it isn't going to work the way it's been working up to this point in history. Actually, we have heard a response to this question given in settings before this one. It has been said more than once: If the Mercy charism is to be carried forward, if the Mercy tradition in secondary education is to continue, it will be primarily our lay colleagues who will do this.

From whence will come their spiritual support? I am in my nineteenth year as principal of Mercy High School, Baltimore. I have not done this just as an individual; particularly I have not been in ongoing awareness of and interaction with the charism just as an individual. That has come primarily from my presence in the Community of the Sisters of Mercy. How will this kind of spiritual support be provided to you, our lay colleagues who truly want to carry the tradition forward? How will it be provided to you as you assume the responsibility for passing it on to the next generation, the generation behind you?

I put a question related to this to each of several lay teachers in conversation. I asked: What would enable you or persons like you to carry the tradition forward? What would you need? Although the details of their responses differed, to a person they all said this could be done only if they had some kind of significant support system, not only to start them off but to continue to sustain them.

One explained this as something that would maintain the relationship with the Sisters of Mercy, particularly with the sponsoring leader-



ship, when there were no more Sisters of Mercy in the school. Whereas the contact with the Community may be implicit when an RSM is, for example, the principal, the mechanisms which would ensure this relationship need to be explicit when a lay person is in this position. Similarly, another said the connection between the school and the RSM Community would need to be much more formalized even than it is now. Still another suggested that the situation would "need a home." There would have to be some center core beyond each individual school, a structure of some kind behind the enterprise. Another described what would be needed as "an active support, "for example, a national organization to keep the connection with the Community alive, with a few key RSMs at this national center. Another, calling it a "lifeline to the charism," said it would probably require some persons in full-time positions. One person commented that the Mercy Secondary Education Association is good, but it is not enough. The Mercy Secondary Education Association cannot and will not provide the stable and dynamic support structure required to enable dedicated lay colleagues to carry Mercy secondary education into the 21st century.

I asked my colleagues in conversation who should take the leadership in initiating such structures and processes. I asked if they saw this as something which they as lay teachers could initiate. They did not. They clearly saw this as something which had to be initiated by the Sisters of Mercy if it is to be accomplished. They acknowledged that the collaboration of lay colleagues would be critical in developing appropriate structures and processes, that is, in working out the particulars, but the leadership must be provided by the Sisters of Mercy.

One of my colleagues in conversation wrote me a note following our exchange. In it she said:

When I envision education at my Mercy high school into the next century, I feel a great need for some kind of structural process which will ground the lay adults in the Mercy tradition in such a way that will guarantee that Mercy schools do not lose their commitment to serve the poor, to create justice, and particularly to respond to the needs of women. My hope is that the Sisters of Mercy will create such a

structure for us, the first generation of laypersons to share in the administration of the schools owned and operated by the Sisters of Mercy. If they can do this for us, I think they can trust us to do it for the next generation.

In an address to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in 1993, Sr. Janet Ruffing, RSM, offered the following challenge in her concluding remarks.

The challenge remains for us to determine the uniqueness of our contribution to ecclesial life, give greater direction to our ministerial choices, and to assess more critically the long-term effects of our choices (Ruffing, 1993 p.13).

There are at this time 39 secondary schools over which we have control. In them we teach 21,388 students; of these students 19,180 are young women. These are the schools in which we have power--power to affect and effect their future. It is essential that those who will lead Mercy schools into the 21st century focus their energies on this critical challenge.

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\* This article was taken from the keynote address given by the author at Mercy Secondary Conference XIV in Burlingame, California on October 14, 1995. It has been edited to fit the *Monitor* format.

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## Educational Leaders in Jewish Schools

by

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Leadership in all schools is complex and challenging, encompassing numerous roles. However the context of leadership in Jewish schools, as well as in other religious schools, has some unique dimensions. The obvious distinction is that Jewish schools have cultural, religious and moral goals as well academic goals. Thus, the image of a school leader in a religious context may include spiritual, religious and moral responsibilities (Grace, 1995). These roles have been explored in Catholic school settings. For example, Bryk, Holland, and Lee (1993) have suggested that educational leadership in Catholic schools is viewed by incumbents as "a vocation to serve," rather than an individual career. Similarly, in a study of Catholic headteachers in England, Grace (1995) found that an ethic of 'serving others' was central to their leadership roles.

Terms such as 'spirit' and 'servant' are not new to the discourse on effective leadership (Depree, 1989). Recently, writers in the field of leadership in the business world have been exploring spirituality and servant leadership (Spears, 1995; Bolman and Deal, 1995). Many businesses facing new pressures, are 'awakening' to a different type of leadership, leadership that "addresses real human values, including the quest for meaning, and congruence with one's innermost source of power" (Renesch, 1992, p. ix). These writers suggest that leaders in the 21st century must lead with a new sense of commitment and spirituality.



These ideas are beginning to make their way into school settings as well (Sergiovanni, 1995). All of these writers, however, caution that they are not trying to bring religion into the workplace.

The purpose of this article is to stimulate discussion about preparing leaders for Jewish educational institutions. What types of professional preparation programs can be developed for these roles? The first part of the article will present the context of Jewish schooling as a framework for analyzing educational leadership in Jewish schools. The second part of the article will report on the results of a survey done among leaders in Jewish education. The purpose of this survey was to identify certain demographic data regarding the leaders in the study and ascertain their reasons for entering the field of Jewish education.

### **Context of Jewish Education**

It is estimated that 80% of Jews in North America receive Jewish education sometime during their lifetime (Rossel & Lee, 1995). Formal Jewish education typically occurs in three types of settings or schools: day, supplementary and pre-schools. Jewish day schools are independent private schools. These schools are full-day programs. Most Jewish day schools are accredited by their state or regional accrediting bodies. These schools typically have two parallel curricula and consequently two sets of teachers, those who teach the academic subjects, and those responsible for Judaic Studies (Hebrew, Bible, Prayer, Customs and Ceremonies). It is estimated that approximately 18% of Jewish children attending some type of Jewish school are enrolled in Jewish day schools (Jewish Education Service of North America, 1992, p. 5; Commission on Jewish Education in North America, 1990).

Supplementary or congregational schools, are part-time schools usually formally connected to synagogues. By far, the largest number of Jewish children receive their Jewish education in supplementary schools. Students come to supplementary schools after regular school, and/or Sunday mornings. Supplementary schools meet for a minimum of 2 hours a week to a maximum of 9 hours a week. The curriculum focuses only on Jewish Studies. These schools, despite their limited hours, are usually operated as traditional

schools. The schools are headed by educational directors or principals who often report or work in concert with the Rabbi of the congregation. Teachers are usually part-time teachers, many of whom are referred to as "avocational" teachers (see Aron, Lee, and Ossel, 1995).

Jewish pre-schools include both full and part-time programs that work with pre-kindergarten children. They are usually associated with synagogues or Jewish community centers. Most pre-schools have a formal director or principal, typically called an Early Childhood Director. The staff of Jewish pre-schools do not follow the day school model with two sets of teachers. In contrast teachers in pre-schools are responsible for all aspects of the curricula.

Most Jewish schools are not part of a larger, bureaucratic educational system as are public schools. However, Jewish schools are part of larger religious communities and institutions, which may include synagogues, community centers or religious movements. Thus, school leaders are connected to a broad intersection of communal institutions. There are few external licensing demands placed on teachers and administrators in Jewish schools. Therefore individual schools are relatively free to hire personnel in an unregulated manner.

Most of the three types of schools are affiliated with one of three denominations: Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism. In addition, some schools are community schools, bridging across all three denominations.

Across these complex settings of Jewish education, it is very difficult to generalize and to articulate the goals of Jewish education. In its simplest sense, one could state that "...Jewish education serves the function of making Jews Jewish..." (Prell, 1995, p.141). Others have stated the goals of Jewish education in terms of developing strong Jewish identity. In a broader sense, goals for Jewish education include acquiring the knowledge base and cultural, religious and historical understandings rooted in the Jewish religion. Therefore, teachers and leaders in Jewish schools have both cognitive and affective objectives which include serving as role models for Jewish children.



## Methodology

A survey of educational leaders was conducted in three Jewish communities in the Southeastern, Midwestern, and Northern United States. The three communities were chosen because they are engaged in a project that is aimed at reforming Jewish education. The survey was administered to all directors of formal Jewish educational institutions, including day schools, supplementary school, and pre-schools. Other supervisors and administrators in these schools, such as vice-principals and directors of Judaic Studies, were also included. A total of 100 surveys were administered, and 77 persons responded. As additional support for the survey analyses, data from in-depth interviews with 58 educational directors from the three communities are included. The interviews concerned educators' backgrounds, training, work conditions, and professional opportunities (Interviews were designed and conducted by Roberta Louis Goodman, Claire Rottenberg, and Julie Tammivaara. All quotations in this report come from those interviews (see Gamoran, et. al., 1996)).

### Educational Leaders in Jewish Schools

Most of the educational leaders (77%) who respond to the survey are principals or directors of their schools. The remaining 33% hold administrative or supervisory positions below the top leadership positions in their school. Thirty-six percent of the educational leaders work in day school, 43% in supplementary schools, and 21% in pre-schools.

Thirty-one percent of the educational leaders work in Orthodox schools. Twenty-two percent work in schools affiliated with the Conservative Movement and the same percentage are with schools connected to the Reform Movement. Eleven percent of the respondents are leaders in schools that are designated as community schools, while 7% indicated that their schools are traditional, and 4% reported their schools are located within Jewish Community Centers. The remaining 4% stated that their schools are independent or have no affiliation.

Seventy-eight percent of the educational leaders indicated that they are employed full-time

as Jewish educators. Ninety-six percent of day school educational leaders reported being employed full-time, as did 81% of pre-school educational leaders. In contrast, only 61% of educational leaders working in a supplementary setting work full-time in Jewish education. Of the supplementary school leaders who work part-time, half would rather be working full-time in Jewish education, while the other half prefer their part-time status.

Two-thirds of the educational leaders surveyed are women, including all the pre-school directors, 61% of supplementary school leaders, and 52% of day school administrators. Ninety-five percent of the educational leaders are married, and their median age is 44. The educational leaders are predominately American-born (88%). Only 7% were born in Israel, and 5% in other countries.

Most of the educational leaders of the three communities have worked in the field of Jewish education for a considerable length of time. Seventy-eight percent of the educational leaders have been working in Jewish education for more than 10 years. Thirty percent have been employed in Jewish education for over 20 years, while only 9% have 5 years or less experience. Thus, for example, one educational director began his career in Jewish education by tutoring Hebrew at the age of 14. From tutoring, he moved on to teaching in a congregational school while in college. A rabbi suggested that he pursue a seminary degree, which he did. Upon graduation he spent 14 years as educational director of various supplementary schools. Now he directs a day school.

The educational leaders in the three communities have less experience in positions of Jewish educational leadership than they have in Jewish education overall. Pre-school leaders have the least amount of experience in leadership positions, with only 12% having worked as educational leaders for more than 10 years. Thirty-seven percent of supplementary leaders and 28% of day school leaders have more than 10 years of experience as leaders in Jewish schools.

The large majority of educational leaders (78%) plan to remain as administrators or supervisors in the same school in which they are currently employed. In total, only 6% plan to become educational leaders in a different school.



None of the educational leaders want to work in another type of Jewish educational institution (such as a central agency), and only one percent plans to leave the field of Jewish education. Nine percent of education leaders are unsure about their future plans. The remaining 5% plan to pursue avenues such as returning to teaching and retirement.

In summary, the educational leaders in Jewish schools have widespread experience in the field of Jewish education and plan to remain working in their current settings. Despite the part-time nature of many Jewish schools, many leaders work full-time.

### **Attraction to Jewish Education**

Educational leaders in the three communities enter the field of Jewish education for a variety of reasons. A theme of service to the Jewish community and developing Jewish identity in children do seem to permeate the leaders' responses. Intrinsic issues, such as working with children (83%), teaching about Judaism (75%), and serving the Jewish community (62%), were rated as very important motivating factors by the highest percentage of educational leaders.

As one educational director commented, "I have a commitment. I entered Jewish education because I felt that I wanted to develop [the children's] souls. My number one priority is to develop their love for who they are Jewishly." Another educational leader explained that he was attracted to "the idea of working, seeing children develop and grow. It's something special to be at a wedding of a child that you entered into kindergarten. It does have a special meaning to know you've played a role or to have students come to you years later, share with you that they remember your class, the role you played in their lives."

Other factors that have strong intrinsic value, such as working with teachers (43%) and learning more about Judaism (49%), were considered by almost half of the educational leaders as very important motivating factors for entering Jewish education.

In contrast, extrinsic factors were rarely considered as important. Only 25% of the educational leaders said the full-time nature of the

profession was a very important reason for entering the field. The level of income was considered by only 7% of educational leaders to be a very important reason for entering Jewish education and by 59% as unimportant. Finally, the status of the profession was rated as very important by only 9%, while 66% of the educational leaders considered it to be unimportant.

The religious affiliation of the school (62%) was mentioned as the most important factor in making the decision to work in the school in which they are currently employed. Among educational leaders who work in schools affiliated with a religious movement (i.e., Orthodox, Traditional, Conservative, Reform), almost all the educational leaders have a personal affiliation that is either the same or more observant than the affiliation of the school where they work.

In summary, the educational leaders in the three communities were attracted to Jewish education first and foremost as a way to serve the Jewish community through teaching. They are extremely committed to their work in Jewish education as evidenced by their overall long tenure in the field of Jewish education, diversity of past experiences in both formal and informal Jewish education settings, and their future plans to remain in their current positions.

Given their future plans, and the fact that 95% of the educational leaders consider Jewish education to be their career, it seems that these leaders want to work with Jewish children as a way of serving their religious community. These findings are consistent with the research on principals in Catholic schools that found that these principals, as compared to their public school counterparts, have a spiritual, communal attachment to their roles (Bryk et al, 1993).

### **Professional Preparation**

This section describes the formal training backgrounds and the professional development activities of the educational leaders in the three communities. Ninety-seven percent of all of the leaders have college degrees, and 70% have graduate degrees. Day school educational leader are the most likely to hold graduate degrees, followed by supplementary school leaders. Almost two-thirds of the leaders (65%) hold



university degrees in education and 53% of the leaders are certified as teachers in general education. In addition, 61% of all leaders have previous experience in general education settings.

Very few educational leaders are formally trained in Jewish studies or Jewish education. Only 37% of all leaders are certified in Jewish education, and only 36% hold degrees in Jewish studies. Although supplementary and day school leaders are the most likely to hold certification and/or degrees in Jewish education, only forty-four percent of day and 48% of supplementary school leaders are certified in Jewish education, and similar numbers hold degrees in Jewish studies. No pre-school educational leaders hold degrees in Jewish studies, and only 12% are certified in Jewish education.

Educational leaders in Jewish schools have very little formal preparation in the areas of educational administration, leadership or supervision. We define formal preparation in administration as either being certified in school administration or holding a degree with a major in administration or supervision. Only 25% of all the leaders are certified or licensed as school administrators and only 11% hold degrees in educational administration. Day school educational leaders are the most likely to have formal preparation in educational administration.

### **Preparation for Leadership Positions**

To fully explore the background of educational leaders it is important to consider simultaneously training in 1) general education, 2) Judaic subject matter, and 3) educational administration. Looking first at those who are trained in both general education and Judaica, the results indicate that only 35% of the educational leaders have formal training in both education and Judaic studies. Another 41% are trained in education only, with 14% trained only in Jewish studies. Eleven percent of the educational leaders are not trained: they lack both collegiate or professional degrees in education and Jewish studies.

Training in educational administration is an important complement to formal preparation in education and Judaic content areas. Looking at those who are trained in all three components,

general education (pedagogy), Judaica, and educational administration, the results indicate that 16% of educational leaders are very well trained, that is, they hold professional or university degrees in education, Jewish studies and educational administration. An additional 10% are trained in educational administration and either Jewish studies or education, but not all three. Thus, looking at the three components of leadership preparation, a total of 84% are missing one or more parts of their formal preparation for leadership positions.

An important qualification to these findings is that they emphasize formal schooling and credentials. Jewish content and leadership skills are not only learned in formal settings. Focusing only on formal preparation thus underestimates the extent of Jewish knowledge and leadership abilities among the educational leaders. Nonetheless, the complexities of educational leadership in contemporary Jewish settings demand high standards which include formal preparation in pedagogy, Jewish content areas, and administration.

### **Professional Growth**

What sort of professional growth activities do the educational leaders undertake? Overall, the survey results show little sign of extensive professional development among the educational leaders in these communities. The educational leaders reported attending few inservice workshops: on average, they attended 5.1 over a two year period. Supplementary and pre-school administrators attended more workshops than did the day school leaders. If we assume a workshop lasts 3 hours on average, 5 workshops over a two year periods come to approximately 37.5 hours of workshops over 5 years, far short the 100 hours required for example, by the State of Georgia.

Besides workshops, about one-third of the respondents said they attended a class in Judaica or Hebrew at a university, synagogue, or community center during the past year. Notably, three-quarters reported participating in some form of informal study, such as a study group or reading on their own.

Other opportunities for professional growth include participation in national conferences, and



organizations. Some educational directors belong to national organizations and attend their annual meetings, such as Jewish Educators Assembly (Conservative); Torah U'Mesorah (Orthodox), and National Association of Temple Educators (Reform). Other educational leaders are members of general education professional organizations such as Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and The National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

An additional type of professional growth is achieved through informal and formal networking with other educational leaders in the same community. Some leaders participate in their local principal's organization as a mechanism to share ideas, network, learn about resources, and brainstorm. However, even with these organizations, some educational leaders reported infrequent help and support from their colleagues within their communities. Supplementary school educational leaders indicate the highest level of collegial support and pre-school leaders report the lowest.

Although they attend few in-service workshops, many respondents generally think their opportunities for professional growth are adequate. Over two-thirds (68%) said that opportunities for their professional growth are adequate or very adequate, including 74% of day school administrators, 59% of supplementary school leaders, and 75% of pre-school directors.

Some educational leaders are not as satisfied with their professional growth opportunities. They specifically expressed a desire for an evaluation process that would help them grow as professionals and provide them with constructive feedback. For example, two pre-school education directors each stated that they would like a peer, someone in the field, who would comment on their work. In describing this person and elaborating on their role, one director said, "They would be in many ways superiors to myself who have been in the field, who understand totally what our goals are and who can help us grow."

Another educational director stated similar desires: "I'd like to be able to tell people what I consider are strengths and weaknesses. I'd like to hear from them whether I'm growing in the areas

that I consider myself weak in. And I'd like to hear what areas they consider that there should be growth."

In summary, the educational leaders have solid backgrounds in general education, but very few are well-trained overall. Most educational leaders have inadequate background in Judaic content areas. There is also a lack of preparation in the areas of school administration. Supplementary school educational leaders are better prepared than their counterparts in other settings while pre-school educational directors have the greatest need for further training. The pre-school educational leaders are notably weak in the area of Jewish studies.

Despite the limited formal training of many educational leaders in Jewish schools, they do not participate in widespread professional growth activities, even though the majority of educational leaders work full-time, in one school, and are committed to a career in Jewish education. Their level of participation in workshops is far below standards required of most educational leaders in public schools.

### Discussion

These findings suggest a great challenge awaits the field of Jewish education. Jewish educational leaders are committed to serving their profession and the wider Jewish community. They come to the field of Jewish education with a commitment of service. However, the leaders have relatively little formal preparation for their roles. Most of the educational leaders have training in the field of general education, but only half have collegiate and professional background in Judaic content areas. Furthermore, the majority of educational leaders do not have formal training in school administration, supervision or leadership.

One possible conclusion could be that the field should be upgraded by increasing participation in existing pre-service and in-service programs in school administration. Furthermore, educational leaders in Jewish schools can be encouraged to participate in ongoing, systematic professional development activities. Professional networks can be developed or expanded so leaders can benefit from senior colleagues who could observe



them at work to help develop a shared professional community that could provide a framework for continued renewal and feedback.

Given the unique goal of Jewish educating institutions, however, it is important to ask, what type of preparation programs should be developed for *these* principals? It is not clear that models from general education really “fit” the Jewish educational context. On the one hand, it would be appropriate to say that Jewish educational leaders should embrace many of the same qualities as those in general education settings: they should be instructional leaders, transformational leaders, change agents and developers of a moral culture supporting inquiry.

On the other hand, Jewish educating institutions have goals that are deeply rooted in Jewish content and Jewish meaning. It is not clear how to best help leaders become prepared to embark on the moral, ethical and value commitments necessary for Jewish educational settings. How can they be prepared to best “serve” the Jewish community? This is extremely difficult in the present context of American Jewish life, where many competing cultures face Jewish youth.

We suggest that serious learning in Jewish studies is crucial. Rich study of Torah, traditional texts and Jewish history could make a difference. Gerald Grace states, “the rhetoric of the qualities which headteachers and school principals should display, especially on matters to do with values, is becoming part of the check-list culture of education management studies” (Grace, 1995, p. 157). The field of Jewish education could go beyond checklist to infuse real Jewish content into values, symbolism and spirituality.

The uniqueness of religious educational settings requires a complete marrying of academic studies (in this case Judaic studies) and the cultivation of Jewish identity, morals and values. There should be no difference in Jewish schools between academic learning (the core technology of teaching and learning) and religious identity. The academic learning is the content needed to develop Jewish identity.

With the prevalence of writing about servant leadership and spirituality, little is discussed about how to provide frameworks for leaders to embrace

these ideas. It is clear that more thinking is needed about how to prepare leaders to cultivate values. It seems like discussions around these questions would be beneficial to all educational leaders.

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## Are Lay Catholic School Principals Prepared to be Faith Leaders?

by

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With the significant decrease in the number of vowed religious in Catholic schools and the importance of strengthening Catholic identity, this study was an attempt to examine the effectiveness of the preparation of lay Catholic high school principals to serve as faith leaders of their schools. The findings of this study can be used to influence the content, structure, and delivery of future preparation programs in developing faith leadership.

The methodology employed both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. First, a questionnaire was sent to the total population of 619 lay Catholic high school principals in order to assess their opinions about their own faith leadership preparation. Secondly, telephone interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of key informants from those who returned the questionnaire.

Of the 324 questionnaires returned, 70% rated their formal coursework as inadequate in the area of faith leadership. More than half indicated that they had taken no courses or seminars beyond their bachelor's degrees related specifically to the faith leadership role. Despite this strong indication of inadequate informal preparation, 69% of the principals believed that today's Catholic schools are as successful as schools in the 1950's in establishing and maintaining Catholic identity even though those 1950's schools were predominately staffed with vowed religious. Twenty-eight in-depth interviews were subsequently conducted with principals chosen systematically to represent all six diocesan regions. Principals credited their own experiences as Catholics, their professional experiences in Catholic schools, the charisms of sponsoring religious orders, and the mentors that they have worked with for their abilities to lead the schools' faith development.

The following section is a review of the current literature that helps to define the principal's role as faith leader.

### Principal as Faith Leader

The American Bishops (1972) described Catholic schools as existing for a threefold purpose: 1) to proclaim the gospel message; 2) to build communities of faith; and 3) to teach the value of service. In 1990, the Bishops added a fourth dimension to the importance of Catholic schools: that of "integrating worship in the lives of young Catholics (p.2).

The presence of Catholic identity in the schools stands as the most important distinction from its public school counterparts. Greeley emphasized that Catholic education provides an "anchored identity" for its students (1992, p. 234). Others defined what is meant by Catholic identity.



McDermott (1986) referred to Catholic identity in the schools as a process of "making disciples by teaching His message" (p. 46). Heft (1991) claimed that to build a distinct Catholic identity is "to go beyond cooperation to place the needs of others first through service" (p. 8). The National Congress for Catholic Schools (1992) stated that Catholic schools exist as "a supportive and challenging climate that affirms the dignity of all persons" (p.17).

According to McDermott (1986), there are four roles within the Catholic school principalship: manager, curriculum leader, creator of environment, and faith leader. He believed that the fourth role, faith leader, is what clearly distinguishes the Catholic school principal from public school principalships. To be responsible for the ongoing development of the Catholic identity in the school and the faith formation of the faculty and students is a unique and challenging aspect of the Catholic school principalship. Helm (1990) found a strong priority for promoting and integrating Catholic vision in the daily activities of the school.

Broderick (1976) pointed out that pastoral ministry is synonymous with "caring for the souls" (p. 457). He stated that the ministry of souls is shared by the religious with the laity and includes the institution of education. Broderick believed that this pastoral ministry flows from three sources: knowledge of the Church, personal spiritual commitment, and cooperation and communication with the community of the Church.

Caltigione (1988) described the role of Catholic school principal using a servant model, saying that the principal must "re-present Christ" (p. 82). This requires that the principal be contemplative, liberator, and visionary. He described the faith leader dimension of the Catholic school principalship as "prognostician rather than diagnostician" (p. 83). By this he meant that the Catholic school principal must question mostly to challenge. He also called for the principal to be responsible for the ongoing discovery of God's presence in all persons in the school community.

Hater (1981) described the faith leadership role as one that expresses a commitment to the concept of Christian community; is sensitive to the

needs of all in the school, including parents; and works to bring the school into harmony with the mission of Christ. According to Hater, the priorities that the principal sets for the religion curriculum, liturgy, hiring of teachers, and the ongoing religious formation of the faculty and students tells how competent the principal is to be faith leader.

Buetow (1988) characterized the faith leader as one who has no doubts about the school's exact identity. The Catholic vision must influence the whole school. He asserted that the "principal is like a trusted counselor who facilitates the marriage of God and His people" (p. 260). Buetow also noted that, prior to 1985, the National Catholic Education Association listed no requirements under the category of professional educational competencies that are completely unique to the Catholic school principal.

Ciriello (1989) asked superintendents of Catholic schools in the United States to identify the most distinguishing characteristics of effective Catholic school principals. The most important characteristic that these superintendents identified was the ability of principals to be faith leaders in their schools. This characteristic of faith leadership includes a broad spectrum of responsibilities. Cappel (1989) believed that principals in the Catholic school are "called," that they are in fact spiritual persons who become Catholic school principals and not the other way around (p. 18). Gorman (1989) indicated that the Catholic principal must have "integrative power" in order to build a faith community among parents, faculty, and students around a shared vision of the Church (p. 32). Drahmman (1989) divided this role into two parts. First are the spiritual attributes that a person brings to the job through his/her own lived faith experience. Second, the pastoral competencies of the role are defined by the ability of the principal to create a prayer environment, to develop a desire on the part of the students to do community service, to integrate the gospel message in the curriculum, and to be a faith witness for all in the school community.

This study revealed that many who are now serving as lay Catholic high school principals earned degrees and certification from public universities. While these preparation programs



offered training in basic administrative areas such as law, finance, personnel, and plant management, they did not address the skills or knowledge necessary to be faith leader. McDermott (1986) asserted that Catholic administrators must be conversant with critical Church issues and teachings in order to challenge teachers to relate these in the contexts of each academic discipline. A competency of the faith leader (Manno, 1985; Buetow, 1988) is to be knowledgeable of the history of Catholic schools and the Church, as well as Church law, documents and teachings. If Church and school leaders see this dimension of the role of Catholic high school principal as most vital, the results of this study may indicate that many may be underprepared to successfully respond to this call.

This study investigated the perspectives of a select number of practicing lay Catholic high school principals about their role as faith leader and whether or not their formal preparation was adequate for this dimension of the principalship. The variety of expectations and competencies of the principal as faith leader cited here show that this role permeates all daily decisions of the principal. Whether or not the practicing principals believed that they were prepared for this role was a major objective of this study.

### **Implications of this Research**

The results of this study should be used as beginning points to design faith leadership programs that could be piloted. Only through an innovative new direction in preparing professions for faith leadership will schools and students be best served. This research alone cannot suggest a guaranteed new approach to preparation. What this research does do however, is strongly refute the notion that principals feel totally secure in this most important role of spiritual leader. Some tentative implications, however, are apparent.

#### **Catholic Colleges and Universities**

More Catholic colleges and universities should offer a core of courses related specifically to the preparation of faith leaders. This core could be used to supplement the preparation of those principals who become certified as administrators by state standards. Separate Catholic school

administration programs should be offered, especially in densely populated regions of the United States in order to respond to the larger number to be prepared in those locations.

Catholic colleges and universities should capitalize on current and future technological advancements to offer their Catholic school core or complete degree programs through distance learning to those who are living in the more remote regions of the United States. While this may help, it would lack the necessary personal interaction suggested by principals.

Programs should include a personal faith development component to increase the confidence of principals as school faith leaders. Practicing lay Catholic high school principals who are identified as effective faith leaders should be utilized as mentors and classroom resource persons. Programs for the development of faith leaders should include opportunities for the ongoing faith formation of current principals.

### **Diocesan Leadership**

#### *Bishops*

The inadequate level of formal preparation to be faith leaders expressed by principals in this study must be recognized by the Bishops. Because the quality of Catholic identity within the schools has consequences for their continued existence, Bishops should be more proactive in calling for required courses and planned experiences in faith leadership to certify all candidates for the Catholic school principalship. Bishops should commit resources that will ensure that these requirements can be feasibly attained. As indicated earlier by Calareso (1989) there is a leadership predicament that will negatively influence the future of Catholic schools unless an increased willingness to invest in leadership training occurs.

#### *Superintendent and Diocesan School Offices*

Superintendents should collaborate with local Catholic colleges and universities to develop and deliver a core of courses and planned experiences designed specifically to prepare candidates for faith leadership. Mentoring programs should be organized to assist candidates and first year principals. Retreats and other programs should be



organized by the central office for the ongoing faith formation of practicing Catholic high school principals. Superintendents should assist the Bishop in securing the resources necessary to provide these programs for faith development in the most convenient and affordable fashion.

Considerable time, expertise and financial resources have been employed by diocesan leaders working with the laity to craft strategies for the future of parish life in light of the dramatic decline in the number of priests who are available for parish work. A similar priority should be addressed by diocesan leaders to ensure the future of Catholic schools as the leadership and staffing shifts to a dominantly lay staff.

### *Religious Orders*

Religious orders across the United States with a long experience of ministry in Catholic schools should continue to support the schools despite the declining numbers of their membership. Those in their orders who have had experience and success as Catholic school administrators should be mentors for the lay principals especially in their roles as faith leaders. This will help the administrators ensure a truly Catholic character for the schools.

### **Summary**

The results of this study indicate that there is a serious need to improve the quality and availability of programs focused on the preparation of lay principals to be faith leaders. It is clear that lay persons who do and will serve as Catholic school administrators need a strong background in Church and Catholic school history and theology as well as the opportunity to probe and develop their own faith, especially as it relates to competencies of being an effective school faith leader. Experiences as Catholics were important to principals, but alone do not properly prepare them to be faith leaders of an entire school community.

As the numbers of vowed religious have dramatically disappeared from teaching and administrative positions in Catholic schools in the past two decades, this study helped to show that there is much more that needs to be done to properly prepare the current and future lay

leadership to be effective faith leaders as they assume these positions in the Catholic schools. Truly, the future of Catholic schools is now predominately in the hands of the laity and their abilities to be faith leaders must be more extensively nurtured. Bishops, superintendents, religious orders, and Catholic colleges and universities must take ownership if this critical need for proper preparation is to be thoroughly and effectively addressed.

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## Leadership in Decentralized Schools

by

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School-based management is oriented toward increasing the level of involvement of multiple constituencies in the governance and management of schools. Decentralization of public schools allows tailored educational decisions to meet the needs of each school, permits a greater range of perspectives to be considered, and empowers school participants to identify improvements that will enhance school performance (Robertson, Wohlstetter, & Mohrman, 1995). Making changes in administering decentralized schools requires that principals adopt new leadership and management strategies. Given the uncertainty of defining their authority, the principal's role in administering a self-governed schools is fraught with trial and error (Anderson & Shirley, 1995). Because private schools are historically decentralized and are traditionally governed by a board of school participants, principals in these contexts may provide insights of how they lead their schools. This article reports the findings of a study that examined the strategies that private-school principals used to administer their decentralized schools.

### Private-School Leaders

Private-school leaders are held accountable for the accomplishment of school goals and for the expectation by participants to be collaborative in sharing power. Private-school principals must build and reinforce goal consensus among staff, parents and students, as well as establish a voluntary community in which everyone is collectively responsible for student learning (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993). Principals of private schools perform several roles, including those of principal, superintendent, business manager, fundraiser, and visionary. These complex roles require that participants be empowered to shape the mission of the school (Madsen, 1995). Cibulka (1989) views the private school as having an internal self-regulation that allows school participants to develop a community in which they define



a common mission and resolve their own problems.

Principals of private decentralized schools have more autonomy over school policies than do their public-school counterparts. They also place greater emphasis on solving school problems collectively and on empowering participants to have a voice in defining the goals for the school (Chubb & Moe, 1988). Private-school principals are better able to create a team of teachers who are like minded and who collectively pursue similar goals for the school (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982). According to Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993), private-school principals regard their primary goal as building community and accepting responsibility to shape school life and to model the school's ideals through their administrative style. Private-school principals are less likely to be autocratic because they must ensure goal consensus for the vision of the school. These administrators spend less time on procedural concerns and devote more energy to building rapport with participants and to responding to parents' concerns. Cibulka, O'Brien, and Lewie (1982) noted that private schools were effective because of the principals' visionary leadership, shared governance, and clarity of mission.

### **Public School Leaders**

The more recent literature on school reorganization cites the need for changes in how school leaders should administer decentralized public schools. Robertson, Wohlstetter, and Mohrman (1995) noted that principals who were high innovators in school-based settings were more likely to share information and promote staff involvement, that they tended to take on more of a facilitator role than an administrative one, and that they focused on managing the decision-making process. Blase's (1993) study on teachers' perspectives of school-based leadership indicated that effective principals elicited compliance from teachers through a give-and-take process, spent considerable time and effort on clarifying their expectations, and encouraged teacher involvement in decision-making. Marsh (1990) believes that school management in school-based settings should involve planning, organizing for implementation, and exercising control. Marsh's research

(1990) indicates that school leaders should manage their vision by building coalitions, supporting professional development opportunities for teachers, and monitoring program goals. Goldman, Dunlap, and Conley (1993) theorize that principals who use facilitative power create favorable conditions for teachers to accommodate change. Reitzug's (1994) research reveals that a principal's ability to empower constituencies is by providing support, providing resources, and encouraging teachers to take risks when making their decisions.

Leithwood, Jantzi, and Dart (1993) state that transformational leadership is a commitment-building strategy in which principals devote themselves to the vision-building process collectively with their staff, provide individualized support, distribute the responsibility and power for leadership widely throughout the school, and strengthen the school culture. Bimber (1993) believes that principals in decentralized schools should lead in a consultive manner, but that the leader is responsible for achieving goals and has the authority for pursuing them. Bolman and Deal (1994) believe that the way in which we prepare leaders for schools must shift emphasis from management--controlling budget and personnel to promote change--to leadership (establishing vision and strategies in order to get people aligned and to create a consensus on school goals). Principals of the future must be able to translate their ideals for their school into a collective responsibility that all participants understand and accept. Leaders of schools must negotiate, build coalitions, and orchestrate the harmony of a common view.

### **Methodology**

Independent schools based on the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) were used in this study. Although the conditions of the marketplace shape independent schools, such schools are given considerable autonomy to define themselves. And however varied in their mission, all independent schools share six basic characteristics: self-governance, self-support, a self-defined curriculum, self-selected students and teachers, and small size (Kane, 1991). Independent schools have policies that define how board members will



be identified. A self-selecting board of trustees bears the ultimate responsibility for an independent school's philosophy, resources, and programs.

The school board members of independent schools are nominated for their expertise rather than as representatives of a constituency with a political agenda. The independent-school board overseas the principal's responsibilities for the recruitment, educational progress, implementation of the long-range plan, and market image of the school. Every seven years, the independent school completes a self-evaluation of its program in order to determine the long-range plan that will become the blueprint for how the school will implement its future needs. These schools are required to involve teachers and the parents of former and current students in the long-range planning process, a practice that gives participants an opportunity to define the direction of the school.

Three elementary NAIS independent schools were selected for this study. The schools, which were located in a large metropolitan area in the Midwest, met the following criteria:

- The schools were not religiously affiliated.
- The schools were located in a geographic area that offered many choice educational options.
- The schools were recognized in the metropolitan area for the quality of its program and its commitment to diversity.
- The schools had gone through several long-range plans.
- The schools' boards were made up of several parents of current students.

In addition to meeting the criteria defined above, these three independent schools were involved in major expansion plans and recruitment efforts. They varied in their years of operation, parent representation on the board, mission focus, and location. For example, one school had been in existence for 50 years, another for 30 years, and the third for seven years. In two of the schools, at least 70 percent of board members were parents of current students; in contrast, the remaining school had only one parent representative and many nonschool corporate leaders on its board. One school focused on a traditional educational program, whereas another promoted a Montessori

program and the third emphasized strong arts and academic focuses. Two of the schools were located in affluent suburbs and faced student recruitment issues from other quality public and private schools, but the third had an inner-city location and a mission to serve working parents; the latter school competed with city magnet schools and a few private schools for its students.

### **Data Collection**

This study took place for one academic year, from 1992 to 1993. A case-study approach was used to analyze the leadership in the three schools. To determine the principals' ability to lead their schools through long-range planning goals, several onsite observations were made for two years (1994 and 1995). Given the breadth of their leadership, it seemed important to document the principals' administrative skills. Several onsite visits were made to verify the principals' ability to work with their constituencies in order to implement major school construction and reorganization. Several qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze data for this study: Participant observation, interviews, and document analysis were the primary data-collection methods.

All interviews were taped and transcribed, and themes from interviews were compared across each site to identify similarities and differences among the schools. Communications sent to school participants were analyzed to determine the level of interaction among board members, parents, and faculty. Data from similar faculty, parents, and board meetings held at each site were cross-listed to document the similar realities of data. Field notes taken from classroom observations were analyzed across settings to determine commonalities in management and instructional practices.

### **The Principals**

All three principals in this study were female. Two were married women in their early fifties; the other was divorced and in her late thirties. Two principals were considered founders of their schools, and the third was considered a "savior" for radically shifting the school's focus from a traditional orientation to a more child-oriented program. All three principals did their own



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### **Data Collection**

This study took place for one academic year, from 1992 to 1993. A case-study approach was used to analyze the leadership in the three schools. To determine the principals' ability to lead their schools through long-range planning goals, several onsite observations were made for two years (1994 and 1995). Given the breadth of their leadership, it seemed important to document the principals' administrative skills. Several onsite visits were made to verify the principals' ability to work with their constituencies in order to implement major school construction and reorganization. Several qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze data for this study: Participant observation, interviews, and document analysis were the primary data-collection methods.

All interviews were taped and transcribed, and themes from interviews were compared across each site to identify similarities and differences among the schools. Communications sent to school participants were analyzed to determine the level of interaction among board members, parents, and faculty. Data from similar faculty, parents, and board meetings held at each site were cross-listed to document the similar realities of data. Field notes taken from classroom observations were analyzed across settings to determine commonalities in management and instructional practices.

### **The Principals**

All three principals in this study were female. Two were married women in their early fifties; the other was divorced and in her late thirties. Two principals were considered founders of their schools, and the third was considered a "savior" for radically shifting the school's focus from a traditional orientation to a more child-oriented program. All three principals did their own



admission tours in order to recruit students and educate parents about the organizational aspects of independent schools. Two of the principals had degrees in business and marketing with little or no experience in working in schools whereas the third principal had previously taught third grade in a public school. The latter earned her Ph.D. in counseling prior to accepting the position in the current school.

### **Visionary Leadership**

The findings from this research project indicated that the principals under study needed to be visionaries. Based on Nanus's (1992) definition, vision is defined in this study as a desirable future state of an organization that helps to energize people. The strength of the principals chosen for this study was in their ability to define the direction of the school. Because of their clear understanding about the school's goals, all the participants found meaning in the school's purpose: the principals were clear about what they wanted the school to be and their constituents supported them. As a result, the principals were able to accomplish many school goals and to establish ownership for the participants.

Each principal had an image for the school that individually and collectively enabled the school participants to see the school not for what it was, but what it needed to become. The long range plan, which was jointly developed by all the participants, conceptualized how all the parts fit together and how everyone played a part in the collective vision. The principals were visionary risk-takers who empowered school participants to take on major funding campaigns in order to complete significant school renovations. They defined for their boards potential risks and barriers, and they provided options for how the goals might be achieved.

As consensus-builders, the principals worked diligently in order to continually align the various--and sometimes conflicting--school coalitions. By providing a coherent definition of the vision, the principals were able to use conflicts with parents and teacher as a means toward building consensus and interdependence. By tackling difficult problems collectively, the schools were more productive in accomplishing their goals. Leadership

meant more to these private-school principals than just getting school participants to buy into their vision: leadership meant valuing the competing views of their school participants. Using the board structure and long-range plan allowed each principal to clarify competing views in order to build a common vision for the school.

### **Other Leadership Skills**

In addition to defining the direction of the school, this research identified other skills that contributed to the leadership success of the principals under study. Because of the board structures and the schools' support for their principals, the principals took considerable risks in defining their schools. Two of them were willing to take their schools through major construction projects. The other principals dealt with recruitment and school growth while maintaining financial stability.

Each of the three principals believed that their school participants must be provided support and resources in order to become empowered as effective decision-makers. (See Reitzug 1994 and Baldman et al 1993). Facilitative power is the principal's ability to develop a synergy among the school groups in order to develop a collective responsibility for shared goals. Groups are given autonomy and the resources to become active participants in the governance of the school. The principal of a decentralized school must be a facilitator for his or her board members, parents, and teachers so that these groups can be empowered in the decision-making for the school.

Caldwell and Spinks (1993) note that goal consensus must exist among the participants in order for schools to be self-managed. This reality implies a resource-focused approach in which the various groups operating within the school develop a consensus, ensuring that planned tasks be achieved. Owing to the shared governance structure, constituencies of the independent schools used in this study were given the opportunity to define their schools' goals through the long-range planning process. Each principal was obligated to ensure that each group's issues were addressed and accepted collectively. As a result, participants became skilled at reaching goal consensus. The principal's role was to manage



each school group and to represent its views to the other groups.

An example of the consensus-building skill occurred at one of the schools in the study. The long-range plan and mission focus created a consensus for school intent. Problems occurred, however, in assigning priorities to the agreed-upon goals and determining the process for implementing them. Input for the school's five-year long-range plan indicated that the parents, the board, and the teachers wanted the school to purchase and update its present technology base, a request that entailed fund-raising issues.

The parent organization and board members moved quickly to raise funds to purchase computers. As a result, the teachers felt threatened by the board's agenda, which they believed took away their autonomy in defining the school's educational program. Very few teachers had computer skills, and they were already pressed with reviewing the curriculum for multicultural inclusion and with revising the language arts program.

When the principal informed her board that the teachers were poorly prepared in the technology arena, the board members expressed little sympathy and asked that the teachers acquire the necessary skills during their summer vacation. The principal did her best to respond to both sides of the issue.

In order to better articulate the teachers' concerns, the principal asked an alumnus, who did extensive technology work for businesses and school districts to meet with the teachers. This meeting identified specific concerns about time, inservice-training needs, and feelings of inadequacy. The principal then asked board members to identify their computer skills. Interestingly, board members also expressed similar feelings of inadequacy about their own technology awareness, and formed an ad hoc committee to work with the teachers to establish a more reasonable time line for meeting the school's goals.

The board also agreed to provide funds for release time and for summer contracts to allow teachers to become computer literate. The principals' ability to understand the need for collaborative efforts and her interpersonal skills enabled her to gain the trust of the participants in

order to build consensus and to accomplish the goal at hand. She became a mediator for the various constituencies because she regarded unanimity about the priority and implementation of goals as her responsibility in administering the school's future.

### Discussion

Wohlstetter and Odden (1992) believe that school-based managed schools should be given the authority to govern themselves in order to form a consensus on a new vision for the school. Most of the leadership literature indicates that principals in decentralized schools must be able to articulate a vision for their schools (Robertson et al., 1995). The governance structure of the board of an independent school provide for an integrated process for policy-making, planning, resource allocation, and evaluation of the school's goals.

With the three principals in this study, it became evident that visionary leadership was imperative if the school was to realize its objective in attracting and retaining students. The success of the school's self governance is dependent on the leadership of the principal. The principal's administrative behavior requires him or her to balance authority with the participants' needs. Principals must cultivate a coalition for change and must politically negotiate the interaction among the participants. Responsive to teachers and parents, principals must become active listeners who facilitate collaboration in the organizational structure of their schools.

Difficulty came with keeping the wishes of parents in the forefront while maintaining the mission of the educational program. Principals had to distinguish between legitimate complaints made by a majority of parents and those where only a few parents were merely unhappy. Principals used much of their time educating parents about parental roles in the school governance and the outlets for complaints. Parents and principals engaged in an interactive dialogue about what the school should become which established ownership and a collective responsibility.

Leading the self-managed school requires that the principal mold a coalition for change in order to create a common vision. Because each



decentralized school must define its own mission and long-range plan, each principal must be the political negotiator who builds a collaborative community. Such a leader has to be a risk taker and someone who can encourage others to be the same. In creating equal voice, the principal must allow exchange and cultivate consensus.

For school participants to become active decision-makers, the principal also must continually educate board members about educational trends and future needs. Principals must empower participants to assume the responsibility in articulating a common vision that gives meaning, purpose, and direction to the school--not to deal with discipline, curriculum, and related school issues. When a principal's power is equalized, a strong institutional culture develops, a culture that empowers individuals to participate in decision-making and equips them with the knowledge and skill to support the school's goals. Such administrative leadership involves the ability to act as a consultant who educates participants so that they become empowered in finding solutions for the school's concerns.

Traditional management that is used to administer individual schools within a school district is not effective for running self-governed schools. Deregulated schools, in which the principals draw constituencies together behind a common vision, require a participatory management. The principal provides participants with the necessary resources to solve problems collectively, to become active decision makers and to define goals.

Principals support their participants by giving them voice, honoring their needs, finding resources, and responding to suggestions and problems. If a school is to be self-sufficient, the principal must lead the diverse constituency toward a shared vision that is based on the educational mission. Such a principal negotiates with the school's coalitions and responds to equal representation. Such a principal clearly understands shared governance and regards his or her role as that of facilitator to the constituencies. Such a principal is a leader who envisions an orchestrated process whereby competing points are clarified and balanced, leading to ongoing school improvement.

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## AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

### Notes From the Editor

*Continued from page 1*

For many years the trend has been away from the autocratic style of leadership and toward the more participatory style. This ranges from leaders who merely consult employees before making decisions to a purely democratic approach where the leader simply informs the group of an issue, leads in the discussion, and asks for a vote to direct administrative action. Unfortunately in some cases, the democratic approach tends to become an entirely free-rein style which results in leadership by non action. This usually has disastrous results for the organization.

The effective schools literature has well identified the central role of the principal in school success. Strong leadership, of whatever style is absolutely essential to keep schools on track in an effort to achieve definable goals. For the public schools the spotlight is strongly on academic goals. Private schools too are concerned with

academic excellence but frequently have another mission as well.

In this issue of the *Monitor* we present three research reports that highlight the matter of school leadership. They look at the work of the principal in view of the core mission of the school. Our lead article is taken from a speech given to administrators of Catholic schools with a distinctive religious mission. It presents some of the challenges faced by leaders in all schools with a special mission.

In simple terms the prime work of a school leader is to define the mission of the school and then align the institution's resources behind the achievement of that mission. It is essential that principals keep the mission firmly in mind as they provide leadership to the various constituencies of the school. Otherwise a private school has no real purpose for existence.

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