# 1

# Control

## *Managing the School Community*

*"Where does it say I cannot come to school at 10:00 A.M.?" a student asks an instructional assistant one morning.*

*"The student handbook," the instructional assistant answers, pausing while writing a late pass for the student, who should have reported to homeroom at 8:40 A.M.*

*This school has a student-centered student handbook that is reviewed with students a minimum of four times annually. The student council is the biggest cheerleader for the review process. It was a student's suggestion that parents be required to sign a statement indicating that they had reviewed the student handbook with their child and that they would support the school with enforcement of school rules.*

■  **ESTABLISHING CONTROL**

You want to win, and as the principal you feel that your position of authority puts you in control. But it is important to recognize that you can never hold all the cards. You cannot control others; at best, you influence them. You do not even motivate others; you establish a context that invites their own motivation. Your only "control" is over the environment you provide that makes winning probable. You can control only your own performance—the frequency, quality, timing, and responsiveness of your efforts—and even that is in question on Monday mornings.

■  **TIME MANAGEMENT**

Effective instructional leaders must *manage time* well. There is no right or wrong way to manage time, but there are more effective and less effective ways to do it. Maintaining a daily log of how much time you spend on particular activities is fundamental to managing your time more effectively. Consider these strategies:

1.  Set aside time each day to review and prioritize demands on your time.

2.  Identify a small chunk of a difficult task, then deal with it right away.

3.  Think through your day while making your way to work.

4.  Always delegate tasks that are not time-effective for you to do.

5.  Split your working day into chunks of 30 minutes each.

6.  Keep a Time Diary in intervals of 15 minutes for three consecutive days. Stop every hour and catch up on the diary entries. Do not trust your memory. The only way for you to make better use of your time is to *analyze* how you use it now—do this on the fourth day—and then to consider ways in which you can reallocate it in a more effective way. When analyzing how you use time, consider using these criteria: urgent and important, important and not urgent, not important and urgent, not important and not urgent.

Below are some additional thoughts about time:

**Deadlines**: Deadlines can aid in overcoming indecision and procrastination.

**Efficient vs. Effective**: Efficient means doing things right. Effective means doing the right thing.

**Scheduling:** Scheduled events are more likely to happen than unscheduled events.

**Murphy's Laws:** (1) Nothing is as simple as it seems. (2) Everything takes longer than you think. (3) If anything can go wrong, it will.

**Parkinson's Law:** Work expands to fill the time available for its accomplishment.

Here are representative "time wasters" I experienced as a beginning urban school principal: drop-in visitors, crisis situations (discipline, custodial, aging infrastructure, poverty, violence, etc.), meetings (scheduled and unscheduled), attempting too much at one time, inability to say "no," buying into personal problems of staff, poorly organized staff members whose tasks were tied to mine, listening to the rumor mill, poor conferencing/interviewing techniques, use of inappropriate leadership style, open-door policy.

There are eight major categories of activities that you will experience and that must be considered as you reflect about time management and control of your school: (1) observing, supervising, and evaluating teachers; (2) meeting with parents and community groups; (3) planning and organizing the curriculum and total school program; (4) handling paperwork, reports, and daily mail; (5) working with support staff such as secretaries, custodians, and aides; (6) working through unexpected demands and crises; (7) responding to and working with district office personnel; and (8) hall duty and school grounds duty.

Operational procedures, rules, and policies—control mechanisms—are established to maintain school safety and security and to increase student achievement. Effective administrators define job roles, assign tasks, delegate appropriately, and require accountability. These behaviors are essential for meeting ISLLC Standard 3: The Management of Learning, whose areas of focus include organization, operations, resources, and safe schools. Artifacts that you may consider for the administrative portfolio appear in the Reflective Practice Exercises section at the end of this chapter.

## THE VIRTUES OF THE ROUTINE    ■

Routines and traditions are important tools for maintaining control in urban schools that serve as oasis for poor children whose lives are too frequently unpredictable and chaotic. Students want order—limits and support for following school rules and teachers' and other adults' directions. That is why it's imperative to include students as partners when establishing order in a disruptive school or in any school.

Although taking charge of and managing an urban school is a tall order, urban principals can and should make use of the various resources within the school community. Effective management is not a one-person undertaking. Moreover, the skills required demand that competencies be revisited and shared to ensure continuous improvement.

Warren Bennis (1994) reminds us that there are four competencies of leaders:

- Management of meaning
- Management of attention
- Management of trust
- Management of self

### Management of Meaning

To be competent as an educational leader, one first must be able to manage the meaning of schooling. A leader has a clear understanding of the purpose of schools and can manage the symbols of the organization to fulfill that purpose.

### Management of Attention

Management of attention is the educational leader's ability to get teachers to focus and expand their energies to fulfill the purpose of school—that is, to use their abilities to teach children.

### Management of Trust

Management of trust means that leaders behave in such a way that others believe in them and the style of leadership does not become an issue.

### Management of Self

Management of self is simply "I know who I am; I know my strengths and weaknesses. I play to my strengths and shore up my weaknesses."

As an urban school principal, you must make these four competencies a mantra that guides your actions. Keeping these competencies on your radar screen will prevent you from being distracted by false issues that cause you to react and behave in ways that do not contribute to leading an institution that is student centered, adult empowering, focused on continuous improvement, process managed, data driven, and outcomes based (see Figure 1.1).

## ■ CHOICE NOT CHANCE

Principals must choose to lead schools decisively with high expectations, high support, high content, and compassion. Management of schools cannot be left to chance.

Why not? Because schools have increased in size, legal and regulatory requirements have been added and have become more complex, and children need additional services to succeed academically. Moreover, the context of the principal's job has changed dramatically in the last 20 years. Doing this job successfully in today's schools means not only being able to unlock the instructional components well, but also recognizing the balance that is needed among a wide spectrum of responsibilities (Educational Research Service [ERS], 2000).

This balance of educational leadership, according to Strong (1993), is one that "draws a rational relationship between *managerial efficiency* and instructionally effective schools" (p. 5). A principal who focuses primarily on management issues may have insufficient time to provide instructional leadership, while a principal who neglects tasks that might be characterized as managerial does not provide the staff with a well-organized environment in which to work. Therefore, a characteristic

**Figure 1.1**     Characteristics of Successful Learning Institutions
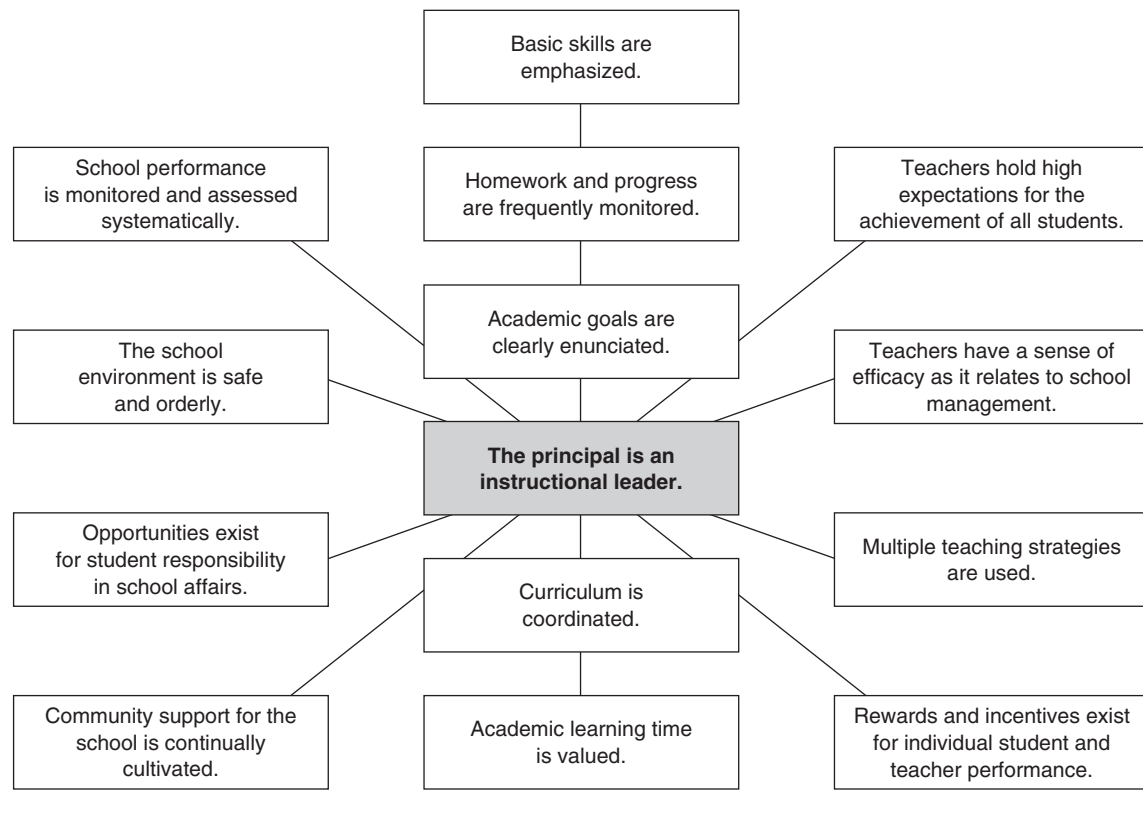


of the effective principal in today's urban schools must be the capacity to make decisions about, and focus on doing, what makes a difference—often on a daily basis (ERS, 2000).

## LEADERSHIP STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS      ■

Educators and policy makers have launched many helpful initiatives to redefine the roles of school leaders. The Council of Chief State School Officers, representatives from various professional associations, and representatives from 24 state education agencies cooperatively developed *Standards for School Leaders* (1996). The six standards present a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that link leadership to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes. Standard 3 focuses on the principal's management of the school: "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring *management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment* [italics added]" (p. 14).

Good leaders characteristically

| | |
|---|---|
| manage reform activities | build consensus |
| delegate authority | secure participant buy-in |
| assume responsibility | gain bureaucratic support |

These attributes underscore the overlap and importance of both instructional and management leadership behaviors of school principals.

Prior to the focus on explicit student socio-economic status and academic achievement data in conjunction with NCLB regulations, the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools' Program focused on 14 correlates of school effectiveness. Note that the expectation was that both instructional improvement and management support tasks were addressed by school leaders.

1. A principal who is an instructional leader
2. A safe and orderly school climate
3. An emphasis on basic skills
4. A system for monitoring and assessing school performance
5. Teachers with high expectations for the achievement of all students
6. The pronouncement of clear academic goals
7. A sense of teacher efficacy over the conduct of the school
8. Rewards and incentives for individual teachers and students
9. Community support for the school
10. Concentration on academic learning time
11. Emphasis on frequent and monitored homework
12. A coordinated curriculum
13. The use of a variety of teaching strategies
14. Opportunities for student responsibilities in school affairs

## ■ EXCELLENCE THEORY

Excellence theory focuses on management practices, pointing to those that may be linked to exemplary school outcomes in situations where an organization may have several layers, different types of administrators, and crosscutting organizational units. Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (2004, 1982) contains an array of management practices that the authors claim have produced sustained excellent performance by a wide variety of businesses. The management practices include the following:

1. Having a bias for action
2. Being close to the customer
3. Preserving autonomy and entrepreneurship
4. Sustaining productivity through people
5. Being hands-on, value driven
6. Sticking to the knitting
7. Creating simple form, lean staff
8. Having simultaneous loose-tight properties

A firm had to be in the top half of its industry in at least four of six outcomes (three each for growth and income) over a 20-year period.

Think about what you do daily as an urban school principal with students, parents, teachers, and partners. Problems await you in the morning no matter what time you arrive. Either a student or teacher has arrived early, or the custodian is waiting because of some incident that occurred the night before with an employee, or a local police officer needs to speak with you. If you remain *customer focused*, you will count to 10 before saying, "There goes my 'to do list' for today!"

## Practicing Leadership

To test the appropriateness of Peters and Waterman's management practices to what you do daily, try the following strategy when your day begins as described above.

1. Don't mistake the problem for a joint problem.

2. Ask, "Who is working for whom?"

3. After the person shares the problem with you, ask the person, "What do you think?" This leaves the next move up to the student or the subordinate because you have not accepted responsibility for the problem. If the person has a solution to the problem, listen to it. If it is a good one, tell the person to come back to you after the plan has been implemented. If the person does not have a solution, spend a few minutes going over the alternatives together, and then ask for his or her recommendation.

By following this strategy, you have employed management practices 1, 2, 3, and 4. Using the same situation, how does the "sticking to the knitting" criterion apply? Ask these questions: "Is there an instructional opportunity here?" and "Does this problem have a direct link to instruction?" If so, then it is appropriate for you to "stick to the knitting" in a number of different ways:

1. You may delegate the task to a teacher or an administrator.

2. You may add the item to the agenda for your next instructional council.

3. You may elect to place the item on your "to do list" and proceed as appropriate.

Excellence themes as translated to urban schools could also be interpreted as shown in Table 1.1.

## EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP    ■

In *A Passion for Excellence*, Peters and Austin (1985) enlarge the focus, including a chapter directed at excellence in school leadership. Peters uses examples from the documented behavior of principals at Deerfield

**Table 1.1**    Excellence Themes in Urban School Management

| Excellence Themes | School Leadership/Management |
|---|---|
| Having a bias for action | • Circulate in halls, classrooms<br>• Use small groups for decisions, e.g., teams/grade levels/committees<br>• Organize administrative teams<br>• Observe teachers *teaching* daily |
| Being close to the customer | • Require end of quarter tests and provide feedback to students monthly<br>• Conduct goal setting and midyear and end of the year conferences with all staff members<br>• Meet with the student council monthly<br>• Meet with parent groups monthly<br>• Provide recognition and rewards for staff and students |
| Preserving autonomy and entrepreneurship | • Protect professional time<br>• Support teachers' different teaching styles<br>• Foster staff interaction across grade level and subjects (teaching across the curriculum) |
| Sustaining productivity through people | • Implement staff initiatives<br>• Provide staff development<br>• Conduct informal and formal observations and provide written and oral feedback |
| Being hands-on, value driven | • Gain consensus on goals/annual plan<br>• Meet with faculty and staff monthly |
| Sticking to the knitting | • Concentrate on core curriculum |
| Maintaining quality control | • Hire only certified staff and/or provide financial support to get staff certified<br>• Develop standardized categories for arriving at meaning of grades |
| Creating simple form, lean staff | • Hire few full-time administrators and nonteaching staff<br>• Keep flat, nonmatrix organization |
| Having simultaneous loose-tight properties | • Mix central monitoring and school site decisions<br>• Combine autonomy and shared goals<br>• Maintain firm, fair discipline |

Academy and the three "tough" urban schools in Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's study on high schools. The eight themes are reduced to three:

1. Superior customer service

2. Internal entrepreneurship

3. The facilitation of the first two with a "bone-deep" belief in the worth, dignity, and creative potential of every person in the organization

Using Peters's framework, Yin and White (1986) further document the applicability of *excellence theory* to the management of comprehensive urban secondary schools. In addition to the eight leadership practices already cited, they add this list of management practices:

## Intensive and Personal Communication by the Principal

The ways to accomplish intensive and personal communication are as diverse as our 50 states. For some principals this means that the principal has an open-door policy and responds quickly to calls and requests from teachers and other staff members. For other principals this means that delegation becomes routine, so time becomes available for wandering.

This management practice may also require that you modify how you communicate with staff. You may decide to communicate with staff through other means than traditional faculty meetings. These might include department, grade level, or team meetings; brown bag lunches; informal conversations in the hallway; one-to-one conferences; memos, e-mail, and round-robin memos to a limited number of people; or copies of minutes, letters, reports, and executive summaries.

## The Principal Acting as an Advocate for the School

Acting as an advocate for the school includes the following actions:

- Speaking at ministerial council meetings
- Participating in community forums
- Appearing as a guest on talk radio or community affairs programs
- Penning guest columns and writing letters to the editor about why partnerships and support by the public are essential for schools to fulfill their mission

Facilitating the following events helps to support your school:

- Mentoring programs (You should become the voice for mentoring programs. Mentoring programs cannot be successful if citizens from all walks of life do not step forward to fill mentoring slots.)
- Summer business internships for teachers (Such opportunities refine teachers' knowledge and skills and allow them to update their practices in keeping with new employment requirements for high school graduates.)
- Campaigns that provide financial support to student enrichment programs (Field trips to museums prepare students for becoming tomorrow's patrons of the arts, thereby ensuring the perpetuation of Western culture.)

Finally, being an advocate means developing an active school-community council that may result in the acquisition of resources for your school, including physical improvements to it.

## Procedures for Streamlining the Routine Administration of the School

When you empower others to solve problems and make decisions—either individually or through teams, grade levels, or committees—you reduce layers of permission steps prior to action.

## Steps to Protect Teaching Time and Professional Autonomy

Protecting teaching time and professional autonomy is easier to do than you think. Consider this list of strategies:

- Implement a 20-minute rule: students are not permitted to leave a classroom during the first 20 minutes of the period.
- Make schoolwide announcements on the public address system only twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Reward teachers who are creative and whose students also score well on school district proficiency tests.
- Increase the length of the school day.
- Plan fewer assembly programs that all students are required to attend.
- Organize schools-within-a-school where teachers and students remain in one wing or area of the building. This cuts down on movement and increases teaching time.
- Relieve teachers of administrative duties.
- Schedule school rallies for after school.
- Encourage teachers to apply for external grants to develop new curricular materials.

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### Unlocking the Routine

Consider devising a list of five or six major practices in your school: afterschool detention, field trip permission, monthly assembly programs, cocurricular clubs, for example. Review the guidelines for implementation. Take the guidelines to a team, grade level, or committee meeting. Ask the group to revise the guidelines while maintaining accountability and quality service.

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## Ways to Promote Innovation and Variation in School Curriculum and Operations

By encouraging teachers, lead teachers, and guidance counselors to plan and teach units (interdisciplinary teaching), by using themes that appeal to students, and by encouraging staff to apply for grants to support such initiatives, you promote innovation and variation. You could also devise a school-based grant recognition program using school and/or PTA funds. Each semester teams of teachers could be recognized for their risk taking and creativity while implementing innovative strategies to increase student achievement. (Incentives might include certificates or money to be used either personally or for project implementation.)

## Techniques for Hiring and Assigning
## Staff to Meet Existing School Goals

- Use incentives when hiring and assigning staff. For instance, reward teachers who agree to stay with your school and teach the agreed-upon subjects for at least five years. An incentive to do this could be payment of tuition for certification in the subjects they agree to teach.
- Implement looping. This can mean partnering seventh-grade mathematics teachers who lack skills in teaching algebra with a local teachers' college for further training. Teachers can take an algebra course in preparation for the next year's assignment.
- Develop your talent pool. Motivate long-term substitute teachers to become certified to teach. Be flexible with these staff members when it comes to the length of their workday. For instance, on some days allow them to leave work earlier than on other days. Consider paying teachers when they are absent and engaged in professional development (attending a workshop, completing work in the college library, etc.).
- Be flexible.

## Frequent Monitoring of Staff and
## Provision of Inservice Opportunities

The school staff development committee can plan, develop, monitor, and evaluate all inservice staff development sessions. Connect these activities to the annual school objectives. Serving on such a committee requires a lot of time; draft teachers to serve if necessary.

When observing every teacher during the first and fourth quarters each year, follow the master school schedule for students at each grade level. Students are often excited by the prospect of having the principal with them for the seven-period day. If students take physical education, change clothes and participate in the physical education activities. Follow up by providing teachers with a joint memorandum about your observations. The memorandum should focus on the quality of teaching, student management and discipline, and record keeping, including the following items:

- Student work folders and portfolios
- The classroom's physical appearance (desk arrangements, cleanliness, shades on windows drawn or up, etc.)
- The existence of instructional-focused bulletin boards
- Student posted, graded work

If, for example, you observe the use of ineffective teaching practices, give the teacher evidence of this practice in an individual memorandum as well.

A second monitoring strategy is to visit classrooms for five to ten minutes and leave a "kudos card" encouraging the teacher to keep up the good work. Teachers often enjoy a visit from the principal and consider

### Unlocking Successful Monitoring Strategies

Carry kudos cards (cards with positive sayings on them), school buttons, and school tee shirts with you so when students respond correctly to some math problem, historical fact, or school-related question you ask, you can immediately give them a reward from your stash.

### Unlocking Enhanced Visibility

- Man the cafeteria period (most principals don't).
- Visit all floors and areas of your building twice a day.
- Observe and provide oral and written feedback to teachers.
- Attend departmental, team, and grade-level meetings (provide written feedback about the meetings).
- Sponsor quarterly "bag lunch" time with teams of teachers.
- Participate on an all-school hospitality committee.
- Attend funerals and visit hospitalized teachers.

### Unlocking the Ability to Learn From Mistakes

Permit those persons to whom you have delegated authority or decision making to make their own mistakes. Sometimes the best decisions are made by the people closest to the problem. At intervals, staff should pause and assess what is working and what is not. The assessment is called "Lessons Learned So Far."

the visit a needed break, especially if the principal can engage the students for a few minutes in some type of academic or school spirit activity.

## Sustaining Frequent and Informal Staff Interactions and Communication

Don't think that you have to have an open-door policy as principal. Conferences should be scheduled. However, teachers and staff should know that if a situation arises and they feel they really need to see you, they are free to come right in. Teachers and staff are not likely to abuse this policy if you are visible in the school.

## Mixed Control Monitoring and Decentralized Decision Making

Delegate to assistant principals and department heads, and encourage them to involve all teachers on their floor or in their departments in decision making and implementation. Encourage the assistant principal or the department head to "find out what makes that person tick" if a particular teacher remains uninvolved. They should use what they learn about the person to engage and involve that person.

A comprehensive theory of school leadership must embrace both instructional management and organizational management, each reflecting excellence.

In a series of five meetings in the winter of 1996–1997, five forums on urban education sponsored by the U. S. Department of Education, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the Institute for Educational Leadership resulted in strategies for improving urban education. These strategies affirm the importance of principals' and other district leaders' management behaviors (Council of the Great City Schools, 1999):

- Set fewer, clearer goals focused on challenging academic standards.
- Strengthen supports for teachers and leaders.

- Develop a school climate conducive to learning.
- Establish stronger collective accountability for school performance.
- Increase investments in urban education.
- Build on what works.

## PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE   ◼

Nine "problems of practice" are discussed in the book *City Schools: Leading the Way* (1993) by Forsyth and Tallerico. The problems were identified by a specially selected group of successful city principals, metropolitan youth-serving professionals, and urban university faculty.

- Understanding the urban context and conditions of practice
- Motivating urban children to learn
- Building open climates in urban schools
- Collecting and using information for decision making
- Managing instructional diversity
- Acquiring and using urban resources
- Governing urban schools
- Effecting change in urban schools
- Establishing mission, vision, and goals

In the chapter focusing on student engagement, Forsyth and Tallerico (1993) discuss two overlapping frameworks that focus on the school while they help analyze the motivation problems. One approach is to examine the organizational structures of the school for possible alienating effects on urban children. For example, consider a school policy that penalizes students for lateness. If school staff are aware that a student is late because he has to see that his sibling reaches elementary school before he reports to school, perhaps the solution is not to provide the student with an alarm clock so that he gets to school on time, but rather to devise an individual school schedule for the student so that his school day begins later. This strategy could be used with a large number of students. The school's goal is to increase student attendance, and students need to be present to master the content taught. The schedule revision accomplishes both goals.

The other approach is for the principal to concentrate his or her attention on creating a task-focused learning environment. This example points to other educational research that focuses on principals' strategic options. It is not unusual for urban principals to be reluctant to direct or require that everyone complete some task in a specific way. This is as it should be; however, it is not unreasonable. In fact, it is your job to require that people adhere to time allotments for instruction because the research says learning is increased by 70% when you do. Time on task is not optional in urban schools in which student achievement is exceptionally low. Teachers should be encouraged to identify ways in which they can increase instructional time on task and reduce discipline management strategies.

### Using Transformational and Facilitative Approaches

Urban principals may choose among several strategic options that will lead them down very different paths. Is there a "best" strategy? Much of

the current literature, according to Smith and Piele (2006), seems to favor transformational and facilitative approaches, but wise administrators will try to distinguish enthusiastic advocacy from objective evidence. Beck and Murphy (1993) point out that metaphors for school leadership come and go. Just since 1960, principals have been asked to be efficient bureaucrats, scientific managers, humanistic educators, instructional leaders, and now transformational/facilitative leaders. The authors further observe that prevailing images may say more about the preoccupations of society than the inherent needs of schools.

## ■ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

As a new or newly reassigned urban school principal, you will continually employ a variety of strategies to assist you in becoming an effective leader. What are some professional development options? Consider these possibilities:

- Read books on leadership and organizational theories.
- Attend courses and principal academies.
- Participate in your school district.
- Use the state's or a national association's assessment center.
- Secure a mentor.
- Engage in peer coaching experiences.
- Self-administer leadership style inventories.

The first step for urban school leaders wanting to improve their leadership style is to become aware of what their style is. This seemingly simple task turns out to be complicated. The Resource section of this book provides a matrix of leadership style instruments that should prove helpful as you explore various styles for various purposes. Proceed with caution, however, when using personal assessment measures. They are not perfect. You should not be too quick to embrace the judgment of any instrument. The pros and cons of the instruments' reliability and validity are as varied as the instruments themselves.

## ■ CONTROL SURVEYS FOR SCHOOL ASSESSMENT USE

As the newly assigned urban school principal, you want to execute three levels of behaviors: initiate; stabilize; and sustain effective practices, initiatives, and programs in the school. Included with the Reflective Practice Exercises at the end of this chapter are several surveys to guide your practice. Using these surveys will help you to be proactive and decisive.

Establishing control and managing the school is not easy. But it is required if the principal's vision and the school district's expectations are to be achieved. As the person in charge, the principal uses sensitivity skills and exercises judgment judiciously while recognizing that decisiveness is critical during the early stage of making his or her presence known.

## CONTROL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE EXERCISES

# Control

## Reflective Practice Exercise #1

Consider the following questions. Write your answers below each.

1. To whom should a student report the existence of a weapon on school property?

2. If a parent is uncertain about his or her child's eligibility to take an advanced place-
   ment course in chemistry, whom should he or she ask for assistance?

3. What are the school's rules about students wearing tee shirts with inappropriate messages?

4. If a teacher has a cardiac arrest in the hallway, what are those who observe the teacher's
   collapse to do?

Answers to these types of questions should be found in one or more of three documents in your
school:

- The student handbook
- The faculty and staff handbook
- The parent handbook

However, if these documents do not exist or if they are not distributed and discussed with the
audiences for whom they are designed, schools can be disruptive, disorderly, and dangerous
places in which to learn and to work.

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## Reflective Practice Exercise #2

## INITIATING CONTROL

**Goal:**   To exercise leadership and facilitate the orderly operation of the school.

| Document | Exists | Everyone Has | Needs Revision | Is Reviewed Formally at Least Twice Yearly |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty/Staff Handbook | | | | |
| Student Handbook | | | | |
| Parent Handbook | | | | |
| School Calendar (Monthly and/or Yearly) | | | | |
| Volunteer/Business Partnership Handbook | | | | |
| Code of Conduct Posted | | | | |
| Daily/Weekly Bulletin | | | | |
| Sign-Up Sheet for Use of Common Areas | | | | |
| School Spirit/Climate | | | | |
| Circulars/Memos/Policy | | | | |
| Administrative Regulation (Binder easily accessible for staff's use) | | | | |
| Parent Group Communications Notebook | | | | |

Answer the following questions based on your inventory:

1.  How many documents on the list exist in your school?

2.  How many documents need revision?

3.  Who developed the documents? Is there a reference that identifies the contributors or developers?

4.  Is there a review process for each document? How do you know this to be true?

5.  How is the faculty/staff handbook distributed to staff? Is this document signed out each fall and returned to school administrators at the end of each school year? If yes, are revisions made yearly?

6.  How are these documents distributed?

If there are no handbooks for substitute teachers, volunteers, and business partners, appoint a committee and have these developed. To initiate control of volunteers and business partners is imperative. Both sectors will have a tremendous impact on the reputation of your school. People talk about their school experiences—pleasant or unpleasant. Do not leave your school's reputation to chance with these two sectors.

Your time and that of your assistant principal can be inappropriately expended when the documents listed are not available. A more productive use of your time could ensure time for instructional supervision or for a variety of other tasks that would impact student achievement.

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## Reflective Practice Exercise #3

Initiating control in a school extends beyond the existence of documents. The existence of a student activities program that reaches out to all segments of the student population can contribute significantly to the following:

- School climate
- Student academic achievement
- Student scholarships
- Students' participation in competitions and contests
- A host of other correlates to school effectiveness, such as parent involvement

The existence of administrative monitoring systems for attendance, suspension, and expulsion enables school administrators to use accurate numerical data on a moment's notice.

The reception parents and visitors receive from school staff is more important than a professionally prepared pamphlet extolling the exceptional academic and athletic programs in your school. Thus, training and monitoring secretarial and other support staff assigned to administrative offices throughout the school are paramount, as is celebrating excellent performance.

A dirty school and school grounds with debris are uninviting for students, teachers, staff, parents, and other visitors. Moreover, students do not respect schools in which the adults do not make them feel welcome and respected. Physical appearance and emotional support count! Bare classrooms, no classroom library, no plants, no colorful posters, no student work posted, outdated tattered books or no books, broken or missing instructional equipment, empty bulletin boards or bulletin boards that aren't changed regularly all say to students, "You do not matter. You are not important."

When such negative conditions exist, principals are compelled to exhibit leadership behavior attributed to charismatic leaders: a sense of purpose and a sense of optimism that is specific and directive.

Answer the questions below about your school. An action plan or plans should be developed to turn every statement that received a "no" into a "yes."

## INITIATING CONTROL

| Activities | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| These student groups exist, are affiliated with state and national groups, or are representative of the student body.<br><br>___ student council          ___ honor society<br>___ Pan-Hellenic council      ___ newspaper staff | ☐ | ☐ |
| Students compete in at least three (local, state, regional) contests. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Monitoring systems to capture daily attendance (staff and students), suspensions, and expulsions are in place. | ☐ | ☐ |
| All administrative offices are warm and friendly reception areas for parents, teachers, students, and visitors. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Clerical staff have been trained how to answer the telephone and greet visitors. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Quarterly open house is held (providing opportunities for parent/ community visits). | ☐ | ☐ |
| The school is safe, clean, and inviting (colorful posted student work, slogans, plants throughout the school, etc.). | ☐ | ☐ |
| School grounds are free of paper and other debris. | ☐ | ☐ |
| A plan exists to educate all staff in critical areas such as AIDS, reporting child abuse, sexual harassment, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, teenage suicide, etc. | ☐ | ☐ |

# Control

## Reflective Practice Exercise #4

### STABILIZING CONTROL

Let's turn our attention to the Stabilizing Control Survey below. If you are not a new principal but are newly assigned to a school that is in need of a "different" kind of leadership, it is important that you assess sound management practices that say to employees, "We are about academic achievement, developmental responsiveness, and equity practices that include contributions from all sectors and attention to rewarding excellence." Although not exhaustive, the survey contains key practices for stabilizing control in a school. If you are a newly assigned principal, do not get overexcited about the variety of practices. You cannot implement every effective practice that you would like to during the first three years of your assignment in a school. Review the list with the idea of sharing it with selected faculty members or a study group. The transformation of a school is not a one-year, one-person undertaking. However, your leadership is critical.

|  | Yes | No |
|---|:---:|:---:|
| Documents are reviewed formally at least twice yearly. (Purpose: To check for understanding and to reinforce policy. Documents include all handbooks. Times: September, January) | ☐ | ☐ |
| For "new" students and staff, documents are given to and reviewed with them within two weeks of enrollment/employment. | ☐ | ☐ |
| A buddy system exists for all "new" students and staff. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Academic assemblies (whole school/grade level/teams) are held at least twice a year. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Assembly programs that require critical listening skills and acceptable audience politeness are held periodically. | ☐ | ☐ |
| There is a recognition program for exemplary performance (developed with input from recipients) for | ☐ | ☐ |

    __ faculty and staff        __ students    __ parents

    __ volunteers and partners

| | Yes | No |
|---|:---:|:---:|
| Parent/teacher/student report card conferences are held at least twice yearly. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Teachers are encouraged to attend professional development workshops and conferences. | ☐ | ☐ |
| There is a school song. Students and staff know it and it is sung on a regular basis, e.g., opening exercise, assembly programs, athletic activities | ☐ | ☐ |
| Teachers are required to enrich the curriculum by taking students on field trips. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Teachers are required to have posted daily objectives for lessons and "to do" or drill activities for students to complete upon arrival. | ☐ | ☐ |
| There is a reward system for recognizing perfect and improved attendance (staff and students). | ☐ | ☐ |

# Control

## Reflective Practice Exercise #5

## SUSTAINING EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

To sustain educational improvement, practices are fewer but equally important. Implementing these practices will move you closer to reaching the school's vision of excellence. Complete the survey and discuss the results with one or all of the following groups: school site council, building leadership team, administrative leadership team, department heads/grade level chairpersons, PTA/PTSO. Develop a plan to give life to prioritized activities. Good luck!

|  | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|:---:|:---:|
| Eighty percent of faculty meeting agenda items deal with instructional issues. | ☐ | ☐ |
| One-third of the faculty participate in professional development activities that result in pilot projects in the school, e.g., clusters, departments, teaching teams. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Academic assemblies are held quarterly. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Every discipline has students who participate in local, state, and national competitions. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Coach classes are held by every teacher. | ☐ | ☐ |
| Classified staff participate in professional development activities. | ☐ | ☐ |