Introduction to School Leadership

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Chapter 1

Leadership

Chapter 2

Building a Learning Community: Democratic Values[1]

How do we create an environment where all members of a school community practice civic habits? How can we help school members learn to practice their First Amendment freedoms? Sergiovanni (2002) tells us that the primary aim of education is to enable an individual to function in society. Assuming a democratic society, the school should promote not only those qualities necessary for survival (employment, getting along with people, managing one's affairs, being a responsible family member, etc., but also those qualities necessary for a healthy democratic society (political involvement that seeks the common good, willingness to displace self-interest for a higher purpose, skills at community building and conflict resolution, an understanding of how the political process works and how to influence public policy. In order for schools to foster the type of environment where learning conditions help individuals develop social and political qualities, learning is best nurtured in a community context.

2.1 A Democratic School Community

In 2001, Fairview Elementary School in Modesto, California participated in a forum sponsored by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the Freedom Forum's First Amendment Center.These two groups joined forces to promote a First Amendment Schools: Educating for Freedom and Responsibility. This join venture was developed as a means of looking at how to change the way schools instruct the rights and responsibilities that frame our civic lives. (Beatty,2004)

The guiding principles associated with the democratic values of First Amendment Schools are:

- Create schools that serve as laboratories of democratic freedom.
- Develop in all members of the school community a commitment to inalienable rights and civic responsibility.
- Engage all stakeholders in a shared commitment to work together for the common good of the school community.
- Foster the knowledge, skills and virtues necessary for thoughtful and effective participation in the democratic life of the school community and beyond.

Based on the democratic values forum at Fairview Elementary School, students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members established an abiding commitment to teach and model the rights and responsibilities that promote civic awareness and undergird the First Amendment. (FAS Founders, 2001)

[1] This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m12921/1.2/>.

2.2 Democratic Leadership

According to Richard DuFour, retired superintendent of the acclaimed Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, author and consultant, says, today's principals must focus on the future, but remain grounded in today. They must see the big picture, while maintaining a close eye on the details. Principals must be strong leaders who give away power to others. (DuFour, 1999)

This idea of shared responsibility is also echoed by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). In 2001, the NAESP outlined six key elements that summarize what is expected of tomorrow's principals who are a creator of democratic values in their schools. These principals:

1. Lead their schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the center.
2. Set high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students and the performance of adults.
3. Demand content and instruction that ensures student achievement of agreed upon academic standards.
4. Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.
5. Use multiple sources of data as tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement.
6. Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

Therefore, these 21st century pioneers must meet the following demands if they are to promote democratic values and build community schools:

- Lead through shared vision and values.
- Enlist faculty in the decision-making process and empower individuals to act.
- Provide information, training, and parameters for staff to make good decisions.
- Are results oriented.
- Concentrate on posing the right questions rather than imposing solutions. (DuFour, 1999)

The principles modeled at schools like Fairview Elementary demonstrate that a culture based on democratic values is developed through reflective leadership practices. Additionally, implementing the democratic values also means that leaders must develop sensitivity towards the value of others in order to give meaning to students, teachers, parents and the community at large. Furthermore, by seeking to understand the values of others, leaders can gather enough information on how they can best utilize a shared decision making process. Hence, by developing an awareness of others, school leaders are able to gauge the influence that certain individuals, groups, and organizations can have on their schools. Therefore, the decision on how to create an environment where schools promote democratic values helps to built students who grow into responsible social and politically aware members of society, which understand the government process and are skilled in community building.

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Chapter 3

Building a Learning Community: The Culture and Climate of Schools[1]

3.1 School Culture

What makes a good school? In today's public schools, where diversity is vast and complex, a good school must provide a strong functioning culture that aligns with their vision of purpose. Good schools depend on a strong sense of purpose and leadership. However, in order to build a culture that is integral to school life, principals must gear their students, faculty, and staff in a common direction and provide a set of norms that describes what they should accomplish. Sergiovanni (2001) elaborates on the principal's influence in shaping school culture by stating that, once established in a school, strong culture acts as a powerful socializer of thought and programmer of behavior. Yet, the shaping and establishment of such a culture does not just happen; they are, instead, a negotiated product of the shared sentiments of school participants. When competing points of view and competing ideologies exist in school, deciding which ones will count requires some struggling. Principals are in an advantageous position to strongly influence the outcome of this struggle.

The building of school culture further requires that building leaders pay close attention to the informal, subtle or symbolic aspects of school life. Teachers, parents, and students should look for answers to questions such as, what is this school about? What is important here? What do we believe in? Why do things function the way they do? How do I fit into the scheme of things? As Greenfield (1973) stated, what many people seem to want from schools is that schools reflect the values that are central and meaningful in their lives. If this view is correct, schools are cultural artifacts that people struggle to shape in their own image. Only in such forms do they have faith in them; only in such forms can they participate comfortably in them.

Leaders of successful schools develop moral order that bind the people around them together. When establishing culture, principals must be able to infuse various ideas, beliefs, values, theories and decision making into their school. Collaborative discourse is a powerful tool that can be used to facilitate the process of developing school culture and climate. Leaders, who look to build their school communities, must recognize that educators, who work together, achieve a collective purpose resulting from their collegiality, which is critical in establishing a successful school. However, for meaningful collaboration to occur, capacity building must take place. Capacity building has frequently appeared in educational literature across the United States. Ann Lieberman (1997) coined this term which means, organizing schools for improvement by allowing teachers to work in teams and with instructional leaders to channel staff efforts towards a clear, commonly shared purpose for student learning. When channeled correctly, these habits and conditions allow staff members to work and contribute to a professional community. Such communities are places where teachers, specialist and building administrators engage in decision making, have a shared sense of purpose and work to support an infrastructure that involves alignment of instructions goals.

[1] This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m12922/1.2/>.

Newmann and Wehlage in their 1995 work, Successful School Restructuring, firmly link student achievement to the effective work habits of adults stating that the most successful school were those that used restructuring to help them as professional communities. Teachers and leaders collaborate and help one another achieve the purpose of student learning. Teachers and instructional supervisors in these schools help one another take responsibility for academic success. These schools which maintain a strong professional community are better able to offer authentic pedagogy and are more effective in promoting student achievement.

School leaders who give their attention to establishing their school culture by addressing the question, what is this school about, begin with a period of organization as the school initiates new collaborative processes that relates to norms, teams, vision, use of data, shared expectations, and ways of working together.

3.2 What Do We Believe In? Why Do We Function the Way We Do?

In a successful school, the culture of the school focuses on establishing a climate where the alignment of values and beliefs are embedded. The idea of developing this type of community allows all involved to develop a sense of group purpose. A recurring theme throughout the literature on instructional leadership is that a leader must have a clear vision. Stephen Covey reminds us that good leadership comes from shared vision and principles. Good leaders must have a sense of what he or she values, something to be committed to, a compass to guide their true north principles. Honesty and integrity, according to Covey, are examples of a leader's true north principle which are not taught, but are laws of the universe. (Covey, 1990) For the most part, a school's shared vision can be found in its mission statement. The central goal of the mission statement is to improve student learning and achievement. Yet, there is an underlining goal as well, which is to align the beliefs and values of a school. McEwan (2003) states, a vision will incorporate the collective ideas of everyone and will be a consensus statement of where you want to go together. Mission statements are also important because they are a statement of the school's purpose. It is vital to remember that the mission statement must be a collective generated statement and not a directive that is forced upon its staff. Therefore, the job of the supervisor is to continually explain, teach, share, demonstrate, and model those practices which can move teachers forward (McEwan, 2003).

To encourage a school culture and climate that promotes individuals who are bonded together by natural will, and who are together bound to a set of shared ideas, and ideals then principals must strengthen their efforts towards improving connections, coherence, capacity, commitment, and collaboration among their members (Sergiovanni, 2001).

The attributes of a supportive climate promoted in successful schools include:

- Continual sharing of ideas- Teachers share ideas daily regarding vital issues of instruction, curriculum, testing, school organization, and the value of specific knowledge.

- Collaboration-Teachers become involved in team teaching and other collaborative efforts in program development, writing, and research.

- Egalitarianism- Teachers dispense with formalities and anyone who takes an interest in a department meeting can vote. The notion that the quality of ideas is more important than the source.

- Practical application-Teachers ask themselves, How does what we are doing help students, teachers, and schools? What did we do this week to help?

Principals who desire to improve a school's culture, must foster an atmosphere that helps teachers, students, and parents know where they fit in and how they can work as a community to support teaching and learning. Creating a school culture requires instructional leaders to develop a shared vision that is clearly communicated to faculty and staff. Additionally, principals must create a climate that encourages shared authority and responsibility if they are to build a positive school culture.

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Chapter 4

Shared Leadership[1]

Traditionally school leadership has been that of the top-down approach adopted from business and industrial organizations where the leader leads, makes key decisions, motivates, and inspires. While this approach has been popular in educational administration in the past, it is highly unlikely that a single person can provide the necessary leadership for all issues. Leaders and followers of today need to let go of that expectation and embrace new ways of leading. One way is to emphasis a shift from the formal leader to a shared leadership model. Instead of a single individual leading to success, other individuals, who are partners or group members, take on the responsibility for leadership.

"We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators"(Lambert, 2002). This formal model has several weaknesses. For example, when the principal leaves any promising change that has been implemented fades away. Under No Child Left Behind, we are under pressure to provide quality learning for all students and quality results on test scores. Instructional leadership must be a shared, community undertaking. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school(Lambert, 2002). Teachers have extraordinary leadership capabilities, and their leadership is a major untapped resource for improving our nation's schools (Barth, 1990). When administrators learn to tap this resource, they will have a wealth of knowledge available to them. Often times it is not only the team leader that possesses the leadership capabilities but also the quiet team member that assumes the role of curriculum specialist.

4.1 Shared Leadership Defined

Shared leadership has many names including partnership-as-leadership, distributed leadership, and community of leaders. Under the shared leadership model, the vision for a school is a place whose very mission is to ensure that students, parents, teachers, and principals all become school leaders in some ways and at some times(Barth, 1990). According to Russ S. Moxley, the idea of leadership as partnership suggests the basic concept of two or more people sharing power and joining forces to move toward accomplishment of a shared goal(Moxley, 2000). The main job of the administrator in distributed leadership is to enhance the skills and knowledge of the people in the organization, use those skills and knowledge to create a common culture of expectations, holding the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result (Elmore, 2000). Principals can develop a community of leaders by openly articulating the goal, relinquishing decision-making authority to teachers, and involving teachers before decisions are made (Barth). When teachers are included in the decision-making process ahead of time, they are more likely to implement change. For example, when teachers are included in deciding what the behavior plan will be school-wide, they are more likely to ensure that it is used in their classroom effectively.

[1] This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m12923/1.2/>.

There are five requirements for the partnership model to work. The first requirement is balance of power(Moxley, 2002). For this model to be a partnership one person cannot have power and the others don't. They must be equal partners. Creating this balance of power is probably one of the hardest aspects in shared leadership. It is important for principals to empower all members of the group and it is equally important for teachers to work together to empower each other.

The second requirement is there must be a shared purpose or goal. Each member, with their own divergent opinions, must understand the ultimate goal of the group. Individuals use different tactics but share a sense of purpose (Moxley, 2002). This model is very powerful when everyone is working toward the same goal. So much can be accomplished when teachers are working together rather than working on their own agenda.

The third requirement is to share responsibility for the work of the group. Partnerships work whenever all the participants share responsibility and accountability for the work of the partnership (Moxley, 2002). Each person in the partnership must take an active role and be accountable for completing their individual contribution. Empowering teachers to work towards a common goal makes them aware of their responsibilities and the important role each one of them plays in reaching that goal. Teachers inherently are hard workers and will strive to do their part to reach the common goal.

The fourth requirement is respect for the person. Each person in the group brings with them skills and ideas that are valuable. The partnership must recognize and embrace the differences in the group. Respect for personhood is the sine qua non of partnerships (Moxley, 2002). With this level of respect, many things can be accomplished using shared leadership. One can build a strong, cohesive unit that can work well together to accomplish a goal.

The fifth and last requirement is partnering in the nitty-gritty, which means working together in complex, real-world situations. If these five requirements are met, something new begins to happen where a relationship becomes more of a partnership. There is more vitality and spirit is experienced, elegantly weaving individuals and their relationships (Moxley, 2002). With all of the complex problems in education today, working collaboratively is working smarter, not harder.

The best way to understand how a partnership is different from individual leadership is to look at how it works in three different settings: a one-to-one relationship, a team, and an organization. Partnership in one-to one relationships would involve the boss engaging in face-to-face dialogue to find out about an individual's gifts, skills, and energies to see where they can best be used to meet the organization's needs. Instead of the boss deciding alone, the two would agree on what works for both the boss and the employee. Instead, they share power and find a relationship-centered solution, a solution from outside of either person that comes from the interaction between them (Moxley, 2002). Partnership in teams is effective when leadership happens as a team of people working to accomplish a shared goal. Directive leadership by a single individual is less important than that the team knows how to function together as a close-knit unit. The partnership model also works in organizations where leadership is understood as collaboration. For example, Southwest Airlines, changed to a new practice of leadership by giving employees the opportunity to participate in the activity of leadership. People who work in an organization where top-down control is not used have an opportunity to voluntarily commit to their work. In turn the organization gets commitment rather than compliance.

4.2 The Future of Shared Leadership

Today the relationship between teacher and principal is under scrutiny. The top-down model is ineffective and too unprofessional. Problems are frequently too big and too numerous for one person to address alone. Schools need to recognize and develop leadership among many different kinds of people to replace the top-down model. School leadership can come from principals who empower teachers to become leaders and from teachers who collectively take responsibility for the well-being of the school (Barth, 1990). Just as we have high expectations that all children can learn, principals must have high expectations that all teachers can lead. If teachers and principals are to effectively lead together, then there must be a substantial change made in the ways we think and feel about our personal and shared leadership responsibilities in the school. Most

importantly a school isn't going anywhere that all of us together, teachers, staff, students, and administrators, don't want it to go (Pellicer, 1999). Teachers have to work collaboratively. We cannot have teachers working on their own agenda. If we do not empower teachers to become leaders then we are missing out on a great opportunity to improve our schools, our students, and our community.

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Chapter 5

The Principalship: Manager to Leader[1]

5.1 Bureaucratic Manager

Schools have traditionally been managed by a bureaucratic management style principal. In this method principals rely on a rational set of structuring guidelines, such as rules and procedures, hierarchy, and a clear division of labor (Allen 1998). Principals using this style receive lots of credit for an efficiently run school. Over time this style of management eventually backfires as creative teachers and students become unsettled. These types of principals tend to be control freaks who find it difficult to let go of the detail and are particularly threatened by the idea of empowering other leaders for fear of diminishing their own power base. These principals soon forget that schools exist for students and not for administrators (Prideaux, 2001). As new decision making models emerge with research backing their success, the role of the principal begins to change.

5.2 Changing from Manager to Leader

Principals are no longer strictly managers; they are expected to be leaders. Leaders that can take their school to a higher level of academic achievement, where all students are successful learners and all teachers engage their students in learning. To become such a leader, principals need to leave behind their bureaucratic management styles and redefine themselves as a moral leader. Principals that are leaders not just managers will be able to move their school forward. These new principals allow teachers to be leaders in developing better curriculums to reach the needs of all students. For a principal to maintain this type of leadership, he will need to learn how to serve his staff not just manage it.

Principals are beginning to value the important role that teachers play in the success of their school. Recognizing their value, principals are beginning to work with teachers to achieve goals that will contribute to the schools success. Principals are looking for a leadership style that welcomes the cooperation of others and values their input. One such leadership style is that of a servant leader. In servant leadership one serves the needs of their staff (Sergiovanni, 2000). By serving one's staff instead of serving one's own needs, a principal is able to create change within the school. Principals can practice servant leadership in the three ways that Sergiovanni (2000) describes: purposing, empowerment, and leadership by outrage.

5.3 Purposing

In purposing it is the principal's responsibility to develop a set of core values that serves the school and present these values to the school (Sergiovanni, 2000). The principal receives input from other staff members so that everyone shares in the development of these values. Principals can receive input from staff members

[1] This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m12924/1.2/>.

by meeting with them in a variety of ways: as departments, as individuals, and as a whole. In these meetings, principals should work to establish dialogue, stressing the point that we are in this together and their opinions are valued. In these meetings the principal and staff can address the problems of the school that need immediate attention, identify ways of improving the school, and ways to head off future problems. Ultimately the goal will be to create a set of core values to serve as their purpose. When developing these values do not forget to incorporate academics, moral and character values, history, tradition, and the community. By establishing the purpose for the school, standards are being set to help guide the school's vision. Equally as important as setting the purpose for the school, the principal is creating a collaborative group that will be a valuable part of school decision making.

5.4 Empowerment

"Empowerment is exactly what happens in a collaborative group, in terms of how everybody's opinion is valued and everybody is allowed to express themselves and be heard"(McMahon, 2001, p. 5). As a servant leader a principal constantly incorporates ways to empower their teachers. Some of these ways include freeing people to "do their thing," delegating with full responsibility, offering and receiving feedback, and the encouragement of self-evaluation (McMahon, 2001). The more a principal uses these strategies the more individuals become empowered and develop leadership qualities. This development becomes vital to improving the school. With additional leaders to make right decisions in the interest of the school, the core values will become the school norm.

For example, imagine the simple task of coming to school. Each teacher leaves from a different house and drives down different roads. In time they arrive at school. Think of this in terms of reaching the shared goals of the school. Each teacher may be at different starting points (homes) and may take different paths (roads) to reach the goals, but each one has a vision of where to head (school) and arrives there. Imagine the power of having all of these people working to achieve the same goal, working to change the school, and working to make the core values a normal part of the school's culture. This is why the empowerment of a staff becomes so valuable to a principal. A principal should allow his staff to make their own decisions for reaching the schools goals, as long as they stay within the standards of the school's core values.

5.5 Dependency

Unfortunately in a principal's attempt to empower his staff, he will have teachers who think negatively. Some teachers do not want to be involved, accept responsibility, or practice self-management. These teachers have become dependent on the administrative staff to tell them what to do and how to do it. How did they get this way? They learned it from a bureaucratic managing principal. "When a principal-rather than the school community members- consistently solves problems, makes decisions, and gives answers, dependency behaviors on the part of staff actually increases" (Lambert, 2003, p. 48). Remember the simple event of coming to school, how getting everyone working towards a common goal is so powerful. A controlling principal unfortunately obtains just the opposite, never achieving such power. Suppose the day before school started the principal visits each staff member's house and give them specific directions on how to get to school. He even tells them what time to leave, how fast to drive and what car to drive. Can you imagine how insignificant the staff feels after this is done? Right away the principal is showing his staff that he has no confidence in their ability to make decisions. As a principal continue to control every aspect of the staff's job they become dependent on the principal to tell them what to do and when to do it. All self-initiative is taken away.

5.6 Breaking the Dependency

In reality, a principal never controls how staff members come to work, just as a principal should not control every aspect of the teacher's job. "Directive or command-and control behavior may get the immediate task

done, but it undermines the growth and development of those who are subjected to it, diminishing teacher leadership and the leadership capacity of the school" (Lambert, 2003, p. 44). A principal never gives up complete control, but needs to be acutely aware of ways that they increase dependency.

As the leader, the principal needs to break this dependency. To do this he should continue working to empower the staff, ". . . releasing the full potential of [his] employees in order for them to take on greater responsibility and authority in the decision-making process and providing the resources for this process to occur" (Cartwright, 2002, p.6). The principal can ask individuals to take on the responsibility of researching problems and coming up with possible solutions. People find ". . . that challenge,significance, and the need to solve problems are important attributes of work that [they] find interesting, enjoyable, and, in a word, motivating" (Owens, 2004, p. 330). When teachers become a significant part of the solution, their motivation and enthusiasm rises. They regain their self-initiative and are less dependent.

5.7 Building Leaders

As teachers become less dependant they are no longer approaching the principal with problems that need to be solved, but rather they are presenting him with solutions to problems they are experiencing. They are asking for support and guidance rather than answers. A principal needs to continue to serve his staff and build servant leaders among them. Spears list ten characteristics of a servant leader: listening, empathy,healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and building community. These characteristics are what a principal will try to build in his staff. "Servant leaders will listen to what is being said and what is not being said"(Spears, 2002, p. 5). A servant leader is not only aware of what is happening around them, but is also self-aware. Servant leaders should rely on persuasion, rather than on one's positional authority to make decisions (Spears, 2002). A servant leader needs to have vision and have a grasp of the "big picture". All of these things help prevent a school from being stagnant and keeps it moving forward. Even with well-established core values, a school may need to revisit and possibly update the core values in order for the vision to continue moving forward. A principal needs to be aware of the importance of foresight to head off possible problems. The principal should introduce the idea of stewardship to his leaders to reinforce the commitment of serving others and helping others to grow. Together a principal and his leaders can work to build community within the school by developing unity among the staff.

5.8 Leadership by Outrage

With more and more leaders in the school,norms are established. One of the greatest norms is the response when the core values of the school are ignored. When this happens, the response of the school leaders and the whole school community is one of outrage. If no one shows that falling short of the school's expectations bothers them then the school, by default, lowers its values. This "leadership by outrage" stops the lowering of values and keeps the school moving forward.

5.9 Conclusion

Setting the purpose of the school, empowering the staff to carry out that purpose, and being outraged when that purpose is ignored should set the basis of a principals leadership style.

The link between servant leadership and moral authority is a tight one. Moral authority relies heavily on persuasion. At the root of persuasion are ideas, values, substance, and content, which together define group purpose and core values. Servant leadership is practiced by serving others, but its ultimate purpose is to place one self, and others for whom one has responsibility, in the service of ideals (Sergiovanni, 2000).

This ideal of serving the core values of the school is what leads a school. The administrators are first to embrace the ideal, then the teachers, and eventually the students. When the whole school community starts serving the core values the school's climate changes. Students begin to care about their education,

and higher expectations are set and met. Teachers believe in students and work to provide them with the best learning environment possible. Principals that follow servant leadership over a bureaucratic style of management will lead schools to achieve their fullest potential.

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Chapter 6

The Principal's Role in Improving and Sustaining Parent Involvement[1]

6.1 Parent Involvement

Literature supports the notion that parent involvement has a positive impact on student achievement and success in school. Parent involvement is not only incremental in the development of the child but also motivates the schools to function at a higher standard by constantly improving practices.The question for many school administrators is how a principal goes about the process of improving school and parent relations so that the student will have improved learning outcomes.

First, a climate of trust and collaboration between the school and parents is essential for effective planning to establish effective parent involvement programs. A principal must ensure that effective communication is in place and that parents know that their participation in school matters and is critical to student success.

Second, recognize that there is no "cookie cutter" for parental involvement. Each school's requirements will be different, and will be driven by different strengths, and backgrounds, such as its history, culture and climate and student performance. A careful needs assessment and knowledge of the norms and values must be studied before a plan is agreed upon by the stakeholders of the school.

Third, parent involvement is often thought of as a means to raise money or plan special school activities but in reality parent involvement includes any number of activities including reading with children, tutoring, and in some cases monitoring the cafeteria! There is evidence in the literature that validates that most parents would like to be involved with the school but need some direction from school personnel on how to help (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004). Some parent may even need training on how they can help their child with their homework math and reading skills, science fair projects and other academic activities. The important thing is to encourage involvement from parents in whatever form or fashion that they can provide.

6.2 Rationale

Parents need to know that whatever they can give in terms of time or resources is appreciated and that it is important to the academic and social/emotional development of the child. When parents value education and show it through encouraging their child and supporting the school the student realizes the importance of the school and learning. Most people may think that parent involvement describes only those parents that give time at the school or attend all the activities. In reality parent involvement is much more.

Christie (2005) identifies volunteering at the school to be on the lowest rung on the ladder of potential activities for parent involvement. However, its importance should not be trivialized as it does have a positive impact on the student achievement and esteem. Children like to see parents at school and teachers appreciate

[1] This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m12925/1.2/>.

the hands-on help they get from parents. Christie ranks attendance at school conferences and activities the next lowest on her ladder of importance followed by participation on committees, tutoring and reading one-on-one. More important is that parents make their student accountable for homework, supplying them a good study environment and making sure that they attend school everyday. The highest level of involvement, in Christie's view, is parents having high expectations for their kids in terms of academics and behavior. The parent that admonishes their student that trouble at school means â€œdouble trouble at homeâ€ helps to focus their student on being successful and taking advantage of the instruction of the teachers. It is absolutely imperative that students present themselves at school with the appropriate disposition to learn. Anything less will result in lower academic performance. Principals should look closely at the relationships between the teachers, the parents and the community. If schools and parents are connected then there will be a solid relationship, stable attendance at conferences and meetings, parents willing to help, varied methods of communication and materials, collaborative relations between home and school and finally communication between parties is successful. With these elements in place the school and home are connected and the outlook for parent involvement is promising (Wherry, 2005).

While these are the signs of a connection between home and school, research from The Parent Institute (2005) showed that teachers and parents often do not rate the significance of parent involvement options in the same way. When asked to rank in order of importance the things parents can do at home to help their child do better in school, teacher and parents had very different views. Teachers thought that the most important thing they can do is to read with their children while parents felt that talking to their children was the most important thing they could do (Wherry, 2005).

This illustrates the wide range of interpretations of the notion of parent involvement. We can learn from this that parents and schools need to establish goals together to effectively meet the needs of the children. Administrators, teachers and parents need to communicate and clarify expectations so that programs can be developed that effectively address student success initiatives. When these parties have agreed upon expectations and have established mutual goals and values then the parties become truly connected. The move towards higher standards, greater accountability and additional and more difficult assessment practices requires a commitment from not just school personnel but families and communities (Machen, Wilson, & Nota 2005).

A study by Nistler and Angela (2000) found that once schools were able to remove the barriers to parent participation, involvement increased. Many parents are simply unable to get to school so efforts need to be increased to accommodate those who need transportation or have small children and need childcare. Solutions include carpooling, providing childcare at the school or forming networks of parents that can help each other out. Clearly, there is a commonality for improving and sustaining parent involvement. the development of a collaborative program that focuses on such things as effective communication, providing multiple opportunities for involvement, removing obstacles to involvement and providing parent training that will increase awareness of the their child's potential (Machen, Wilson & Notar 2005).

One of the most fundamental ways to improve the parent school connection is to improve the teacher - parent relationship. Since teachers are the primary connection with the school that relationship is critical to student success and parent involvement. Teachers must learn how to communicate with parents in an effective and informative way. Evidence exists that when the initial contact between parent and teacher is positive future negative incidents will not replace the initial impression (Million, 2003). By establishing a relationship with parents early in the year a foundation is built for future involvement. Teachers must open the door to parent involvement and enlist the help of parents the first day of school. Having a list of "needs" ready at the Open House or posted outside the classroom makes parents feel like they are integral part of the education process. An environment that welcomes parents in a non-threatening manner enhances the likelihood that the parents will want to volunteer at the school. Many schools recruit parents early in the year, sometimes even before school start.

Principals should identify some of the parents that are enthusiastic about volunteering and enlist them to recruit additional parents. A strong parent-teacher organization is a must for successful school volunteer programs. . These organizations will plan and organize fundraising events, provide support for teachers and work to include all parents in the community. Parent volunteers, with effective leadership can provide

support that can make the school a better place while not being overly intrusive. The opportunities for parents to help are endless and the rewards are great for all parties. Schools must make concerted efforts to nurture parent involvement. By using a variety of modes of communication from email to flyers to phone calls so more parents can be reached. Principals and teachers need to be specific about what their needs are and how parents can best help the school.

Teachers and administrators must make a concerted effort to acknowledge the volunteers and show appreciation for all efforts both large and small. It is imperative that the principal stay in close communication with those parents that spearhead volunteer efforts so they can stay knowledgeable of what is happening. The leaders of the parent groups must have open lines of communication with the principal. They will know the status of volunteer efforts and those that are contributing, which gives the principal an opportunity to recognize those individuals - contributions must be acknowledged and appreciation must be extended for parent involvement to be sustained (Hasley, 2004).

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Index of Keywords and Terms

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B Building Leaders, § 5(15)
Bureaucratic, § 5(15)

C Change, § 5(15)
Climate, § 3(7)
Culture, § 3(7)

D Democratic, § 2(3)
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E Empowerment, § 5(15)

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M Manager, § 5(15)

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S shared goals, § 4(11)

T Teachers role, § 6(19)

V volunteering, § 6(19)

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