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INTRODUCTION

NEW EXPECTATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

This book is very much a product of our times. Not so long ago school communities in Canada, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom reflected the relatively stable cultural homogeneity of the communities they served. Administrators managed schools through a fairly limited repertoire of managerial processes. There was seldom much need to reflect on the suitability of established practices as guides to action, although, as Coombs argues in Chapter 4, such reflection has always been the mark of a wise leader. Management was largely a function of comfortable, well-worn, and proven procedures. As Johansson points out in Chapter 12, schools were traditionally an arena for professional activity, the community stayed at a comfortable distance, and professional expertise seemed a sufficient warrant to earn the trust of the community.

Those days now seem to be pretty much gone and have been replaced by a much more complex set of social circumstances. Societies have become more pluralistic in make-up and the demands and needs of communities more diversified and insistent. On the surface, these circumstances would seem to signal the onset of a golden age for nations and communities with democratic forms of governance; however, as Starratt (Chapter 2) and Johansson (Chapter 12) explain, democratic leadership theory is as much strained as vindicated by current social circumstances. Consequently the nature of school administration has altered dramatically. One very obvious outcome is the increase in the frequency of value conflicts in school environments. Campbell (Chapter 3) discusses the extent to which putting ethical standards into practice can be extremely challenging as administrators strive to “let right be done.” Begley (Chapter 1) argues that school administrators must strive for authenticity in their leadership practices. Johansson (Chapter 12) suggests that administrators conceptualize their work context in terms of arenas of influence in order to lead schools effectively.

Fortunately, there have been a number of encouraging trends. During 1996, two research centres were established in North America, both devoted to the study of values. One is the OISE (University of Toronto) Centre for the Study of Values and Leadership. The other is its University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) affiliate based at the University of Virginia (Charlottesville), the Center for the Study Leadership and Ethics. Annually, since that year, an important gathering of the minds has occurred at the Values and Educational Leadership Conference held alternately in Toronto and Charlottesville, Virginia. In 2000 this pattern deviated with a decision to hold the conference in an

international setting, Bridgetown, Barbados. Philosophers, theorists, and researchers in the values field assemble for three days annually at this conference to engage in what has since become a sustained dialogue. Many outstanding papers have been delivered at the five annual conferences held to date. The best papers of the year 2000 conference in Barbados have been edited, updated, and brought together in this book. We have also included invited chapters by three additional scholars who did not attend the conference - Richmon (Chapter 3), Walker (Chapter 9), and Collard (Chapter 11).

Of course, value conflicts have always been present in educational administration to some extent, if only as a result of the generation gap between adult faculty and youthful students. However, value conflicts now seem to have become a defining characteristic of the school leadership role. The work of educational leaders has become more complex, much less predictable, less structured, and more conflict-laden. For example, in many sectors of the world there is considerable social pressure for greater stakeholder involvement in significant decision making within school organizations. There is also a heightened sensitivity to matters relating to racial, ethnic and gender equity. This implies the acquisition of new skills by school administrators who must now lead and manage outside the immediate and traditional professional context of the school. Several contributors to this book explore these important issues and concepts. Notions of community and collaboration are defined by Strike in Chapter 5. Two further chapters (Chapter 6 by Stefkovich and Shapiro, and Chapter 8 by Leonard and Leonard) deepen our understandings of community and collaboration in the applied setting of education. Walker (Chapter 9) advocates for the adoption of a cross-cultural perspective to replace the Western dominated notions of culture that dominate the English language leadership literature. Finally, Collard (Chapter 11) focuses specifically on gender as a context variable that influences leadership practices.

What has made these new demands on the school leadership role profoundly more challenging is that the achievement of consensus on educational issues among even the traditional educational stakeholders has become more difficult. School administrators increasingly encounter value conflict situations where consensus cannot be achieved, rendering obsolete the traditional rational notions of problem *solving*. Administrators must now often be satisfied with responding to a situation since there may be no solution possible that will satisfy all. As Begley (Chapter 1) and Johansson (Chapter 12) discuss in their chapter contributions to this book, such value dilemmas can occur within a single arena of administration or among two or more arenas. For example, conflict can reside within the mind of the individual when the relatively unnegotiable personal core values of the individual compete with each other or run counter to professional or organizational expectations. Value conflicts may also be the outcomes of interactions among two or more individuals. Finally, value conflicts may be outcomes of an incongruence or incompatibility among one or more of several value arenas; that is, conflicts occurring among the domains of personal values, professional values, and/or organizational values. Richmon (Chapter 3) also addresses these persistent difficulties by critically examining existing values theory.

More than ever before, administrators recognize that the values manifested by individuals, groups, and organizations have an impact on what happens in schools, chiefly by influencing the screening of information or definition of alternatives. The more reflective life-long learners among administrators have also become more conscious of how their own personal values may blind or illuminate the assessment of situations. This capacity is one of the marks of what Begley theorizes in Chapter 1 as an 'authentic leader'. Friedman (Chapter 10) presents a research-based demonstration of how the clear articulation of organizational values can be used in a strategic way to motivate personnel.

Some respected scholars of school leadership working in the empiricist tradition still dismiss values and ethics as concepts too abstract and resistant to inquiry to be of any practical use to school administrators. Indeed, the need to clarify values only becomes important when one needs to know about intents and purposes, or when difficulty is encountered attempting to establish consensus within a given population. As previously suggested, school leaders in many sectors of the world are clearly encountering such situations these days. This is definitely the current situation in Ontario, Canada where several years of unrelenting educational chaos has resulted from the reform policies of a government with a ruthless commitment to an economic agenda. Similarly, principals from Petrozavodsk, Karelia in the former USSR and in Belarus report similar conditions of social turmoil associated with the collapse of their political systems. Recent visits to Hong Kong also produced observations of much the same circumstances. School administrators there are still struggling to understand the full implications of the 1997 reunification of Hong Kong with China. School administrators from these radically different contexts have intuitively developed an appreciation of the relevance of values to administrative practice. As the traditional managerial strategies of school leadership fail, administrators confront a challenge to respond creatively with new forms of leadership. One approach that is attracting increased attention within the scholarly community is the notion of cross-cultural perspectives, as presented by Walker in Chapter 9.

As tempting as it might be to use the theory and research findings presented in this book as a basis for developing a prescriptive guide to ethical or value-added leadership, this is not possible. Attempting to catalogue the correct values which school administrators ought to adopt without reference to context is not possible. The processes of valuation in school leadership situations are much too context-bound to permit this quick fix. Furthermore, although something is known about the problems currently confronting schools, nobody can predict with any degree of certainty the nature of future school leadership beyond the certainty that there will be more problems to solve and new dilemmas to confront. As a result, it is not enough for school leaders to merely emulate the values of other principals viewed as experts. Leaders of future schools must become both reflective practitioners and life-long learners that understand the importance of the intellectual aspects of leadership, and authentic in their leadership practices in the sense that many scholars have advocated for some time. The first step towards achieving this state is, predictably enough, to engage in personal reflection - familiar advice to anyone who has kept up with the leadership literature. However, the adoption of a values perspective on school leadership can transform this sometimes vague advice into

something specific enough for school administrators to act upon. Once a degree of improved self-knowledge has been achieved through personal reflection, administrators must then take the next step towards authentic leadership. That step is to strive to develop sensitivity to the values orientations of others in order to give meaning to the actions of the students, teachers, parents and community members with which they interact. The payoff to this authentic form of leadership occurs when understanding the value orientations of others, and the political culture of schools, provide leaders with information on how they might best influence the practices of others towards the achievement of broadly justifiable social objectives.

The concluding chapter of this book is a classic piece by the best known and most respected philosopher of educational administration, Christopher Hodgkinson. It briefly summarizes our modernist past and examines our future prospects, using a tongue-in-cheek Post Post-modern non-structure to make the argument one last time for the adoption of an axiological perspective on educational administration. This is the essence of the message intended by this book. The traditional parameters of managerial and procedural responses to administrative situations must now be augmented with more creative approaches to leadership - a working of the edges of common administrative practice, perhaps even extending to artistry. The traditional notion of administrative knowledge based on the experience of many instances is superceded by a superior class of knowledge based on the form, essence, or idea, underlying each instance. Such knowledge can develop only as an outcome of reflection, cognitive flexibility, and sophistication - which leads to a key proposition introduced in chapter one: Acquiring administrative sophistication is a function of understanding the influence of personal values and collective valuation processes. It is values awareness that provides the links between theory and practice and generates praxis.