Current Trends In Educational Leadership For Student Success Plus Facilities Planning And Designing

Ann Hilliard, Bowie State University, USA
Barbara Talbert Jackson, Bowie State University, USA

ABSTRACT

Many school leaders today are experiencing many challenges to ensure that their schools are successful. Since the passage of No Child Left Behind Act, school leaders have been faced with making sure that all students, regardless of language and/or background, are successful on the state assessment test. If students do not make AYP Annual Yearly Progress based on set standards, the school leader is viewed as not being effective. The school leader/administrator is at the front-line for their school's progress on a daily basis and just to name a few items, school safety, appropriate curriculum and accommodations for students, high quality instruction service to all students and utilizing technology to enhance instruction and management tasks (Lashway, 2003). This research paper will discuss aspects and trends in leadership in the following areas: leadership standards, leadership development, shared leadership, support for school leadership, change in mission, facility planning and designing, classroom configuration, use of school time, early programs, special programs, school transfer, use of technology and virtual schools.

Keywords: No Child Left Behind Act; Annual Yearly Progress; School Planning and Designing

INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), school leaders along with teachers have many responsibilities in the area of accountability. Each child regardless of language or background is expected to be successful in passing the state assessment test. With this mandate along with a number of responsibilities that a school leader has to perform, being a school leader/administrator is becoming more and more challenging. School leaders must look at school safety daily and to ensure that instructional services are appropriate for all students plus give input for facility planning and designing. This research paper will focus on the following trends in school leadership, planning and designing: standards/certification for school leaders, instruction/shared leadership, appropriate professional development, ways to support school leaders, change in mission, planning facilities, program for early childhood, school and class size, school enrollment, time in school, mainstreaming more students, adjusting grade span, using less paper, technology for instruction and management, and virtual school opportunities.

School leaders must have met appropriate certification for the job and practice those standards set by Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). All of the standards are put in place to assist in measuring the educational success of all students. In summary, the school leader/administrator must maintain standards and focus on creating a nurturing vision, maintaining a growth oriented school environment, effective instruction and management, positive collaboration with family members and the broader community (ISLLC, 1996)

STANDARDS FOR LEADERS

In order to secure a job today as a leader at the elementary and secondary school level, it is required to meet state certification. For over a decade, individuals seeking positions as an assistant or principal must meet standards

set by Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) which has guided most states in the U.S.A. since 1996. The standards direct the school administrator to clearly state how the school administrator will promote the success of all students regardless of language or background. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) wants school administrators since No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to have met certification as administrators before assuming a leadership position. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium is aligned with standards, also set by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).   The No Child Left Behind Act is requiring that all administrators center their force for effective leadership toward the achievement of students.   In essence, how well students perform is a measure of the leader's success or effectiveness. If students are not successful as measured by various assessment instruments including state tests, the school leader or administrator is considered being ineffective and frequently is let go from the position as school administrator.

There is a push for all administrators with expert leadership to seek advanced certification in leadership and acquire national certification as an administrator. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and a number of other educational organizations are moving forward collectively to develop national certification for school administrators/leaders in the near future. Again, this effort is being moved forward to ensure that there is a stronger pool of much more effective leaders serving as assistant principals and principals in schools across the U.S.A. (Archer, 2002).

INSTRUCTIONAL/SHARED LEADERSHIP

Because of the emphasis to ensure that all students are successful in schools today, all school administrators/leaders are expected to be strong instructional leaders. School leaders and administrators need to know what effective instruction look like before and when a classroom visit takes place. Schools are being asked daily, if the school is meeting the needs of all students. Therefore, the school leader and administrator must be a participating member of knowing what determines effective instruction. Using data driven decision-making, school leaders today are able to use technology as a support tool to improve observations and give meaningful feedback to the instructional faculty member. Teaching and learning should be influenced by data collected and such data could be used for conducting relevant professional faculty development activities for faculty to improve the quality and type of instructional services needed for meeting the individual needs of students. The school leader/administrator and support team members are expected to model effective instruction to the instructional faculty. School leaders/administrators need to stay current with the latest trends, best practices based on research to ensure that the instructional faculty members are at their best in teaching and learning so that students are successful learners. Some school leaders have resource faculty members to help with ensuring that their peers are successful in instructional delivery services. The resource faculty may meet twice a week with teachers to discuss student success and what students are in need of in the area of improvement. The resource faculty members may observe peer faculty members and offer or suggest ways to increase the quality of instruction for students who need to improve their academic performance. The resource faculty member is an invaluable resource for the school. The resource faculty members meet with the school leader/administrator twice or once a month to discuss the progress of the instructional faculty member(s) within their given department. The school leader/administrator and the support team is part of the leadership system in most schools today. Leadership is no longer defined as a "lone star" master of modeling instruction for student improvement, but a host of individuals with instructional expertise in the distribution of leadership for school improvement.

LEADERSHIP DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

It is very difficult for one or two individuals in a school to perform all needed tasks. Therefore, the many aspects of school improvement are a shared experience. For the past decade, many school leaders/administrators are using the distribution leadership model.   This model helps the key leaders/administrators of schools to encourage other faculty and staff to share and coordinate activities at the school level that may have been in past years coordinated by the school leader/administrator solely. For example: some faculty members may be responsible for coordinating professional development activities, school leadership team meetings and the testing program. Some of the coordination of activities may be rotated among various department members each quarter or semester during the academic year. In some schools the distribution of leadership is part of the school's culture. The distribution of

leadership is helping to prepare some of the instructional faculty members to become future assistant principals or to gain access to some other positions in the school system. School leaders/administrators have a responsible to guide the instructional program and with faculty support and this could easily create a buy in to the importance of reaching high quality instructional services for all students. The distributed leadership model helps to increase the skills, knowledge and expectations of the school. The distribution leadership model helps to build trust and positive relationships among faculty, school, students, leaders/administrators and staff. This model also helps to develop future school leaders (Elmore, 2002).

DEVELOPING SCHOOL LEADERS

Developing school leaders is a practical experience and ongoing process. For the past ten years, there has been a strong effort that emerging school leaders gain formal training with hands on experiences in school settings/field study, some classroom theoretical exposure, and relevant professional development in order to get ready to take on a role of leadership in schools. School systems around world and the U.S.A. want leaders/administrators to come to the table of leadership in schools well prepared to be effective instructional and managerial leaders and that these leaders are technological savvy in understanding the value of data and how to collect and use data in their school improvement plan for school effectiveness. The school leader/administrator should continue to participate in new and improved learning experiences. As school leaders/administrators ask faculty/teacher to rethink their practices, the school leaders/administrators should reflect on their own leadership practices too.

There has been an increase in leadership mentoring programs. Successful leaders have been asked in many school districts to assist or mentor the relatively new leaders/administrators. By serving as a mentor it helps the school leader/administrator too, to reflect on one's own practices (Crow, 2000).

WAYS TO SUPPORT SCHOOL LEADERS

The support of school leaders/administrators should be an ongoing practice according to The State Action for Educational Leadership (SAELP) to ensure higher quality leaders are in our schools. These are some of the ways to support school leaders/administrators as follows:

- Adhering to standards, articulating the direction and stating what expectations and priorities are
- Seeking a well qualified group of leaders/administrators who are ready to take on leadership positions
- Providing relevant training for school leaders/administrators through appropriate professional Development
- Ensuring that all school leaders/administrators are qualified for the position by having certification license at the state level and passing the School Leaders Licensure Assessment based on (ISLLC) standards and a renewal process generally every ten years
- Attracting and retaining school leaders/administrators by making employment benefit packets Impressive/inviting
- Giving school leaders/administrators more autonomy to manage their schools in order to meet state expectations

The notion of supporting school leaders/administrators is essential in order to provide greater improvement in student learning across the curriculum (SAELP, 2001)

CHANGE IN MISSION

Today, school leaders/administrators must demonstrate more flexibility than ever before during their working career. It may be necessary to modify the curriculum in order to meet the needs, for example, of special education students and others. Students are expected to pass state tests or national tests. Students who are performing well may be asked to take on more courses in math and science or foreign languages instead of non-core course electives.

The mission of the school or school system setup or designed based on the projected needs in society today may need to change. Because of the limitation of funding in many school districts today, some school buildings may have classrooms for major subjects that are offered and non-core subjects may be offered in another building. The use of technology in some schools is expanding so more schools are building more multipurpose rooms, holistic learning labs and exploratory centers (Butin, 2002). Many schools today are also using rooms or space for community activities or events after regular school hours. Some schools are affording adult parents to use the technology labs during the evening to upgrade parents' computer skills. During the day adults may come to see the nurse for their blood pressure to be checked. Some senior citizens may have lunch in the student cafeteria and may come to the school site to participate in health fitness activities. The school's mission may change or expand when its classrooms and gyms are used in a double duty capacity.

The overall mission stays the same in schools, but modification of the mission could occur or change when the school extends its services and facilities to the larger community. When the mission is written, it should include the added features that is relevant to the entire school community that may accommodate not only students, but their parents and others from the community (Sullivan, 2002; Binger, 2003)

FACILITY PLANNING AND DESIGNING

Planning and designing for school facilities have become a normal involvement for school leaders/administrators. Today, schools are operating in a broader manner because schools' of choice are on the increase. Schools of choice may be increasing their enrollment numbers and school leaders/administrators must remain knowledgeable about such possibilities. Some parents may not be so happy about their local public schools today and are seeking other school choices for their children. The voucher and tax credits give parents some privileges to have parents to look at other alternative educational settings for their children. Some communities are looking at unboundary possibilities for parents to have a choice of charter or magnet school for their children (Shostake, 2004).

Many school planners do not know how many students will show up at their school.   Schools are also using various themes as a focus and parents are finding this information worth reviewing. School facilities may require different infrastructure because of the curriculum offerings at the school, so planning and designing is key to having appropriate space and equipment in the school. When capital improvement funds are available for a new school or remodeling the school, the school leaders/administrators may be asked to give their thoughts about facility planning and designing (Carpenter, 2005)

CLASSROOM CONFIGURATION

More trends today are being imploded in schools for the variety of classroom sizes and configuration to accommodate different learning styles and needs of students. Some schools are focused on having the entire school devoted to specialized learning style or physical needs for the majority of the students. One size does not always accommodate the students appropriately; therefore, school may have special classroom configurations (Tileston, 2000).

Classrooms may be designed differently if large numbers of students are visually challenged. This type of classroom may need more technology media to assist students. There must be more flexibility and classroom adaptation to the needs of the students.

USE OF SCHOOL TIME

In some school districts, students are required to spend extended time at school due to improving their academic performance. Students who are at risk of not making the grade may be required to participate in reading or math classes after regular school hours. Some students are participating in before and after plus weekend programs too, to boost their academic performance. School buildings are also open today frequently for community programs and activities. The extended use of schools causes the school district to use more energy and maintenance which needs to be thought through during the planning and designing of the building.

EARLY PROGRAMS

For the past decade, more early childhood programs are operating for very young children who are 3 to 4 years old and some few programs are growing for children who are babies and toddlers who are being housed at regular school buildings (Wilen, 2003). In order for children to be prepared to take tests early, children are starting school sooner and engaging in meaningful instructional program activities.

Many states are looking at offering early pre-school programs as interventions to ensure that students have a greater opportunity of being successful academically, socially and culturally. Some states are looking at offering three and four year old children early intervention programs so that children will have better literacy skills. Therefore, schools being built today need to have additional space for the pre-school population. There should be enough space and storage available for age appropriate activities for the preschool children (Pascopella, 2004).

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Students or children with disabilities are required to have the opportunity to be taught along with non-disable children based on the Individuals Disabilities Education Act of 1997. Again, the layout of the school should be appropriately accommodating for the special population of students. When the layout of the school is more accommodating to the special needs students, there is less travel time from classroom to the next.

There are about twelve students out of one hundred averagely who need special services in a typical school environment today. Therefore, schools should have special services so that special needs students could be given the opportunity to develop in a mature manner for their age academically, socially, emotionally and physically in a positive manner (Adams, 2006).

The designers for mainstreaming students in an appropriate environment should keep in mind that there should be seamless interface between special needs students and the standard classroom of students in the same building. Special needs students should be in the least restrictive environment. The classroom environment should be designed so that students and teachers are comfortable so that appropriate instructional services can be delivered to students appropriately across the curriculum.

SCHOOL TRANSFER

When students transfer today to different schools because of a new residence or other reasons may have a negative effect on the students' mastery of skills in a new environment because of the adjustment to a new setting (Renchler, 2000). Some school districts across the U.S.A. are seeking to reduce school changes by offering educational programs under one roof k-12 grade. This concept is a part of the neighborhood educational center where students attend the same school and interact with some of the same teachers until graduation. These relationships among students and teachers may cause the students to feel more comfortable in the school environment.

The more common configuration of grades in some school districts may be grade k-5 or k-6, but some schools will have a split grade as primary, intermediate and then high school. A few districts have stand alone six and ninth grade centers for students.

Grade changing can affect the layout and location of schools in some specific geographical location. School districts need to take time to look at short term plus long term configuration plans for their schools (McEntire, 2005).

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology is here to stay and schools need to continue to find ways to enhance the capacity of technology for instruction and management purposes. Using paper learning materials are becoming less in demand especially in high schools. Most activities in many high schools today are technologically-driven. Many reference magazines,

journals and some books are online for student review. Students can access information for most classes online (Beare, 2001). Students today are able to access most needed information from their own home computer. Assignments can be submitted and graded online. Students are given an access code from the educational institution and students can access, give input or download information (Simon, 2001).

Living a digital ready age, students are connecting with the technology highway globally. Educational institutions must have adequate infrastructure to accommodate the many technology devices to aid the instructional and learning process. The e-learning opportunities are expanding very fast and teachers and students must be ready to embrace the new and improved technology.

With the expansion of technology, schools systems need to establish methods to control costs. It is proposed that one way to control or decrease costs is to offer more virtual or e-schooling for schools especially for upper secondary grades and post secondary education (Berge & Clark, 2005). Students who wish to do advance work or students who need interventions may be able to take classes by use of the internet or for some closed circuit television at school or in the library. Another way to control costs may include the use of networks and software to deliver general education within the school (Snyder, 2004). Instead of six teachers delivering instruction, perhaps only three teachers would be needed for the task.

SUMMARY

The trends in school leadership and the use of technology in planning and designing may a need to be revisited by school leaders/administrators today. As we think of educational practices in schools, the decision makers and participants must think of designing school facilities based on the needs of students and perhaps the community, but also keeping down cost as much as possible. School leaders/administrators must be aware of how the demographics and composition of communities may be changing and new and improved ways of delivering instruction to students in the most effective manner must be a strong consideration. School leaders/administrators, planners and designers must be aware of what would taxpayers be willing to support and how can educational services be delivered in a more efficient manner to meet the needs of all types of students regarding of background or language for the 21st century.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Dr. Ann Toler Hilliard teaches in the Department of Educational Studies and Leadership at Bowie State University, U.S.A. The researcher coordinates activities that provide professional experiences for those individuals who are seeking the opportunity to serve as a school administrator. She has held leadership positions as a principal, college program director, academic achievement specialist in Maryland and in the District of Columbia. Her experiences as a leader in the area of administration extend from elementary school through graduate school.

Dr. Hilliard served as director and principal investigator for Bowie's Scholars program in the University College of Excellence. Other positions held included being the assistant to the vice-president for academic affairs and deputy director for the Science Engineering and Mathematics program for a Model Institution of Excellence. Her professional experiences extend to the U.S. Bureau of the Census by analyzing national population and economic status data and served as a consultant for Maryland, U.S. Virgin Islands and Seoul, Korea schools, and post-doctorate program at Harvard University.

Dr. Hilliard has presented at local, national and international conferences on topics related to leadership, instruction, curriculum development, formative assessment and best practices for recruitment and sustaining staff. The researcher has published a number of articles in national and international journals.

Education: Ed.D., George Washington University, Consulting Certificate, Harvard University, Advanced Professional Certificate, Maryland State Department of Education, M.S., Johns Hopkins University, M.A.T., Trinity University, B.S., Elizabeth City State University

Memberships: Educational Consultants Institute, Clute Institute for Academic Research, American Association of

University Women, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Institute for Academic and Social Development Board, Phi Delta Kappa, National Staff Development Council

Barbara Talbert Jackson, Ph.D. is a graduate of the District of Columbia teachers college, Washington, DC; Antioch University Yellow Springs, Ohio; and Union Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio. She has had more than 30 years experience in education, and has worked in both the public and private sectors. Her employment history includes: classroom teacher, instructional supervisor, director of education, principal, regional superintendent, and executive assistant to the superintendent. For the past 10 years, Dr. Jackson has served the Bowie State University community as an assistant professor and department chair.

Major post-doctoral experiences cited are: I.B.M. education executives program; superintendents academy, Ohio State University; Harvard University's Legal Issues Institute; and Oxford University's round table.

Honors and awards include: Ford Foundation fellow, institute for the gifted and talented research award, ASCD southeast Asia presidential study tour fellowship, DC board of education exemplary service award, District Of Columbia mayoral proclamation, and the District Of Columbia hall of fame education award.

Dr. Jackson has contributed to several publications. Among them are: Instructor Magazine, ASCD's Educational Leadership Journal, United States Department of Education Developmental Therapy Newsletter, Bowie State University Newsletter the Oxford University's forum on public policy, and a correlation study on academically talented black students in the primary grades.

Professional memberships include: Kappa Delta Phi, Phi Delta Kappa, American Educational Research Association, National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, The Horace Mann League, and The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, where she served as its international president.

Her motto is: "the secret to success is hard work and determination."

REFERENCES

1. Adams, C. 2006, June. The new realities: Special need Scholastic Administrator, 5 (8), 41-46.
2. Archer, Jeff. "Leadership Groups Hope to Launch Advanced Certification." *Education Week* 21, 40 (June 12, 2002): 14.
3. Beare, H. 2001. *Creating the future school*. London: Routledge-Falmer Press.
4. Berge, Z., & Clark, T. 2005. *Virtual schools. Planning for Success*. New York: Teacher College Press.
5. Bingler, S., Quinn, L., 7 Sullivan, K. 2003. Schools as centers of community: A citizen's guide for planning and design. Washington, D. C.: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities. http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/scc_publication.pdf
6. Butin, D. 2000. Classrooms. Washington, D. C.: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities. http://edfacilities.org/pubs/classrooms,pdf
7. Carpenter, B. 2005, May. Charter schools: Thirteen years and still growing. The Hartland Institute http://www.heartland.org/article.cfm?artld=16886
8. Crow, Gary M., and Joseph L. Mathews. *Finding One's Way: How Mentoring Can Lead to Dynamic Leadership*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, 1998. 202 pages. ED 414 263.
9. Elmore, Richard. Building a New Structure for School Leadership. Washington, D. C.: The Albert Shanker Institute, 2000.
10. Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium. Standards for School Leaders. Washington, D. C.: 1996
11. Lashway, Larry. Trends in School Leadership. *ERIC Digest*. 2004.
12. McEntire, N. 2002, updated 2005. Grade configurations in k-12 schools. Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting. http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/gradeconfig.html
13. Pascopelia, A. 2004, August. Universal early education point/counterpoint: Is early childhood Education outright dangerous or the pivotal path to educational glory? Two experts Debate. District Administration, 40(8), 28-31.

14.   Renchler, R. 2000. Grade sopan. *ERIC Research Roundup*, 16(3).

15.   Shostak, A. 2004, November-December. High Schools for futurism: Nurturing the next Generation. *The Futurist*, 23-27.

16.   Simon, E. 2001. Electronic textbooks: A pilot study of student e-reading habits. Institute for Cyber-Information.

17.   Snyder, D. 2004, January. A look at the future: Is technology the answer to education's long Term staffing problems: *American School Board Journal*. http://.asbj.com/2004/01/0104technologyfocus.html

18.   State Action for Educational Leadership Project. State Policy and Practice Compendium. 2001. 23 pages. http://www.ccsso.org/SLELP/compendium.html

19.   Sullivan, K. 2002, October.   Catching the age wave: Building schools with senior citizen in Mind. Washington, D. C.: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities. http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/agewave.pdf

20.   Tileston, D. 2000.*Ten best teaching practices: How brain research, learning styles, and standards Define teaching competencies*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

21.   Wilen, J. 2003. Ready for school: the case for including babies and toddlers as we expand Preschool opportunities. Chicago, Illinois: Ounce of Prevention Fund.