Leading with values in troubled times

Lessons learned
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Curriculum in Context

Leading with values in troubled times:
Lessons learned

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The editorial committee seeks articles that provide perspectives, research and practical information about the issues of and ways to improve learning and teaching in Washington State.

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Our two years as editors of *Curriculum in Context* have flown by; it’s hard to believe that this is our last journal before passing the editor reins over to Dr. David Denton of Seattle Pacific University and Dr. Mike Dunn of Northeast Washington ESD 101. Mike and David will also be ably assisted by Deb Ramsay, of Northeast Washington ESD 101. Special thanks go out to Dr. Joan Kingrey from Washington State University who has warmly mentored the three of us, Dr. Jim Howard, Dr. Becky Cooke, and Dr. Gene Sementi, through the past two years. Thank you also to Kelly Lagrutta, also from Washington State University. Kelly has done an exemplary job of constructing the journal for the past several years with a level of professionalism that we have all aspired to. Kelly’s contributions were absolutely mission critical.

Our tenure as editors saw the first attempt at an on-line journal, and attempt that was well received and would prove to be a harbinger of things to come. Ongoing funding, as has been the case throughout the state and nation the past few years, has been a concern for Washington State Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. Our Executive Director, Kathy Clayton, and the WSACSD board have done an excellent job of keeping the organization fiscally solvent in these tough times. They have done so by aggressively pursuing revenue streams and scrutinizing expenditures. Through the financial diligence of the board it became apparent that due to escalating printing costs it was time to permanently transition to an on-line journal. The outgoing editors have a great deal of faith that the new editors will build on a successful first offering to create a strong tradition; thanks to the expertise of Deb Ramsay this is a certainty.

The theme for the Fall 2011 *Curriculum in Context* is “Leading with Values in Troubled Times; Lessons Learned”. Initially the theme spoke to our common dilemma of providing a world-class education to each and every Washington student, regardless of shrinking funding and public doubt reported in the media. This is certainly a noble goal that every educator in the state is applying the best of themselves towards; it is a goal that is undeniably worthy of our best effort. For the outgoing editors “Troubled Times” took on a new, deeper, and far more personal meaning when Co-Editor Dr. Jim Howard was diagnosed with a very aggressive and life threatening version of Leukemia. Troubled Times quickly morphed from “doing more with less” to “fighting for your life”. Jim’s career in education continues to span every level of education throughout the state; he has been a public school teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent, and professor. He has been an unparalleled mentor to a seemingly unprecedented number of students; be they kindergarten students or graduate students. As this journal goes public it appears, as we have all hoped, prayed, and expected, that Jim will win this fight and continue to touch the souls of everyone who has had and will have the privilege of working with him.

Theodore Roosevelt once said “Far and away the prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work that is worth doing.” In these tough times it is important to remember that we as educators have the opportunity to leave our fingerprints on the souls of the children we work with. It is not adversity that we face so much as it is an opportunity and obligation to touch the future.
As a fellow educator, I anxiously await the arrival of students for the start of another school year. Regardless of the roles we serve in this endeavor, many opportunities await us individually and collectively. It is imperative that we are willing to open our eyes fully to see beyond imminent challenges and look to the unique opportunities ahead. More importantly than seeing these opportunities, we must open our hearts and act upon them with courage, heart, and strategic execution. “Leading with Values in Troubled Times” is a fitting theme for this journal and one that strikes emotion in all facets of our work. In a time where education continues to come under attack as failing, we must do more than survive – our students are worthy of such.

Budget cuts coupled with higher expectations will certainly be an enormous challenge to overcome. However, one of our greatest challenges ahead is the lack of belief society has in our education systems as a whole. And while we ponder this thought, one might think, what can one educator, one school, one district or one organization like Washington State ASCD really do to overcome the media sensationalism of what we know to be the right work?

As we embark on this upcoming school year, it is time to not simply acquire or deliver the skills and knowledge necessary to best serve the students in our state, but build purpose, relationships and persistence to move the hearts of those with whom we work. Starbucks did not move society to buy a four-dollar cup of coffee based on logic and assurance of quality. They convinced people that they needed it; they connected with the consumer by offering something special that no one else had. Furthermore, they did not sit back and let skeptics control the conversation, but instead, brought forth their best product, and inundated the voice in the market and built belief that this is what was needed as part of our life. Education is not a luxury item like coffee – but a necessity. And if an organization can mobilize a community as a whole around a four-dollar cup of coffee, we certainly should do the same with societies’ greatest asset – the future of our children. As educators, we must be compelling and willing to stay the course in this noble endeavor and bring forth our best… for the students. In these troubled times, we must not withdraw but stand tall with pride and commitment. Be willing to tap into the emotional side of our work and tell our story connecting our communities and constituencies in a way that they not only know the story, but they own it with commitment and support. Putting ourselves in this vulnerable conversation can be risky. We can easily be compelled to make hasty, quick fix changes as we face the divergence of thought; however we must courageously stay the course with what we know to be the right work.

Serving as a board member for Washington State ASCD the last 4 years, I have seen our organization act with courage, forge relationships and build upon success. In tough economic times when our organization faced some tough fiscal challenges, we were first inclined to pull back professional development in order to remain solvent and simply weather the storm. Instead, we embraced the opportunity, worked to replicate success elsewhere and refined our approach. We didn’t start over even when every indication told us we probably should. We had to become clear about our organizational values, rethink how we do business and keep a laser focus on the right work. Building vision and structure for a diverse, representative board, we have brought focused professional development across the various regions of our state. And while some may be looking for that quick fix, we have kept true to best practices over and over working in support of the Whole Child. Today, we are not only fiscally solvent which allows us to stay true to this endeavor, but in these tough times we have grown in membership and have expanded our partnerships in the state with higher education, OSPI, the ESD’s, several school districts, and local businesses. We have extended our boundaries as an organization to not only serve our practicing educators, but have built connections with universities to expand student chapters in pre-service programs. I am proud to serve on a board that is courageous and one that continues to act in a forward thinking manner for the students in our state. The key to our continued growth has not been merely providing quality professional development – that is certainly important. What has been pivotal are the continued relationships we have developed beyond our board and organization as a whole. We have connected with regions and other entities and through these connections have been able to reach a more diverse audience and broaden our focus to ensure practice that emulates a safe, healthy, engaged, supported and challenged approach for the education of the children in our state.

What is your story of success? As parents, community and students come down the halls of your school, make it a priority to connect. That connection breeds commitment and belief and ultimately allows us to stay the course with the work we know to be proven and true. I hope to see many of you at our annual conference in October; “Hope for Tomorrow, Change for Today”. We can have the greatest hopes for the future success of our students, but it is right now that we must see and act upon the many great opportunities that will aspire us to that very hope we have in our hearts. Have a great start of your school year and continue the fine work we provide to the students in our state.

Tim Nootenboom is President of WSASCD, and Executive Director for Learning and Teaching, Central Valley School District, Spokane Valley.
Public education in the United States is a complex enterprise serving an ever-evolving, increasingly diverse community of students. It is the universal differential bound to hopes for future economic prosperity and fulfilling lives. Commitment to social justice demands that we dedicate ourselves to promoting the success of all our students so that race and class cease to be predictors of achievement. I believe passionately that gaps in student achievement can be eliminated, but only when the gaps between what we know as professional educators, elected officials and concerned community members, and what we do, are reduced to zero.

Research has identified proven practices for the implementation of effective instructional strategies, the development and support of those critically important collaborative partnerships among educators working together to meet diverse student learning needs and the building of effective partnerships with families, businesses and the community. These practices, employed at the local level, can drive the achievement of meeting rigorous student achievement goals. Additionally, studies have clearly described effective funding models for quality public education systems as well as the need for a transparent, fair accountability system. Success in our larger endeavors rests on courageous leadership at all levels, a common will, ethical behavior and unrelenting advocacy.

Commitment to Core Values

Rising expectations, diminishing resources and a plethora of issues and challenges confront today’s educational leaders. Our moral compasses must be intact and in use on a daily basis in order to lead through these troubled, turbulent times. Ethical leadership based on personal integrity is essential and begins with a recognition of and commitment to individual core values. Knowing your core values or beliefs and having the courage to live them is the foundation of success as an educational leader. Core values are those most important aspects of who we are and how we treat others. In workplace leadership, our core beliefs about people and how we treat them clearly impact how we manage day-to-day. Our behaviors must align with our internal values and beliefs for the purpose of advancing student achievement.

Integrity is a core value and requires that one be reliable, honest, and honorable. Leaders with integrity are sincere; their actions match their words. They are consistent; they can be trusted in their conviction and focus. They have substance and character; there are no false appearances. They perform all tasks to the maximum extent of their ability and have no investment in who gets the credit. Integrity is built, one action at a time; one must act with integrity consciously so that such action becomes a habit – then a lifestyle. It is an “essential” to effective leadership but it is written in pencil and easily erased. A single breach of integrity can portend permanent, irreversible consequences to an organization. I also believe operating with integrity creates a sense of empowerment and safety-- the freedom to be innovative, creative, open and honest-- in order to improve systems and make a difference for students. I strive to build this sense of safety and trust so that all can contribute to their fullest capacity in achieving our shared purpose and commonly held moral imperative.

I first formally identified my beliefs as an educator during a leadership training class, and I have remained conscious of them and how they have guided my behavior. They have evolved over time and have strengthened. I endeavor to be transparent in this regard; I included them as part of my application papers to become a superintendent and they are currently posted on the Renton School District web site. I have had applicants to the district comment on their interest in joining the Renton family based on their personal connections to these beliefs, and I have referred to them in many challenging situations with staff, students, parents/community members and elected officials. They guide my daily work.

PERSONAL BELIEF STATEMENTS

1. I believe that all students can learn and deserve our time, energy and effort to help them reach their full potential and realize their dreams.
2. I believe educators have great moral, ethical and legal obligations to create, maintain and sustain great schools.
3. I believe in accountability, all of which begins with self.
4. I believe that personal and ethical skills essential for success include integrity, honesty, strong moral character and the courage to confront challenging issues.
5. I believe the success of students must be the fundamental value of all decision-making and actions.

6. I believe a school district should be a place to help students become lifelong, self-directed learners; critical thinkers; and caring people.

7. I believe quality education results when collaborative efforts between students, parents, administrators, teachers, staff and community focus on personalized educational experiences for every student.

8. I believe all students have the right to a safe and supportive environment with established policies that implement effective principles of governance, discipline and student management.

9. I believe interpersonal relationships significantly influence organizational goals and require caring, sensitivity, empathy, motivational skills and consistent, effective communication.

10. I believe belief statements must be communicated clearly and frequently, and must be supported in action.

Leaders’ Actions and the Effect on the Organization

With a firm grounding in ethical behavior, effective leaders have the foundation to judge and act prudently. They communicate deserved praise of great work being done by passionate, caring, skilled educators. In addition, they gather trustworthy, talented, ethical advisors to work with them. Wise leaders collaborate to identify and incorporate best practices, solve problems, and address each issue facing their organizations while minimizing the risk of human error by building effective support and accountability systems. They reason and act with organizational purposes firmly in mind, providing focus and consistency, and reinforcing support for their actions.

People who see their leaders as ethical and having a strong commitment to “doing the right thing” are assured that they work in an environment of stability and reason. They know that their leader’s integrity will not be shaken when tough decisions need to be made. They also know their leaders will treat people fairly and will willingly share information so that all have the needed context to understand decisions made and processes put in place—and they know that there will be frequent opportunities to provide input and feedback.

Leaders regularly face challenges and opportunities in demonstrating transparency. They are put to the test often by such situations as statistical evidence that does not reflect well on student achievement, the financial status of the organization, or general management. A plan of action to thwart disaster must be implemented, identifying and acknowledging “lessons learned” and steps to prevent repeated errors. Through open, honest, truthful and factual communication, leaders can ensure the health and sustainability of the organization. Facing such challenges as disappointing achievement results, difficult budget decisions or evidence of unprofessional practice requires the courage to respond with ethical leadership. Framing the outcomes to these situations as opportunities as well as challenges; seeking expertise in developing solutions; and ensuring transparent, honest communication when errors are discovered—these actions are the foundation for ethical response and they build confidence in the organizational leadership.

The Power of Organizational Ethics

We are all aware of the importance of state assessment results. They are an important indicator of progress, but unfortunately, they are also used inappropriately to label students, schools and districts based on limited data points and faulty contextual assumptions. Results often contribute to inaccurate public perception at a local, state and federal level regarding the quality of education offered. As leaders, we must continually communicate the need for appropriate use of assessments to drive instruction, teacher evaluations, improve our practice and inform policy regarding a fair accountability system—this is the ethical position to take. Large scale assessments have their place in accountability and are an important measure of progress, but they are only one measure and must be used in conjunction with other measures to make important decisions about our work.

Renton’s journey toward developing a well defined belief system to guide decisions for the organization came as a response to facing disappointing state assessment results and then assessing the state of the district and the progress of its students more broadly. Specifically, the examination of data inspired a powerful sense of urgency about the inequity achievement gaps represent, and a keen focus on improving learning for all students. Over 300 stakeholders (School Board Directors; Renton Mayor and City Council members; leaders in civic organizations (i.e., Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions’ Club); staff, students, and parents from throughout the district; staff from the state office and state professional organizations for administrators and principals; and local business partners) participated in a “data carousel” process to review demographic and contextual data, as well as results of perceptual surveys from staff, students and parents, and academic achievement data including state assessment results, local benchmark assessment results, and classroom grade point average (GPA) information. Data was also provided regarding graduation rates, drop-out rates, number of students in Advanced Placement classes, behavior referrals, suspensions and expulsions. Adherence to a common protocol as the data was examined provided a safe, non-judgmental approach to discussion of “the facts.” The intentional focus on analyzing and responding to data produced the urgency for change because the process generated an undeniable “current reality” regarding the degree to which we were—and were not—meeting student learning needs.

The data presented caused participants to reexamine their belief systems. Under and over representation of groups in particular programs; stark differences in behavior referrals, suspensions, and expulsions among groups of students; and detailed aggregation and disaggregation of student achievement data made existing inequities abundantly clear to all stakeholders. Additionally, perceptual results on the surveyed belief of staff, students and parents regarding teachers, schools and the district provided critical information guiding the district’s work and further confirmed the profound need to raise achievement for all students and close the identified achievement and opportunity gaps. This process has provided an open, honest forum to identify the current reality, strategize solutions, and develop partnerships in order to make progress toward common goals. Analyses of these indicators are now used regularly to determine progress and to drive instructional changes, changes in support to teachers, and all district level decisions.

As a result of this data study process, the community articulated a belief system based on a common commitment to the goals we identified as indicators of student success, including equity and access goals for quality education for all students. These beliefs powerfully communicate the ethics that Renton values, and the district lives by:
1. **In order to achieve our goals, we believe it is critical** to deepen the commitment to eradicate the achievement gap in the Renton School District by implementing a plan that permeates the entire organization and holds cultural proficiency as a core value reflected consistently in expectations, actions and practice.

2. **In order to achieve our goals, we believe it is critical** to promote a culture and belief in the potential of all students – and a culture that has zero tolerance for using excuses to explain low student achievement and learning.

3. **In order to achieve our goals, we believe it is critical** to clarify and communicate roles and responsibilities for support, implementation, and accountability at the school, district, and board levels. Expect and enable the superintendent, central office administrators and principals to be instructional leaders. Create a comprehensive structure for support and accountability for all staff.

4. **In order to achieve our goals, we believe it is critical** to promote and sustain the Professional Learning Community structure and process as a means of focusing on learning and teaching and building capacity through collaboration.

5. **In order to achieve our goals, we believe it is critical** to use data as a tool to promote improvement in all aspects of district operations, schools and classrooms. Establish student behavior and academic performance targets based on high expectations for each student in the district.

6. **In order to achieve our goals, we believe it is critical** to provide guidance and knowledge for all students of the opportunities for work after high school graduation and the opportunities for post secondary training and education.

7. **In order to achieve our goals, we believe it is critical** to ensure that all students are prepared for work and post-secondary education and training.

The community data carousel process resulted in a common understanding that breakthrough performance was necessary, that we could no longer be satisfied with small, incremental gains in student achievement. We understood that we needed:

- a changed belief system related to the ability of all students to succeed
- curriculum aligned to current state standards
- targeted professional development of staff
- implementation plans to improve instructional strategies
- better assessment tools
- a more transparent accountability system
- increased parent support and involvement

It became clear that we needed to eliminate excuses-- acknowledge and remove barriers--and ensure that students had access to multiple and varied opportunities to acquire skills.

Three critical actions were undertaken to address these needs based on the data analysis and the beliefs identified:

1. Establishment of a clear vision of what we want to achieve. Our vision is worthy, provides hope, and validates the culture of the community and the needs of our students.

2. Establishment of goals--ambitious but reachable goals--with celebrations for incremental gains along the way. We celebrate Renton's graduation rates climbing from 74% in 2006-07, improving each succeeding year, so that for the last two years in a row a 93% graduation rate has been achieved!

3. Establishment of a relentless focus on measurable results through development of a culture of effective professional collaboration.

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**Call To Action**

The future of public education depends on leaders who act based on their values and function with integrity. Elected officials at all levels, local community leaders, school board members, superintendents, teacher and staff leaders and student leaders must model integrity in all circumstances. I encourage all those preparing for or currently in leadership roles to take the time to reflect on the core values that define them personally and professionally. Holding fast to your moral compass will see you safely through troubled waters and increase your positive impact on student achievement. Leaders acting with integrity will shape a future that is visionary and inclusive and enables every individual to reach his or her full potential.

Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel became the superintendent of the Renton School District in 2006 and was honored as the 2011 Washington State Superintendent of the Year and one of four finalists for the National Superintendent of the Year.

Prior to Renton, she served as the Washington State Deputy Superintendent at OSPI, an assessment director, a school principal, and a teacher for 12 years including special education, P/K-12, and instructor at West Point Military Academy.
Leaders know a moral code and a strong sense of ethics is not an option, it is an expectation that is measured each day, with each decision, and each action. A strong sense of ethics is one of the most desirable characteristics of a leader.

The challenge of change leadership is to create a “system” for continuous improvement of instruction, supervision, and instructional leadership (Wagner, 2005). This “system” has clarity of purpose, a collaborative culture, a focus on results and is based on trust and ethical principles. Educators want to follow somebody they believe in and trust. Ethical leaders know trust is the glue that bonds people to an organization and leads to meaningful change.

In 1970, Crosby Stills and Nash recorded the song, “Teach Your Children” in which the value of living by a moral code was highlighted. The lyric, “You who are on the road must have a code That you can live by – ” provided a powerful reminder that a strong moral compass is necessary “on the road” of life. To lead, leaders must demonstrate integrity in their daily behavior. Integrity is foundational value of a leader’s moral code. Peters (1987) asserts, “Integrity may be about little things as much or more than big ones.”

In addition to integrity as a cornerstone of a leader’s moral code, people value leaders who model personal commitment and inspire a strong sense of purpose within an organization. Green (2005) calls these traits “the elements of character.”

**Character Counts**

In leadership, character counts. Bennis and Goldsmith (2003) maintain “Leadership is character. It is not just a superficial question of style; it has to do with who we are as human beings and with the forces that have shaped us.” These authors believe “character continually evolves as we collaborate with others and acquire their trust, gain their commitment, and build their partnership to realize a shared vision” (p. xii).

Sosik (2006) notes that positive character is an essential component of good leadership. Leadership is not value-free, according to Sosik, and leaders must embody positive character traits: “Leadership is a social process that is accomplished through human relationships” (p. 102). Maxwell (1999) comments, “Your character determines who you are. Who you are determines what you see. What you see determines what you do. That’s why you can never separate a leader’s character from his actions” (p. 4).

Character is the key to leadership. It develops over time. Character is the disposition of a person, made up of beliefs, values, skills and traits. This behavior wins trust, inspires loyalty, and ensures the organization’s continued vitality. Organizations seek leaders who are ethical, who foster a sense of hope, and who exhibit optimism. This kind of confidence influences others. It generates the energy and commitment necessary to achieve results.

Everything within an organization rises or falls on leadership character. Character is more than talk, it is action. Character is a choice that leaders make to improve relationships with people. Leaders know they cannot rise above the limitations of their character. A highly effective organization is a reflection of its leader. The organization can never be something the leader is not (Pritchett, 2002).

**Maxims of Ethical Leaders**

School leaders serve as role models for the educational community. They should respond effectively to moral dilemmas in an ethical manner and demonstrate integrity. Some “maxims” gained from highly regarded ethical leaders include:

- **You are what you do** – People read your actions. They do as you do. They look to you to set the example on how you spend your time, what you reward, and how trustworthy and honest you are.

- **The means are the ends** – Ethical behavior is a process. You cannot have ethical outcomes unless you have an ethical process along the way. Every process sets up a means to an end. People want respect in the process even if they lose in the outcome.
• Consistency is important – What you demand of others you must be willing to demand of yourself. Ethical leaders strive for fairness in all they do. Working hard to do the “right" thing is essential to ethical leadership.

• Promises are the lifeblood of integrity – Your word is your bond with others. All trust is predicated on your ability to keep your promises. Others rely upon us. When we break promises we betray others in the deepest sense. Betrayal of trust hurts and lingers long after all else because it cuts so deeply into others who rely upon us and our ability to act with integrity.

• All accountability starts with personal accountability – Without personal accountability, no amount of planning and system measurement matters. When we do what we say, we are accountable.

• Effective decision-making requires deliberation - Successful outcomes require thoughtful analysis and weighing the consequences of our actions.

• Competence and trust must be developed – Leaders must deliver on outcomes to gain the support and trust of the public. Leadership is action, not position. Honesty and respect for others will gain loyalty and trust. The truth matters. You cannot build trust without the truth. If we lie or mislead, we take away other freedoms that we enjoy. We sever accountability; we destroy the credibility of the institution when we are dishonest. Respect from others requires telling the truth.

• Getting it right means listening well to others – Listening is the ultimate act of respect for another person. It demonstrates your respect for him or her. You must listen well to be a good leader.

• Humility is essential for ethical leadership – Humility is the capacity to realize that leadership is not about the leader; it is about the people and what they need. Humble leaders step back when credit is due and forward when criticism is forthcoming.

The Ethical Leadership Challenge

The challenge of effective leadership is to create a “system” for continuous improvement that has clarity of purpose, a collaborative, ethical and trusting culture and a focus on results. Bolman and Deal (2001) remarked,

The challenge for leaders is to go beyond a focus on the day-to-day management concerns and crises and to focus on the larger purpose of teaching and learning . . . The deeper and more important task is to give passionate, relentless attention to mission and purpose, continually seeking ways to offer the gift of significance to one’s constituents (p. 209).

Leaders who are up to this challenge demonstrate ethical leadership. John Quincy Adams remarked, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, and become more, you are a leader.”

Ethical leaders lead by example, modeling integrity, professionalism, pride in performance, and an unyielding commitment to high standards and quality. These leaders demonstrate a positive “do what needs to be done” attitude and expect the same from others. They accept more of the blame and take less of the credit when they are due. They exhibit a strong sense of hope and a positive outlook. Ethical leaders are highly effective in implementing necessary change.

Fullan (2001) contends, “Leaders will increase effectiveness if they continually work on the five components of leadership – if they pursue moral purpose, understand the change process, develop relationships, foster knowledge building and strive for coherence – with energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness” (p. 11). Indeed, ethical leaders create and sustain focus, empower others, provide guidance and focus on continuous improvement in their performance and practice.

Why is Ethical Leadership Important?

The most powerful way to produce desired organizational change is to impact organizational culture. Culture is created, and school leaders are the catalyst for building a culture where continuous student learning, managing change, honoring relationships, and building trust are the norm. People follow leaders they trust. Trust is the foundation for initiating change and constructing meaningful relationships. It is the glue that holds people and schools together.

Trust building is an essential characteristic of ethical school leaders. There can be no sustainable growth in student learning and organizational effectiveness unless trust is valued and modeled by school leadership. Bryk and Schneider (2003) documented the powerful benefit of trust as a component of school reform. The schools these authors studied who showed sustainable gains in student achievement all shared a common characteristic – a high degree of trust.

Leadership is an “influence process” and leaders can be anyone with the opportunity to affect others. A highly effective school has leaders at all levels and is highlighted by the characteristics of integrity, honesty, fairness, and a genuine concern for everyone in the organization. In these environments students flourish and professional learning communities are born and validated.

Effective schools have leadership that results in improved student performance. This leadership is distributive in high performing schools. These leaders know there is no relationship building without trust and respect, and neither is granted automatically by students. They must be earned through the hard and consistent work of building a culture of trust.

Educational Leadership is Hard Work

Educational leadership at all levels is hard work, but hard does not mean impossible. The public expects a great deal from their school leaders. They watch their leaders’ every action. They look to leaders to set the standard. There are no timeouts for school leaders. Personal behavior counts – in fact, it counts a great deal. How do school leaders behave when personal gain collides with the “common good?” How do they respond to ethical dilemmas?

Citizens admire school leaders they can trust and emulate. They admire leaders of character, leaders who are ethical. Ethical school leaders build strong organizations by paying attention to some of the following character fundamentals:

• Respect for self, others, the organization, and the mission of the school and its work,

• Commitment to the organization and the team,

• Commitment to serve others,

• Honesty and integrity,

• Humility and kindness, and

• Courage and persistence.
Ethical leaders watch carefully comments such as, “Well, maybe just this once . . . No one will ever know . . . It doesn’t matter how it gets done as long as it gets done . . . Everyone does it . . . No one will get hurt, unless you tell . . . What is in it for me?”

When confronted with ethical dilemmas, ethical leaders ask questions such as: “Is it legal? Is it balanced? Is it just? Is it fair? Have I taken the time to completely understand the issues and the consequences?”

Ethical leaders work hard each day to earn respect. They establish a school culture conducive to building trusting relationships and one based on character and integrity. These leaders must not just “talk the talk,” but “walk the talk.” The honor of wearing the badge of leadership requires discipline, perseverance and ethical behavior.

**Summary**

Ethical leadership is hard work. It takes a great deal of courage, integrity and character development. Ethical leaders lead from within – with temperament, intellect and integrity. Without trust, they could not lead effectively.

On the road to “Teach our children well,” ethical leaders focus on people, fostering relationships and sharing responsibility. They display courage and accept conflict while leading from the front, not from behind. These leaders “have a code that they live by” that inspires others to greater achievements. Ethical leaders know the work is hard, but the rewards are well worth the effort.

The actions of ethical leaders are reflected in the statement offered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” Marcus Aurelius may have summarized it best in his comment, “Waste no time arguing what a good man should be. Be one.”

**References**


Gene Sharratt, Ph.D., is a Clinical Associate Professor, Director, Washington State University Superintendent Certification Program.
When I was a boy growing up in northern India, my grandmother was my greatest teacher and guide. While tiny in stature, she was larger than life in terms of her leadership position in our village. Powerful men would melt in the presence of her warmth, grace and love. She never spoke a negative word about anyone, quietly setting the expectation that I should follow my heart in making good decisions. While unaware at the time, I was learning some of the core principals in leading an organization.

Like my grandmother, I still believe that goodness is everywhere and in everyone. In my office I have a prominent yellow sign that reminds me of this on a daily basis: "Because Nice Matters." This sort of heartfelt belief in humanity and kindness has helped me encourage authentic leadership among employees and guide me through some extremely challenging times in very different career fields.

True, there are certain core principals in leading an organization which are essential. First, you must have clarity in vision and purpose. In the business world they call it the "elevator speech" – be able to state your mission in the time span of an elevator ride (30 seconds or less). In my current role as a superintendent, that speech is simple: "North Thurston Public Schools puts student learning at the center of all we do and every decision we make." Everyone in your organization – not just your directors or administrators -- must be familiar with this mantra and be able to communicate it effectively to others. Without this universal understanding and commitment, your mission is just a sign on the board room wall.

Secondly, you must have the knowledge and skills to do the job and have competent people to carry out the organization’s mission. I came into education without a teaching degree, but I had the leadership skills to operate an organization effectively. I also hired people who were experts in their fields, whether it was academics, water resources or finance management. Likewise, as a leader I need to stay current on changes within the field. I can’t say enough about regular meetings with staff, informal gatherings with your community, reading educational periodicals and websites, and keeping up on local news -- even those sometimes hard-to-swallow blogs and anonymous public forums.

Finally, you must have a system in place to implement your mission of today and vision of tomorrow. To make this happen, you must work painstakingly at times, with staff and others to craft and re-craft goals, objectives, expectations, and effective management controls. Keeping focused on organizational goals will help your employees to streamline their efforts and do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. Again, repeated communication around these goals along with feedback is essential in making sure things get accomplished and not just talked about. Still, all these characteristics and actions mean little if you are missing the human elements that can help you lead from the heart and not just the head. Understanding and acting upon the aspects of human relationships is what can make or break a work culture and everything we are trying to accomplish.

While every human being is different, I believe that the principle of human relationships is an essential component of effective leadership. This leadership model has served me well in many different organizations, from banks and city government, to non-profits and public education. To help employees meet their maximum potential, we must first build trust amongst those individuals within our organization and establish our own personal and emotional well being. In this article, I will share the connected values of this principle which I believe can help us all lead more effectively during troubled times, including humility, integrity, a trusting heart and optimism, authenticity, and personal well being. Together, these elements can help bring out the best in our employees, ourselves and our organization, increasing personal capacity, productivity and competence.

Humility

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “We must become the change we want to see in this world.” Though he died before I was born, Gandhi’s philosophy, based on accountabil-
ity and humility, was at the heart of all my grandmother taught me as a child growing up in a world of castes and economic inequity. I remember going to temple with her one day and questioning why some children were not allowed to come inside. At the time, I had no concept of my culture’s definition of “untouchables.” I simply felt this was wrong and unfair. I threatened not to go inside. My grandmother could not explain it to me at the time, but I clearly remember her message that stays with me today as a leader: “I may not have good answers for your heart-felt and difficult questions, but don’t stop asking them!”

To this day, I find myself applying this important lesson of inequities in our competitive society of “race to the top” executive titles and corner offices. My value to an organization is no greater than that of a bus driver who is contributing to his or her maximum potential to do what’s best for students. Everyone has something to offer and as leaders we need to demonstrate that respect for others – even if we disagree with them or their behavior. Understanding the human condition and asking, “where is this person coming from” can help build a connection between unlikely parties and remind us that each of us has something valuable to contribute to our community. It is our behavior, reactions and attitudes that separate us. Recognize the value of “the whole person” and do your best to listen, learn and improve on the human relationship.

**Integrity**

Working with children is one of the true joys of my current position. While innocent, they have so much to teach us, including the value of authenticity. A child knows when an adult is being truthful and up front. They can spot false pretenses from a mile away and more likely than not they will call you on it. Even when we as parents or teachers try to “soften the truth,” children can see through our little white lies and shake their heads and question us for the real story.

Over the years I have learned to recognize integrity in others – and question it in myself – in order to carry out the mission of the workplace and organization. Sometimes this means asking difficult questions of others and challenging authority.

During my years in banking, my wife Rana and I decided that she would stay home to care for our two children. At the time, I was grateful she had this option but also recognized many other mothers did not, including many part-time tellers – mostly women -- in the banking industry. As part of an internal committee in my bank whose charge it was to discuss challenges facing our organization, I learned that there were plans to reduce teller hours which would impact their benefits. Immediately my moral radar went off and I found myself not only questioning “why” but “how?” While my job was in strategic and financial planning, it did not feel right that our lowest-paid, front line employees -- including many working mothers -- were being targeted. On my own, I took a risk by taking my concerns to upper level management. Thankfully, my desire to “do the right thing” paid off, but it was a reminder that often as leaders we will be challenged to stand up against the establishment in defense of doing the right thing and leading with our heart.

**Trust in Heart and Optimism**

When I reluctantly signed on as Seattle Public Schools’ Superintendent in 2003, the district was facing an ominous $35 million deficit. The community and staff were in shock and hurting. I knew that healing was needed in our community, but to get there we would have to put everything on the table in an open and honest forum of discussion based on trust and collaboration from groups that were sometime adversarial. We quickly cast this net widely to involve the unions, principals and teachers, auditors, parents and others in both the disclosure of the problem and the solution. We had to identify the reductions while maintaining operational stability, and establish practices to prevent future fiscal challenges. We came together for many meetings sharing ideas and information in an effort to solve the problem together instead of pitting our special interests against one another.

What could have been a doom and gloom scenario, ended up pulling our school district and community together. Sure it involved tough discussions around school closures, layoffs and hiring freezes, but by being forthright and honest, we managed to build optimism in our organization -- and a $26 million reserve. In building this trust and collaboration, we were able to accomplish many other great things including academic progress, overwhelming community and levy support, and a five-year contract with the Seattle Education Association. Ahead of its time, this contract gave us the flexibility to not use seniority in teacher layoffs in the underperforming schools in a certain geographic area of the district.

**Authenticity**

After leaving Seattle Public Schools, I took some time off before seeking out a new challenge. It found me in the form of Seeds of Compassion, a 5-day early learning education gathering in 2008 featuring guest speaker Dalai Lama. I will never forget sitting next to this incredible man who could teach us all a few things about being fully present in the moment. He didn’t know my position or leadership history, but knowing where I grew up, he took my hands during introductions, looked deep into my eyes and said repeatedly, “You are my neighbor… you are my neighbor.” This experience is a constant reminder to me that no matter where we come from or what our backgrounds might be, we are all connected and should treat each other with kindness and respect as much as humanly possible. When someone asks you how your day was, take the time to stop in the hall and share with them. Then ask them – sincerely – how they are doing. You will be amazed how simply being present can impact someone else’s day and actions. Be encouraging, thankful and authentic.

Life lived with awareness is the best teacher of all if we are present and open to learning. One cannot grow if our attitude is always going to be, “I’m the boss…I’m right, you’re wrong.” Being open to new ideas and different ways of thinking can truly make you a stronger leader, not a weaker one. This new learning happens to me all the time. And it is good for us to let those “teachers” know about your learning.

The best teachers are those who know you best. They are the friends and family and maybe that co-worker or two who are comfortable in pointing out your “blind spots.” For me, those people are my wife and children. Over the years, they have guided me and helped me narrow that gap between my beliefs and actions. At times, that kind of advice may be hurtful to our ego, but honest feedback is critical in becoming a stronger leader.

**Personal Well Being: Body, Mind and Spirit**

I draw strength from all of these examples in my day-to-day living. I am constantly reminded that our personal and professional lives are connected. We cannot be truly authentic if we go home after
work and become a totally different person around our friends and family. By being true to ourselves we are true to others – including our employees.

As leaders, we are constantly expecting more of each other, and ourselves. We need to practice self care and model it for others in our organization. Will working repeated 15-hour-days, eating poorly, and constantly going to meetings help or hurt your organization? Finding that life balance to nurture the body, mind and spirit while staying disciplined and focused on the work can be a challenge, but it is possible. Think about implementing an office walking program, or invite employees to a salad potluck and community chat during the lunch hour. Be creative and remember that it’s not just about the work.

Finding the head and heart balance in leadership is a constant challenge, but it is at the center of building trust amongst your employees, your community and in yourself. Building a trusting work culture where people believe in themselves and fellow employees is invaluable. Good leaders are good listeners and when people know they can trust you in sharing problems as well as successes, your organization will be stronger and better. While we want people to take on leadership, we also want to know there is a safe place to discuss challenges and issues. Effective leaders promote and nurture a trusting work culture where shared leadership collaboration and accountability become critical components or organizational success.

You cannot make it happen until you make it real!

Raj Manhas is the Superintendent of North Thurston Public Schools in Lacey, Wash. His personal practice of authenticity, optimism and humility has guided him throughout his career in both the private and public sectors, including Rainier Bank, City of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools, Rainier the historic “Seeds of Compassion” gathering in Seattle with the Dalai Lama.

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The Leader’s Credibility

The essential ingredient for successful school change

Credibility: Without It Change Will Not Occur

During the 2011 Annual ASCD Conference in San Francisco, Pam Robbins and I had the honor of presenting important concepts from our co-authored book, *Learning From Lincoln: Leadership Practices for School Success* (ASCD, 2010). Looking out at our colleagues we stated, “We are all attending this conference to learn new ideas and reaffirm, or gain a better understanding of, ideas we believe in, to make a positive difference in the lives of the students and teachers we work with each day. And, when the sessions end, all of us will be eager to share, what we have learned with our colleagues back home, so that together we can implement successful change. However, unless our colleagues believe in us, and are willing to listen to us, as credible and reliable administrators and teacher leaders, change will not occur. What we can all learn from Lincoln is that if change is to succeed, a key ingredient is character, our personal example.”

Our message during the conference was straightforward: People need to believe in us as leaders, in order to be moved and motivated, to implement and sustain meaningful change. As Zenger and Folkman (2002) conclude, “Everything about great leadership radiates from character” (p. ix). During the Civil War the destiny of the nation hinged on Lincoln’s character, his behavior as our leader, as the Union faced seemingly insurmountable challenges. Thus, the stature of the messenger is an incalculable variable. The relationship of this idea to school leadership is compelling. Bryk and Schneider (2002), in their influential work, *Trust in Schools*, remind us that leadership effectiveness—related to student achievement—rests on four character and skill pillars: respect, integrity, concern for others, and competence.

A Lesson From History

We stressed these points during our ASCD session because it is too easy to think of Lincoln as an historical figure, who has little to teach us today about change. But, when we ignore lessons of the past, we commit ourselves to present and future failures. For example, consider Lincoln’s enduring words to Congress on December 1, 1862, The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficult, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall our selves, and then we shall save our country.

Exactly 31 days after stating these words Lincoln delivered the Emancipation Proclamation. During the first two years of the war he came to realize that fighting for the Union and Democracy, without emancipation, was an empty promise to the people of the United States and other na-
Lincoln recognized that his personal example—through words and actions—and the example the United States was sending to the world during the Civil War was hypocritical, unless slavery ended. For many in the North Lincoln had not moved quickly enough on emancipation. Horace Greeley (quoted above), the editor of the New York Tribune, and Frederick Douglass were two of his severest critics. Yet, both Greeley and Douglass slowly came to realize that Lincoln’s heart was in the right place, they just disagreed with him on his timing. In the end, Lincoln made the right decision on emancipation, and the moral force of his work and words is an enduring legacy. Lincoln also gained credibility by telling the hard truths: the nation was on a long and difficult journey, and perfection was still only a vision. Thus, in the Gettysburg Address he noted the “unfinished work” to secure the union and democracy. Today, his words and actions inspire those of us who seek to expand opportunities for all students by closing the achievement gap, reducing the drop out rate, and pursuing other social justice goals. We need to aim high and do the daily work necessary to make a difference.

But, making the changes necessary to improve schools begins with the personal credibility of individuals and teams—the administrators and teacher leaders—that seek to implement change. Yet even today, with all of the outstanding research available to us on successful change implementation, we still forget that how the change initiative is delivered can lead to success or failure regardless of the initiative’s sound research basis. Fullan (2007) reminds us, “It is possible to be crystal clear about what one wants and totally inept at achieving it” (p. 8), especially if one overlooks the importance of relationship building. It’s true: People don’t care what you know, until they know that you care. Which brings us back to Lincoln. On June 1, 1865, Frederick Douglass, speaking at Cooper Union in New York, described how millions of black Americans felt about the death of their fallen president,

They viewed him not in the light of separate individual acts, but in the light of his mission, in his manifest relation to events and in the philosophy of his statesmanship. Viewing him thus, they trusted him as men are seldom trusted. (Douglass, in Burlingame, 2009, p. 4, emphasis added)

What makes Douglass’ reflections about Lincoln so compelling is that he had profound differences of opinion with the President. Yet, in the end, he believed in Lincoln. He trusted the President, and Lincoln delivered: “a new birth of freedom” became a reality. The work may still be unfinished, but Lincoln’s credibility—his character, his will, and his legacy—still inspires millions to fight for equality in our schools and society.

References
You are you. You are a small group of elementary, middle, and secondary school principals (and some teachers), each of whom, I assume, desires the agency necessary to the creation and continuing renewal of your school. In the late 1990s into the early 2000s, most of you (I think) were connected with schools that provided the agency necessary to good work and schools good enough to have attracted the attention of members of the IEI and responsible people who told us so. Suddenly, these good things were at risk.

In 1909, historian Ellwood Cubberley wrote the following: “Each year the child is coming to belong more and more to the State and less and less to the parent.” In 1957, Sputnik I and II brought to the fore the responsibility of our schools for America’s first place in the world economy. In 1983, the Commission on Excellence in Education, appointed by Secretary of Education Terrel Bell, told us: had a foreign power imposed our system of schooling on us, we would have viewed it as an act of war.

Early in 2000, thoughtful educators were becoming aware that the No Child Left Behind Act had imposed on our schools a narrow curriculum and system of assessment that correlated hardly at all with what education is and school should be. A hundred years after Cubberley’s warning, the federal government has commandeered the people’s schools. Have we now the yellow brick road to a democratic populace? (See Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, and Goodlad, Education for Everyone, 2004.)

Frederick Winslow Taylor was a major player in the hundred-year descent of our “educational” institutions from helping children become unique human beings to preparing them for the workplace. His books, Shop Management (1912) and Principles of Scientific Management (1915) brought him lectures to the first MBA program (developed at Harvard University). Henry Ford’s introduction of the assembly line in the making of automobiles, and widespread cor-

In its essence, democracy is really all about trust. Not trust in any particular individual, or even in some innate goodness to be found in human nature, but trust in the human capacity for creative, responsible, and effective participation. Without this participation in the purposes and decisions that affect us, there can be no democracy.

For many decades now John Goodlad has been a leading advocate for creating the conditions that make this effective participation possible. His tireless work as president of the Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI) has focused on establishing mechanisms for continuous renewal in our schools, as well as on reclaiming the public purpose of education.

This article was presented at a recent conference of the National League of Democratic Schools. It examines the disturbing loss of real agency in our schools over the past 50 years, and makes a compelling case that restoring this agency is essential to the process of continuous renewal.

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Robyn Davis, West Valley School District, Spokane, WA
Jim Strickland, Western Region Coordinator, National League of Democratic Schools
porate attention to the idea that “all possible brain work should be removed from the shop and centered in the planning or laying out department.” The human value of work became money, money, money, but little personal worker satisfaction (see Matthew B. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 2009).

Not surprisingly, there is growing concern over the fact that an increasing plethora of information is not leading to knowledge, let alone wisdom. In the United States today, the leading thinkers in nearly every field of thought about human behavior report this decline of the intellect. A major path of present school reform seeks to replace teachers with others. I believe that we need better teachers and this requires better teacher education. But we are not going to get the large supply of good teachers we need until they get the necessary autonomy of agency that good teaching requires. Thinking has been taken out of the schoolhouse just as it has been taken out of the workplace beyond.

Taylor’s rationale was that, in the corporate world and anyplace else that employed a hierarchy of workers, the most important decisions are at the top, and therefore, that is where thinking is most needed. But in the school place, the most important decisions are those of the workplace—where the workers need the most agency and the wisdom necessary to good decisions.

The Founding Fathers of our now troubled democracy appear to have understood this. But this necessary agency has been largely whittled away, steadily reducing the interest of the most able in teaching. The present goal of President Obama and Bill Gates for our schools appears to have little to do with what education is. But it has a lot to do with training.

Just as the Ford assembly line replaced worker satisfaction of daily accomplishment with the Yankee dollar, our school teachers should be able to offer the young at school with what communications scholar Neil Postman referred to as “a covenant of sorts . . . if you will pay attention in school, and do your homework, and score well on tests, and behave yourself, you will be rewarded with a well-paying job when you are done. . . .” It follows from this that any school activity not designed to further this end is seen as a frill or an ornament—which is to say, a waste of valuable time” (see Postman’s *The End of Education*, 1995, p. 59).

I have to assume that the pundit who wrote what I read about the coming together of Obama and Gates had not done adequate homework. Both have at times presented a much broader template of school purpose—the former in his election campaign calling for the dawning of a new day in schooling; the latter placing preparing for democratic understanding and behavior before work and post-secondary schooling. But the fact that what they were reported as saying got out to an already dumbed-down populace regarding what education is and our schools are for is scary. If alive today, philosophers William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Hannah Arendt, John Dewey, and Mortimer J. Adler would be appalled.

In 1987, Adler wrote as follows:

> I am sorry to say that most Americans think of themselves as the subjects of government and regard the administrators in public office as their rulers, instead of thinking of themselves as the ruling class and public officials as their servants—the instrumentalties for carrying out their will.

Preparation for the duties of citizenship is one of the three objectives of any sound system of public schooling in our society. Preparation for earning a living is another, and the third is preparation for discharging everyone’s *moral* [italics mine] obligation to lead a good life and make as much of one’s self as possible. Our present system of compulsory basic schooling, kindergarten through the twelfth grade, does not serve any of these objectives well (*We Hold These Truths*, pp. 19, 20).

John I. Goodlad is president of the nonprofit Institute for Educational Inquiry in Seattle, Washington.
A couple of years ago, my wife, Bonnie, and I attended a conference at a Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Late one evening, our friends wanted Bonnie to play the lobby piano for them. We called hotel security to get it unlocked. When the security man arrived, he explained that earlier in the month someone had abused the piano, so it was now locked in the evenings. My observation that Bonnie had performed with the Spokane Symphony less than a month earlier failed to impress. Quite politely, I reminded him that the motto of the Ritz-Carlton is “Ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen.” He was aware of that. When I asked who among us didn't qualify, he apologized and said he had no choice. We asked to see his supervisor. Finally, after a full hour, the security officer’s manager recognized that not only the piano, but the heart of the Ritz-Carlton’s values was being imprisoned by a temporary rule. And the music began.

Leaders react in a very predictable way when they see trouble. They defend, they tighten, they hunker down. In situations big and small, when we need clear thinking and wise problem solving, we’re more likely to get dictums. Principles of good leadership often get replaced by mandates. Is there a better way?

When a problem showed up at the Ritz-Carlton, an opportunity for leadership was choked by a rule. When a security officer could have been a gentleman serving ladies and gentlemen, his job was to obey. A well-trained employee applying an organization’s core values will always outperform the blind application of a policy or a rule. But too often we think that more rules, more strictly applied, result in more control. And in troubled times, we want control. Unfortunately, that is not what we need.

An institution’s best defense against stiff challenges comes to the surface when its people make value-driven, contextually based decisions. In tough times, decentralized wisdom outperforms centralized control. The most effective way to lead with our values is by training and empowering the people closest to the point of service. In theory, we get that. And in good times, we even do that. But when things get tough, we tighten up.

Budget cuts, for example, are often accompanied by stronger rules about how money can and can’t be spent. Rules are not as smart as values. Values invite wise application. Rules demand obedience. I used to tell my co-workers I didn’t like across-the-board anything. It’s hard to believe that taking individual circumstances into consideration won’t lead to better outcomes than one mass decision. But we generally feel that universally applied rules are safer, so we make them when we feel trouble around the corner. What we fail to take into consideration is that at some point, a rule will betray the value it is intended to protect.

A university of Michigan professor took his seven-year-old son to a sporting event. He bought the boy a lemonade, but it was an alcoholic drink. Dad claimed he’d never heard of the drink. The security officer, however, rejected the dad’s explanation, took the boy away and sent him to the hospital in an ambulance. Although no trace of alcohol was detected in the boy’s blood, the child spent 48 hours with Child Protective Services while things were checked out. When the father made a mistake, everybody followed the rules. The driving value behind the rules was the child’s well-being. But rules took the boy away from his parents for two days; the rule betrayed the value.

So, how should we as leaders respond to trouble?

Step 1. Lift up our mission. When threatened by trouble or even distraction, we need to remind our people who we are and why we exist. Talking about strategies without a clear vision of our mission is like talking about a route without agreeing on a destination.

Step 2. Recognize that leaders are not the only people in our organizations from whom we need leadership. When our mission is clear, every person is able to lead. I remember a freshman move-in day on which a parent told me about his campus visit. Evidently, a member of our custodial staff dropped everything and accompanied his family to the room they were looking for. That was an act of leadership. Our “students come first” training and culture gave permission for a custodian to drop the broom. The parent attributed that one act to creating his general impression of the university.

Step 3. Instill the institution’s values in every member. Leading with our values requires those engaged in acts of leadership to know their institutions’ most fundamental values. Unless the leaders are the only
ones who lead, core values must be embed-
ded in the people and the culture of the
organization. You may feel you can com-
minate those values by example alone. If
that’s true, you’re a far better exemplar than
I am. It can’t hurt to take every opportunity
to repeat your core values, your institutional
identity and your reason for being.

**Step 4.** Empower the people closest
to the point of service. I have found four
key elements needed for an environment in
which people feel empowered to lead.

- First, for “non-position holders” to
  feel empowered to lead, they must be
  educated in how leadership is exercised.
  Formal and informal opportunities can
  be taken to provide examples such as
  the one provided by our custodian. Five
times a year, for 15 years, I took 30
minutes with our staff to say thank you,
to make announcements and introduc-
tions, and to provide service ideas and
examples. We preceded these meetings
with coffee and donuts as a symbolic
expression of appreciation. Effective
training and culture-building require an
upbeat tone.

- Second, empowerment requires
  resources. It is worth doing an insti-
tutional leadership or service audit
and asking every employee, “What
resources would help you to make bet-
ter decisions, or to serve others more
effectively?” Often, such resources
require little or no financial investment.
And when money is needed, it gives
the employees a chance to discuss their
budgetary priorities.

- Third, empowerment assumes autho-
rization. Early in my career, I served
as an adjunct professor at a prestigious
graduate school in the Midwest. Half-
way through my first course, the dean
called me in to ask if I had allowed a
student to retake the midterm. “Yes,” I
answered. “That violates our policy,”
he replied. “Why?” I asked. “Well,
to be fair, you would have to allow
everyone the chance to retake it,” he
said. “I did. I told the class I composed
another midterm for those who were
dissatisfied with their grade.” “Doesn’t
that penalize the ones who were well-
prepared for the first exam?” he asked.
“No,” I beamed, “I don’t grade on the
curve, so all the satisfied students can
take what they got, and all the dissatis-
fied students are studying more and
learning the material better. My objec-
tive is to help students learn as much
as possible.” I came to find out I was
not authorized to use my best judg-
ment on how to achieve the school’s
loftiest stated value. If we want leader-
ship from people closest to the point
of service, we give them good training
and then give them the authority to
act.

- Fourth, we can supply training,
  resources and authority, but leadership
won’t happen until our people have
the confidence to lead. We need to
encourage and support our people, but
we also need to watch how we respond
to their mistakes. A friend of mine
expressed his frustration about the
employees in his company being overly
cautious in customer service. I asked
him about training, resources and
authorization. He felt his company
had provided all three. What ended up
unleashing his people was a memo in
which he said, “No employee will ever
be criticized for a mistake in the direc-
tion of the customer.” Great educators
understand the effect our responses
to mistakes or failures can have on a
student’s confidence.

The prophet Isaiah stands unchallenged
as the Hebrew Scripture’s most famous
oracle. He prophesied when Assyria was
lowering the boom on the Israelites. Their
trouble went far beyond thin resources; they
were being conquered. In the first chapter
of Isaiah’s prophecy, he follows a pattern
that all leaders should consider:

> “Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.[a]
Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.
Come now, and let us reason together.”
(Isa. 1:17,18a)

In troubled times, good leadership
reminds us of our values. In troubled
times, good leadership calls us to reason. In
troubled times, good leadership brings us
together.

In a time of earthquakes, tsunamis,
unemployment, budget cuts, stressed fami-
lies and struggling children, we need great
leadership. We need leadership that unites
all of us around our high calling as educa-
tors, creators of tomorrow. We teach reason,
and in troubled times, we must practice
what we teach.

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to 2010, after previously serving as
president of Manchester College, in
Indiana, from 1986 to 1993. His ten-
ure as Whitworth’s president was the
second longest and one of the most
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The Value of Hope

Hope lightens our load. The presence of hope makes it possible for us to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. It causes us to have a healthy disposition toward trials and hardships, giving us the fuel to overcome and the ability to persevere. Even though our path may be strewn with obstacles, hope makes it possible for us to see far less of them than we do the light at the end of the way.

Being hopeful can provide motivation to pursue goals and develop creative ideas that may help in solving problems. As Washington state educators embark on new standards and curriculum alignment issues related to the Common Core State Standards, it is hope that will enable us to imagine a positive outcome. At the same time, new standards demand organizational changes that require new actions, objectives and processes in schools and districts across our state.

Educators continue to be models of hope and resilience for our students in the midst of the changes that come with deep budget cuts to education, as well as new federal and state mandates. It is because of our need, as educators, to be hopeful in light of so many demands and changes, that the 2011 Conference Committee chose ‘Hope for Tomorrow: Change for Today’ as the Annual Conference theme. Our fabulous conference committee, led by co-chairs, Janet Regge (Renton) and Marti Shefveland (Kent) encourages schools, districts, and universities to send teams of teachers, administrators, and professors to the conference to take advantage of the opportunity to learn from experts in our field, as well as, from each other.

Please join educators from across the state for the 2011 WSASCD-OSPI Annual Conference which will take place October 14-15 at the Seattle Airport Doubletree Hotel. To register for the conference, go to http://wsascd.org/downloads/annual_conference_2011/2011_Registration_Form_opt_distributed.pdf.

Program Schedule

Friday, October 14
7:00–8:00 a.m......Registration, Exhibits
8:00-9:30 a.m .....Opening Session
9:30-10:00 a.m ....Special Opening of the Exhibits
10:00-11:30 a.m. .Concurrent Sessions
11:30-11:45 a.m .Break
11:45--1:00 p.m...Conference Luncheon & Awards Ceremony
1:00-1:15 p.m .....Exhibits
1:15-2:45 p.m .....Concurrent Sessions
2:45-3:00 p.m .....Break
3:00-4:30 p.m .....Concurrent Sessions
4:30-5:30 p.m .....Exhibitors’ & President’s Reception

Saturday, October 15
7:00–8:00 a.m......Registration, Exhibits
8:00–9:30 a.m.....Full-Day Action Labs begin
9:30-9:45 a.m ....Break
9:45-11:00 a.m. ...Action Labs continue
11:00-12:15 p.m..Luncheon, Keynote: Richard Thomas
12:15–1:30 p.m. ..Action Labs continue
1:30-1:45 p.m .....Break
1:45–3:00 p.m. .....Action Labs continue

See program descriptions on the following pages
2011 Conference Program: Friday, October 14

General Session Keynote Presentation - Dr. Gene Sharratt

Building a Culture of Hope

When you have hope for tomorrow, you have power to change today. Effective schools are hopeful schools, where educators build a culture of support around student learning based on authentic relationships and trust.

Dr. Gene Sharratt is a clinical Associate Professor at Washington State University and directs the Superintendent Certification Program. Before joining WSU, Gene spent 30 years in public and private schools. This experience was in Washington, Alaska, and Norway. Dr. Sharratt has served as a classroom teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, school superintendent and ESD superintendent. He enjoys research and writing and is the author of Keeping on Your Feet, an inspirational book about overcoming life’s challenges in a positive and meaningful manner.

Concurrent Sessions

The concurrent program (http://wsascd.org/downloads/2011_Session_Presentations.pdf) supports a full agenda of presenters with the latest information about promising practices from the preschool through university level. These 1-1/2 hour sessions will be presented by educators from Washington state on topics related to powerful instruction, future innovative learning technologies, school culture, innovation, creativity, resiliency for staff and/or students, data to inform instruction, growing assessment literacy, college and career readiness for ALL students, cultural competence, teaching thinking, and leading change. In addition, OSPI will present information at this conference related to current topics in Math, Science, Literacy, including updates on new standards and curriculum alignment issues.

Awards Luncheon

Our Conference Luncheon will feature many state recognition award winners (http://wsascd.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=123&Itemid=115), as we honor outstanding individuals, programs, teams, and community partners who have significantly contributed to education in Washington. Also honored will be the Outstanding Young Educator Award (OYEA) recipient, six OYEA Honorable Mentions, two ‘Educating the Whole Child’ award honorees, and a State School of Character Honorable Mention for demonstrating promising practices.

2011 Conference Program: Saturday, October 14

Luncheon Keynote Presentation – Richard Thomas

Hope for the Future

As one of this nation’s most gifted communicators, Richard Thomas inspires thousands all over the country each year to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential. Whether he is speaking in the faith community, at corporate events, and/or on campuses across the nation, Richard captivates and entertains his audience imparting hope and offering practical ideas to enable individuals to realize their dreams. Richard’s ability to achieve his own dream of becoming a professional athlete despite overwhelming odds certainly qualifies him to encourage others to pursue greatness.

Richard Thomas displayed his athletic aptitude while he played football at the University of Washington (1991-1995) capturing three Pac-10 Championships, after which he pursued a professional football career with the Baltimore Ravens. In response to the dire need of the youth of this nation to receive encouragement and motivation toward success despite their circumstances, Richard left his football career behind and forged ahead with his new mission: to empower people to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.

Full-Day Action Lab Presentations

On Saturday, six fabulous full-day Action Labs (http://wsascd.org/downloads/Action_Lab_Presentations_for_website.pdf) are offered, which connect proven approaches to leadership and working with students with varying abilities and behaviors.

Dr. Harvey Alvy

1 Lincoln for Today: Leadership Practices for School Success

Because ‘character is destiny,’ we can gain inspiration and learn how to lead schools more effectively by examining Abraham Lincoln’s heroic life. Based on the presenter’s co-authored ASCD book, Learning from Lincoln: Leadership Practices for School Success, this interactive session will examine the importance of core values and mission, communicating with clarity, facilitating change, humility, emotional intelligence, trust, and fostering hope to positively impact students, teachers and the community. The Action Lab goal is not to replicate Lincoln’s style – it is to refresh one’s own capacity to grow and lead by reflecting upon Lincoln’s behavior during an extraordinary time.

Dr. Harvey Alvy served as an international principal in Singapore, Israel, and India. He was honored as a NAESP National Distinguished Principal and is a founding member of the International Principals’ Training Center. Harvey co-authored, with Pam Robbins, Learning from Lincoln, The New Principal’s Fieldbook, The Principal’s Companion and If I Only Knew; and with Dr. Jane Liu, The Principal Management Handbook. Dr. Alvy holds the William C. Shreve Endowed Professorship at Eastern Washington University.

Dr. Tammy Campbell

2 Closing the Achievement through Powerful Pedagogy

How to Reach and Teach Each Child… Participants will engage in an interactive session in which we will look at ‘gap-closing’ research-based instructional practices. We will examine habits of thinking and leading that promote high achieving classrooms and schools where students from ALL backgrounds are successful.

Currently the executive director of Teaching and Learning Services with the Spokane School District, Dr. Tammy Campbell has over twelve years’ experience as an educator, having served as a principal, math staff developer, and classroom teacher.
Tammy is an Adjunct Professor for the WSU Principal Certification Program and serves as a consultant for many schools and districts.

**Pete Hall**

**3 Teacher Evaluations that Make Sense: Addressing Quality Control, Professional Growth, and Performance Concerns**

Administrators have longed for a teacher evaluation system that addresses the dual purposes of the endeavor: ensuring high-quality teachers for every child and providing meaningful feedback that leads to professional growth. In this session, learn how to do both, plus address performance concerns in a professional, direct, and impactful manner. Pete will share strategies for scheduling observations, conducting frequent walk-throughs, providing tailored feedback, offering reflective questions, and building teachers’ capacity for success.

**Dr. Elham Kazemi**

**4 Advancing Elementary Students’ Computational Fluency through Ambitious Teaching Practices**

Participants will learn about key conceptual milestones that elementary students must achieve as they develop computational fluency. Through video excerpts, participants will discuss teaching practices that advance students’ computational fluency.

**Dr. Sharon Kramer**

**5 Common Formative Assessments: The Key to Student Learning**

The research is clear that regular formative assessments are the key to improving student achievement. Participants will understand the role of assessment in the learning process, identify the key factors to consider when developing formative assessments, and identify the implications for classroom and team assessment practices. During this session, participants will learn the common assessment process from beginning to end, understand how to collect meaningful data that informs interventions and enrichment planning, and gain tools to use in the process. This session will also include strategies to engage students in their learning and assessment.

**Dr. Flint Simonsen**

**6 Behavioral Success for All Students through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): A Three-Tier System for Addressing Challenging Behaviors**

Behavior management still remains a top concern in public schools today. This Action Lab will describe a three-tiered model (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports or PBIS) for addressing the diverse sets of challenging behaviors we face in public education. PBIS implementation has shown powerful effects on a) reduced rates of student misbehavior, b) increased student academic achievement (including performance on high-stakes assessments), and c) improvements in the behavioral climates of schools both in Washington State and across the country. Participants will gain an understanding of the PBIS model and steps to move toward PBIS implementation.

**Dr. Flint Simonsen**, is an Associate Professor of special education at Eastern Washington University. He has conducted research in the areas of behavior management, academic interventions for students with disabilities, severe disabilities, and school-wide reform. Dr. Simonsen consults nationally on behavioral and academic assessments and interventions for students in public education.

You will want to attend this outstanding event. Please remember that WSASCD workshops and conferences are appropriate for the use of professional development funds, including but not limited to Title I, Title II, Title III and IDEA. Involvement in this conference will enable participants to come away with a powerful hope and strategies to plan for and create a limitless positive version of the future.

Kathy Clayton currently serves as the executive director of Washington State and has been a public school teacher and administrator for more than 30 years.
Enhancing teacher and administrator effectiveness to improve student learning

The passing of Senate Bill 6696 marked a new era in Washington State’s teacher and administrator accountability framework. How have you started adjusting to the demands of SB 6696? What instructional or evaluative practices show promise in light of rigorous evaluation standards? What are you currently doing to align your instruction and evaluation to the new framework? Which innovative techniques have you deployed to improve teacher effectiveness and administrator effectiveness? How can we improve evaluation to enhance student learning? *Curriculum in Context* is inviting submission of manuscripts dealing with these ideas. Please email an abstract, 50-150 words, to David Denton (dentod@spu.edu) by February 10 to receive submission guidelines. Final manuscripts are typically 1000-2500 words. Send additional questions to David Denton.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE**
Spring/Summer 2012 – February 10, 2012