Section I: Transformative Ideas and the Contextual Background

Section I: Transformative Ideas and the Contextual Background contains four chapters that lay the groundwork for preparing leaders for social justice, equity, and excellence. Given the importance of school administration, the role of educational leadership in school improvement, and the preparation of educational leaders, it is essential to understand the history, development, and promise of the principalship. Due to changing demographics, conflicting societal values, and shifting expectations, the principal’s role is ever evolving. In Chapter 1, some of those critical events are outlined briefly, followed by a description of the effects on the role in general and on the preparation and certification of principals in particular. Within this context, gender equity issues are explored more deeply. Chapter 2 provides readers with an overview of the role of the principal in actually promoting social justice, equity, and excellence. Although many schools are failing to fulfill their duty, others are meeting the challenge of serving each and every student really well (Oakes et al., 2000; Riester, Pusch, & Skrla, 2002). The literature on leadership for social justice identifies schools that have demonstrated tremendous success not only with white middle-class and affluent students, but students from varied racial, socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds (Capper & Young, in press; Scheurich, 1998). In striving for equity and excellence, virtually all students in these schools are learning at high academic levels. There are “no persistent patterns of differences in academic success or treatment among students grouped by race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language” (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p. 2).

Reminded by Delpit (1995) that we do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs, the internal courage to look within and honestly confront one’s biases and shortcomings is necessary in order for the external work in the school community to be authentic and effective. Because understanding the nature of beliefs, attitudes, and values is essential to understanding future and current leaders’ choices, decisions, and effectiveness regarding issues of diversity and equity, Chapter 3 offers a review of quantitative measures, instruments, inventories, and studies that assess educators’ personal and professional beliefs, attitudes, perceptions,
and preconceptions. Two instruments in particular are recommended for principals to use with their teachers in addressing similar issues. From a critical theorist perspective, Chapter 4 then describes a practical, process-oriented model that is responsive to the challenges of preparing such educational leaders committed to social justice, equity, and excellence. This is followed by a mixed-methods research study aimed at documenting theory into practice findings.


INTRODUCTION

"Almost all educational reform reports have come to the conclusion that the nation cannot attain excellence in education without effective school leadership" (Crawford, 1998, p. 8).

Given the importance of school administration, the role of educational leadership in school improvement, and the preparation of education leaders, it is essential to understand the history, development, and promise of the principalship. This chapter is intended to provide a brief illustration of critical events in the history of the principalship and their effects on the role in general (See Appendix A for more on the history of how principals are prepared and licensed. See Appendix B for more on gender equity issues affecting career advancement opportunities for principals).

Until the end of the nineteenth century full-time building administrators were not typically found in schools, and, because “the role of the principal is an extremely malleable one, shaped by a diverse set of concerns and events” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 197), conceptualizations are problematic. Throughout the history of the modern American school, differences in political, social, and economic philosophies have had a major impact on the development and organization of education in general, and on the principalship in particular. As a result, the role has been reshaped, redefined, and renegotiated. Immigration, urbanization, the rise of great corporations, the traumas of two world wars, the great depression, the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, and the high-stakes accountability movement of the 1990s influenced the values of society, reshaped the purpose of schooling, and increased the demands of the principalship. According to Ravitch (1983), expectations are high:

Whether in the early nineteenth century or the late twentieth century, Americans have argued for more schooling on the grounds that it would preserve democracy,
eliminate poverty, lower the crime rate, enrich the common culture, reduce unemployment, ease the assimilation of immigrants to the nation, overcome differences between ethnic groups, advance scientific and technological progress, prevent traffic accidents, raise health standards, refine moral character, and guide young people into useful occupations (p. xii).

Principals face a daunting task in trying to fulfill these somewhat unrealistic and often conflicting demands. According to Murphy and Beck (1994), principals are expected to “work actively to transform, restructure and redefine schools while they hold organizational positions historically and traditionally committed to resisting change and maintaining stability” (p. 3). From a critical perspective, this chapter chronicles such trends from 1840 through the year 2000. Dates are employed somewhat arbitrarily and the points outlined are over generalized. However, certain perceptions emerge over and over again (e.g., male dominance, societal pressures, bureaucratic structures, increasing responsibility, etc.).

THE EMERGENCE OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP (1840–1900)

The “head teacher” of the early nineteenth century was the first professional position in American schools to have administrative and supervisory responsibilities. As the nation’s population grew and one-room schools became graded, multi-room schools with several faculty members, so did the need for program coordination and internal management. Although hardly differentiated from teaching (Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987), “head teachers” were appointed to monitor students, teachers, and classroom procedures. Accountable to the local school board, “principal teachers” were expected to teach the highest class in their school, to implement specific board policies, and to perform certain clerical and janitorial tasks. Over time, their duties became mainly administrative and less involved with direct classroom instruction. The actual term “principal” appeared as early as 1838 in the Common School Report of Cincinnati and then again in 1841 in Horace Mann’s (1842) report to the Massachusetts School Board. The title did not become formally recognized and widely accepted until the latter part of the nineteenth century. During this period, education served mainly to prepare an individual to live a godly life and to confirm and confer status (Spring, 2001).

Some Critical Events 1840–1900

The title, role, and expectations of the “principalship” emerged between 1840 and 1900 as a result of the rapid growth of the nation’s population, cities, and graded schools. As immigration, urbanization, and expansion increased, so did the purpose, the structure, and the number of schools, along with the task of managing and maintaining schools.

A shift in philosophy occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century. In viewing education as a government function, as opposed to a family function, edu-
Education was brought into the service of public policy. The common school movement established an organized system of public schooling whereby administrative decisions regarding personnel, finances, and daily operations of the schools were made by school boards, including the direct supervision of teachers and the delivery of instruction. But, by 1900, “there were school boards with as many as 500 members and, because boards of such size became unwieldy and ineffective, board members complained of the workload and impossibility of discharging their responsibilities effectively” (Reller, 1936, p. 17). As communities grew, the increased demand and complexity of rapidly changing student demographics yielded the need to separate graded elementary classrooms from high schools, to hire a superintendent employed by the board of education to oversee the district, and to employ full-time administrators called “principals” to manage and transact the general business of each building.

With its grassroots governance, consensual ideology, and universal curriculum, the “common school movement” was one of the most significant social movements in American history. It mobilized the people in support of public education and attempted to create a common culture, morality, and political ideology. According to Spring (2001), “Common school reformers believed that education could be used to assure the dominance of Protestant Anglo-American culture, reduce tensions between social classes, eliminate crime and poverty, stabilize the political system, and form patriotic citizens” (p. 103). Administered by state and local governments for the purpose of achieving such public goals, common schools became the central institution for the control and maintenance of the social order. Advocates believed that mixing the rich and poor within the same schoolhouse would cause social-class conflict to give way to a feeling of membership in a common social class and would thus provide society with a common set of political and moral values.

**Changes in the Role of the Principal 1840–1900**

During this time period, the role of the male principal emerged as “evangelical missionary” destined to establish the public school institution (Tyack & Hansot, 1982) and promote the basic moral doctrines of Christianity. Horace Mann, often referred to as the “father of the common school,” listed these duties as instruction in piety, justice, love of country, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, chastity, moderation, and temperance. Principals were to ensure that teachers taught and children learned a common religious and political education. Mann proclaimed that moral instruction was to be based on a nonsectarian use of the Bible and on common virtues, while political instruction was to include those articles of republican faith that were approved and believed in by all sensible, judicious, patriotic men. Most people agreed that common schools would help eliminate class distinctions and promote equality of economic opportunity. As men of good character, principals were responsible for ensuring that this happened.

The change from “head teacher” to “principal” signified the beginning of a critical movement toward professional leadership and administration in public education. The emergence of the “principalship” implied a shift in power from local lay administration to control by a single educational leader. Aside from teaching, the principal’s duties
included implementing state curriculum, keeping school attendance records, making reports to the school committee, overseeing the upkeep of the school building and grounds, and coordinating the use of instructional materials, equipment, and supplies. Over time, "The freeing of the principal from teaching duties to visit other rooms proved the opening wedge for supervision by the principal" (Pierce, 1935, p. 16). Luehe (1989) defined this early supervisory role as one of "inspector" in which the principal’s responsibility was to weed out weak teachers and ensure school boards that standards were being met. Because of this, the principal's role increased in status and expectations.

The closing decades of the nineteenth century found the principal in large cities well established, not to say entrenched, as the recognized administrative head of his school. He gave orders, and enforced them. He directed, advised, and instructed teachers. He classified pupils, disciplined them, and enforced safeguards designed to protect their health and morals. He supervised and rated janitors. He requisitioned all educational, and frequently all maintenance, supplies. Parents sought his advice, and respected his regulations. Such supervisors, general and special, as visited his school usually made requests of teachers only with the consent, or through the medium, of the principal (Pierce, 1935, p. 39).

While local control by elected school committees set a democratic stamp on public education, policy elites at the turn of the century complained that the efforts of rural school trustees fell short (Tyack, 2001, p. 6) and that the leadership in urban districts was poor. In response, the eight-year, graded elementary school, the uniform course of study, the district system, and the position of principal and his accompanying “pedagogical harem,” were all elements in the early development of the hierarchical, bureaucratic organization for the administration of American education.

**THE “PROFESSIONALIZATION” OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP (1900–1940)**

The burgeoning role and new authority position of the principal was solidified in the early 1900s with the beginning of the progressive movement and the advent of scientific management (Knott & Miller, 1987). Scientific management, with its emphasis on efficiency, had dramatic and almost immediate effects on education, including the "professionalization" of the principalship. During this time period, executive, managerial functions were centralized and structured systematically at the top with specialized divisions intended to cause the entire school district and each school to run efficiently. The role of the principal shifted from evangelical missionary and values broker to scientific manager and dignified social leader (Beck & Murphy, 1993). Pierce (1935) noted that by the turn of the century, the principal had become the directing manager rather than the head teacher of the school. Charged with administering discipline, selecting, hiring, and evaluating teachers, determining the curriculum, monitoring pedagogical techniques, and overseeing other organizational tasks, the principal was quickly established as the school’s administrative head and director of instruction.
Some Critical Events 1900–1940
The “professionalization” of the principalship developed during the first part of the twentieth century as a result of massive change and progress in American society. The industrial revolution and the emergence of the modern business corporation, between 1850 and 1900, placed a premium on education as preparation for work and the need for new and better forms of administrative organization and control. During this time, educational reformers grew dissatisfied with local self-rule and a shared curriculum. Their vision of democracy in the new urban and industrial society exalted experts and denigrated widespread lay participation. This newly founded, nationwide belief that professionals should be in charge caused lines of authority to be defined, organizational communications to be improved, data to be collected and analyzed, and structural and technical adjustments to be made. During this time, the public school became an “instrument of democracy” run by apolitical experts. Such leaders were charged with educating all children according to their abilities and destiny in life. “Such was the new vision of democracy in governance: a socially and economically efficient system that adapted schooling to different kinds of students, thereby guaranteeing equality of opportunity” (Tyack, 2001, p. 7).

Developed through time-and-motion studies, Frederick Taylor’s principles of “scientific management” and industrial efficiency became the highly touted and widely accepted concept of “best practices” in administration. Employees would develop job specialization and be evaluated on the basis of adherence to approved standards of performance rather than by results (Guthrie, 1990). These developments had a terrific impact on school practices and educators’ beliefs, including the managerial dimensions of educational leadership.

The notion of “one best way” of running organizations was born and adopted wholeheartedly by most institutions, including school systems. Education was to be centralized and standardized. Because small rural districts and one-room schools were not deemed cost-efficient, many schools were closed, consolidated, and restructured (Shakeshaft, 1989). In fact, nearly 20,000 small schools closed between 1917 and 1922 (Thompson & Wood, 1998). As the trend of closing smaller schools continued, educational participation and school enrollment actually rose steadily. “The schools developed an expanded economic role in the increasingly urban and industrial society of the late nineteenth century, and as this happened, the high school joined the elementary school as an institution at which attendance was considered essential for all people” (Spring, 2001, p. 164). For example, in 1890, approximately 2,500 high schools were serving over 200,000 students. By 1910, over 10,000 high schools were serving over 900,000 American students (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). During this 1900 to 1940 time period, compulsory schooling laws were enforced, the attendance age was raised to remove teenage workers from a depressed job market, and the standard 8-4 graded elementary and high school structure yielded to a new 6-3-3 structure with the creation of junior highs. The percentage of eligible students attending high school more than doubled between 1920 (27%) and 1940 (66%) and the curriculum shifted dramatically. Concerns with formal learning for the discipline of the mind were replaced with an emphasis on practical education for life and preparation for occupation.
The differentiated curricula of the junior high and senior high schools, together with vocational guidance, were to provide equal opportunity from the perspective of improving human capital. As millions of European immigrants were assimilated and millions of rural American citizens were prepared to assume roles in an emerging industrial nation, principals became key players in the formation of a new socio-economic order. Efficiency experts advocated reform of schools based on the manufacturing analogy, with students as “raw materials” and schools as “factories” (Knott & Miller, 1987). These experts made numerous recommendations, including increasing class size, lessening “free” hours for teachers, abolishing certain courses, such as foreign languages, and providing different educations based on individual differences. “In essence, scientific management, combined with a differentiated curriculum, was to develop human capital by objectively controlling the provision of equality of opportunity” (Spring, 2001, p. 281). As a result, complex new bureaucratic structures in education emerged, including the formal creation of the school administration profession.

Changes in the Role of the Principal 1900–1940

The nature of education and the role of educational administrator changed dramatically due to Taylor’s scientific management principles. Centralization, specialization, and the division of labor all reinforced the belief that the role of the principal should be separate from the role of teaching. In 1900, rules and principles derived from research were established to guide practice. Because schools were under considerable pressure to produce results, teaching procedures and practices were greatly influenced by “experts” whose interest was primarily the improvement of organizational efficiency. Principals were assumed to be more like business executives using good management and social science research to run schools effectively and efficiently. They were expected to implement a standardized and regimented curriculum and monitor progress of teachers and students toward educational goals. A formal hierarchy of power was firmly established and schools increasingly became bureaucratized. “This scientific approach to administration emphasized a top-down approach to defining and communicating information concerning instructional practices, and the administrative personnel of a school or district became the legitimate experts” (Daresh, 2002, p. 82).

Defining school administration in terms of task areas was consistent with scientific management. For example, Gulick’s (1937) master list of things managers did was abbreviated in the acronym POSDCoRB: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. In addition to their administrative and managerial tasks, principals’ supervisory activities included classroom visitation, teachers’ meetings, tests and measurements, instruction in methods, pupil adjustment, and teacher rating (Pierce, 1935). In Cubberley’s (1916) highly influential textbook for school leaders, Public School Administration, he emphasized the principal as organizer, executive, and supervisor of work. While explaining the nature of state and local school governance and what building-level administrators are supposed to do to maintain balanced budgets, keep accurate student records, and oversee building maintenance, Cubberley claimed, “As is the principal, so is the school” (p. 15). However,
as the managerial dimensions of school leadership increased, the educational and pedagogical dimensions of the principal’s role decreased. The shift from a political model to a hierarchical, bureaucratic model in governance, structure, and role meant that the instructional leadership role became submerged under the roles of manager and bureaucrat. Torn between administrative duties and instructional responsibilities, principals realized their precarious status in the hierarchy. According to Glanz (1998), “It was in response to mounting criticism that supervisors, in a concerted effort to gain control of their work, sought to professionalize as a means to counteract bureaucracy” (p. 42).

Cubberley (1923) also noted “the great spiritual importance” (p. 561) of the principal’s work and likened the principal to “the priest in the parish” (p. 26). A very strong Protestant work ethic and principals such as thriftiness, efficiency-mindedness, and high moral values were necessary for the role. The growth of centralized and bureaucratic control, as opposed to democratic localism, ensured the protection and dominance of a particular set of middle class cultural and religious values.

“In the 1920s, principals were considered to be a link among spiritual values, the “truths” of scientific management, and their schools. In the thirties, both the language and the content of educational writings suggest that the spiritual emphasis waned and that the principal came to be viewed as a business executive, a kind of manager within the school” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 47). This continued until the alliance between business managers and school administrators collapsed under the economic pressures of the Depression. Businessmen wanted the educational system to be inexpensive (i.e., they wanted to reduce financial support). School administrators and professors of education wanted to ensure the continued growth of educational services, resources, and opportunities. The two opposing views caused a serious rift in this long-held relationship. According to Murphy (1992), “The Depression, the New Deal that was undertaken to conquer it, and the Great War to free the world of democracy all brought an end to unbridled infatuation with the titans of business and with capitalistic–industrial values” (p. 26).


From 1940 to 1960, there was a shift from a top-down managerial philosophy to more of a democratic facilitative process of developing, supporting and coordinating cooperative group efforts as both an end and a means for reform in schools. As a result of World War II, the principal’s role changed from authority figure to process helper, consultant, curriculum leader, supervisor, public relations representative, and leader on the home front (Beck & Murphy, 1993). The purpose of schooling was now to promote democratic values. According to Lucas, (2001), “Just as our participation in World War II caused us to focus our attention on patriotic values, the principalship of the early 1940s and the early 1950s stressed the importance of education in a democratic and strong society” (p. 28).

As the business–management doctrine was abandoned and the “social conscience” of administrators was awakened (Callahan & Button, 1964, p. 89), liberal progressive educators began to speak out. Although the Brown v. Board of Education decision
occurred in 1954, the ramifications of this Supreme Court case and the notion of inequitable schooling were not truly dealt with until the 1960s and 1970s. However, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957, the effects were immediate. As fear and panic gripped the nation, a major crusade against ignorance initiated the anti-intellectualism campaign against schools in general, and principals in particular. Beck and Murphy’s metaphors for the 1950s include the principal as administrator, defender of educational practice, efficient manager of time, and overseer of minute details. In addition, principals were expected to prioritize and defend the work of educators by offering empirical evidence of effective performance.

Some Critical Events 1940–1960

One consequence of the scientific management era was the tendency to value organizational goals more than the interests and needs of the people who worked in the organization. During the 1940s and early 1950s, a human relations administrative philosophy took root. Principals were encouraged to use every means possible to stimulate employees by focusing on satisfying the personal and professional needs of individuals who worked in schools. In the transition from the scientific management era through the human relations era to the behavioral science era of the late 1950s there was increasing dissatisfaction with “the economic view of administration and organization” (Culbertson, 1965, p. 5). Ideological management in schools extended even into the areas of military defense. Concurrent with the debate over the proper knowledge base and the role of values in principal preparation programs, criticisms were being leveled at practicing administrators for supposedly having “weakened” the academic training offered by the schools, making it difficult for the United States to compete with the Soviet Union in developing military weapons for the Cold War. Preparation programs were also being exhorted to develop stronger programs “to protect the public against ill-prepared or indifferent practitioners” (Goldhammer, 1983, p. 250). There is some evidence that by the late 1950s, “the almost complete lack of theory oriented research in the field of administration” (Griffiths, 1959, p. 4) was being addressed and that the theory movement was holding center stage among leading scholars in universities (Moore, 1964; Willower, 1963).

The effects of the Cold War were played out in the schools in many ways. When anti-communism reached its peak in the 1950s, schools were purged of teachers and ideas that sounded communistic. Under the influence of McCarthyism, many liberal, progressive, and so-called subversive educators were fired or silenced and pressures for ideological conformity became intense for students. High school students learned a curriculum based on strengthening U.S. military technology while little children learned passive fear as an official way of life by participating in mock atomic attacks. The need to cultivate talent and compete with Soviet expertise generated a stream of educational policies designed to use schools to strengthen national defense. As increased federal aid to education entered in the National Defense Education Act of 1958, concerns with centralization of educational control at the federal level grew.
Changes in the Role of the Principal 1940–1960

The early part of the twentieth century suggested that administration was largely defined as the business of keeping organizations headed in the right direction by making certain that operational details were addressed (i.e., bills were paid, people were evaluated, and so on). Mid-century perspectives indicated that people were important and their needs were real. The new focus on faculty and staff morale caused the supervisory role of the principalship to shift from monitoring to assisting teachers and others to improve instruction and other services. The era of human relations had principals become more involved with parents, community members, teachers, and school personnel.

Scientists’ authority was fully established by 1958. Responding to both the public demand for action and the real needs of science education, plans were outlined to improve American education with a strong math and science emphasis. A number of critics called instead for a broad program of federal aid to update facilities, recruit teachers, and develop materials in all content areas. Principals were caught in the middle of this and other debates. Receiving messages concerning their roles and functions from a number of constituents, principals often vacillated between taking highly theoretical perspectives on their work and dwelling on mundane issues of practice.


The tension between forces seeking stability and maintenance of traditional values and those pressing for change and the emergence of diverse values are highlighted in this section. The Cold War, the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik, and the social and political turbulence of the 1960s created a new focus for formal education. While schools concentrated on academic excellence, particularly in math and science, principals drew on empirically developed strategies for management and organization. They worked hard to maintain stability and a sense of normalcy. Nationwide trends toward school consolidation, the profession’s emulation of corporate management, and the political nature of public education institutions led the majority of principals to neglect the instructional arena as a domain of primary concern (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

According to Beck and Murphy (1993), the role of the principal during the 1960s shifted to that of bureaucrat, protector of bureaucracy, user of scientific strategies, accountable leader, and inhabitant of a role in conflict. While living in a personal state of confusion regarding role definition due to conflicting expectations from various stakeholders, principals were simultaneously seen as members of a well-developed educational bureaucracy with clearly defined professional bases of power and responsibility. They were expected to guard the distribution of power within the hierarchy and handle those who challenged the system. Principals were also expected to use empirical data in planning and measuring the work of teachers and were held accountable for measurable outcomes in the school. In essence, they were caught between the constancy of bureaucratic rational thought and the outcries for a “social revolution” (Campbell et al., 1987).

The growth of social problems in the 1970s, such as racial tension, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy, required principals to provide a wide variety of remedies
that turned their primary attention away from academic leadership. The principal as community leader, imparter of meaning, juggler of multiple roles, and facilitator of positive relationships are descriptions used by Beck and Murphy (1993) to describe the principal’s role during this time period. According to these authors, principals were expected to lead students, teachers, and the larger community, to impart meaning to educational efforts, to juggle a number of roles that often required competing skills, to relate well to persons, and to facilitate positive interactions between students and teachers. Public confidence in education declined in the 1970s, and the theme of accountability surfaced for the first time.

Some Critical Events 1960–1980
While debates about schooling have included discussions of culture, race, and gender, a major theme in the history of schooling in the twentieth century has been discrimination against minority groups and certain social classes. Following *Brown v. Board of Education*, reformers in the 1960s challenged the organizational structures introduced in the first half of the twentieth century. The very idea of a meritocracy based on the sorting function of the school came under severe attack by the civil rights movement. Advocates argued that “small schools are better, that big districts should be decentralized, that all students should be helped to meet the same high academic standards, that academic segregation of students into tracks limits their learning, and that schools can benefit from parents’ involvement in educational reform” (Tyack, 2001, p. 7).

The changing concept of democracy (i.e., concern about expanding democratic rights to a broader range of citizens) meant that all people were to be involved, not just those in power. This placed new responsibilities on the principals, including the task of correcting the inequities that resulted from segregation. Socio-cultural concerns, including debates over financial disparities and the multicultural content of textbooks and the curriculum greatly affected expectations for and the work of principals. And yet, according to Beck and Murphy (1993), principals seemed to deny the reality of these complex issues by avoiding frank discussions of problems related to desegregation, poverty and the general social unrest that pervaded American culture during this decade.

Changes in the Role of the Principal 1960–1980
One result of the civil rights movement was the expansion of the federal role in education with the launching of the War on Poverty programs in the 1960s. Principals became increasingly responsible for managing federally funded programs designed to assist special student populations. Compensatory education, bilingual education, education for the handicapped, and other federal entitlements required implementation support from the school site administrator. Curriculum reform also took off as an infusion of federal dollars stimulated widespread innovation in mathematics and science. In contrast to their earlier role of maintaining the status quo, principals were now expected to be involved with curriculum management and program improvement. As a result, change implementation functions ranged from monitoring compliance with federal regulations to assisting in staff development to providing direct classroom sup-
port for teachers. Reform innovations were conceived and introduced by policy makers outside the local school. The principal’s role was limited to managing the implementation of externally devised solutions to social and educational problems (i.e., implement innovations whose goals, substance, and procedures were designed by others). This philosophy and practice limited ownership and responsibility assumed by local educators for the long-term institutionalization of program changes. While the innovations were implicitly oriented toward educational improvement, researchers found that principals demonstrated greater concern with meeting criteria compliance than for program outcomes. Program implementation was often viewed as an end rather than a means of improving learning for students (Fullan, 1991).

Further responsibilities were added when, with the formation of teacher unions, the principal was forced into the position of negotiator in matters of union demands and teacher contracts. In addition, the principal was required to become more politically active and engaged in policymaking, practices considered taboo in the 1900s. According to Castetter (1971), “He is finding he must compete with other public agencies for a share of the public tax dollar, that the schools are on the receiving end of strong group pressures, that he must find ways of recognizing the legitimate role of pressure groups and deal with their demands democratically and constructively, and that he is no longer the controlling force in the educational decisions” (p. 7). The beginning of the accountability movement also impacted principals’ supervisory roles. Instead of being judgmental, principals became more clinical, analytical, and focused on curriculum development. They viewed their new role as helping teachers be more effective by diagnosing teaching and learning problems.


Principals emerged as primary players in the improvement of school instructional programs. The instructional leadership role of the 1980s highlighted the centrality of the principal in coordinating and controlling curriculum and instruction. Principals were seen as problem solvers, resource providers, instructional leaders, visionaries, and change agents. They managed people, implemented policies, solved problems, and provided resources to facilitate the teaching and learning process while guiding teachers and students toward productive learning experiences. Principals also developed and communicated a picture of the ideal school while facilitating needed changes in educational operations to ensure school effectiveness (Beck & Murphy, 1993). The motto of the 1950s shifted from “Happy employees are productive employees” to “Happy employees are productive employees if they work in a productive place.”

In contrast, the transformational role of the 1990s emphasized the diffuse nature of school leadership and the role of principals as leaders of leaders. Restructuring brought the knowledge needed for school improvement back to the school and the role of the principal back to the image of leader, servant, organizational architect, social architect, educator, moral agent, and person in the community. During this phase, it was the responsibility of the principal to lead the transition from a bureaucratic model of schooling to a postindustrial model.
Some Critical Events 1980–2000
With the rise of international economic competitors in the 1980s, such as Japan, and the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), an unprecedented period of extensive school reforms began across America. Mandated by states and districts to make schools more efficient and effective while retaining their basic features, policies were enacted to tighten educational standards, strengthen professional certification requirements, and increase accountability. The pressure on school principals to respond to the criticism increased from all quarters. Not only did citizens offer suggestions and advice to educators, but there were also many mandates requiring boards and superintendents to respond and principals to implement (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). The reforms, generally categorized as first wave school reforms, dealt primarily with top-down reform efforts from the state legislatures. They called for districts and schools to refocus on academic achievement and the preparation of students for the workplace, and for principals to engage more actively in leading the school’s instructional program and in focusing staff attention on student outcomes. The American public’s renewed interest in educational improvement and the documented importance of principal leadership united in the worlds of policy and professional practice. The problem of school leadership was framed by policymakers in terms of inadequate principal expertise in curriculum and instruction. By the mid-1980s, professional norms deemed the principal’s role of program management as unacceptable and instructional leadership became the new educational standard for principals (Murphy, 1991).

As educators and policymakers began to examine the structure of schools, they came to a growing awareness and consensus that centralized administrative structures were not resulting in meaningful improvement in teaching and learning at the school level (Hanson, 1991). Rigidly prescriptive reforms placed too much emphasis on policies, rules, and procedures and gave too little attention to results (Rebarber, 1992). The desired ends of schooling as defined for principals by policy makers were improved student achievement while the means were specified in terms of selected models of classroom instruction and school improvement. Work roles in schools tended to limit the effectiveness of teachers and principals, parents were excluded from participating in the decision-making process, and curriculum had little relevance for students.

School reform was transformed into school restructuring, a process that focused, at least initially, not on repairs to the existing system, but on the “reshaping of the entire educational enterprise” (Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1992, p. 330). The term “restructuring” suggested that the school was now viewed as the unit responsible for the initiation of change, not just the implementation of changes conceived by others. This awareness led to the introduction of second-wave reforms which identified teachers and administrators as the solutions instead of the problem. The new wave called for a bottom-up approach to school improvement whereby teachers were viewed as important sources of expertise, rather than as the targets of others’ efforts to improve schooling (Barth, 1990). Because restructuring empowered teachers rather than managed them, principals needed to learn new skills. As managerial functions shifted to leadership responsibilities, the importance of collegiality, experimentation, reflection, school-based staff development, and capacity building took on new meaning.
Changes in the Role of the Principal 1980–2000

As educational authorities sought to reform the principalship in an image compatible with the popular conception of effective schooling, a pivotal shift in perspective implied a de-emphasis on the principal’s role as a manager and greater stress on responsibilities for instructional leadership (Murphy, 1991). DeBevoise (1984) defined it as “those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning” (p. 15).

For practitioners, top-down orientation to change was implicit in most policy-driven translations of effective schools research. Assuming that principals lacked expertise and that the practices of effective teaching and leadership could be standardized and controlled, staff development programs outlined clear, sequential steps for managing school-based improvement teams. By the mid-1980s, while virtually every state boasted a substantial in-service effort aimed at developing the instructional leadership of principals (Hallinger, 1992), ironically few resources were actually allocated for coaching or on-site mentoring—necessary ingredients for change in practice at the school site (Murphy & Hallinger, 1987). Without any significant technical assistance, adjustment in role expectations, or policies designed to support the use of new knowledge and skills, the role of instructional leader became more rhetoric than reality. Competing expectations required principals to assume a variety of managerial, political and instructional roles with actual changes in administrative practice less evident than proclaimed or expected.

With the arrival of the 1990s, concern was expressed over the compatibility of the principal’s role as an instructional leader with emerging conceptions of teacher leadership and professionalism (Barth, 1990). According to Grogan and Andrews (2002), “The emergence of an increasingly competitive international economic reality, combined with rapidly changing social conditions in the United States—particularly changing family and student demographics—has caused many educators to speculate that the strict conceptualization of the principal as the only instructional leader in the school may be inadequate for today’s contexts” (Grogan & Andrews, 2002, p. 240). Policymakers, administrators, teachers, and parents recognized that the current system of education was not adequately preparing students and concluded that fundamental changes were needed in the organizational structure, professional roles, and goals of American public education. As a result, reformers recommended the decentralization of authority over curricular and instructional decisions from the school district to the school site, expanded roles for teachers and parents in the decision-making process, and increased emphasis on complex instruction and active learning (Hallinger, 1992).

The pressure to restructure schools enhanced role overload and role ambiguity and increased the complexity of school management tasks (Bredeson, 1993). Compounding the decision-making arena was the phenomenon Murphy (1994) referred to as “leading from the center” (i.e., the necessity of obtaining input from many different groups before decisions were made thus adding time and complexity to the principal’s job). The restructuring move to site-based management called the principal to engage in expanding the leadership team or creating what Elmore (1999) referred to as distributed leadership. Empowerment became the motto, collaborative decision making became the norm, and facilitator, builder of collegial relationships, and resource provider became the principal’s role.
By most contemporary accounts, the 1990s began an unprecedented level of public scrutiny regarding principals’ jobs, expectations, and responsibilities. Proposed solutions to the notion of education for morality, citizenship, and economic growth combined moral instruction with the scientific efficiency techniques of accountability, testing, and standards. Charter schools, privatization, vouchers, decentralized governance, standardized testing, accountability, and youth social issues provoked new pressures and policies, including salary and contract sanctions and rewards based on gains in student achievement. In addition to ongoing societal changes, including shifting demographics, the speed of communication, and the explosion of knowledge rapidly changed the look of and the demands on schools (Marx, 2000). Beck and Murphy (1993) suggested that “there [were] serious efforts developing to transform the principalship into an instrument of social justice” (p. 194). Other conceptual frameworks included principal as servant leader (Greenleaf, 1970), principal as transformational, moral agent (Burns, 1978), principal as ethical leader and shared follower (Sergiovanni, 1996), principal as political leader and coordinator of large administrative teams (Kimborough & Burkett, 1990), and principal as community builder and economic developer (Theobold & Nachtigal, 1995).

As the principal’s role continued to evolve and become increasingly complex, increased expectations for principals moving into the 1990s were accompanied by a loss of authority and an erosion of positional power. During this decade, state and local bureaucracies gained more control and influence over public education, while the nation’s governors met to establish national performance goals to enhance the United States global competitiveness. The “perception of a rising economic challenge from highly industrialized nations” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 29) encouraged various citizen groups to seek input into educational policy making. As a result, principals were expected to administer a highly specialized, extensively regulated, and enormously complex human organization (Deal & Peterson, 1994).

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the reform and restructuring of schools in general and the principalship in particular. Have we come full circle from 1840 to 2000? The role of “teacher of teachers” sounds very similar to the earlier role of “head teacher.” The description of moral, ethical, and servant leadership echoes the earlier role of principal as evangelical missionary, values broker, and spiritual leader. And, the notion of goals, objectives, and benchmarks mirrors the earlier concept of efficiency, scientific management, and bureaucracy.

THE “CHALLENGES AND PROMISES” OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP (21ST CENTURY)

The once rational, objective leader of teachers and manager of conflict is quickly being replaced by the nonrational, subjective leader of leaders and advocate of conflict. Leadership at the top of the pyramid is being replaced by leadership within the center. Restructuring, involving fundamental changes in roles and responsibilities, is being replaced by reculturing involving the substitution of new beliefs, norms, and values for existing ones (Fullan, 1996). When defining the principalship for the 21st century, the emphasis has shifted from pointing out the processes that must be used by principals to more of a values-based, outcomes-based approach on what schools are supposed to accom-
plish. According to Rost (1991), leadership is “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102).

One task for tomorrow’s school leadership is to continue to address the very issues and challenges we have handled with insufficient success for the past century and a half. The challenge, not only for principals but for American society, is to change schooling to be responsive to the needs of historically disenfranchised and undereducated pupils rather than attempting to mold children to fit currently dysfunctional organizational forms. In McPherson’s (1990) opinion, the failed agenda of the last fifty years is still our appropriate agenda.

The ones that will bedevil us are the ones we either have ignored or only partially addressed in the past—racial and social inequalities; failures in productivity and accountability’s professional insularity; isolating, bureaucratic (rather than collegial) organizations; inadequate funding; little attention to human resource development of education professionals and non-professionals; misplaced authority and responsibility; and ignorance regarding the special needs of children emerging from generations of poverty (pp. 94–95).

Another challenge asserts that the requirements of the profession are negatively impacting potential candidates’ career development decisions (Cusick, 2003; McAdams, 1998). Long hours combined with low salaries and high stress are discouraging teachers and other graduate-level candidates from pursuing careers as principals. In other words, the future of the principalship is in jeopardy because the nature of the job is becoming less and less attractive and more and more burdensome. According to ERS (2000), the United States is experiencing a dearth of interested, willing, and qualified candidates because the principal today is confronted with a job filled with conflict, ambiguity, and work overload. Given this, it’s understandable that fewer and fewer qualified people aspire to the principalship, that good people are becoming increasingly harder to find, and that “bright, young administrators aren’t appearing on the horizon” (McCormick, 1987, p. 4). The titles of two recent front-page newspaper articles capture this point—Washington Post (January 5, 1999): “Wanted: A Few Good Principals (As the Job Becomes More Complicated, Schools Fear an Administrative Shortage)” and Los Angeles Times (June 23, 1999): “Principal: A Tougher Job, Fewer Takers.”

The principalship has evolved into a complex role—far more complex than its emergence a hundred years ago. Factors that are dissuading those qualified for administrative posts from applying for positions range from higher teacher salaries, to more two-income households, to negative role perceptions, to balance-of-life questions. Several studies uncovered a myriad of factors contributing to the decline of potential principal candidates (Barker, 1997; ERS, 1998; ERS, 2000; Jones, 2001; McAdams, 1998; Portin, Shen, & Williams, 1998; Wulff, 1996):

1) compensation, salary, and benefits not sufficient or commensurate with job responsibilities;
2) stress, shifting organizational demands, huge workload, unending paperwork and phone calls, day-to-day mundane tasks, countless meetings, and bureaucracy;
3) time demands, long hours, late nights, supervision of events, little time for family or personal renewal, emotionally draining and demoralizing;

4) pressing, complex societal problems, equity issues, increased discipline problems, safety issues, larger numbers of at-risk and ESL students, more special education issues, and higher dropout rates;

5) meeting students’ and parents’ affective and social needs rather than cognitive needs, difficulty focusing on instruction, teaching, learning, planning, evaluation, and reform;

6) escalating standards, accountability pressures, high-stakes testing, accreditation requirements, and school choice issues;

7) lack of respect, erosion of authority and autonomy, shift in balance of power, decentralized decision-making, higher expectations for immediate response, difficulty in satisfying parent and community demands, unrealistic standards;

8) lack of support, isolation from colleagues, threats of litigation, absence of administrative tenure and job security, inadequate school funding;

9) inadequate preparation, broader technical knowledge and collaboration skills necessary, little professional development, perplexity of information to know and share;

10) negative press, increased public scrutiny, unreasonably high expectations;

11) structure of state retirement systems;

12) pervasively stressful political environments, roles, statues, mandates, rewards, and sanctions that dictate practice and benchmarks, legislated systemic change.

In one study, Whitaker (1995) interviewed principals to examine emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in their jobs. Four themes emerged that respondents indicated might prompt them to leave the principalship: increasing demands, lack of role clarity, lack of recognition, and decreasing autonomy. Duke (1988) conducted a similar qualitative study with principals who were considering leaving the principalship. The reasons these principals offered were grouped into four categories: fatigue, a growing awareness of self, a sense of career and timing, and lack of preparation for the realities of the job.

What are the realities of the job? Charged with the mission of improving education for all children, the principalship has become progressively more and more demanding and fraught with fragmentation, variety, and brevity (Peterson, 1982). McAdams (1998) explained that “the changing nature of school administration—in terms of professional status, complexity of tasks, time, demands, and accountability—is another deterrent to pursuing an administrative career” (p. 38). Frequently cited role changes in the literature are connected to the increased time associated with management tasks, shared decision-making, site-based management, pressures to improve student achievement, students’ changing demographics, special education issues, wearing the hat of “community leader,” and issues associated with choice (Christensen, 1992; Murphy, 1994). Always adding to and never subtracting from the job description has lead to excessively high expectations for principals. Wulff (1996) astutely pointed
out, “Each new popular educational issue usually translates into another role for the principal” (p. 2). As a result, marketing that role has become problematic.

According to Murphy and Beck (1994), principals fill a role replete with contradictory demands. They are expected to “work actively to transform, restructure and redefine schools while they hold organizational positions historically and traditionally committed to resisting change and maintaining stability” (p. 3). In addition to being first-rate instructional leaders, principals are being exhorted to be highly skilled building managers, outstanding human resource directors, and competent negotiators. They are expected to be change agents and problem solvers who provide visionary leadership, moral leadership, and cultural leadership while practicing transformational leadership, collaborative leadership, servant leadership, and distributive leadership.

Deal and Peterson (1994) stated, “The role of the principalship has shifted toward administering a highly specialized, extensively regulated, and enormously complex human organization” (p. x). Principals today must possess an “ever-expanding range of skills and knowledge and take responsibility for practically everything in the school” (Hurley, 2001, p. 4). In a sense, they are expected to be all things to all students, to be everything to everyone. In fact, Copland (2001) calls them “Superprincipals.”

Challenges and obstacles to some are often viewed by others as promises and possibilities. For those with a deep sense of purpose and a strong desire to improve education, the principalship is a role replete with great potential. Being a leader of learners yields numerous opportunities for personal and professional growth and development. The shift in transformed schools from a power-over to a power-with approach signifies a reorientation toward moral leadership, professional empowerment, and collegial interdependence. Through collaboration, communication, and experimentation, principals for the 21st century can be learner-centered, vision-driven, action-oriented, and reflectively confident in their ability to instigate reform and stimulate success for all students.

CHAPTER 1 CRITICAL QUESTIONS

1) How did the role of African-American principals change between 1840 and 2000? What were the causes and effects of these changes? What impact did the Brown v. Board of Education decision have on African-American principals in 1954 and in 2004?

2) From a historical perspective, name and discuss three major injustices in the American educational system between 1840 and 2000. From a current issues perspective, name and discuss three social justice issues confronting educational leaders today. What are the connections between the injustices of yesterday and the injustices of today? How are some in-service principals actively and concretely addressing them? Why are other in-service principals denying and avoiding them?

3) How might the role of the principal be restructured to address current challenges and obstacles, current promises and possibilities? What are the pros and cons to each suggestion?
CHAPTER 1 REFERENCES


