THE PRINCIPALSHIP

Thelbert L. Drake *William H. Roe*

THIRD EDITION

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Preface

The world of the principal today is drastically different from the world of the principal when we went to elementary or secondary school. The principal of this decade deals with conflict, stress, and a myriad of external forces and expectations. The social and technological revolutions which have overtaken all of our communities to varying degrees have affected and will continue to affect curriculum, school organization, discipline, student behavior, community relations, and the very nature of the teaching-learning process itself. Thus the old ground rules that fashioned our American schools into such similar and unquestioned molds are now largely obsolete—an obsolescence which has left the principal in too many cases without an acceptable mode of administrative behavior.

This book attempts to fill the void. It must be filled because the principal is a key factor in the survival of any school's effectiveness. The flood of reports in 1983 underlined the importance of the principal's role, over and over again. He or she is the administrator of direct-line action, having first contact with the parent and the local community, with the teachers needing resources and direction, with the students in the learning environment, with the staff in the central administration, and with outside agencies and institutions wishing to make some impact upon each individual school unit. It is the principal who must articulate to these "publics" a vision of what should be.

The dichotomy implied in university programs that separate principalship courses into elementary, secondary, and sometimes even middle school, tends to weaken the program and the idea of the principalship as a career field. Such separation reinforces the already existing barriers between the elementary and secondary levels.

The authors contend that there are common understandings and competencies essential to administering an elementary school, a large comprehensive high school, or a transitional junior high or middle school. These provide the principal with perspectives about our changing society and about teaming

up with individuals and groups within the framework of formal and informal school organizations. As an educational executive, the principal must be capable of implementing an administrative process that utilizes and stimulates input from all people within the community and at the same time provides leadership for the future. This book makes available for this process patterns that are workable, responsible, and yet not so rigid or brittle that they shatter under stress. Examples of proven theories, principles, and practices that are presented are not intended to be formulae for success, but are intended to stimulate the reader to make practical applications appropriate to his or her organization and social cultural setting.

The overriding philosophy of this book is the simple but often neglected principle that instruction of the students and learning by the students is the supreme reason for the school's existence. Since teaching and learning are primary, the principal's instructional leadership with teachers is paramount. Organization and administration must then be considered as means and not ends. In developing this point of view, the teacher becomes the most important agent in carrying out the educational process. Therefore, a principal's most important function is to help establish, develop, and maintain a teaching staff that will provide the best possible opportunities for teaching and learning. He or she then works with the teachers and students to develop yet-to-be-reached levels of achievement and behavior, and a learning environment of the highest order.

It is from this viewpoint that this book is directed to principals and their superintendents, to prospective principals, and to those who prepare people for the principalship.

The book assumes that the reader is well grounded in educational foundations and has an introductory knowledge of school administration. It spends little time, therefore, with the history and background of educational administration. It is concerned primarily with the effective functioning of the principal in providing the best possible learning environment for children and adults in a society that is continuously assuming radical new dimensions.

The authors wish to recognize the many obligations they have to the investigators and authors whose works are cited throughout this book, and to many colleagues at several universities, state departments of education and professional organizations who helped shape our thoughts as we prepared this text.[1] Specific mention is due to Dr. Robert Seitz of Ball State University for his work in revising Chapter 11. We also express our appreciation to Drs. J. William May, Tomas Lopez, Lynn P. Hartzler, and Fannie Lovelady-Dawson all from the California Department of Education; Dr. William C. Golden, Chairman of the Florida Council on Educational Management, and Dr. Lu-

[1] An honest attempt has been made throughout the text to avoid the use of masculine pronouns when referring to people in general; however, on rare occasions a masculine pronoun has been used in reference to humanity at large for purposes of succinctness.

ther R. Rogers, Deputy Director for Program Services; Dr. John Alford, Assistant Superintendent for Planning, Illinois Office of Education; Dr. James W. Keefe, Director of Research for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Dr. Dale E. Graham, Principal of Carmel High School and Past President of NASSP.

We also give special thanks to our wives, Suzanne and Vi, who in spite of many early and late hours of poring over our notes, wrestling with putting ideas onto paper, and in spite of many weekends and relaxing times that never materialized, still understood and encouraged us.

T. L. D.
W. H. R.

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Part I
Bases for Operation

The principal of today and tomorrow faces a rapidly and continuously changing environment. The political, social, economic, technological, and environmental forces that are influencing our society so dramatically are in turn having a dramatic impact on all aspects of the school itself—the curriculum, the school organization, the faculty, student behavior, community relations, and the very nature of the teaching–learning process. An important ingredient for the success of elementary, middle, and secondary school principals operating in this dynamic setting is that they bring to the position a solid foundational base that will give them perspective about our changing society. In addition, he or she must have expertise in teaming up with individuals and groups within the formal and informal school organization to make our schools responsive to the changing needs of society. The next seven chapters attempt to provide the potential educational leader with the elements of this important foundational base.

Chapter 1 A Social Base for School Operation: Are We Coping with a Myth or Reality?

Although there is a serious question of whether the American school can be considered a major agent of change in our society, it has had thrust upon it more and more responsibility for maintaining our society. In a matter of a relatively few years the school has changed from an institution serving only a part of our youth through a limited curriculum to an institution attempting to serve all youth for all of society.

The public is nearly unanimous in its endorsement of an educational system that will serve all children and youth. One notes, however, a divergence in viewpoint on how broad and varied the school program should be, along with a great reluctance to give it *carte blanche* in its role as an agent of change for our society. Herein lies a great debate that is causing confusion both within the profession and society at large.

The School and a Changing Society

In 1932, George S. Counts asserted that "only in the rarest of instances does it [the school] wage war on behalf of principle or ideal."[1] His thesis was that schools should not exist just to preserve and maintain the status quo or merely to pass on accumulated knowledge of the past. Rather, he proposed that teachers should lead the way to the utopian, better life.

> We should, however, give to our children a vision of the possibilities which lie ahead and endeavor to enlist their loyalties and enthusiasms in the realization of

[1] George S. Counts, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order* (New York: The John Day Company, 1932), p. 5. This publication was based on three papers presented by George Counts at major educational meetings in February of 1932. The titles of these papers were, "Dare Progressive Education be Progressive?" "Education Through Indoctrination," and "Freedom, Culture, Social Planning and Leadership."

the vision. Also, our social institutions and our practices, all of them, should be critically examined in the light of such a vision.[2]

Counts' controversial and dramatic statements in his papers entitled *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order* touched off a series of lively debates and discussions in professional societies and graduate schools of education throughout the country. The more daring were the "changers" and the more conservative were the "maintainers," and for more than fifty years this lively discussion has ebbed and flowed to the point that there probably is not a thinking educator in this country who has not participated in these debates. Unfortunately, these discussions generated much heat but little action. The schools of today still must follow a course which ties them inexorably to the establishment, forcing them into a difficult and almost untenable position; for while the school, by its very nature, must maintain and support the present system, the world has been changing, values have been questioned, and society is in the midst of a major social and economic upheaval.

Alvin Toffler, in his book *Future Shock,* described this phenomenon most succinctly, in a manner that is still appropriate.

> This storm, far from abating, now appears to be gathering force. Change sweeps through the highly industrialized countries in waves of ever accelerating speed and unprecedented impact. It spawns in its wake all sorts of curious social flora—from psychedelic churches and "free universities" to science cities in the Arctic and wife-swap clubs in California.
>
> It breeds odd personalities, too: children who at twelve are no longer childlike; adults who at fifty are children of twelve. There are rich men who playact poverty, computer programmers who turn on with LSD. There are anarchists who, beneath their dirty denim shirts, are outrageous conformists, and conformists who, beneath their button-down collars, are outrageous anarchists. There are married priests and atheist ministers and Jewish Zen Buddhists. We have pop . . . and op . . . and *art cinetique* . . . There are Playboy Clubs and homosexual movie theaters . . . amphetamines and tranquilizers . . . anger, affluence, and oblivion. Much oblivion.
>
> Is there some way to explain so strange a scene . . . Is there a way to understand it, to shape its development? How can we come to terms with it? Much that now strikes us as incomprehensible would be far less so if we took a fresh look at the racing rate of change that makes reality seem, sometimes, like a kaleidoscope run wild. For the acceleration of change does not merely buffet industries or nations. It is a concrete force that reaches deep into our personal lives, compells us to act out new roles, and confronts us with the danger of a new and powerfully upsetting psychological disease. This new disease can be called "future shock". . . .[3]

The Faith of People in Education

The people of our country have immense faith in education—and rightly so, for the success of our birth and development as a vibrant democracy could be

[2] Ibid., p. 37.

[3] Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), pp. 9–10.

attributed to an educated, enlightened citizenry. Schools were always a part of the American way and American dream.

In early America, as today, education was the central unifying force of a civilization, the common denominator of life. There was something in it that stirred the popular pulse. More than three hundred years ago the colonists, on the bleak shore of Massachusetts, in the presence of their privations, found the willpower and the means to create the Boston Latin School and Harvard College. Over the years, as early Americans married, built homes, and began taming a primeval land, the education of their children was a foremost common concern. From the little they laboriously took from forest and soil they built their schoolhouses and paid their schoolmasters, and plowed back their savings into coming generations. This process still continues, but in a much more sophisticated way.

It was in America that there first was heard the voice of authority that said to all that they must provide for the education of all. America was the cradle of the free public school. It was in America that universal education first established itself upon the largest scale. Here citizens of all sorts were the first to be forbidden to grow up unlettered and uninstructed. Here secondary education, as well as elementary education, was made available to everyone. It was in America that free public education was first used as the instrument for creating a constantly broadening middle class, so that all people might eventually be equal participants in the free, competitive, yet cooperative, and productive life of the nation. It was in America that an educational ladder was first erected so that all people might ascend, from bottom to top, according to their impulses and talents: ascend, if they might, to positions of the highest leadership in arts and letters, in science, business, industry, and agriculture, in technology, in the professions, and in public affairs. It was in America that education found a new serviceability to man by dealing with the realities of everyday life as well as with the gleanings of the scholars of the past. A German, Goethe, once said that children are so brilliant that, if they fulfilled their early promise, the world would be peopled with geniuses. But it was the unresting American spirit that contrived, and is still patiently contriving, a system of schools, colleges, and universities designed upon the dream of making Goethe's observation come true.[4]

The schools served our country well in this regard for they gave man the fundamental tools—reading, writing, and arithmetic—necessary for an enlightened citizenry. This was no myth. The public schools did spread literacy and general knowledge throughout the country, encouraging each American to be confident of his or her ability to rise to his or her highest level.

[4] For a more extensive development of this concept, the reader is referred to Chap. I, "Education and the American Way of Life," in the book, *State School Administration*, by Lee M. Thurston and William H. Roe (New York: Harper & Row, Pub., Inc., 1957). The authors are indebted to Thurston and Roe for many of the ideas developed in this chapter.

Is It a Myth?

The role of the common school was no myth in regard to helping build America through creating a literate citizenry; however, as our population grew and society became more complicated, and as public and private education became more extensive, it became probable that a myth had developed. We are discovering that some of our fundamental beliefs are fallacious. Because the schools were so important in the building of our country, as society became more complicated—fraught with a Gordian knot of tangled problems of urban migration, breakdown of the family, crime, race relations, poverty, unemployment—people turned confidently to the schools and said, "They'll fix it!" Educators with a naive faith that learning solves all problems responded with, "All we need are more resources and to get all the children for longer periods and society's problems will be solved." But, just more of the same was too simple an answer for the complicated problems. We deluded ourselves by assuming that there was a basic value system that could be a foundation for our teaching; that just sitting together in a classroom and working together in schools—the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the washed and the unwashed—would impart to everybody an understanding and respect for each other, and give each the ability and the desire to become citizens capable of making their unique contributions to this great country.

Henry Steele Commager points out that it was most unreasonable to expect the schools to either fashion a new society or solve the problems of national and world affairs. This, says Commager, is not just the school's but also society's responsibility. The school cannot and should not function as a surrogate conscience for society, nor should society impose on schools the task of inculcating standards of conduct which it is itself unprepared to honor or practice.

> To judge by the experience of the past forty years, reliance on the schools to reform society and usher in the millennium by teaching social problems, or world history, has been an almost unmitigated failure. After half a century of exposure to world culture, world history, and world politics—most of it contemporary, of course—Americans turned out to be culturally more alienated and politically more isolationist and chauvinistic than at any time in our history.
>
> It is of course folly to blame this on the schools. The responsibility is on society itself for requiring the schools to do far more than they could do and deflecting them from doing those things they had done well in the past and were prepared to do well in the present.[5]

The myth was that schools could do anything, and anything they did would be right.[6] This just did not prove to be true! Many people have been disillu-

[5] Henry Steele Commager, *The People and Their Schools* (Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa [Fastback], 1976), p. 31.

[6] Henry Steele Commager, "The Schools Can't Do it All," *The Rotarian,* 143 (Nov. 1983), pp. 26–29.

sioned because they believed so strongly in this myth. It may be more accurate to say that more responsibility has been thrust upon our schools than they should accept; more results have been expected than they could possibly produce; and in too many cases, schools have assumed more than they should. An approach to dispelling this myth is to admit that the schools have been essentially maintainers and reinforcers of existing systems. Is this a "cop out"? Were they really established and so broadly supported to build a new social order? Are we asking for "what never was" if we assume they can do so?

How a Broad-Based Concept of Education Grew

Because this myth grew, this does not mean we should fault educators for perpetuating a myth. Rather, the problem was this: as society became more complex, schooling (learning in school) and learning within the total life experience became intermixed. To criticize educators for believing so firmly in the power of schooling and what it can accomplish in self-improvement and social improvement is indeed misplaced criticism.[7] These educators were dedicated, devoted, and committed to the crusade against ignorance, poverty, and social injustice; and were firmly convinced of the power of education to correct these ills. In the schoolmasters' belief that education could create informed, self-fulfilled citizens, they tried relentlessly to enlarge the opportunities of the individual through expansion of the role of the school. As devoted citizens and educators, they accepted the challenge to correct a wide variety of social problems and, in the process, too often attempted to fill every void created by omissions of the family, church, and society.[8]

This broad concept of education was not developed by osmosis, or by a helter-skelter process. To believe this is to do injustice to dedicated educators of the past. If one reviews the history and records of the various educational associations through the years, and if one reads their pronouncements, one understands that there were thousands of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses with a boundless faith in youth and their education—educators with visions and dreams who enunciated what the good life should be—who planted the seeds, who provided the vision of what education could and should do for a democratic nation. An example of this vision may be seen in the reports issued between 1911 to 1919 by the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education.[9] Their key report, issued in 1918, which had a significant impact on education and schooling, was *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Educa-*

[7] Diane Ravitch, "What We've Accomplished Since World War II," *Principal*, 63 (Jan. 1984), pp. 7–13.

[8] Charles A. Tesconi, Jr., "Additive Reform and the Retreat from Purpose," *Educational Studies: A Journal of the Foundations of Education*, 15 (1984), pp. 1–10.

[9] Appointed by the National Educational Association and supported by the then U.S. Bureau of Education.

tion.[10] This report enunciated what they considered to be the principal aims of education: (1) health, (2) command of the fundamental processes, (3) worthy home membership, (4) vocation, (5) citizenship, (6) worthy use of leisure, and (7) ethical character.

Then, in the late 1930s and 1940s, some of education's most prestigious and influential organizations conducted studies, which were followed by a variety of reports and scholarly publications, expanding on this philosophy. The Educational Policies Commission of the National Educational Association issued the following Reports: *The Unique Function of Education in American Democracy* (1937); *Education for All American Youth* (1944); *Education for All American Children* (1948); *Moral and Spiritual Values in Public Schools* (1951); and *Education for All American Youth—A Further Look* (1952). During approximately that same period the Progressive Education Association was conducting an eight-year study of secondary education, which culminated in a five-volume report, in 1942. This was known as the *Adventures in Education Series.* The study was an attempt to gain greater cooperation between secondary schools and colleges and thereby obtain more flexibility in the curriculum. The general feeling was that the requirements of colleges and universities were causing the high school curriculum to be overly dominated by academics. A quote from *The Story of the Eight-Year Study* capsules the philosophy and purpose behind the study:

> The school should be a living organism of which each student is a vital part. It should be a place to which one goes gladly because there he can engage in activities which satisfy his desires, work at the solution of problems which he faces in everyday living, and have opened to him new interests and wider horizons. The whole boy goes to school; therefore, school should stimulate his whole being. It should provide opportunities for the full exercise of his physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual powers as he strives to achieve recognition and a place of usefulness and honor in adult society.[11]

Recurring Waves of Criticism

It would be a mistake to assume that there was complete acceptance of the idea of broadening the role of the school, either by the educational community or by society at large. Throughout the years there have been persistent waves of criticism challenging this viewpoint. Many believed the schools should limit their efforts to basic academic education. A major confrontation regarding these differences of thought was precipitated in October of 1957, when the Soviet Union became the first nation to put an object in orbit: it

[10] A Report of the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education, *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education,* Bulletin, 1918, No. 35, Department of Interior (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1937.

[11] The Progressive Education Association, *The Story of the Eight-Year Study* (New York: Harper & Row, Pub., Inc., 1942), p. 17.

launched a basketball-sized spaceship named "Sputnik." Looking for a scapegoat for what they considered to be the United States' second-class position in a new space-age, American opinion makers concluded that it was the fault of our schools that the Soviets had beaten us in space, because schools were devoting too much time to extras and not enough to academics. They asserted that the talent of our youth was being wasted, and the result was that we did not have mathematicians, engineers, physicists, and scientists with the skill and know-how necessary for us to be leaders in space exploration.

The unexpected achievement of the Russians was attributed largely to their educational system. In comparing our two systems, the impression was created that public education in the U.S. neglected fundamental subjects; that we placed too much emphasis on "life adjustment" problems. These problems, the critics asserted, should be the main concern of the home and nonschool social agencies. A capsulation of the viewpoints on this issue can be found in *The Great Debate: Our Schools in Crises.*[12] In their preface, the authors of *The Great Debate* pointed out the gravity of the situation in words reminiscent of those from *A Nation at Risk:* "If we fail to educate the present and immediately future generations appropriately and well, we may lose the current conflict with the Soviet powers, and cease to be free to educate and live as we see fit. This is the grim prospect before us."[13]

A considerable portion of the "Great Debate" of the late 1950s was more emotionally charged than it was reflective. The criticism sent shock waves throughout the educational community. Educators were generally resisting the attacks and denying charges while the critics were illuminating and exaggerating errors. Fortunately, balance and perspective began to emerge. A few thoughtful educators, such as James Bryant Conant, through lectures and writings, declared that if issues are fairly presented and freely debated, workable solutions, with merit, could emerge.[14] As a result, through the tremendous interest in education created by this widespread public debate there was an unparalleled opportunity to make some long overdue improvements, during the 1960s and 1970s. An example of the results is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which gave the federal government unprecedented power, and, in effect, made the federal government a champion of equal opportunity in education. This gave rise to dozens of federal programs that not only flooded the schools with money but imposed a variety of mandates and regulations.

[12] Scott C. Winfield, Clyde M. Hill, and Robert W. Burns, *The Great Debate: Our Schools in Crises* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959).

[13] Ibid., p. iii.

[14] James Bryant Conant was no doubt the most popular and influential spokesman about education in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He gave hundreds of lectures and wrote a number of books, which were widely read by both educators and lay people during this period. Five of his most popular books are listed in Chapter 1 Selected Readings.