

## STEWARDSHIP OF A VISION OF LEARNING

*A school is often the lengthened shadow of its principal.*

—Anonymous

### INTRODUCTION

#### Expectations + Vision = Achievement

Great schools reflect great principals. The principal is essential to the purpose of a school. In purposing, it is the principal's responsibility to develop with input from other staff members a set of core values that will move the school toward its goal of reaching high academic achievement for its students and helping a staff to become independent thinkers and problem solvers. The principal is the steward of the school. He or she drives the change that is needed to improve. Often, we think of a steward or stewardship as it relates to a labor union or religion, but it is very applicable to the principalship. In medieval times, under the feudal system, the steward or "keeper of the hall" was responsible for the management of the household; the principal has the responsibility for moving the school forward toward academic excellence. The steward needed to hold himself accountable for all that took place, even though he could delegate certain activities; in a school, the principal delegates, but maintains accountability. The medieval steward made it his business to know all the operational details of the estate; in schools, it is the principal's responsibility to have knowledge of all the details that can or might impact the mission or vision of the school. In medieval times, the steward provided the necessary training to those that he

supervised and helped them to develop the skills of a good steward; in schools, the principal uses strategies that empower staff and provides training opportunities for increased effectiveness in the delivery of instruction. The principal seeks to develop stewards of education within the staff. The best principal, like the best steward, understands his or her role in the educational process and carries it out with devoted and steady effort.

The principal or educational leader must have a vision of learning. This is critical to the success of the school. Vision serves as a source of energy that drives all decisions related to the welfare and improved education of its student body and staff. It is the force that shapes the practices within the school. Without a vision, our teaching and learning activities will not contribute to significant student learning, and our efforts will be less meaningful. The vision for helping students to achieve academic excellence should be shared by all the stakeholders; it should be creative and obtainable. According to Gordon Calwelti, great leaders do just two things—they decide what to do, and then seek support to get things done (Owings, 2003, p. 47).

The principal, as the chief steward, has the responsibility of creating a learning community that

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will support necessary change to improve and maintain high student achievement. The teachers and staff, through professional-development activities, are invited to co-create the vision and engage in practices that reflect that vision. They also become stewards of the vision as understanding and acceptance develops,

which impact practices in the classroom and eventually the readily acceptance of the established vision by the student body. When the norm of the culture changes and students begin to believe in the school, they begin to set and meet the higher expectations as established by the vision.



## Beacon of Light

*If we don't stand for excellence, who will? We are the keepers of the educational beacon of light!*

—Diana Williams

I was so excited about my first assignment as principal. I had been assigned to a 100-year-old building in the heart of the city. The building had its own charm, with large wooden-floored hallways. There were large expanses of Plexiglas windows on the new addition and updated entranceway.

I began going in weekly during the summer as soon as I received the assignment, getting myself ready for my new role in the fall. The first time I went in, I met the custodial staff. I commented on the beautiful updated entranceway and how it would “look so nice once the windows were cleaned.” I commented how I wanted to start bringing in plants to adorn the entranceway. When I went back the next week, my indirect comments had gone unheeded, so I reiterated my wishes this time a little more assertively, “Could you please clean the windows soon, so I can start bringing in the plants?” The headman, a little unkempt himself, nodded and said, “Sure, Miz Williams, we will.” I went away satisfied that I had asserted my leadership and that my wishes would be carried out.

Needless to say, this game went on for a few more visits. Each time, Mr. J would be very compliant, but nothing ever changed. I thought about my response for the fourth or fifth time, and decided I was going to use my excellent persuasive communication skills this time. When we had exchanged the usual pleasantries, I said, “Mr. J, I have asked you several times now to clean the entrance windows,

and you have not done so. Will you please tell me why you have not done this?” To which he replied, “Well it’s like this, Miz Williams, as soon as we wash the windows, these kids are going to come up here and put their hands all over them, and then we’ll just have to wash them again. It’s just not worth it to wash them before we have to.” My response is known to my colleagues and friends as “The Beacon of Light Speech.” I stood on my soapbox with a flame in my eyes and said something like this,

Mr. J, this school is going to be the beacon of educational light in this community. If the kids dirty the windows, we’ll wash them again! This is going to be the place where everyone wants to go . . . If we don’t stand for excellence, who will? We are the keepers of the educational light. We must not forget that!

After a few minutes of stunned silence (I even stunned myself), he muttered, “Well alright, Miz Williams. We’ll get right on it!” Which, they did. Not only did he clean up the windows, but he also had on a new shirt the next time I came. We walked the building together, and he proudly pointed out improvements he had made for our beacon of light! We went on to have a good working relationship, and he took great pride in being the headman of the beacon of light in the community.

# My Journal Story

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## Lessons Learned

- It is important to be direct in communication. Tell people what you want.
- Bracket your requests with specific information, such as, "I'd like this done by Wednesday of next week."
- The principal sets the tone for high expectations. Principals must convey these expectations to others and get them to buy in to them.
- People will rise to the occasion if we believe in them.
- Tell people the "whys." Telling the whys helps people understand the vision.
- Differentiate between a request and a nonnegotiable. Often, matters that are nonnegotiable are phrased as if the other person can either accept or deny the request. It is important to be clear about what we want from others.
- It is important to understand the other person's point of view.
- People will rise to higher standards if the expectation is set.



## Mini Coaching

- What communication skills do you use to help others be clear about what you stand for?
- What are some strategies you have used to work with people who have disappointed you?
- What do you want for your school?
- How do you communicate your expectations to staff?

## A Time for Action

*The time is always right to do what is right.*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

This particular day, all seemed right with the world. There were no challenging or urgent responsibilities within my immediate awareness that needed attention; yet, I was feeling a pull at my inner being that was causing a lot of turbulence—somewhat of an anxiety attack. The cause of this condition was not clear, but as I started to reflect upon some of my earlier thoughts and observations that I gathered from the staff, I realized that change had to be initiated. Was dissatisfaction with many aspects of the school that I had responsibilities for leading causing my subconscious to drive my conscious self into action? If so, how was this transformation going to occur? How was I going to get the staff on board, a staff that had embedded itself into a belief that mediocrity in teaching performance was acceptable because of the suggestion that poverty and lack of parental involvement and concern were to blame? This was in direct conflict with how I perceived our students and their families. This

difference in perceptions caused much of my emotional stress. Something had to change. On this day during my walkthrough, I decided to look for people who by their actions demonstrated a strong passion for maximizing the learning environment of their classroom.

By the end of the day, I had identified and selected 3 out of 18 classroom teachers to engage in discussing or sharing a vision of how our school could be improved academically and socially. During the individual conversations, I was pleased to discover that their beliefs were similar to mine—a belief that changing the way we as a staff did business could increase the number of successful students, decreasing the number of failing ones. The gnawing at my inner conscious seemed to decrease after each conversation. I felt more at peace because now I had started on my journey of sharing my vision and developing a plan that involved others in helping to create a more effective school culture.

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**Lessons Learned**

- It is important to develop an understanding of your subconscious.
- It is necessary to identify people who can assist you in accomplishing your vision.
- Change is difficult for some people even though it may be in the best interest of the organization.
- Established norms are difficult to change.
- As you move through your school, choose a specific point of interest to focus upon.



**Mini Coaching**

- Tell about a time that you have been unsettled about the direction and vision for your school.
- As you think about the changes that you want to occur, what barriers are the most daunting?
- How will you be able to move your initial intentions to deeper and more significant involvement?

## The Broken Windows

*We shape our buildings and thereafter they shape us.*

—Winston Churchill

Like so many times before, I submitted a work order for the replacement of the glass-block windows that cascaded across the front of the building and above the library. The school district's maintenance department responded by sending a work crew to fix the problem that was caused by some of the neighborhood students who found the windows to be quite useful for target practice; they threw rocks at them during evening hours and weekends. This time, to my surprise, the maintenance men came prepared to cover the windows with wood. I was definitely not in agreement with that decision and stopped the work order by requesting they put the wooden boards back on the truck and leave the school grounds, which they did.

I immediately phoned the director of maintenance and questioned the decision that was made to cover, not replace, the windows. I was told that it was a matter of finance and that the school district could not afford to continue replacing the glass block. I explained to him that I could not afford to

have the windows in the library blocked or covered with any type of opaque material. Boarded windows would take away the sunlight that streamed through the windows, thus creating a dark cavernous environment. One of our goals was to create a learning climate that was warm, inviting, and welcoming. The boarded windows would not support that goal and would expand and reinforce the negative and blighted conditions of the surrounding neighborhood. I acknowledged respectfully the district's position in this matter, but I could not and would not accept that decision. After much discussion, I was finally asked for an alternative solution. I promptly suggested the placement of a wire mesh guard over the windows to prevent the vandalism. Due to my steadfast objection, the decision was rescinded and my suggestion was followed. The installation of the wire guard protected the windows from flying objects and allowed light to filter into the library. The problem related to the broken windows was permanently solved.



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## Lessons Learned

- When you truly believe in something and act upon your beliefs, you will be successful in your endeavor.
- The school district has to be fiscally responsible, but not at the expense of my students' welfare.
- Be prepared to fight for the interest of your students.
- I was willing to be labeled uncooperative if that had been the outcome resulting from my actions.
- Develop an understanding of your challenges and have feasible solutions to problems when asked for input.



## Mini Coaching

- Tell about a problem that you want to resolve.
- How will you make your wants clear?
- How will you be clear in your thinking so that you can present your case in a clear and concise manner?
- What other possibilities can you think of to resolve your problem? Think of at least five. Now, think of five more.

## Controlling the Louse

*As the wound inflames the finger, so thought inflames the mind.*

—Ethiopian Proverb (Leslau, 1985)

The mission statement of our school implied that it was our purpose to maximize the learning opportunity for each student. In reaching this goal, it was necessary to recognize and alleviate any condition that might interfere with this outcome. For whatever reason, our student body was plagued with head lice. I suspect it was the result of transmitting the bug from head to head by way of the old stuffed furniture that sat on the porches of many homes in our school community, the sharing of head wear and hair implements, or the affectionate contact that primary-grade children, especially, have with each other. Whatever the reason, we had more than our share of this social problem.

Once a child became identified as having head lice, he or she, according to our board policy, was removed from school. For readmission, the student's hair needed to be cleaned by combing out the lice and nits, treated with some type of medicated shampoo, and screened by the school nurse. This was an expensive and time-consuming activity; many of the parents could not afford the shampoo, and the nurse who worked in our school on a part-time basis was not always available. Some of the

parents became upset about the removal of their children and reacted by not attending to the situation as promptly as possible. The absence, although necessary, was in conflict with our mission statement of maximizing the learning opportunity for each student. This was a challenge that needed to be resolved. The staff and I had to come up with a plan that enabled our students to be in school, adhere to board policy, and protect the unaffected population. After much discussion, we created a mini health clinic, which was staffed by one of our educational assistants who was very passionate about keeping the kids in school. Our focus was to assist parents in combing out the lice and nits while at the school. We were also able to provide shampoo, donated by our local pharmacies, to the parents who needed it. Selected school staff also performed the head check when the nurse was not on duty. A very negative situation was turned into a positive one. Once parents viewed the school as having a genuine interest in helping resolve the problem and did not regard it as a stigma, parents became positive about doing their job in controlling the problem. Absence created by head lice was practically eliminated.

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## Lessons Learned

- The incongruence between our mission statement and the practice of removing students for head lice was a concern. How can students be expected to learn when they are not in school?
- Certainly, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children's education is not disrupted, but we cannot control the actions of parents.
- We as a school staff have the responsibility of engaging in practices that support our beliefs.



## Mini Coaching

- From the examination of data, what solutions can you think of to address your issue?
- What can you control, and what type of actions could be taken that will resolve your issue?
- How will you involve the staff in solving this problem?

## Keeping the Kids at the Center

*Set the tone for a child-centered mission.*

—Diana Williams

Upon entering my new assignment as principal, I noticed that staff members began jockeying for little perks, usually beginning with, “The former principals did it this way,” or “The former principals allowed us to . . .” I made it clear even as we reviewed our mission statement that central to all decisions would be what’s best for the children.

There was a large, spacious, carpeted room that apparently a former principal had agreed to let one of the kindergarten teachers move to. On the other hand, there were two teachers who had been researching team teaching and multiage

grouping who wanted to develop a model for the school in first and second grade. This model would include up to 50 students and two teachers as opposed to the 23 students for the kindergarten room.

Other faculty members generally supported my decision that the multiage group would be better served from the room usage. While the kindergarten teacher was disappointed, I do believe that she also came to view this as a wise decision, as it was made based on the question “What’s best for the most children?”

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## Lessons Learned

- Adhering to the vision allows for better decision making and buy in from a broader base.
- Modeling the importance of keeping students at the core of the vision sets the tone for a child-centered mission.
- You cannot always please everyone when making a decision.



## Mini Coaching

- When have you had to make a decision that disappointed a staff member?
- How have you been able to foster collaborative decision making?
- How have you used your mission statement to drive a decision on behalf of students?

## The Unstoppable Event

*The secret of success: Never let down! Never let up!*

—T. Harry Thompson

The Boy Scouts of America in our area were concerned about the lack of availability of scouting opportunities in communities that experienced a lower socioeconomic status and, therefore, created a program that would bring scouting to the central parts of the city through the in-school Scouting program. Our school was identified as a potential prospect for the program. After much discussion, the teachers and I felt that it would bring a different set of opportunities to our students and we accepted the Scouts' offer to implement the program in our building. Learning modules that embraced the academic standards of our district as well as the Scouting curriculum and experience were designed. Our in-school Scout leader was extremely dedicated to her work with our students and worked diligently to help our fifth-grade students develop the necessary skills to participate in a citywide first aid competition. It was very exciting to have our team excel at the district, state, and finally the national level. Since our school had many challenges, both social and academic, this level of success was a morale booster for the student body as well as the immediate community.

One of the rewards for coming in first place nationally was the opportunity to be recognized during the annual conference of the American Red

Cross. We received a congratulatory letter that also invited us to the conference. We became really excited about having our students engage in this type of experience; but one week later, our excitement ended when a representative from the Red Cross contacted me. She attempted to discourage the team from attending the national event and indicated that our plaque would be mailed to the school. Of course, I would not accept the suggestion. Realistically, it was going to be a stretch of the imagination to transport our students to Baltimore, Maryland. Money was the biggest issue along with time and travel arrangements. I was determined that our students would have their recognition; they worked hard to earn it, and this was a rare opportunity for them to travel beyond their community. With donated money, I was able to buy airline tickets and arrange limousine service from the airport to the conference hotel. Several of the parents came with us. Neither the students nor the parents had flown, so this trip provided exceptional opportunities for the group. The trip was a one-day event; we left at 6:25 a.m. and returned at 6:35 p.m. This was one of my most rewarding accomplishments—just to be able to help provide this experience to our families and to participate and share the joy of our time together.

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## Lessons Learned

- As the building principal, it is my responsibility to take advantage of the opportunities to have my students experience activities beyond their daily lives.
- I have the ability to create within each student the desire to strive continuously for success and to understand the rewards and recognitions that come from hard work.
- In your walk as an administrator, it's difficult to know when and how you affect the lives of your students unless you are fortunate enough to receive a note years later from one of them who indicates a desire to be just like you (what an honor).



## Mini Coaching

- Think of a meaningful accomplishment you have made on behalf of students.
- In what ways did the outcome outweigh the time and energy required to accomplish this goal?
- What indicators would you use to determine the benefits of the experience?
- How did you obtain the resources needed for your goal?

## Field Trip to a Great School

*Professional learning together builds a strong learning community that improves outcomes for students.*

—Diana Williams

In our district, there was one school in particular that was making a name for itself by implementing a comprehensive and effective schools model. The principal was a well-known and highly respected leader. The school had been promoting its mission as an outstanding academy for poor and minority children. They had implemented several innovative curricular approaches, they had opened up a parent center on their premises, and they were fostering high expectations among their student body by promoting an academic and safe climate. In short, as a principal taking on a failing school, I wanted us to do, have, and be all that the other school promised.

This Academy hosted visitors on certain days of the week at particular times as their reputation grew. I engaged enough substitute teachers over the course of a month to allow each staff member to spend a morning at one of the sponsored tours at the Academy. I asked that they take note of those things that the other school had and were doing that would be good for our school. Also, I asked them to note things that we were doing as well or perhaps better than the other school. I asked them to hold their comments and notes until everyone

had a chance to go. Finally, all of the staff had visited the model school. The secretary, custodian, and I were the last three to go.

The following week, we had a staff meeting where we put up chart paper labeled with the characteristics of effective schools:

- Strong leadership
- Climate conducive to learning
- Monitoring of student achievement
- High expectations for everyone
- A strong parent and community focus

We then listed in columns all of the ideas that we saw that we would like to implement. We also used a column to list some of the things that were occurring at our school that we were proud of and wished to retain. Once all of the ideas were on newsprint, everyone had three sticky dots to use to vote and prioritize their most pressing areas of concern. From that process, we engaged committees willing to work in the prioritized areas. Ultimately, these areas would become our school-improvement plan, which became the guiding document for our reform work and our grant writing.





## The Winds of Change

*Things do not change; we change.*

—Henry David Thoreau

Our school district, like most public schools, uses data to determine the impact of its educational programs on the various populations that are served. As our school was a Title I school, we had access to grant money earmarked for school improvement. I have always believed that if you keep doing the same things in the same way, you will end up with the same results. It was necessary to infuse the minds of the staff with fresh ideas regarding teaching and learning if real change was going to occur, which meant that we would need to go beyond the walls of our school. In consultation with the Title I district administrators, a school on the East Coast was selected for a site visit. I shared the opportunity with the staff and explained why it was necessary for us to visit an exemplary school that had socioeconomic conditions similar to ours but a higher rate of success in their efforts to overcome them. It was also important to acknowledge that our students performed well, considering the perceived history that each child brought to school, but it was possible to improve that performance if we changed our teaching methods, organization, expectations, and classroom-management styles. The opportunity to explore and the challenge to become better at what we do were presented to the staff. The staff bought into the idea of visiting another school to obtain information that would act as a catalyst for our desired change. Four teachers, divided evenly between primary and intermediate levels, were selected for the experience.

The day before we departed for our site visit, I made sure each team member was prepared with the necessary information regarding flight numbers and time, name and address of the school, knowledge regarding ground transportation, and the

need to arrive at the airport in a timely manner. Upon my arrival at the airport, a few minutes behind schedule, I encountered a rather long line, which delayed my getting to the gate prior to the closing of the jet way. I missed the plane. However, I was able to catch the next available flight and joined my team about an hour after their arrival at the school, amid their good-natured teasing as well as their relief from the uncertainty imposed by my delay. All went well after that incident as we began to focus on the school and its program. We observed the utilization of all staff in the delivery of the reading program and the enthusiasm that seemed to radiate throughout the entire school. We saw teachers using effective techniques of instruction and classroom management, and students actively engaged in the learning process. We were provided the opportunity to discuss the school's program with teaching and support staff and to do some videotaping of the school. It was a very impressive experience.

The visit was successful and it accomplished what it had been designed to do. It had a profound impact on the team and created the energy that was needed for them to influence the other staff members. The team provided the leadership that encouraged the teachers and support staff to want to take a serious look at what our students needed and how those needs could be met. It was amazing to witness the effect of exposure to a positive teaching-learning climate; our team bubbled with the possibilities of what could happen in our school. It enabled our staff to reflect more objectively on their abilities to make a difference in the lives of our students and for change to become a reality rather than a passing thought.

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## Lessons Learned

- The desire to change must be kindled similarly to starting a fire.
- Change occurs best when others become involved in the process.
- Make sure you heed the advice you give to others.
- Knowledge, when used for the right purpose, provides the fuel for action.



## Mini Coaching

- What indicators for success do you have for your school?
- What opportunities have your staff members had to expand their vision of success?
- What opportunities for collaboration are you thinking of?
- How will you know when you have achieved your goal?

## Holding High Expectations for Report Cards

*Before we can demand excellence from students, we must first demand it of ourselves.*

—Diana Williams

Prior to sending out the first set of report cards in my first year as principal, I asked the teachers to prepare their report cards, including all notes they were sending, and send them to my office for review. I communicated to them that I wanted (1) to become acquainted with the student records and to identify students who might be having academic difficulty, (2) to become acquainted with the grading patterns of the teachers, and (3) to proof the letters and notes that went out from our school. We had had initial talks about “academic excellence” and the vision that each child was going to be successful. I was surprised to find numerous spelling errors, grammatical errors, rub-outs, strike-outs, and write-overs in the notes provided by a number of the teachers. While I thought I would be making a cursory inspection of the report cards and taking notes on student progress, I ended up gathering a large pile of sticky notes and flagging many mistakes. I asked those with extensive errors to redo the report cards and resubmit them to me

before sending them out. It was a lot of work for me to pore over almost 300 reports, but the alternative would have been to convey to our community that we accepted low performance on the part of the staff. How could we be a beacon of excellence when we had low expectations for ourselves? Through the course of massaging some hurt feelings and holding the vision for excellence before them, we got through the first round of report cards. I also encouraged them all to proof any correspondence going out from the principal’s office to make sure there were no mistakes. From that moment on, everyone took pride in the materials that were sent out. On the next round of report cards, some teachers attached sticky notes to their cards saying that they had checked them over and hoped there were no mistakes. On other occasions, some would impishly and with great delight point out errors in some correspondence I might be sending out. I took it with grace and pride that we were all embracing the same vision of excellence.



## Professional-Development Snippet

### Vision Requires Change

*Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better.*

—Whitney King, Jr.

*Change* denotes making or becoming distinctly different and implies either a radical transmutation of character or replacement with something else. Applied to our school, change was the process of transforming our current organizational practices into new behaviors that supported a shared vision of learning. Kurt Lewin's (2006) force field analysis was selected as the initial tool to help us to move in the direction that was needed for our success. We chose a process that would help us to identify significant factors that could impact our school's ability to change. Lewin's tool allowed the school staff to identify the issues that impeded or supported the creation of a learning environment—a place that sustained the academic, social, and personal growth of all our students. In the world of schooling, we have all types of people—those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, those who ask what happened, and those who actively seek to keep things from happening. It is difficult getting rid of those imbedded cultural practices that fail to nurture the academic success of all students, albeit the results of such practices are not intentional. An example of a practice that might be considered favorable is the creation of a system to reward students for good behavior by having a weekly extra recess that places one teacher on duty while the others attend to “teacher business.” In this or similar situations, the question becomes who is benefiting from the reward. If the teachers are concerned about what the students are learning or how much more the students should be

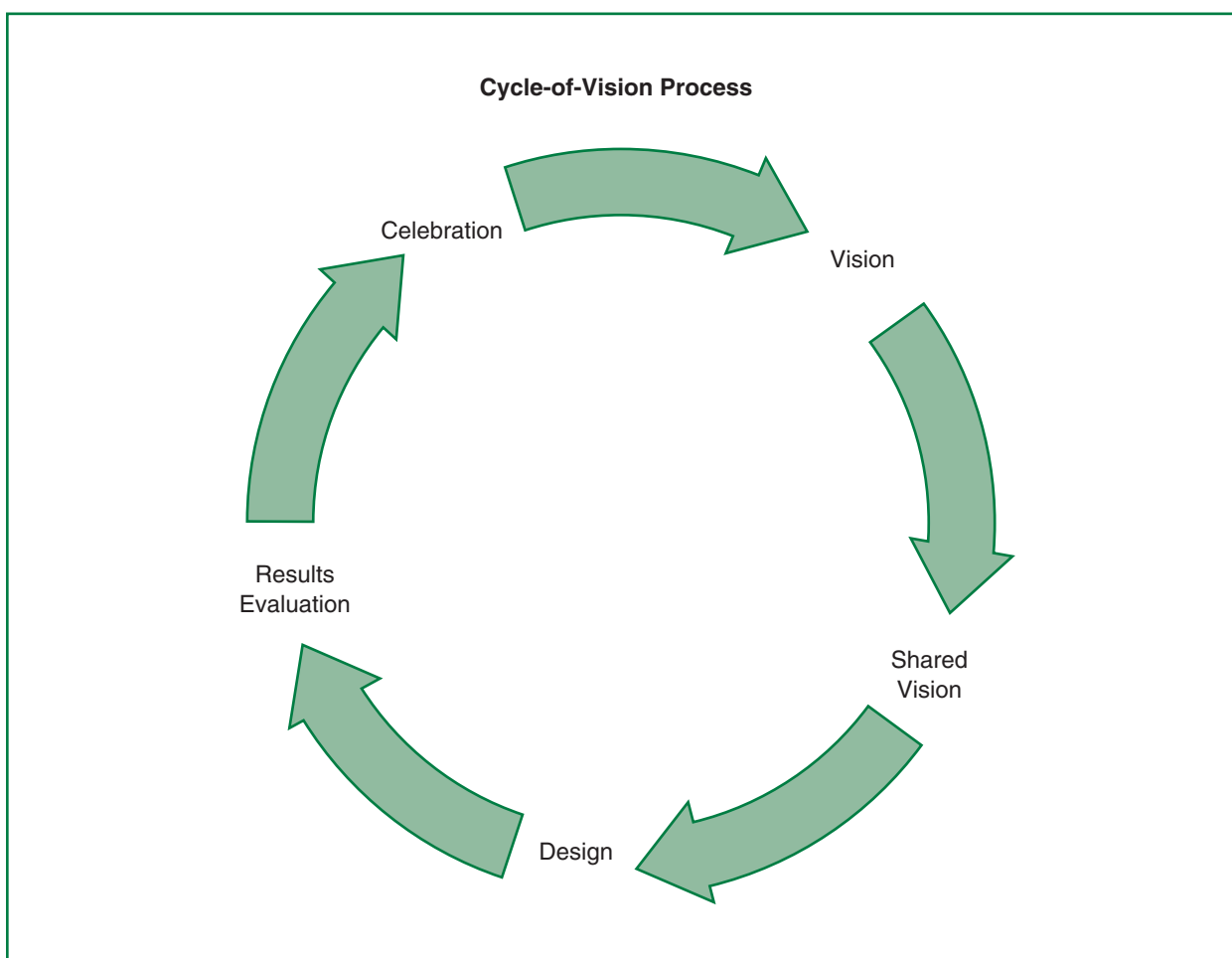
learning, time is an asset, and we need to take a closer look at how it is used. A disconnect, in situations such as those illustrated by the example referring to the use of time, existed between that which was expressed and which was practiced.

The challenge of sharing the vision was how to give all the “stakeholders” in the organization an opportunity to express their opinions in a safe and supportive environment. The force field analysis process provided each staff member the opportunity to be involved in identifying issues related to continuous school improvement, the driving forces that encouraged change and the restraining forces that maintained the status quo. The instrument used to create a visual of the generated information was a simple diagram created by drawing two columns on large sheets of newsprint and heading the left column as Driving Forces and the right column as Restraining Forces. After the issues to be discussed had been prioritized, a single issue was placed on top of the T-shaped diagram. The influencing factors were identified, placed in the appropriate column, and positioned to illustrate their strengths or organizational influence; strong forces were placed farther away from the middle of the equilibrium line, and weaker forces were placed closer to the middle line. Arrows that extended from each written factor were drawn pointing toward the center. As a result of identifying change issues and factors that supported or hindered progress, it became apparent what could be changed, how it could be changed, who could

provide the necessary influence to make it happen, and how the change could be sustained. This process of staff development is not the single dose of vaccine that provides a lifetime remedy; it is a series of doses that must be continued frequently after

initiation and revisited over time. Figure 1.1 describes the continuous process of visioning, sharing the vision, planning and designing actions, evaluating results, celebrating successes, then starting the process over again.

**Figure 1.1** Cycle-of-Vision Process



*In reality “learning” and “change” are synonymous. Change is not an issue if it makes sense to and is “owned” by those involved, rather than being arbitrarily imposed. An appreciation that change is a continual process, involving confusion and difficulty, is vital for future learners. “It is not change that kills, it is the transitions.”*

—Anonymous

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### OUR SCHOOL'S CYCLE-OF-VISION PROCESS

Kurt Lewin (1951) theorized that there are three stages to change:

#### 1. Unfreezing

An organization has to rid itself of old practices and ideas before it can adapt new behaviors. This is not easy because habits are hard to break.

#### 2. Changing

This phase of the process involves a mixture of confusion and excitement due to the uncertainty of the new as well as its promise. A good deal of patience and cheerleading is required for the successful transition from the old to the new to occur.

#### 3. Refreezing

Once the changes are in place and the new behaviors are apparent through what is observed within the organization, it is important to celebrate the successes and begin the process of preparing for the next change process.

Based upon Lewin's work, the staff entered into the first stage of change by attempting to unfreeze many of the old practices that failed to help the staff and students achieve the results that were desired. The services of the school district's staff-development office were used to facilitate the staff-development activities. Substitute teachers were obtained, and we were able to provide release time for staff to meet during the school day. In addition to full day inservices, after-school staff meetings, as designated in the teacher's union contract, were used for staff-development activities related to issues that had been identified in the initial force field analysis activities. Routine information that sometimes can become the focus of regular staff meetings was handled through written communication, thus recognizing and honoring the staff's ability to read and understand, as well as making more efficient use of time. School people are appreciative of small acts of kindness, so refreshments were always a part of those activities that required the sincere efforts on the part of the participants. As one administrator, a friend of mine, once said, "A staff runs on its stomach."





## CHAPTER

# 2

*Dear Principal,*

*I hope you have a great Christmas holiday. You worked hard. You make a great Principal. Christmas is special and you are special too. Enjoy the Christmas holidays.*

*Your friend,  
Shanae*

*Dear Principal,*

*You have worked hard and you need a break. You have helped the school very much to get through problems. If you weren't here, I don't know where we'd be. I will maybe go to my sister's on Christmas. Maybe you should go home and spend Christmas with your family. Nice talking to you.*

*Aaron*

### Standard Two

A school administrator is a leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.