

LEADING FROM THE HEART

by Troy Loeffelholz, Principal, Hastings Middle School; President, NASSP



Loeffelholz

“What does leadership look like? When does it start, and when, if ever, does it end? (White-Hood). What gets your adrenaline going? I’ve heard many principals tell their

war stories and the woes of the job. It can be quite depressing. Unless you are different than I am, all of the things I hear regarding standards, parents, and apathetic students, are the things that get my adrenaline going. Working and leading from the heart is what makes the job exciting and vibrant.

How has the principalship changed over the last five to ten years? How many of us were using the terms: STARS, NCLB, Assessment, Data Retreat, Assessment Portfolio, Vouchers, NCE, NRT, CRT, etc.; you get the point. The role of the principalship has changed. With many mandates and the toll we pay for education to be delivered to our students, the job can seem overwhelming.

Everyone has heard the term Instructional Leader and used it to describe his/her job. Pat Roschewski and Dr. Jodi Isernhagen have done an excellent job of leading a group of leaders from across the state in some interesting dialogue. I have read several articles over the past year, but the article given to us from MCREL really hit home. It talks about teachers being instructional leaders, principals being leaders of learning, and for the sake of keeping Superintendents happy, they are the

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NEBRASKA STATE ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ANNOUNCES 2005 PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR



Warrick

The Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals is proud to recognize **Philip Warrick**, Principal at Waverly High School, and **William “Bill” Bucher**, Principal at John Lux Middle School in Lincoln, as their Principals of the Year.



Bucher

Phil Warrick was selected to represent Nebraska as the High School Principal of the Year. Mr. Warrick was appointed Principal at Waverly High School in August 2000 after serving as Assistant Principal the previous two years. Prior to his arrival at Waverly, Mr. Warrick taught and coached at Aurora and York High Schools.

Mr. Warrick developed the Viking Leadership Academy in 2002. The purpose of the Academy is to develop positive leadership traits in students, which will help improve the school climate and communication between administrators and the student body. He has also created Faculty Learning Teams where staff members meet to discuss new professional literature dealing with brain based teaching strategies or strategies for developing literacy in the different curricular areas. Waverly High School also has an Excellence Program which recognizes students for excellence in academics, activities, and community service at rallies held each semester.

Mr. Warrick is completing his Doctoral degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where he also received his Masters Degree in Educational Administration in 1996. He graduated from Chadron State College in 1988 with a Bachelor of Science Degree.

His honors include being named NSASSP Region 1 Assistant Principal of the Year in 1999, NASSP New Principal of the Year in 1999, and the NSASSP Region 1 Principal of the Year in 2003. Mr. Warrick has served as NSASSP Region 1 President and is a member of the NCSA Legislative Committee which he currently chairs.

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The mission of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) is to be an effective leader for quality education and to enhance the professionalism of its members.



KEEPING THE FAITH

by Greg Emmel, Principal, McMillan Magnet Center, Omaha

Nearly six years ago I was faced with a new challenge—being principal at McMillan Magnet Center in Omaha. McMillan is an inner-city magnet school with unique curriculum for 7th and 8th grade students in the areas of math, technology, and communication arts. We recruit 6th graders from outside our attendance area as a part of our district's voluntary desegregation plan. I learned a lot about the difference between being an assistant principal and a principal that year, and I also learned that in 1965, a group of McMillan students and staff buried a time capsule in the basement of the school that was to be opened in the year 2000.

Some of the former students and staff also remembered, so we spread the word and sent out invitations, including to a local TV station, to be a part of the unveiling. As a former social studies teacher, I was really excited about this

event and imagined a treasure trove of McMillan memorabilia at our fingertips. The tension built as the capsule, a wooden box encased in cement, was dug up from the basement and brought with some difficulty to our cafeteria. With the camera rolling and eyes fixed, the box was pried open to reveal...not much of anything but moldy, illegible papers, booklets, and magazines and other items that had been mostly ruined by moisture and time.

The disappointment rolled over me like an ocean wave, and I tried to hide it by focusing on some Kennedy half dollars someone pulled out of a baby food jar. But my disappointment was soon forgotten with the sound of laughter. I looked around and saw former staff members and students talking, joking, and reminiscing about old times. They seemed not at all concerned about what was or wasn't in the box. It struck me then that

what's important in life can't be placed in a box. It's the relationships we have with each other and what we share together that really counts. And so it is that as educators what really matters is the impact that we have on children—the positive relationships we build and the growth we are a part of in our students' lives.

In the New Age of Accountability and No Child Left Behind, it seems that much of the public and politicians have forgotten what life's all about. The quality of a school seems to be summed up in a few numbers that are posted on charts on a web page or published in the newspaper. Last year our school failed to make AYP because fewer than 95 percent of our special education students were assessed in math CRT's. This happened, in spite of the fact that we had erased deficits from the previous year in African-American achievement in reading and math and students on free/reduced lunch in math. We had also showed some significant gains in reading and math achievement for special education students. All told, we now have 20 separate goals that we need to achieve annually for AYP because of the diversity of our population. Expectations continue to rise while resources to deal with needs of these special populations remain about the same.

Now that CRT's have become the focus of achievement and success, one has to stop and wonder about what that means. Tests are given almost immediately after the topic is taught, then students who are not proficient are retaught and tested again. Would the results be the same if "proficient" students were tested a week or a month later on the same test? Should we all be patting ourselves on the back as we see CRT scores gradually rise, as teachers, students, and administrators become more proficient at playing the CRT game? Sorry about the cynicism, because I do support standards-based education. It just seems like we took a wrong turn somewhere with all the attention on numbers and testing, and now we're going down a road in the

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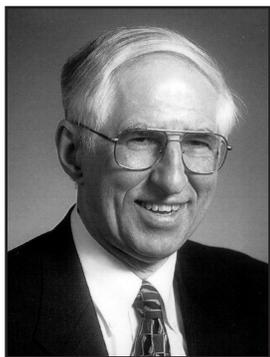
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P E R S P E C T I V E S

by Jerry Sellentin, Ph.D., Executive Director



Sellentin

“HOW MUCH DO WE CARE?”

Caring: For Christmas our daughter, Tausha, gave me a book, *How Do They Know You Care? The Principal's Challenge*, by Linda L. Lyman, an associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations at Illinois State University. As administrators and educators, we are in education for a variety of reasons, but one reason which is always at the top of the list is caring for the success of all students.

Dr. Lyman's book presents a number of questions for personal reflection on the impact of caring leadership on learning, school climate, parental involvement and faculty commitment:

- How might my leadership be changed by a deeper understanding of caring?
- What part does caring play in my life's purposes?
- To what extent do I engage in and foster caring relationships?
- What one word would I use to describe the environment of my school?
- How do I contribute to creating a caring school environment?

As I reflect on the above questions, I'm reminded of the comments at the recent American Association School Administrator's Annual Conference, by Dawna Markova, President of Professional Thinking Partners. "In correcting a student's spelling paper, emphasis was placed on the number of misspelled words instead of the correct ones." Which way is most helpful in caring for the success of the student?

I also reflect on the article by Jim Burns in the August 8, 2004 Lincoln Journal Star newspaper: Every 30 Minutes in the US... 29 kids will attempt suicide, 57 adolescents will run away, 685 teens will use some form of narcotics, 188 kids will experience a serious drinking problem. It's important as a

leader of learning to be sure there is a teacher in every classroom who cares that every student, every day learns and grows and feels like an important human being.

At the end of the day do we think of our accomplishments or do we try to fall asleep thinking about an activity or issue that was not successful? There's documented research that March is the worst month for burnout and despair for new teachers and administrators, because they are bone tired and there's a lot of the school year still remaining. Some of the idealism with which they began has been tempered by disappointments, disillusionment and the to-do list seems endless. Young or old, rookie or veteran, we all need to take care of ourselves.

Top Ten

Each year Paul Houston, Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators, gives the association's Top Ten list at the annual conference:

10. It's better to be over the hill than buried in it.
9. It's important to be sincere,

whether you mean it or not.

8. To err is human, but if you wear out the eraser you may be overdoing it.
7. Half the people you meet are below average.
6. He who must always have the last word may end up talking to himself/herself.
5. The school administrator who always smiles probably got a good deal on Botox.
4. 42.7 percent of all statistics are made up on the spot.
3. The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up.
2. If everything seems to be going well, you've probably overlooked something.
1. If you want the rainbow, you've got to put up with the rain.

Celebration

It does not seem possible but ten years ago (March 13, 1995) NCSA moved into our current offices. With the support of members we have no mortgage on the building and have purchased additional parking space which is an added convenience for members and makes for an additional investment.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

**March 30-31
NASA Think Tank Gallup
Institute**
Omaha, NE - 6:00 p.m.

April 6 - GRIT Conference
8:00 a.m.
Lincoln - Embassy Suites

**April 12-13
Nebraska Educational
Leadership Institute NELI**
Gallup University - Omaha

April 13 - EOP Workshop
8:30 a.m.
Kearney - Holiday Inn

**April 14 - NARSA Spring
Event**
3:30 p.m.
Brownville - Whiskey Run
Creek

**April 26-28 - NASBO
Convention**
April 26 - 1:00 p.m.- Golf
April 27-28 - Convention
Kearney - Ramada Inn

**April 27-28 - NASES
Spring Conference**
Kearney - Ramada Inn

**May 2 - Job Descriptions
Workshop**
8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
ESU #16 - Ogallala

**May 2 - Job Descriptions
Workshop**
2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
ESU #11 - Holdrege

**May 4 - Job Descriptions
Workshop**
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
ESU #3 - Omaha

**May 4 - Job Descriptions
Workshop**
2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
ESU #1 - Wakefield

For more information on any of these conferences or to register online please visit www.ncsa.org



ETHICS: THE NEED FOR CANDOR

by Ken Bird, Ed.D., Superintendent, Westside Community Schools and
Susan Evanich, Ed.D., Director of Administrative Services, Westside Community Schools, Omaha, Nebraska

Dr. Ken Bird and Dr. Sue Evanich joined Superintendents Dr. Doug Otto of Plano, Texas; Dr. Mary Barter of Durango, Colorado; and Dr. Ken Dragseth of Edina, Minnesota, as a committee taking a “deeper look” at conflicts of interest issues among superintendents and other senior administrators of public school systems. This article is based on the full committee’s research and discussion and offers the group’s timely and practical recommendations. [Committee members’ biographies appear at the end.]

Much has been written and debated recently about “ethics” in the education world, and it is clear the discussion needs to be expanded in at least three areas:

- Major federal legislation has been passed to curb notorious misdeeds in corporate America and it is starting to have ramifications for non-profits and school districts. The Sarbanes-Oxley

Act, for one, likely will affect us all before long. And states are taking a cue from the federal action.

- Questionable work practices of a few companies and administrators have called artillery in on all individuals in positions of authority. Though few, these notorious cases have opened the door to general inquiries from many sources.

- Most important, both the legislation and the questionable practices are beginning to focus attention on Superintendents’ “routine” interactions with vendors, suppliers and others with whom we conduct necessary business.

Legislation

The American Competitiveness and Corporate Accountability Act of 2002

(Sarbanes-Oxley) was enacted to deal with the notorious scandals of companies such as Enron, Arthur Andersen and others. It established new governance standards, extended board members’ accountabilities in financial matters, and tightened auditing procedures.

The wide net cast around business and industry now is falling on possibly unintended targets, first hospitals and

...a Superintendent in the Northwest who was chided by lawmakers for using her position to line up lucrative jobs once her duties as Superintendent were over to charges of a Superintendent in the Northeast and another in the South for bid rigging and accepting kickbacks. A Texas Associate Superintendent was indicted for allegedly mishandling school contracts and a California school official was alleged to have changed budget numbers, artificially inflated enrollments and illegally shifted money to the general fund.

medicine, and now non-profits and school districts. Attorney generals’ offices in some states are proposing that elements of the act be applied to non-profits, and recommendations are being made that we “voluntarily” adapt to the provisions.

Specifically, school districts are being advised to ensure the independence of auditors and auditing committees, disclose certain financial information ordinarily not required in the past, and eliminate some standard accounting practices. Concerning “whistle blowing,” non-profits should consider developing, adopting and disclosing a formal process for dealing with complaints and preventing retaliation of those “blowing the whistle.”

Questionable Practices

Ethics recommendations for school administrators would be easier had it not been for some recent bad behavior by a few of our peers. We refer to public scandals such as the case of a Texas Superintendent whose ties to a for-profit company brought on early retirement after the arrangements were publicly challenged. According to published

reports, the Superintendent recommended an energy conservation company for a healthy multi-year contract with her school district. Detractors pointed out that the Superintendent had not disclosed she was working as a paid consultant to the energy firm. The energy firm reportedly said that its policy was to ask administrators working as consultants to disclose their business relationships to their school boards.

Other notable ethics debacles around the country

have ranged from a Superintendent in the Northwest who was chided by lawmakers for using her position to line up lucrative jobs once her duties as Superintendent were over to charges of a Superintendent in the Northeast and another in the South for bid rigging and accepting kickbacks. A Texas Associate Superintendent was indicted for allegedly mishandling school contracts and a California school official was alleged to have changed budget numbers, artificially inflated enrollments and illegally shifted money to the general fund. There are allegations and fines in several states related to the hiring or promotion of close family members, and there have been other cases in the past two years.

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Ethics: The Need for Candor

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Routine Interactions

The committee concluded that some highly publicized transgressions on the part of a few Superintendents are a problem for all of us, but it will be more routine issues, closer to home, that will affect most school Superintendents. Issues like:

- Superintendent involvement in national groups which pay Superintendents, even modestly, for participation in "advisory" conferences with companies doing business with the schools, even if the clear intent is to benefit product and service development, which in turn will benefit all districts, students, and faculty.

- Gifts, gratuities and travel expenses that vendors occasionally offer, even if the vendor is supplying valuable goods or services at competitive rates.

- Gifts or services donated by parents or requests for favors which consciously or unconsciously could create a conflict of interest when dealing with decisions related to the family.

- The use of school technology, ie: laptops and cell phones outside the school day.

Many people in and out of education would scoff at the suggestion that a Superintendent is doing anything other than conducting routine business in the activities described above. Still the questions are starting to be asked and policies perhaps need to be modified to ensure that the answers are solid and practices are ethical. We are not talking about all-expenses-paid vacations to exotic destinations, but routine interactions, in the give and take of district management.

Some Practical Advice

1. So how does the modern school Superintendent get legitimate business conducted while in the focus of a newly suspicious crop of lawmakers, media and critics at large? Where do legitimate, absolutely necessary interactions end and the first scent of impropriety begin? Superintendents, administrators and staff have a responsibility to be candid and judicious about disclosing perti-

nent information to their school boards. Disclosure, we believe, is one of several key points that form the best answer: Would prior disclosure to the school board have saved the job of the Texas Superintendent? Perhaps not, but had the school board members been given an opportunity to understand the significance of such a disclosure, the discussions would have given the Superintendent an opportunity to listen to any concerns, and consider the degree of support for becoming involved in the activity. Disclosure to your board should be annual and in advance of anticipated participation in activities. Provide information on the mission and purpose of the activity, the benefit to the educational community, compensation and other relevant matters.

With the above as a foundation, we offer the following guidelines for Superintendents and administrators to consider in the quest for answers they are or will be facing:

2. Review Superintendents' contracts:

- a. Is consulting permitted?
- b. Can the Superintendent be compensated?
- c. Are "consulting days" spelled out or should vacation days be used?
- d. If language requires that Superintendent be "full time" or use "best efforts," does this permit time off for consulting? If so, how is time off to be taken?
- e. Is disclosure to the board required?

3. Get a legal opinion on whether a Superintendent's participation in activities like product review panels and Superintendent search committees, in which Superintendents are paid to travel and consult with companies or other school districts, violates contractual agreements.

4. Review purchasing policies:

- a. Are conflict-of-interest protections in place? If so, make sure policies are followed. If not, consider including them.
- b. Consider authority issues. For example, even if purchasing is the responsibility of someone else,

Superintendents should recognize the potential for their own influence on the process.

c. If you purchase from a vendor with whom you have had a business association, consider whether policies are sufficient to rebut any conflict-of-interest claim. Consider disclosure to your board before initiating the transaction.

5. Train teachers and district administrators. Many employees do not fully understand key ethical concepts, nor do they realize the moral integrity required of them. A Superintendent cannot assume that staff is trained, skilled or resilient enough to stand up to the pressures they encounter.

School districts and their administrators clearly are NOT sliding in the same direction as the Enron and Arthur Andersen companies but we believe that some advance work right now – particularly in the area of open discussions and regular disclosure – will save us all in the long run.

Committee members who contributed to this article:

Dr. Douglas Otto is a national leader in educational technology, school administration and school finance. He has led the 53,000-student Plano, Texas, Independent School District since 1995. The American Association for School Administrators gave him their Leadership for Learning Award in 2000 for integration of technology into the elementary curriculum. He is on the National Advisory Board for Practical Parent Education and the Horace Mann League. He is an adjunct professor at the University of North Texas and the University of Texas.

Dr. Mary F. Barter is Superintendent of Durango, Colorado School District 9-R which is the largest public school district in Southwest Colorado. The Durango School District is comprised of seven elementary schools and two middle schools. The Colorado Department of Education also commended three of her district schools for making outstanding gains on specific tests. Two of Durango's elementary schools received "excellent"

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REDISCOVERED AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

by Tammy Heflebower, Staff Development, ESU #6

If the kitchen table at our house could talk, it would rave of much more than nutritionally filling stomachs. Rather, it would speak of stories, varied topics and situations congruent with professional development. Not because this is what I do for living, but because of the assortment of natural formats involved with lifelong learning. Our two boys can be heard occasionally complaining about the meal someone worked diligently to create, the allowances that may not be comparable to a friend's down the street, or noticed crafting their own science fair experiments with green beans and meatloaf.

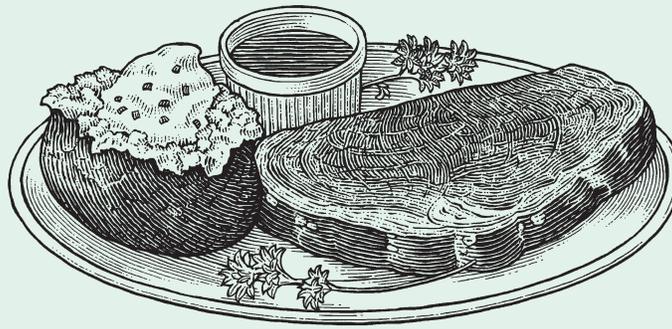
Whatever the issues, the format is slightly different based upon the needs of the day. Sometimes, the format is one of a learning team—one sibling teaching the other the how to create a milk volcano that erupts if he only laughs hard enough. Another format involves coaching others, like when my husband and I are working hard to distribute compliments about progress our children are making toward doing what we ask. Yet another format might be that of facilitating the new learning for your staff, similar to our approach as our nine-year-old is completing his daily homework. There are also the formats of counseling and modeling for staff who might need additional assistance in one area or another. Just like the times we listen and advise the disappointments in the lives of our children, or how we try to model the values and behaviors we hope to see—chewing with your mouth closed, please! How does this relate to professional development you might ask? Well, let's think about that for a moment.

Recently, I had the opportunity to be a part of the second cohort of Nebraska Educational Leadership Institute (NELI) participants. One aspect of this training focuses around the concept and power of transformational leadership. In transformational leadership, professional development is infused as a way of doing

business, and it encourages:

- Developing others
- Differentiating needs
- Providing intellectual stimulation
- Energizing and inspiring efforts
- Conducting idealized work congruent to principles.

Continuing with the analogy of parenting might be a good way to consider these aspects. As a parent, you are con-



tinually working to develop skills, talents, and essential learning for your own children. In order to provide that intellectual stimulation, you take vacations, visit museums, read, discuss, and expose your children to various opportunities for them to make connections with the world around them. Additionally, if you have more than one child, you know the value of differentiating these experiences based upon the unique qualities of each of your children. You know one might be a book worm and the other, the next Yao Ming. As a school leader, you work to inspire and motivate. At home, you work to make even brussel sprouts inspiring, and certainly try your best to instill idealism congruent to your family principles.

I would ask you to reflect about the learning organization of which you are a part. Are there opportunities for the aforementioned concepts? Professional development is just the vehicle for this type of transformational leadership. Using standards set out by the National Staff Development Council as a guide, such opportunities for you and your staff may take on an entirely new approach and meaning. Professional development

should not be seen as single ingestions of disconnected information. Instead, a means to introduce, inform, experience, and intellectually stimulate conversations about teaching and learning.

As you think about this infusion of professional development into transformational leadership, consider varied ways to encourage and challenge yourself and your staff. Again, this may reflect formats you know from home. The learning team concept is sweeping our state as a way for staff to research and converse about one or more topics regarding teaching and learning, like siblings teaching siblings. Using listserves or email to pose thoughtful questions to your staff in advance of group conversations is helpful to set context and meaning. We won't even begin

to connect the chat rooms, text messaging and tech language our children possess! Another innovative approach might be to use one block or team planning period a month for your staff to have continual professional development aligned with your school improvement efforts, similar to that of regularly-scheduled family meetings. Still other schools are finding ways to use staff meetings for problem-solving and professional development rather than for only information dissemination. In many schools, when a staff member attends a conference or training workshop, he/she is encouraged to share strategies and ideas with others, not unlike your dinner conversations when your child has had a unique experience that day.

Whatever the format, the goal is the same. Lifelong-learning is something we must be about, rather than simply tout in our school mission statements. Consider new ideas, formats, and conversations regarding professional development. Let's make professional development our "frequent guest" at the table. 

Book Review by Ron Joekel

20 BIGGEST MISTAKES PRINCIPALS MAKE AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Written by Marilyn L. Grady

Corwin Press, ISBN 0-7619-4601-2 (2004)

After a quick perusal of this book, my first thoughts were where was this book when I began my first year as principal? Reflecting back, I have to plead guilty to some of the mistakes the author identifies. Based on the author's own experiences and a collection of cases from teachers and administrators, the mistakes identified and the scenarios utilized to describe them form the basis for the book.

We not only learn from our own mistakes, but the mistakes of others as well. "To err is human" applies to all of us and we can learn from others to avoid future mistakes of our own. Simply stated, that is the essence of the value of this contribution to the literature.

The organization of the book into seven broad categories, the identification of mistakes that are frequently made in those categories, and then the presentation of a series of scenarios that focus on specific examples make it easy to follow. An added value is a prescription provided for each scenario based on research and the literature that will help the reader to avoid the mistake.

The twenty mistakes are divided into the broad categories of People Skills, People, Principal, Job, Tasks, Personal Issues, and Fatal Attractions.

People Skills presents mistakes from the human relations-interpersonal relations side of the principal's role.

The People Section includes mistakes relating to working with professionals and parents.

The Principal Section includes mistakes that reflect principals' shortcomings. These include being bossy, inconsistent, or weak.

The Job Section includes mistakes that RELATE to the principal's position grouped around endless work and time constraints.

The Task Section highlights mistakes related to the work a principal must

accomplish. These tasks are typically presented early in preparation programs and principals are expected to master them. Mistakes of ignoring preparation, displacing goals, avoiding decision making, change dilemmas, professional development vacuum, and failing to supervise comprise this section.

The Personal Issues category discusses family and health mistakes. Mistakes to avoid that affect a principal's ability to do the job or impact their personal lives, and family health.

Fatal Attractions, the final category, presents mistakes to be avoided at all costs as they can be career-ending!

The fifty scenarios scattered throughout the seven sections and twenty mistakes, illustrate the mistakes that can occur in each area. They reflect the real world of practice and I suspect we can personally identify with many of them or know of cases that personify the mistake. My first reaction when I read the book was that it should be required reading by everyone enrolled in a preparation program or considering a career in administration. However, even seasoned



administrators will benefit from reading the book and finding comfort in the fact that they are not alone in their experiences.

A practical book of 111 pages that is written in a style that is easily read and assimilated that will bring back many "poignant memories" to experienced principals and provide valuable information for new or aspiring principals. To help readers to ascertain where they are in regard to their own skills four self-assessment instruments are included in the appendix. They are: (1) Building Visibility in the Community; (2) Verbal Skills Self-Assessment; (3) Principal Access Self-Assessment; and (4) Principal Self-Assessment.

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD

The Nebraska Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, seeks to recognize exceptional elementary, middle school and high school educators in the fields of health and physical education. Please consider nominating someone you know for these awards.

Following nomination, there is an application process that the nominee needs to complete. Deadline for nominations is: March 31, 2005. Send nominations, including, name, address, phone, school of nominee to: Debra Kaplan - Swanson Elementary School - 8601 Harney - Omaha, NE 68114 or e-mail dkaplan@westside66.org



WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

by Mike Lucas, Superintendent, Franklin Public Schools

There's a scene from "Top Gun," the fast-paced movie from the mid 1980's, where Tom Cruise, the hot shot pilot named "Maverick," is sitting in a bar drinking a glass of ice water as he ponders his future. Maverick had been down on his luck and was battling through some tough adversity. Kelly McGillis, the attractive flight instructor, tried to talk him out of quitting his fighter pilot duties by telling him, "you know you won't be happy unless you're going Mach-2 with your hair on fire."

Throughout our careers in educational leadership, many of us have been in similar soul-searching situations. The pressures that we face to lead our districts forward in these trying times of declining enrollment, financial uncertainty, unfunded mandates, etc. all take their toll on us and give us plenty of "Mach-2 like; hair on fire" scenarios. I challenge you, however, to find a career more meaningful than what we do. The oppor-

tunities we have to "make a difference" in the lives of others on a daily basis cannot be truly measured and go unmatched when compared to other careers.

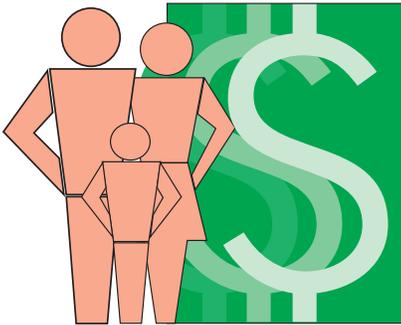
We have the skills to be successful in many areas. Our organizational skills could help us be quite effective in the private business sector. Our people skills would allow us to be great in sales or human relations. Our work ethic and communication skills would be assets to any organization or occupation. However, we have been steered towards the 'shark tank' called educational leadership. This is where we belong and this is where we are needed.

I stay in close touch with a few of my high school buddies from back in Florida. One is a financial investor that just entertained a dozen clients at the Super Bowl in Jacksonville and had a blast. Another is an attorney and consultant for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays professional base-

ball franchise. They both have great jobs, like many of the people you know, but they don't have the chance to have a hand in positively impacting the future of children like we do.

This is my 11th year in "the game," with the last seven being in administration. I'm proud to go to work every day in this great state knowing that there are so many talented and dedicated educators out there like you; and Kelly Ballinger in Wayne, Stephen Grizzle in West Point, Lee Frye in Elkhorn, Russ Gade in Osceola, Scott Shepard in South Sarpy, Joan Reznicek in Red Cloud, Kendall Steffensen in Blue Hill, and hundreds more! Stay in the hunt and keep up the fight in these challenging times. We all "make a difference" and are lucky to be doing what we're doing! 

NSDLAF+ NOTES #22



I can remember when I was the superintendent in Grand Island in the pre-LB1069 years, a junior high math teacher was retained in the summer to assist in producing a study of state aid and specifically as state aid affected the Grand Island Public Schools. The report was completed in 1978 and the material pointed to some "dramatic" conclusions. First, not enough dollars were committed to the process of state support of education to ever allow the system to function beyond a basic foundation approach. Second, the assessed val-

uations among sub-divisions of government were so inconsistent that any use of valuation as a measure of a district's funding capacity was impractical and the cause of gross inequities throughout the state.

The various legislative activities that have occurred since those early days of state aid have ostensibly been designed to address previous problems. The argument that not enough of the state resources are committed to the process still lingers. The formula attempts to differentiate among districts on the basis of such items as demographics and relative wealth. Each year new or refined options have been proposed. Some have been adopted and during each legislative session old ideas are rekindled and new concepts explored resulting in the usual battle of the print-outs.

The process of property assessment has definitely been the recipient of the entanglement between real and adjusted values as a part of state aid. To a

degree controls that were not present earlier are now in place to direct local assessors to remain current and comparable with other jurisdictions. Frustration has now become litigation.

The current legislative session of 2005 again attempts to address conditions within the structure of State Aid. Since the state-aid-to-education evolution will undoubtedly always be with us with social, economic, and educational components, the burden on school districts to effectively manage will be daunting at best. The responsibility for financial planning carries with it as always the responsibility to communicate honestly and consistently with patrons, boards, and staff.

For assistance in cash-flow and financial management for your school district, educational service unit or community college, contact Cliff Dale, Senior Marketing Representative, PFM Asset Management LLC, 402-483-1678, or dalec@pfm.com 



CONGRATULATIONS TO...

☞ **Bloomfield Public Schools** on their over-ride election

☞ **Millard Public Schools** on their successful bond election

☞ **Exeter-Milligan Public Schools** on the success of their over-ride election

☞ **Dennis Berry**, Principal at McCook Junior High and Central Elementary was elected Mayor of the City of McCook

☞ **Senator Elaine Stuhr**, District 24, received the Nebraska Association of Elementary Principals Friend of Education Award

☞ **Mike Dulaney**, Associate Executive Director, Nebraska Council of School Administrators received the Nebraska Association of Elementary Principals Friend of Education Award

☞ **Jami Harper** of Grand Island Northwest High School received the national Prudential Spirit of Community Award for creating an educational game, conducting workshops and developing a website to educate others about the importance of protecting water resources

☞ **Jonathan Hanus**, of Lux Middle School, Lincoln received the national Prudential Spirit Of Community Award for assisting 12 teachers at his school with a wide variety of classroom chores and volunteering after school, weekends, and during the summer

☞ **Kevin Wingard**, Superintendent Ainsworth Public Schools, appointed Superintendent Milford Public Schools

☞ **Brian Maschmann**, Principal Sutherland Elementary Public School, appointed Principal Sutherland High School

☞ **Josie Floyd**, Curriculum Specialist, Sutherland Public Schools, appointed Principal Sutherland Elementary Public School

☞ **Larry Weaver**, Superintendent Maywood Public Schools, appointed Superintendent Sutton Public Schools

☞ **Fred Hansen**, Superintendent Chambers Public Schools, appointed Superintendent Lyons-Decatur Public Schools

☞ **Paul Bohn**, Superintendent Fillmore Central Public Schools, appointed elementary Principal Papillion La Vista Public Schools

☞ **Tucker Lillis**, Superintendent Central Decatur Public Schools, Iowa, appointed Superintendent Ogallala Public Schools

☞ **Damon McDonald**, Silver Lake Principal, who has been appointed Superintendent of Arapahoe Public Schools

☞ **Denise Grunke**, West Point Elementary School Principal, who has been appointed Curriculum and Assessment Director of West Point Public Schools

☞ **Rex Anderson**, Gretna Middle School Principal, who has been appointed Curriculum Director of Gretna Public Schools

☞ **Randall Klooz**, Franklin Public Schools Principal, who has been appointed High School Principal at Plainview High School

☞ **Larry Humphrey**, Retired Superintendent, who has been appointed Superintendent at Ansley/Arcadia Unified School District.

☞ **Thomas Christie**, Multicultural Administrator from Lincoln Public Schools on being selected for one of 2005 UNL Chancellor's "Fulfilling Dream" awards

☞ **Joe Sherwood**, Administrator, Lincoln Parkview Christian School, who has been appointed Superintendent at Pender Public Schools

☞ **Dave Melick**, Principal, Schuyler Central High School, who has been appointed Superintendent at Madison Public Schools

☞ **Kathi Krzycki**, Principal at LaVista West Elementary School, who has been appointed Middle School Principal at Ralston

☞ **Cinde Wendell**, Superintendent at Arapahoe/Cambridge, who has been appointed Superintendent at Holdrege Public Schools

☞ **Danavon Leighton**, Retired Superintendent, who has been appointed Superintendent at Winside Public Schools

RETIREMENTS:

☞ **Wayne Blankenbiller**, Lincoln Public Schools, Principal McPhee Elementary School,

☞ **Stan Knapp**, Lincoln Public Schools, Assistant Principal Robin Mickle Middle School,

☞ **Neal Nannel**, Lincoln, Public Schools, Assistant Principal Lincoln East High School,

☞ **Linda Douglas**, Lincoln Public Schools, Director of Special Education,

☞ **Lon Bernth**, Ralston Middle Schools, Principal

☞ **Marge Welch**, Millard Public Schools, Russell Middle School

☞ **Jerry Rutherford**, Ralston Public Schools, Principal Blumfield Elementary School,

☞ **Tom Hall**, Norfolk Public Schools, Principal Grant Elementary School,

☞ **Bonnie Kolowski**, Millard Public Schools, Principal Neihardt Elementary Schools,

☞ **Beverly Barthule**, Fillmore Central Public Schools, Principal Fillmore Central Public Schools

☞ **Tom Hain**, Imperial Elementary School, Principal

☞ **Susan Emanuel**, North Bend Elementary School Principal

☞ **Phillip Gray**, Logan View Jr/Sr High School Principal

☞ **Don Eberle**, Kenesaw K-12 Principal

☞ **John Richmond**, Lexington Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations

☞ **James Loch**, Adams Central Jr/Sr High School Principal

☞ **Sally Ganem**, Fremont, Howard Elementary School Principal



NSASSP Announces Principals of the Year

(continued from page 1)

He is a member of the Waverly Chamber of Commerce and served as President of that organization from 2002-2003. Mr. Warrick has presented at NCSA Administrators' Days, the State School Boards Convention, and the Nebraska Sportsmanship Summit. He was an initial member of the Gallup Educational Leadership Institute.

Alvin Blankenship, Counselor at Waverly High School said "He is the epitome of principals who base their principles on the development of each individual's potential whether that be a student, educator, or parent." "I have never met a principal so in tune to his school, so enthusiastic about his work, and so devoted to his students and faculty, as well as friends and family," noted Lane Sorensen a Waverly High student. Dan Ernst, Superintendent at Waverly said "His enthusiasm and positive attitude toward education is contagious among staff and students." Mr. Warrick will receive his award at the NCSA Administrators' Days in Kearney this August.

William "Bill" Bucher was selected to represent Nebraska as the Middle School Principal of the Year for the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals.

Mr. Bucher has been a Building

Principal for 22 years and a school administrator for 27. Bill was appointed Principal at Lux Middle School in Lincoln in 1996. Prior to that Mr. Bucher served several schools including: Principal at Culler Junior High in Lincoln, Principal at Walnut Junior High in Grand Island, Assistant Principal at Fremont Junior High School, Principal at Archbishop Bergan Junior-Senior High in Fremont, and he began his career in education as an English Teacher at Pound Junior High in Lincoln.

Mr. Bucher holds an Educational Specialist degree, a Masters degree in Educational Administration, and a Bachelor of Science degree in English all from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Bill has been a member of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the NSASSP since 1978 serving as the Vice President of Region 1 from 1993-1995. He has served as Co-Chair of the Nebraska Joint Principals Conference and participated in the Leadership Talks Technology Academy during the 2003-2004 school year. He Co-Chaired the Lincoln Public Schools Middle Level Study Committee from 2000-2003.

Mr. Bucher received the Award of Excellence in Middle Level Education in February, 2003, and was named

NSASSP Region 1 Middle School Principal of the Year in 2004.

In supporting Mr. Bucher for this award Mark and Kerry Dornbos, parents of four Lux Middle School students, said "It has been obvious in observing Bill for the last nine years that he has blended a love of educating the individual student with the desire to nurture a very special group of young people all while upholding and expecting an extremely high level of moral, responsible behavior in all those around him." Marilyn Moore, Associate Superintendent for Instruction at the Lincoln Public Schools, noted that "Mr. Bucher's work as a principal springs from his deeply-held beliefs that students are important, that their learning is important, and that schools should be a good place for students where they learn academically, socially, emotionally, and physically." "The most impressive qualities that Bill possesses are the passion he has for education and the compassion he has for the people he works with," stated Myrna Bornemeier a Mathematics teacher at Lux. Mr. Bucher will receive his award at the NCSA Administrators' Days in Kearney this August. 

Keeping the Faith

(continued from page 2)

wrong direction with our priorities all twisted up.

At McMillan all our students are exposed to technology integrated throughout the curriculum. Traditional elective classes in Family Consumer Science and Industrial Arts have been replaced by hands-on, project-based technology labs where traditional skills are enhanced by career and exploratory experiences in a variety of fields. Let's not forget about the importance of noncognitive skills either. Every day we are teaching about effort and perseverance, working with others to resolve conflicts, instilling self confidence and self discipline, social responsibility and citizenship, and the ability to relate to and

understand those who are different than we are.

Of course, these critically important goals of public education are not tested and reported in the newspaper, even though improvements in them are needed, too. Most of them will be more important in life than all the academic outcomes of standardized tests. They are also undoubtedly better indicators of the future success and happiness of our students. So, as we continue down this bumpy and frustrating road of increasing testing and narrow measures of accountability, don't forget that higher road that leads to what really counts. Stay focused on the real needs of our children. The future of our families and communities are depending on us. Keep the faith! 

**Mark Your
Calendars!
Administrators'
Days 2005
August 3-5
Holiday Inn -
Kearney**



Ethics: The Need for Candor

(continued from page 5)

Overall Academic Performance ratings in Colorado's 2003 State Accountability Reports prepared by the Colorado Department of Education, while five other district schools received "high" performance ratings. Durango High School and Miller Middle School also received "high" ratings. In 2002-03, Durango High School's graduation rate was 85.4 percent, with nearly 84 percent of their students pursuing some kind of post-secondary education.

Dr. Ken Dragseth is Superintendent of Edina Public Schools in Edina, Minnesota. Edina is the largest school district in Minnesota with 7300 students. Four of the district schools have received the United States Department of Education National School of Excellence Award. In 2003, Newsweek named Edina High School as one of the best in the nation. The Board and Superintendent team was identified in 2002 as one of the top three in the nation by the New England School Development Council. Dr. Dragseth was selected by the American Association of School Administrators as the 2003 National Superintendent of the Year. The University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human

Development credits Dragseth as being a "vocal advocate for all who are underserved in public education, stepping up to take the heat while leading the district to make some bold educational choices."

Dr. Ken Bird has been the Superintendent of the Westside Community Schools in Omaha, Nebraska since 1992. The Westside District has an enrollment of just under 6,000 students. Dr. Bird recently received the Educational Achievement Award from the Nebraska Alumni Association. He also has been a recipient of the American Association of School Administrators President's Technology Award. He received the Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award by eSchool news, and in 1998 was the Nebraska Superintendent of the Year. He is also very active in the community, currently serving on multiple Boards.

Dr. Sue Evanich is the Director of Administrative Services for the Westside Community School District. The past eight years Sue was the Westside Middle School Principal and prior to that the Assistant Principal for five years. During her leadership, Westside Middle School received the Blue Ribbon School Award as well as National recognition as an Exemplary School of Technology. 

Leading from the Heart

(continued from page 1)

CEOs of the Learning Organization. WOW, what a concept! It didn't really hit me until my drive home from a Leaders of Learning conference. Where the rubber hits the road is instructional leadership. The principalship has evolved from the archaic rituals of managers of buildings to Leaders of Learning, not instructional leadership.

What do we mean by Leaders of Learning? What is it that drives us to do what we do? We are leading from the Heart. We strive to be master community builders in our building, we want to create a positive learning culture, and build an effective learning environment. I've met a lot of principals from across the country and we all have our same war stories. However, I have yet to meet a principal like those from Nebraska. The vision I see from the dialogue with the men and women of this state, is exciting to see and hear. We are taking risks and maximizing our expectations to make schools better for our students.

Teachers as well as principals love to feel ownership in the job they are doing and seeing the rewards of students doing well in school, both academically and socially. To develop a learning culture all people involved need to have a voice and contribute. But most importantly, we need to model what we believe and what we want teachers and students to do. Yes, NCLB, STARS, DATA, NCE, NRT, CRT, and all of those abbreviations are still there. But if we develop a culture, model it, and focus on student learning, the synonyms will take care of themselves.



NCSA Executive Board Summary

The NCSA Executive Board met on February 2 and discussed the following items:

- Motion was made to change the NCSA By Law Article VII, Section 2, Audit and By Law Article VIII, Section 2 Code of Ethics.
- An update on the newly finished parking lot was shared.
- Jerry reported on the newly formed Information/Communication Committee.
- Motion was made to continue with the current five NCSA regions.
- Mike Dulaney updated the board on upcoming School Finance issues. NCSA is launching a new "School Finance" webpage for members and lawmaker to go

to for information. In addition, Mike is planning a learning session for new senators on school finance.

- Jerry Sellentin reported that the EHA rates for the 2005-2006 would be made in early March. The EHA Board will meet in February to discuss rates and needed plan changes. There will be some managed care programs on diabetes and heart disease which will happen this year.
- Motion was made to accept Brian Maher, Superintendent of Centennial Public Schools as Chair of the NCSA Legislative Committee.
- Motion to increase the dues from \$300 to \$310 for the 2005-2006 membership year. 

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
Administrators' Days 2005
August 3-5
Holiday Inn - Kearney

WANTED...

ADMINISTRATIVE VACANCIES FOR LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary School Principal
Middle School Associate Principal
High School Associate Principal
Supervisor for Federal Programs
Supervisor for Music
Director of Special Education
Director of Library Media Services

Please visit our Web site for a detailed list of administrative openings including timelines and application forms.
www.lps.org

NASCD Executive Director

NASCD is accepting applications for its Executive Director opening. This position will begin in June of 2005. This is at present a part-time position with compensation to be negotiated. For additional information and job qualification and description, contact Cindy Gray via e-mail at cgray@epsne.org or by phone at 402/289-2579

LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Asst. Superintendent/
Business & Operations

Lexington Public School District is seeking an Assistant Superintendent /Business & Operations. General administrative duties with primary focus on administration of business function, budget management, and general operations of the district.

Three-year contract – salary range \$95,000 to \$105,000 commensurate upon qualifications and experience, plus benefits. Application deadline is April 1, 2005. Nebraska Superintendent's Certificate required.

For information and application contact: LaVay Rinehart, Adm. Asst., Lexington Public Schools, PO Box 890, Lexington, NE 68850. Ph: 308-324-4681 ext 25. Fax: 308-324-2528. Email: lrinehar@esu10.org or available at www.lex.esu10.org

Application, credentials or resume, and letter outlining interest and qualifications may be sent to: Richard D. Eisenhauer, Ed.D., Superintendent, Lexington Public Schools, PO Box 890, Lexington, NE 68850

SYMPATHY...

☞ **Ann Mactier**, State Board of Education Member on the death of her husband

☞ The family of **John Kennedy**, former Special Education Director of ESU #10

☞ **Terry Hazard**, retired Superintendent on the death of his wife and son in a car accident

☞ **Kandy Imes**, State Board of Education Member on the death of her Mother in Law

☞ **Howard Hanson**, retired Superintendent on the death of his Sister in Law

☞ **Russell Hoppner**, Superintendent of Hampton Public School on the death of his Mother

☞ **Paul Basler** retired Superintendent on the death of his wife

'Coins for a Cause' to Assist Holocaust Memorial

The Nebraska Holocaust Memorial invites the participation of schools to assist in construction of the Holocaust Memorial. The fund-raising goal is \$150,000, including a maintenance and education endowment. Organizers are asking students to donate their change for three days in the month of April 2005, to the Holocaust Memorial Fund. Recognition will be as follows:

- Schools raising \$100 or more will have a brick at the Memorial. For every \$100 raised a brick will be placed at the memorial in tribute to that school, and the school will receive a recognition certificate.

- Schools raising \$1,000 or more will receive a special recognition piece for display in a trophy case. Artwork is available for the campaign in a Publisher format. For that artwork, e-mail: eholbrook@wyuka.com

Additional information will be sent to each school on how to become a campaign supporter.

Essay Contest Seeks Entries on Holocaust Lessons

This year is the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, and one of the most tragic chapters in human history, the Holocaust. In observance, the Nebraska Holocaust Memorial Committee is conducting an essay contest for middle and high school students. The essay theme is "What Are The Lessons of The Holocaust?" Essays submitted by middle schoolers should be no more than 500 words in length. Essays submitted by high school students should be no more than 1,000 words. All submissions should be e-mailed or mailed by April 30. To e-mail entries, include the student's name, mailing address, e-mail address and phone number. Also include the stu-

dent's school, a school contact, school e-mail and a telephone number. Prepare the essay as a Microsoft Word document and send to: eholbrook@wyuka.com

To mail essays, send them to the Holocaust Memorial Committee, 3600 "O" Street, Lincoln, NE 68510 At both the high school and middle school levels, first prize will be a \$500 savings bond, with second prize a \$250 savings bond.



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Calendar of Events

MARCH

9	NASA Region IV	10:00 a.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
9	NSASSP Region I	5:30 p.m.	Valentino's	Lincoln
14	NAESP Executive Board	10:30 a.m.	Governor's Mansion	Lincoln
18	NASA Region V	12:00 noon	Gaslight	Gering
22	NAESP Region I	11:00 a.m.	Malcolm Elementary	Malcolm
30	NAESP Region V	9:30 a.m.	WNCC	Sidney
30	NSASSP Region V	10:00 a.m.	WNCC	Sidney
30	NARSA Executive Board	10:00 a.m.	NCSA	Lincoln

APRIL

1	NASES Region III	12:00 noon	Sports Denn	Norfolk
5	NSASSP Executive Board	10:00 a.m.	NCSA	Lincoln
6	GRIT Conference	8:30 a.m.	Embassy Suites	Lincoln
6	NCSA Executive Board	1:30 p.m.	NCSA	Lincoln
6	NSASSP Region IV	1:00 p.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
13	EOP Conference	9:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
13	NASA Region V	12:00 noon	Cabela's	Sidney
13	NASA Region I	4:00 p.m.	York Country Club	York
14	NARSA Social	3:30 p.m.	Whiskey Run Creek	Brownville
26-28	NASBO/NASES Convention	1:00 p.m.	Ramada Inn	Kearney
27	NSASSP Region III	6:00 p.m.	Eldorado Hills Country Club	Norfolk
27	NAESP Region IV	12:00 noon	Drew Heady's House	Hastings
27	NSASSP Region I	5:30 p.m.	Evening with Friends	Milligan
27	NSASSP Region II	5:30 p.m.	UNO Alumni House	Omaha
27	NAESP Region II	5:30 p.m.	River City Star River Boat	Omaha
27	NAESP Region III	6:00 p.m.	Eldorado Hills Country Club	Norfolk
29	NAESP Region I			

National Conventions

April 15-19 - NAESP National Convention - Baltimore, MD