

SPRING

by Steve Morton, President, NSASSP; Principal, Norfolk Sr. High School



Morton

The seemingly endless nights of supervision, especially Fridays and Saturdays, begin to drag on. The number

Some people mark Spring by the calendar date, others the start of track season, for some it's golf, still others the temperature and daylight savings time, but for me it's the National Secondary Principals' convention.

of teacher evaluations that I need to reschedule is growing and all of my teachers are "so happy." Retirements and resignations mean nights of reading files and days of interviewing. It's dark on the way to school and it's dark on the way home, hey.

But with the National Convention I get a few days away with my wife, somewhere usually warm, and I begin to see things starting to grow. No, not flowers, they make me sneeze and my allergies take over. I begin to see the positive

things about my profession and my school begins to pop up all around me.

Oh sure, you say, anyone is revived after five days in Las Vegas! I didn't say rested, but I am renewed.

As we all know, *Breaking Ranks II* contains research about personalization and I firmly believe that it is the foundation for a great school. We often focus on personalization for our students but what about the Principal?

Our National Convention provides me the opportunity to visit with great Principals from Nebraska and around the country. For whatever reason Principals invigorate me. What an outstanding group of people; I am continuously amazed at their ideas, thoughts, and passion. Whenever I think it's time to look for something else to do, they pick me up. The stories, the ideas, the tri-

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Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals Announces 2007 Award Winners

The Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals is proud to recognize Kent McLellan, Principal at Morrill Jr. Sr. High School, and Randy Schlueter, Principal at Beatrice Middle School, as their Distinguished Principals of the Year.



McLellan

Dr. McLellan has served as Principal at Morrill High School since 1993. Prior to that, Kent was Principal at Fairmont Jr.-Sr. High School. He was also a classroom instructor at Gering.

Kent is active in many professional

Kent McLellan was selected to represent Nebraska as the High School Principal of the Year. Kent received his education from the University of Nebraska-Kearney (Bachelor's), Chadron State College (Master's) and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Doctorate in Education).

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Schlueter

Randy Schlueter was selected to represent Nebraska as the Middle School Principal of the Year for the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals. Randy received his education from the University of Nebraska Lincoln (Bachelor's, Master's and Ed. Specialist).

Randy has been the principal at Beatrice Middle School since 2000 and with the Beatrice Public Schools for a total of 8 years. Prior to his service in Beatrice, he was an Assistant Principal in the Grand Island system.

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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.



Spring *(continued from page 1)*

umphs, the defeats, and the laughs!!! Education at its core is a people business, we can't forget that!

I work in a District with twenty administrators and I have three outstanding Assistant Principals but, even for me, these interactions happen all too infrequently. I cannot imagine how Principals at smaller schools survive. I know many rely on their conference schools. For me I have the Outstate Principals' (a group of larger schools outside the metro areas) meetings in October and April, NSASSP Region meetings, and this year I am fortunate to be part of the NELI (Nebraska Educational Leadership Institute) group.

How does a person find that passion in March? For me it's a return to the reason I am in the business - kids! When Todd Whitaker (15 Things Great Principals Do) tells people that he did lunch duty, people giggle. He reminds us

that if he does lunch duty, it ends at 12:30 pm and if he doesn't, it often ends at 3:30 pm. Well for me it's also about connecting with our students. Just being around the students reminds me of why I get up everyday. I try to focus on the students who don't seem to have lots of friends, those who are not in the "regular" crowd. It's a time to build bridges with those who are not as comfortable with adults or authority. Guy Dowd spoke at the Inspirational Breakfast at the National Convention. Guy is a former Teacher of the Year from Minnesota. He speaks about the teachers that made a difference in his life. The ones that didn't see him as he or his family was but how he could be. I see those kids in my lunch-room every day.

Several years ago at the State Basketball Tournament I noticed Mike Wortmann (our unofficial Principal photographer) from Lincoln High taking pic-

tures of the student section at their game. I soon purchased a very nice digital camera. I began taking pictures of our students at activities, football games, basketball, concerts, plays, dances, etc. (Thankfully it's a digital camera!) I used the long lens to take pictures in the hallways and cafeteria where students did not notice me. We show the pictures on our cable system in the school, Channel 14. This year I've given the camera to students to take the pictures and we've posted their results around the school. People love to see their picture! Those pictures often end up in end of the year powerpoint presentations and we receive requests for copies.

How does someone find the passion in March? Make connections with your colleagues and students!!! Get out of the office and into the hallways. Go to conferences and regional meetings. Pick up the phone and call a friend. Use the Principals' listserve.

Random notes:

To access the NSASSP Listserve go to <http://www.fes.org/ncsa/> the login is your e-mail address and the password is "nsassp"

This year the NASSP Convention theme was Advocate, Lead, and Achieve. Our Executive Director Gerald N. Tirozzi made an impassioned plea for us to become more vocal on behalf our students. He was extremely articulate on the state of education today given the recommendations of the Aspen Institute's Commission on NCLB. Have you heard of "Highly Qualified Principals? You can see his address at: http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/se.c.asp?CID=971&DID=55235

Advocacy at the State level starts by having a relationship with your State Senator. Don't leave it to the Superintendents and School Boards. Sign up and attend the 1st NSASSP Legislative Conference on Tuesday, March 27th. Join with your colleagues from around the State as we send a message about the importance of our work! 

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Kent McLellan *(continued from page 1)*

organizations and community leadership positions such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals. Kent is also a member of the Morrill Rotary Club, the Morrill Community Development Group, the University of Nebraska Independent High School Advisory Board and the Western Nebraska Community College Tech Prep Advisory Board.

Dr. McLellan has several other honors, including the Nebraska Jaycees Leadership Nebraska Award, the National Jaycees President Leadership Award and the NSASSP Region V Principal of the Year in 2003 and in 2005. He has also published several articles in state and national education periodicals.

Mr. Roy Ingram, Superintendent of the Morrill Public Schools, states: "Dr. McLellan's greatest strength is in the area of curriculum, instruction and assessment. Daily, he shares research on ways to improve student achievement with staff via email. He spends time analyzing testing and assessment data with the intent of sharing the information with staff and working with them to improve teaching methodology. In addition to other duties, Dr. McLellan works hard to establish and maintain a positive school climate by the use of the student recognition programs he has designed."

JoAnn Wilson, a member of the Morrill faculty, says: "I see Kent as a dynamic and caring leader of our school and community. Through Dr. McLellan's efforts in building team leaders and involving the entire staff in developing the school improvement plan, we are currently enjoying a district that is totally "kid-focused" and united toward a common goal. He is a very caring and compassionate individual and is devoted to his district, community and family."

Troy Unzicker, Principal at Mitchell Jr/Sr High, states: "I have worked with Kent on projects our two districts share and at the conference and regional level. Kent's leadership skills are excellent and he is a tremendous model of professional growth. His professionalism helps others achieve a high level of proficiency." "

Dr. McLellan will receive his award at the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals conference in Kearney in December. 

Randy Schlueter *(continued from page 1)*

Randy also has educational service in the Ogallala, Friend and Lincoln districts.

Mr. Schlueter is active in many professional organizations such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National and Nebraska Middle School Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Phi Delta Kappa and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators. Randy has held numerous offices in the state organizations. He is a member of the Gage County Youth, Family and Community Development Coalition, the Gage County Juvenile Diversion/Juvenile Service group and has served as a volunteer with the Youth Recreation and Instruction baseball league. Randy has also been a presenter for several state and regional conferences.

Mr. Schlueter has been honored as the Region I Middle School Principal of the Year in 2006 and was the first recipient of the Gage County Character Counts "Citizen of Character," as well as serving on several North Central accreditation teams for several other school districts.

Dr. Dale Kruse, Superintendent of the Beatrice Public Schools, states: "During Mr. Schlueter's distinguished career as principal of Beatrice Middle School, he has consistently displayed qualities of initiative, conscientiousness, and professionalism. There are leaders who are, because of their skills, able to perform at an exceptionally high level and commit to improving student learning. Mr. Schlueter is an outstanding leader in both of these areas."

Lynn Danielson, BMS teacher, says: "His strong, progressive leadership provides the necessary balance between theory and practice for our school's continued growth in meeting each year's challenges. He is truly a leader who believes in influence rather than power or ego, and we have benefited from his initiative, vision and direction."

A.J and McKenzie Wiese, former BMS students, state: "Mr. Schlueter consistently encouraged students to engage in challenges facilitating their growth as learners. He is dedicated, straightforward, and principled. His fairness, trustworthiness, intelligence, and profound decency laid the groundwork for academic, moral and personal success for students at BMS."

Mr. Schlueter will receive his award at the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals conference in Kearney in December. 



The Benefits of Involving a Professional in Collective Bargaining

by Karen A. Haase and Kelley Baker, Harding & Shultz, P.C., L.L.C.

Spring is just around the corner and with it come various annual rites including bargaining with teacher unions, and for more and more boards, bargaining with classified staff employees such as custodians, secretaries and paraeducators.

As employee compensation and personnel costs typically consume 75 to 85 percent of a school district's budget, the negotiations process is increasingly critical to the financial health of the district. In Nebraska, boards have traditionally negotiated directly with their teachers unions. However, as personnel costs have increased, and as labor relations have become increasingly tense, boards have begun to turn to outside experts for help in this process. This article addresses some of the benefits that can be realized from retaining a negotiations expert to assist the board or even represent it in collective bargaining.

Saves the Board Time

Negotiations can be tremendously time-consuming. The board's team will spend hours upon hours analyzing and writing proposals, assessing the legality of proposed contract language, contacting outside resources, gathering data, planning counterproposals, deciding on strategy, and negotiating with the union. While a professional negotiator can't relieve the board of all its responsibilities, he or she will have extensive knowledge in a variety of areas that can significantly reduce the board's workload.

Saves the Board Money

Hiring a negotiator costs money, but that cost is typically nowhere close to the amount at stake to the school. A knowledgeable professional can prevent the board from making errors that cost the district year after year.

Achieves Board Bargaining Goals

Many board members feel that collective bargaining is a process of "give, give, give," without getting anything in return. Boards need to recognize that both parties have the right to present proposals

and aggressively pursue their goals at the bargaining table.

Avoids and Eliminates Expensive and Intrusive Contract Provisions

Negotiated agreements too frequently contain wording that is costly, overly restrictive, and even an impediment to improving the educational program. A professional can help boards to eliminate or modify provisions, draft wording that gives the board more flexibility, and avoid ambiguous wording that can lead to grievances or costly litigation.

Precise Wording is Critical

Boards that include "homegrown" provisions in their negotiated agreements often do not recognize the ambiguities in their contract wording. Both parties' rights and obligations depend on wording that may appear innocuous at first but results in a binding agreement that unnecessarily restricts management's authority.

Evens the Playing Field

Boards are up against a well-organized, capable team from the Nebraska State Education Association that focuses on statewide strategies. Local teacher and classified bargaining teams are advised by the NSEA's Director of Bargaining, UniServ representatives, labor relations staff, and attorneys. To even the playing field, boards need the advice and guidance of a professional in negotiations.

Facilitates the Process in Other Ways

Professionals understand the current negotiations environment and stay on top of other districts' settlements. They are not intimidated by union negotiators' pressure tactics or threats of litigation. It is not uncommon for union negotiators to use these tactics aggressively when a board does not have professional representation and to curb their use when a professional is present.

Finally, when negotiations are particularly difficult, the resulting antagonism affects the entire school community,

Hard feelings about contract negotiations can spill over into other areas and infect negotiations and relations for years to come. However, a professional who represents the board can become the lightning rod for bargaining hostility. When the parties settle and the professional heads home, the hostility follows the negotiator and does not linger in the district. This can help the board, administrators and staff return to the normalcy of school district operations.

Hiring a Negotiator

If you hire a negotiator, look carefully for a good "fit" with your district and your board's negotiations team. A chief negotiator doesn't need to be an attorney, but to be effective he or she must have:

- A thorough knowledge of labor relations and collective bargaining under Nebraska's Industrial Relations Act.
- Knowledge of the comparability process and the decisions of the Commission of Industrial Relations.
- Working knowledge of public education, including school finance, to analyze the effect of bargaining proposals on school operations.
- Experience in actual negotiations with certificated and classified bargaining units.
- The ability to develop and articulate district positions effectively and convincingly at the bargaining table.
- Conflict resolution skills.
- Communication planning skills to effectively reach news media and community.
- A personality that won't be intimidated. The chief negotiator must be articulate, firm, but polite.
- Other key qualities are trustworthiness, patience and the ability to be discreet.

Conclusion

As boards prepare for negotiations and choose the members of their bargaining team, they should give serious consideration whether this is the year to use of a professional to help them. 



MAJOR SHIFTS PROVE BENEFICIAL AT GIPS

by Steve Burkholder, Assistant Superintendent, Grand Island Public Schools

The Grand Island Public Schools has made several major shifts in how we do business over the past several years, with some impressive results. These results – with an increasingly diverse population that is now 41 percent minority, 22 percent English Language Learners (ELA), and 56 percent low socioeconomic (SES) students – include the following:

- Every GIPS school achieved every AYP requirement in 2004-05 (only five schools made AYP two years earlier), while our 18 schools met 357 of the expanded 364 indicators this past school year.

- Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 improved 13 percentiles on the ITBS/ITED achievement test over the past six years, and even more impressive is the 23 percentile gain (from 41 to 64) for grades 3-5 in the same time period.

- Steady gains have been made on all District Language Arts and Math Assessments, with 78 percent of all 1st-12th grade students now proficient on challenging math assessments, compared to 43 percent three years earlier.

- Progress in closing some long-standing achievement gaps has been significant in these areas (based on past three year's 1st-12th District Assessment results): for the socioeconomic status gap, from 21 percent to 18 percent in language arts and from 19 percent to 14 percent in math; for the ethnicity gap, from 21 percent to 17 percent in language arts and from 26 percent to 11 percent in math; and for the ELA program gap, from 35 percent to 22 percent in language arts and from 20 percent to 10 percent in math.

Our learning gains can be attributed in large part to an intense focus on nine components, which overlap a great deal. These components are not listed in any particular order, and are certainly not intended to represent a complete blueprint. Each area is described briefly with a few examples provided.

1. A results-driven mindset, based primarily on summative assessment results, is used to make key decisions about the effectiveness of K-12 curricular programs, improvement initiatives, and school improvement process (SIP) strategies.

When possible, improvement initiatives are designed using a backward planning process, which begins with the identification of the intended outcomes. Beginning with the end in mind, which seems logical but often doesn't happen in school planning, provides direction for what measures will be used to determine the success of the initiative.

To facilitate the analysis of all 1st-12th summative assessment results, our Teaching & Learning Services staff centrally generates detailed aggregated and disaggregated summative assessment results so that each school staff can best spend their energies analyzing and using the results to improve students' learning opportunities.

2. A systemic approach – as opposed to more site-based – is used to address students' learning needs, establish improvement goals, and align our resources and implementation efforts to directly accomplish these goals and strategies.

Our first major shift six years ago was to create K-12 curriculum and assessment (C&A) teams, and to closely like the C with the A. K-12 teachers found they enjoy working together and benefit greatly from becoming more knowledgeable about other levels. It's hard to pull a system together when no one knows what anyone else is working on or toward.

An example has been to adopt districtwide grading and reporting practices over a three-year period that will be aligned with district curricula, assessments, and instruction. As has been the case with most U.S. schools, grades have typically not meant much as every teacher has been allowed to use their own measuring stick. Our goals are to better support and align with the learn-

ing process, encourage student success, and more accurately measure student learning. A K-12 task force was established 18 months ago, with Canadian grading and reporting expert Ken O'Connor working multiple times with the task force.

We have also established predictable communication channels with monthly K-5 and 6-8 grade level meetings, high school department meetings, and better use of email and the district's website.

3. Agreement on a common definition of learning has made it possible to drive instructional and assessment decisions in the same direction, and help determine what learning gets prioritized and measured.

The notion that there is a compelling need for educators to spend time gaining consensus on what it "really means to learn" may seem silly at first blush, but get a 100 educators in a room, pose this question, and be prepared for the food to fly... particularly when everyone shares how their brand of learning actually gets measured. The lack of consensus in our country about what learning should be most valued is a shortcoming of our system.

Our own abbreviated definition – learning is constructing personal meaning from information and experience – created a tremendous need for a balanced emphasis on both knowing/understanding and doing. This is not the norm as most educators say that "if we don't use it, we lose it," but give lip service to the application of knowledge as evidenced by what counts in gradebooks.

4. Collaborative school improvement processes have been linked directly to districtwide improvement goals and processes.

One of the best success stories in GIPS has been the tremendous number of opportunities for teachers to lead the teaching and learning process "from the middle." In former days, those roles were reserved for a chosen few. Now, our

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Major Shifts...

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teachers cochair every K-12 C&A Team and most school improvement teams (SITs), provide major leadership at grade level meetings and on task forces, and regularly make major presentations on PD days.

Each SIT has been trained to use a common school improvement planning structure, which allows for choice from among a set of research-based strategies that are connected to the districtwide T&L goals. The SIP is supported by an annual retreat to review summative results, paid time is provided each summer for SITs to update their annual plan, and access is provided to a wide range of PD resources and central office assistance to implement each plan.

The degree of staff implementation for districtwide and school-based improvement strategies are evaluated by using these defined Levels of Use: Nonuse (Level 0); Awareness (Level 1); Demonstration (Level 2); Implementation (Level 3); and Transfer (Level 4).

5. A comprehensive, coordinated K-12 approach for designing and aligning all K-12 curricula and assessments is no longer a choice for individual schools. When considering what is “loose” and “tight” within a school system, curricula and summative measures must all be the same... or else kids have little chance of receiving equitable opportunities to learn.

Teams of up to 30 teachers work for ten or so days each June (usually for three summers, with additional revision days as needed) to refine district learning targets and assessments. This work always begins with a thorough study of national and state curriculum frameworks and best practice.

Our philosophy is that assessment must drive instruction in positive and intended ways, and so developing assessment literacy – especially how to measure the “doing” piece – has been a district goal for five years.

Our district chose to design a summative assessment system for districtwide, state, and federal accountabil-

ity purposes. These summative measures provide “snapshots” for, and dictate the necessity of, a wide variety of formative assessments – which form the heart of the ongoing feedback loop that is so critical to improving students’ learning. Given that teachers are generally more experienced in measuring declarative knowledge via structured response assessments, our district has emphasized and trained teachers how to design performance tasks for all curricula areas, with accompanying scoring guides (e.g., rubrics) that measure procedural knowledge.

All GIPS teachers in core areas have access to K-12 curriculum frameworks, which generally include K-12 program strands, curriculum standards, enduring understandings, and essential questions. For each course and grade level, C/GL standards and pacing guides have been provided to help guide decision-making. We are now in the process of further developing enduring understandings and essential questions that will motivate students as they learn a new unit.

Given the district’s goal to help all teachers plan instruction by units, extensive training is being provided in the backward design process so that all future instructional units will someday follow an Understanding by Design (UbD) unit format. Jay McTighe, coauthor of the UbD books, has worked extensively with our staff on assessment literacy. Now he and his colleague, Allison Zmuda, are helping our staff combine the three pieces of curriculum, assessments, and learning activities into a meaningful UbD training piece for our teachers.

6. A great deal of attention has been given to providing quality instructional resources – textbooks, software, maps and globes, science equipment, various technologies, etc. – that enhance or diminish the teaching and learning processes.

In contrast to most professions, education often ties at least one hand behind teachers’ and students’ backs with outdated and/or low quality learning tools. GIPS leaders strive to equip our kids and teachers with the best, even “state of the art,” learning tools available, and we have made major

upgrades by understanding that a percent of the total budget must be designated for 21st century tools and technologies.

We have established a thorough process for selecting new resources, which ideally occurs after course/grade level curriculum standards have been stabilized. Designated selection teams must first establish clear selection criteria and then go about matching sample resources with this criteria. These criteria must clearly reflect the district’s philosophies for content and process.

7. Given that a district’s number one resource are its people, there must be a major ongoing investment in the continual growth of its staff. Business and industry understand this idea; schools generally do not. For GIPS, this has meant the implementation of a comprehensive and systemic professional development program that expands the capacity of all certified staff – both novice and experienced – and results in better learning experiences and results.

The 7.5 days of required PD activities represents a small part of the learning opportunities provided for GIPS teachers. Most teachers participate in at least that many more days of adult learning experiences annually. A wide variety of optional activities exist for adult learning, in addition to the traditional workshop-type opportunities. The K-12 C&A design process begins with an extensive literature review and heavy doses of new learning. Many optional study groups get formed on either a districtwide or school basis for staff interested in reading a book purchased by the district.

Preservice training begins about ten days prior to the teacher contract, with all new teachers asked to participate in curriculum-specific training that veteran teachers have already experienced. All new teachers receive two days of Boys Town social skills training and an initial dose of literacy training, mostly on the writing traits. Every new K-12 language arts teacher is required to complete a Balanced Literacy Course their first fall, which is taught by our staff.

Due to our emphasis on performance

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Major Shifts...

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assessments, we regularly bring teachers together to group score performance tasks and learn about common student errors and misconceptions, which is an extremely valuable use of teacher time if we truly expect teachers to teach better every year. Optional summer courses are offered each July for three graduate credits, most often Kagan Cooperative Learning and Understanding by Design (UbD).

To ensure successful implementation of new instructional resources, we pay teachers in late July and early August for two-five days of initial training when new adoptions require significantly different instruction (e.g., Trailblazers, Connected Math, and CPM Math; FOSS Science; and TCI social studies). Several additional days of training are provided for each curricular area throughout the first couple of years, with ongoing training provided for all teachers new to these areas.

Our Mentor Teacher Program, which began six years ago for all new teachers with 0-2 years of prior experience, has been expanded to a two-year experience. First-year mentees and mentors observe each other's instruction several times, and all mentees spend two half-days observing other teachers' instruction as well. Monthly training is provided on specific topics (e.g., communicating with parents, ELA students). Each mentor gets an annual \$1,000 stipend for spending an average of one hour weekly with his or her mentee on both predetermined and optional topics. Mentors are trained to some degree in the GIPS Learning-Focused Coaching model and meet monthly to further develop their skills and problem solve. Second-year mentees participate in UbD unit design training with their mentors, and these pairs also have the option of attending a conference together.

This is the district's fifth year of using K-8 instructional coaches to facilitate instruction. Their job goals are to provide job-embedded coaching that helps GIPS teachers more effectively and consistently teach, and GIPS students learn, the district's established curriculum. Our literacy (reading and writing) and math coaches receive extensive training in the GIPS Learning-Focused Coaching model,

which originated from the cognitive coaching work of Bruce Costa. We use Bruce Wellman to train our instructional coaches and principals (four days in GIPS this fall with summer institutes also available). The coaches' main priority is to complete classroom observations and then provide growth-evoking feedback that leads to better student learning opportunities. Additionally, there are four other coaching models which they may use with teachers: model a lesson; coteach a lesson; problem-solving, and professional development. Needless to say, our coaches are booked on SIP days and for many after-school staff meetings.

All of our coaching efforts – whether by mentors, instructional coaches, or principals – are centered around the need to provide teachers with support, challenge, and vision. There are four stances or modes of coaching which a skilled coach may use: consulting (giving advice), collaboration (problem solving with the teacher), coaching (guiding teacher self-reflection), and calibration (clarifying teacher expectations and goals). All learning-focused conversations provide opportunities for teachers to analyze student and teacher performance and should produce insights that facilitate reflection and growth.

8. Administrative supervision and coaching should be considered as another powerful form of professional development, but has been listed separately for this article to emphasize its crucial importance and highlight the changing expectations of GIPS principals. We ask a tremendous amount from our principals these days, and although we may wish it could be different, educational research articles consistently highlight and emphasize that it is often “the principal of the thing” which most impacts the quality of students’ learning experiences and results. McREL’s extensive work has shown that their are sometimes low-performing schools with effective principals, but there is almost never a high-performing school without a strong educational leader.

We consider teacher evaluation to be a requirement that is but one component within the umbrella of instructional

supervision; it has been well-documented that evaluating teachers in isolation of face-to-face coaching does very little to improve teacher effectiveness. Facilitating growth-evoking dialogues with teachers is considered a critical formative piece, with summative evaluations fulfilling the legal requirements and providing quality assurance that every teacher is performing at a “proficient” level on our district teacher evaluation instrument. This includes five criteria: Danielson’s four teaching domains (Instructional Planning and Preparation; Classroom Environment; Instructional Process; and Professional Responsibilities) plus the fifth criteria of student performance, which is judged as patterns of achievement over time.

To help school principals lead their schools to greater student learning gains, our monthly professional development concentrates on getting better at three key roles: 1) monitoring the district’s curricula and assessments; 2) leading the school improvement process; and 3) supervising and coaching teachers

Principals are expected to average an hour daily observing classroom instruction by completing brief daily walk-throughs (no feedback required) and/or informal observations (followed up with oral feedback during a 15-20 minute postconference within 24 hours of the observation). The focus of their observations include the district’s teacher performance criteria, student engagement, and specific instructional strategies that are part of district or school improvement efforts.

Principals are also provided with a number of classroom observation tools that have been specifically designed to help focus on districtwide curriculum philosophies and instructional strategies. These observation tools describe what both teachers and students should be doing during an effective learning experience related to classroom management or instruction in guided reading, math problem solving, scientific inquiry, etc.

9. Laserlike attention must be given to the successful implementation of key instructional strategies, curricula,

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UPCOMING EVENTS...

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

March 12-13
NAESP Legislative Conference
1:00 p.m.
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

April 10
Education Office Personnel
8:30 a.m.
Holiday Inn - Kearney

March 14
Think Tank
8:00 a.m.
Gallup Univeristy - Omaha

April 18-20
NASBO State Convention
Holiday Inn - Lincoln

March 27
NSASSP Legislative Conference
8:30 a.m.
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

April 26-27
NASES Spring Conference
Haythorn Ranch - Ogallala

April 4
GRIT Conference
8:30 a.m.
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln

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

Major Shifts...

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resources, and assessments with all teachers and students (often referred to as “keeping the main thing the main thing.”) Otherwise, what we claim is critical to students’ success may not really be so important.

Michael Fullan noted that in the 1970s, the term “implementation” was seldom mentioned in educational writings. At that time, there was apparently a feeling that if teachers attended a workshop to learn a new strategy or resource, they would could come back and, in isolation and without much support, achieve successful implementation. We are not quite so naive today.

A major function of our five Teaching & Learning Services administrators is to structure methods which can be used by staff to monitor how well key practices – new or old – are implemented throughout the district. This constant focus on fidelity helps minimize haphazard and ineffective usage.

In summary, it should be emphasized that the improvement efforts embraced by the Grand Island Public Schools are neither perfect nor complete. That said, these changes represent recent districtwide shifts that have resulted in significant student learning gains in one of the state’s most diverse and lowest spending school districts. Such is possible with a highly committed teaching staff, strong leadership, a willingness to think differently, and tons of support, challenge, and vision (the pillars of our coaching model).

Oh, and one more piece that has been critical to teacher engagement in our improvement process. It is often spelled “chocolate” but also manifests itself in the form of other healthy and unhealthy treats. Do keep this in mind, because if we don’t feed the teachers, they may eat the kids! 

ANNOUNCEMENTS...

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CONGRATULATIONS TO...

☞ **Mick Loughran**, Administrator ESU 9, on his election to the Association of Educational Service Agencies

☞ **Roger Breed**, Superintendent of Elkhorn Public Schools, on his election to the Suburban School Superintendents Association Board of Directors

☞ **Marlene Uhing**, Superintendent of Seward Public Schools, who has been appointed Superintendent, Norfolk Public Schools

☞ **Brian Maher**, Superintendent of Centennial Public Schools, who has been appointed Superintendent of Kearney Public Schools

☞ **Darrell Vitosh**, Principal, Diller - Odell High School, who has been appointed Superintendent of Diller - Odell Public Schools

☞ **Brian Begley**, Principal, Russell Middle School, who has been appointed Principal, Millard North High School

☞ **Ryan Ricenbau**, Assistant Principal, Waverly High School, who has been appointed Principal of Waverly High School

☞ **Tim Muggy**, Principal at Brownell Elementary, who has been named Principal at Meadow Lane Elementary School in Lincoln

☞ **Rob Slauson**, Principal in Colorado Springs, CO, who has been named Principal at Southwest High School in Lincoln

☞ **Dennis Mann**, Instructional Coordinator, who has been named Associate Principal at East High School in Lincoln

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☞ **Brent Toalson**, teacher at Southeast High School, who has been

named Associate Principal at Lincoln High School

☞ **Chad Denker**, Principal at Kimball Jr/Sr High School, who has been named High School Principal at Seward

☞ **Greg Adams**, PE/Health Teacher, who has been named Principal at Malcolm Jr/Sr High School

☞ **Heidi Penke**, Admin. Intern at Reeder Elementary in Millard, who has been named Assistant Principal at Ackerman Elementary

☞ **Carrie Novontny-Buss**, Assistant Principal at Wheeler Elementary, who has been named Principal at Ezra Elementary in Millard

☞ **Paula Peal**, Assistant Principal at Ackerman Elementary, who has been named Principal at Cather Elementary in Millard

☞ **Colleen Beckwith**, Assistant Principal at Neihardt Elementary in Millard who has been named Principal

☞ **John Southworth**, Assistant Principal at Beadle Middle School in Millard who has been named Principal

☞ **Joan Wilson**, Assistant Principal at North Middle School in Millard who has been named Principal

☞ **Ryan Saunders**, CADRE Associate at Cottonwood Elementary who has been named Assistant Principal, Neihardt Elementary in Millard

☞ **Chad Meisgeier**, General Counsel at Metro Community College who has been named Director of Employee Relations at Millard Public Schools

☞ **Tobin Buchanan**, Principal at Arlington Elementary, who has been named Superintendent of Perkins County Schools

☞ **Nancy Johnston**, Principal at Beadle Middle School in Millard who has been named Director of Secondary Education

☞ **Melissa Gilbert**, Principal in Cedar Rapids, IA who has been named Principal at Ackerman Elementary in Millard

☞ **Matt Dominy**, Principal in Page, AZ who has been named Principal at Cody Elementary in Millard

☞ **Josh Fields**, Principal in Liberty, MO who has been named Assistant Principal at Wheeler Elementary in Millard

☞ **Mitch Mohrig**, Principal at DCWest who has been named Principal at Russell Middle School in Millard

☞ **Nila Nielsen**, Principal at Cather Elementary who has been named Principal at Reagan Elementary in Millard

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☞ **Randy Jochum**, High School Principal Osmond Public Schools

☞ **Richard Werkheiser**, High School Principal Millard North

☞ **Arlyn Uhmacher**, Assistant Principal Lincoln High School, Lincoln Public Schools

☞ **Annie Scott**, Assistant Principal Lincoln High School, Lincoln Public Schools

☞ **Gary Barta**, Principal at North Middle School in Millard

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☞ **Rick Werkheiser**, Principal at Millard North High School



THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF LEADERSHIP

by Paul D. Houston and Stephen L. Sokolow

Key Six: The Principle of Holistic Perspective



Houston



Sokolow

This is the sixth in a series of articles drawn from *The Spiritual Dimension of Leadership: 8 Key Principles To Leading More Effectively* by Dr. Paul D. Houston, AASA Executive Director and Dr. Stephen L. Sokolow, Executive Director of the Center for Empowered Leadership. Many of the core values and principles that guide and sustain us as leaders have underlying spiritual roots. We use the word spiritual not in

a religious sense per se but rather to describe ways of thinking, being, and doing that are life-sustaining and life-enhancing both for individuals and organizations. In our book, we describe 8 key principles from an array of 42 spiritual principles of leadership we have identified. The full array is available on our website: www.cfel.org

In this article we will present a brief overview of The Principle of a Holistic Perspective.

Perhaps you've heard the story about the three blind men who came across an elephant in the forest. As the story goes, one reached out and caught the tail, one grabbed hold of a leg, and the other grabbed hold of the elephant's trunk. The first man thought he was touching a vine, the second a tree trunk, and the third a large snake. The problem, of course, was that each had a limited perspective,

and none could see how the parts were related to the whole.

Leaders are inevitably dealing with people who perceive only one part of the elephant. Your job is not only to see the whole and how the parts contribute to it but also to help others see it. Think of this in terms of connections and context. From the leader's vantage point, you are in a position not only to see the connections but also to create them. Your job is to create the structures that bring people together for collaboration and to open the communication pathways in all directions. By bringing diverse elements of your organization together for dialogue and by setting a tone of mutual respect, you can help people gain a more holistic perspective on the issues that confront them. In your leadership role,

want to do that from the highest perspective, a perspective that asks people to look at the whole, to look at the parts, and to look at the relationship of the parts to each other and to the whole.

As you know, people want to be meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their lives. You need to create processes that let the people who see the tail talk with both the people who see the trunk and the people who see the legs. When you also help them to ask questions from a holistic perspective regarding the way these elements affect each other and relate to the whole, staff members are more likely to realize they are working with an elephant. To put it another way, when people begin to see holistically, they tend to be more understanding of diverse perspectives. And when people are involved in meaningful ways in collaborative processes, this helps create positive long-term institutional memory of both the process and the outcomes.

Leaders work with systems in which the components are connected and affect one another. People tend to see things from their own perspective. It's your job to help people see things from a larger, more holistic perspective.

Appreciative Leaders (edited by Bea Mah Holland, et al.) has a subtitle that says: "In the Eye of the Beholder." We are convinced that many of the problems in education stem from the fact that some beholders have such a limited perspective. This is especially true with respect to the issue of governance, which from a holistic

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A spiritual truth for people and organizations, indeed the universe, is that the parts affect the whole and the whole affects the parts. Since we are part of the whole, it is in our own enlightened self-interest to devote our vision, energy and gifts to shape the world that is unfolding.

you get to set the context or framework for whatever is unfolding. You always



Spiritual Dimension...

(continued from page 10)

tic perspective affects everything else. As a leader, you must strive to help people see things from more than one perspective, which requires more openness and more collaboration. You might benefit from the wisdom expressed by Atticus Finch, played by Gregory Peck in the movie, *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "You never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them." Once you can see things as though you are standing in other people's shoes, you can help others do it, too.

Although putting yourself in the shoes of another may be useful, we have found that one of the best strategies is to ask people "What does this look like through your eyes?" We are frequently surprised by what they say. When they tell us what it looks like through their eyes, we may not agree with their perspective, but it is one of the best ways we know of getting a true sense of what their perspective is. Understanding the other person's point of view may or may not help you to find

common ground, but at the very least, communication will be enhanced and people will have a sense that they have been heard.

A spiritual truth for people and organizations, indeed the universe, is that the parts affect the whole and the whole affects the parts. Since we are part of the whole, it is in our own enlightened self-interest to devote our vision, energy and gifts to shape the world that is unfolding.

We are complex beings comprised of mind, body and spirit. For our best selves to emerge, we must nurture and balance these three aspects. Enlightened leaders nurture and balance these characteristics in themselves and in others. They see the mysterious interconnectedness of everything in the universe and seek to understand how the parts of any system affect each other.

Enlightened leaders know that what we think, say, and do affects the universe and what affects the universe affects us. They know that for any system to operate

effectively and efficiently, all of the parts must be able to work well and work well together:

Enlightened leaders help others recognize that they are part of something that is larger than themselves, but also that every part is vital and important to the success of the whole.

You may find it helpful to remember that enlightened leaders:

- Strive to have a holistic perspective.
- Are aware that everything is connected.
- Understand that small changes can create large effects.
- Understand how the parts and the whole are related.
- Identify patterns so that others are able to see them.
- Model holistic thinking. 

2007 Administrators' Days

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OBSERVATIONS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

by Jed Johnston, Dean of Graduate Studies in Educational Leadership, Doane-Lincoln College

A wise principal once told me that if you really want to know how and what teachers are doing, ask the kids. As a principal, whenever I visited classrooms I tried to ask students what they were learning. The responses taught me a great deal. Now, as I facilitate the Doane Educational Leadership (EDL) Program, I have taken that practice a new direction. I wondered what school leaders were doing. So, I asked teachers. The teachers were graduate students - members of the EDL Cadre who had collectively spent over 3,400 practicum hours in their schools observing, engaging in leadership activities, and talking about leadership. The leaders were the principals, assistant principals, directors, coordinators and deans (the list goes on) who worked with them in meeting uniquely designed practicum learning goals.

A common conversation that takes place during EDL classes stems from questions such as: What makes leaders effective? What responsibility do all leaders, whether by title or role, play in assuring that all students learn? How do we behave in a changing, more complex, and increasingly diverse world and what is our role as educational leaders? How do we, as emerging leaders, best communicate our beliefs through our written and verbal thoughts, actions, and behaviors? How do we continually challenge ourselves and reflect upon our progress and needs in service to schools in Nebraska? The result is often a lively discussion about the leadership modeled in schools throughout the state. EDL Cadre

members learn to examine leadership with a critical eye - not to offer criticism of decisions made by their school leaders, but to take a look at leadership and compare what is observed to currently held beliefs. Such a process results in a greater sense of the steps necessary to understand leadership, reflect, and pre-

pare themselves as future leaders. Recently, I posed several questions to EDL Cadre members: 1) Think of leaders you have observed or worked with who you consider to be effective. What makes them effective? What do they do? How do they act? 2) What is it that effective leaders focus upon in their schools? The responses to these questions yields insight into the leadership modeled in schools today. So, sit back and read what some of our emerging leaders are saying about school leadership.

decisions based upon how it will affect all students." Others described school leaders as those "willing to go the extra mile for students," who "put children first," and who "set clear expectations for students." One Cadre member commented that "effective leaders focus on the well-being of children with the foremost concentration on student learning and the application of learning."

School leaders have students as the central focus of schools. "It [leadership focus] is dependent upon what the school needs, not what the leader needs. Is it going to benefit the students, the teachers, the community?" Such a focus included the school environment and culture, "What is best for kids... student achievement is the result of a positive school culture, best practices,

"What is best for kids...student achievement is the result of a positive school culture, best practices, safety, and passion." As an EDL Cadre member put it, "Leadership is leading those around you towards the improvement of student achievement and best instructional practice. Striving towards "the best" in all that we do is important."

safety, and passion." As an EDL Cadre member put it, "Leadership is leading those around you towards the improvement of student achievement and best instructional practice. Striving towards "the best" in all that we do is important."

One EDL Cadre member stated, "The leader I'm thinking of is effective because she has a clear vision and purpose and knows what is negotiable and what is not negotiable for that vision and purpose. She keeps the focus on students. She is calm, decisive, and listens. She hears all voices, but still keeps the focus on children and does not waver."

"Leadership is the intentional and consistent process of moving people forward."

EDL Cadre members observed effective school leaders as those who "always make decisions based upon what is good and right for kids." One Cadre member saw his principal as one who "makes

decisions based upon how it will affect all students." Others described school leaders as those "willing to go the extra mile for students," who "put children first," and who "set clear expectations for students." One Cadre member commented that "effective leaders focus on the well-being of children with the foremost concentration on student learning and the application of learning."

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Observations...

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These leaders "encourage people to stretch" and "push for learning by asking tough questions, giving positive feedback, and facilitating reflection." Such leaders "...exude so much confidence and excitement about what they are doing that it becomes impossible for teachers not to buy-in to the cause." Movers of people "...lay out a vision succinctly...they have a plan, but allow others input to shape how things are done."

Another theme noted was that the leaders who were viewed as effective build relationships. One EDL Cadre member commented, "Leadership is building relationships with the people around you, developing a vision with them, and taking steps in facilitating action toward making that vision a reality." Leaders accomplish such a process by being "open and approachable," by "exhibiting great respect for others," by "listening, responding, and seeking out feedback" and by being "involved in all aspects of school, from the classroom to the community events." Such leaders "have an open door policy" and "always take the opinions of others seriously."

EDL Cadre members note that effective leadership "develops leadership in others." Such development is promoted when leaders "allow several people to be in leadership positions...invite all staff to be involved" and when they "empower others to do their best work." Such leaders "guide and facilitate others to solve

their own problems." One EDL Cadre member noted how a leader's beliefs promoted opportunities for him to develop as a leader. His principal believed that "leadership is being able to make changes when there is need. Leadership is being able to step out on a path and do what is right for the greater good, yet, also knowing when to step back and let others shine."

Through the observation of EDL Cadre members, based on their engagement with leaders in their schools, a number of themes emerged. Students observed leaders who:

- a) Keep the focus on student learning and achievement
- b) Move people forward
- c) Build relationships, and
- d) Develop leadership in others

Now, how should this information be used? This was an informal study of the perceptions that EDL Cadre members hold regarding the leadership observed in their schools. So much has been written about school leadership that, if you are like me, my "to read" pile grows steadily each week. My intent was not to offer a scholarly review of the current research on effective school leadership, but, instead, to offer some perspective about school leadership from a group who observes and discusses the leadership that takes place in schools on a daily basis. Hearing EDL Cadre members who

will one day be leading our schools reaffirms much of what experts on leadership suggest through books and articles. Somehow, hearing some local perceptions of leadership brings it all closer to home.

If you are in a leadership position, reflect upon the question, "If my leadership was being observed (and it is, by everyone!) how would I be described?" The reflective process used by the EDL Program begins with such a question. Next compare your response to what you believe and hold near to your heart about leadership. Finally, compare your answers to what others perceive about your leadership and come up with some next steps in your learning. Gandhi said, "Leadership is a way of life." What leadership life are you living?

As one who has a passion to help leadership develop, it is wonderful to note that the EDL Cadre students are certainly benefiting from observing strong models of effective leadership in Nebraska schools! 



Log on to www.ncsa.org
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relating to Nebraska Council of School
Administrators



Control Your Emotions and Behavior No Matter How Disrespectfully Your Child Acts

By: Dr. John Maag, Professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Principal: Monica, I've told you **three times** to stop dawdling in the hall and get back to your classroom.

Monica: I'm going as fast as I can; I'm not some track star!

Principal: Listen, young lady, you will not talk back to me or you will find yourself in my office.

Monica: (Under her breath) Why don't you just shut up and leave me alone?

Principal: (Clenching his jaw, thinking to himself) *She shouldn't have said 'shut up' to me; that's an awful thing to say; I can't stand it when she does that! She's in a lot of trouble for making my day end so terribly.* (Red-faced and bellowing) I'm not going to tell you again, get to class!

It is not always easy to keep your cool when a student is refusing to follow your directions—especially at the end of a long work day. But when you allow yourself to react emotionally, as Monica's principal did, you are more likely to respond ineffectively—and even to make the situation worse. In this article, a very powerful system is described for learning how to control your emotions and behavior regardless of how disagreeably students treat you. The approach is based on rational-emotive therapy (RET) which was developed by Albert Ellis, and has subsequently been elaborated on by many psychologists, including Tom Miller, who studied under Dr. Ellis. Miller developed an innovative way to help people recognize and combat four common irrational thinking styles, which you'll learn about in this article.

Recognizing Your Irrational Beliefs

Most people engage in a variety of irrational thinking styles. An irrational thought is simply one that does not match the facts of a given situation. For example, a person who says, "I'll never get into graduate school because I have low entrance exam scores," fails to acknowledge the

other factors considered in the admission process—grade point average, letters of recommendation, and relevant past experiences. Ellis believed that irrational thinking styles stem from both heredity and environment. Miller considered that, of the many irrational thinking styles, four contribute most to the difficulty people experience controlling their emotions and behavior: "**Demandingness**," "**Awfulizing**," "**I-can't-stand-it**," and "**Condemning and damning**."

It's important to note that we often engage in these four irrational thinking styles automatically and unconsciously. The chart below presents a "generic" irrational statement (left column), and the type of irrational thinking involved in each part of the statement (right column).

What we say to ourselves or others...	...and four types of irrational thinking behind it.
"That event (for example, a student telling you to shut up) shouldn't have happened, and	Demandingness: The use of the words "should/shouldn't," "have to," "need to," and "must." These words represent a magical way to change reality to the way we want it.
it's awful that it did, and	Awfulizing: The belief that a situation is more than 100% worse than it is, catastrophizing, making mountains out of mole hills.
I can't stand it, and	I-can't-stand-it's: Imagining one can't tolerate situations or have any happiness if the situation persists.
somebody around here needs to be condemned and damned as rotten and worthless—let's see, is it me? Is it you? Is it the way the world works?"	Condemning and damning: The tendency to be excessively critical of oneself, others, or the world.

Combating Irrational Thinking

The irrational beliefs you use to interpret situations have become unconscious through repeated use. Consequently, it takes a tremendous amount of conscious effort to combat them effectively. Doing so requires that you understand the two most important factors in making a fun-

damental change in your own behavior. You must be able to:

- Force yourself to behave differently from how you're feeling.
- Generate the power within yourself to turn your intention to change, into actual change.

Gaining greater emotional and behavioral control first requires you to take a close look at how you experience events. Think about any experience you encounter as having the following four parts:

- **Event** Any situation of which we are a part, and/or our interactions with others.
- **Belief** The interpretation or the meaning we attach to the event or situation.

- **Emotion** The feelings we experience as a result of our interpretation about an event: happiness, sadness, anger, frustration, anxiety, depression, guilt, joy, etc.

- **Behavior** Our actions—how we respond both verbally and nonverbally

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Control Your Emotions...

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when confronted with a situation, based on our beliefs and feelings about it.

Although it may not be obvious when you're angry or frustrated, you always have a choice about how you respond to another person's disagreeable behavior. You can either:

- Use a rational interpretation of the person's actions to control your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in an effective way, or

Allow others to control your behavior by interpreting in an irrational way what they say or do.

Demandingness: How We Get Drawn In

Demandingness is the most difficult irrational thinking style to combat because the strategies for doing so go against social convention. But it's worth rethinking these automatic reactions. Every time you allow yourself to become overly upset, you are, in effect, demanding something of others or of yourself. For example, you may respond to a student who tells you to "Shut up!" by saying to yourself in an indignant way, "She **should not** have told me to 'shut up.'" or "She **needs to** be more respectful." But, if you think about the facts of the event, these statements demand that the student change an action that has already happened, and over which neither of you have any real control.

However much you might wish to, you cannot turn back time so that the student was respectful and did not tell you to "Shut up." When you place these kinds of demands on others, you fail to acknowledge the reality of a situation. It is a futile attempt to change reality to the way you wanted it to be.

It's often very difficult for educators to use demanding words such as "must," "have to," or "should" in a factual way to describe the reality of a student's behavior. The reason is because, when people evaluate behavior, there's a tendency to lump together the ideas of whether we **accept** the behavior with the idea of whether we **approve of** the behavior. However, these two notions are actually separate from each other.

We tend to not accept a behavior if we don't approve of it. However, **it is possible to accept the fact that a behavior has occurred, without having to approve of it.** For example, you may enter the cafeteria after the final lunch period and see that a student who spilled a carton of milk hasn't cleaned it up. The milk "**should be**" on the floor because it is. No amount of saying "It shouldn't be there" or "He should have cleaned it up" is going to magically reverse time and put the milk back in the carton. To continue to do so simply wastes time, emotional energy, and the ability to respond effectively. You do not have to approve of it being on the floor to accept the reality of the situation. Once you accept that the milk "should be" on the floor, you can then figure out how to respond to it.

Combating Demandingness

Combating the irrational thinking involved in demandingness is deceptively simple: Instead of using demanding words as an attempt to magically **change** reality, you merely use demanding words to **describe** reality. Here are the most common demanding words:

Must	Have to	Ought to
Need to	Got to	Should/shouldn't

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the definition for "must" is "imperative requirement," "compelled to." The word "must," and the others above, indicate that there is no choice involved. Therefore, the rule for not engaging in demandingness is to test whether the "demanding words" that pop into your mind live up to their definition and match the reality of the situation. If a behavior is a "must" or "have to," then there is no choice involved—you are compelled by forces beyond your control to do something. For example, dying is a must—we cannot live forever. Or, if we drop a pen or pencil, it must fall to the ground because of the law of gravity.

But, if you use demanding words when there is any choice at all, then you are engaging in demandingness. For example, if you say "I must be on time to work," as you leave the house 10 minutes late, you are engaging in demandingness. The

only thing you accomplish by repeating the word "must" is to keep yourself in a state of emotional upset that gets worse with every red light you encounter. So ask yourself, "Is it **possible** for me **not** to be on time?" The answer is: "Yes." You may not like the consequences, but, **it is possible** not to be on time.

Another way to test whether a situation offers absolutely no choice is to imagine using a non-demanding word to describe it: For example, you might try saying, "It would be **preferable** to be on time." As silly as it may sound at first, when you actually say "It would be preferable . . ." you automatically decrease how emotionally upset you become.

Combating Awfulizing

Other terms for awfulizing that you may have heard are "catastrophizing," "making mountains out of mole hills," or "blowing things out of proportion." Awfulizing is a logical consequence when you engage in demandingness. If you say that something **should** or **shouldn't** have happened, your next interpretation of the event will be that it is awful that it did, in fact, happen. In order to effectively combat awfulizing, it is important to understand and accept the fact that bad (i.e., negative) things do happen to us.

To avoid awfulizing, put "bad events" into perspective so that you can prevent overreacting and respond rationally and effectively. The "physical injury scale," (see chart below) created by Miller, is one tool you can use to combat awfulizing. The idea behind the scale is that when you are able to compare a negative event to physical injury—a tangible situation that we all understand and try to avoid—you will only get upset in proportion to the real unpleasantness of the event. If you train yourself to use the physical injury scale whenever you encounter a situation that you label as "bad," you will generate a response within yourself that is logical based on the "badness" percentage you select.

(continued on next page)



Control Your Emotions...

(continued from page 14)

THE PHYSICAL INJURY SCALE

100%	- death
90%	- paralyzed from waist down
80%	- dominant arm cut off
70%	- 1 hand cut off
60%	- 2 fingers cut off
50%	- 3 broken limbs
40%	- dominant arm broken
30%	- broken nose
20%	- gash requiring stitches
10%	- bruise
0%	- nothing

So, for example, when a student tells you to “shut up,” you can place that event on the physical injury scale and ask yourself, “How bad is it?”, which you determine by looking at the scale and asking yourself: “How much physical pain would I be willing to trade to have prevented the student from saying “Shut up.” It’s a good bet no one wants to go higher than 10% (bruise). Therefore, you choose to keep

yourself calm by telling yourself that the incident only warrants your being 10% upset, which leaves you with 90% of your rational thinking capabilities to figure out how to deal with the situation. This takes practice, so be patient with yourself while you’re learning.

Combating “I-Can’t-Stand-It” and “Condemning and Damning”

If you work first on reducing your demandingness and awfulizing, which are strongly interconnected, you’ll have an easier time controlling the other two kinds of irrational responses: The “I-can’t-stand-it, it’s” and “condemning and damning.” When you say, “I can’t stand this anymore,” you’re grossly exaggerating reality and increasing your chances for overreacting. As is the case with many demanding terms such as “must” and “should,” saying “I can’t stand it” is a fallacy. We are living proof that we have stood everything that has ever happened to us. Death is the only thing we cannot stand. Finally, if you let the other irrational think-

ing styles take over, you are more likely to condemn and damn others, yourself, or the world. On the other hand, if you successfully combat the first three thinking styles—demandingness, awfulizing, and I can’t stand it—it’s—you reduce your tendency to condemn and damn.

When you avoid irrational thinking about a student’s behavior, your level of emotional upset automatically decreases, giving you the emotional control to figure out an effective response. As a result, you’re less likely to feel hurt and disrespected, and to be overly punitive with the student. A student with challenging behaviors seeks the sense of power and control he gets when he can successfully “push your buttons.” Recognizing and combating irrational thinking styles will help you handle any disagreeable behaviors students throw at you—and reduce the likelihood of them “getting your goat.”

References

Miller, T. (1986). *The unfair advantage*. Skaneateles, NY: Lakeside. 



Sellentin

PERSPECTIVES

by Jerry Sellentin, Ph.D., Executive Director

By the Numbers

As I think about the past 15 years as NCSA Executive Director, it's interesting to reflect. On a tombstone is listed the date of birth, a dash, and date of death. The dash may be a reflection of all that occurred between birth and death. The following by the numbers is my "dash" from 1992 - 2007:

- 16 - Chairs and Vice Chairs of NCSA Executive Board
- 92 - NCSA Executive Board members
- 70 - NCSA Executive Board meetings
- 15 - Administrators' Days Conferences
- 14% - Increase in active membership
- 43% - Increase in active, retired, student and associate membership
- 168% - Increase of NCSA Assets, (Real Estate, Office Equipment, Reserves)
- 112 - Articles written for the NCSA TODAY
- 450 - Aspiring administrators have completed the Emerging Administrators Program
- 1006 - Members attending the 2006 Annual Administrators' Days Conference
- 100 - Administrators have partici-

pated in the Nebraska Educational Leadership Institute, (NELI)

- 80 - Administrators are participating in the McRel Balanced Leadership Program
- 37 - High School Principals are part of the Union Pacific Principals' Partnership
- 40 - Parking spaces are available at the NCSA offices
- 0 - NCSA is debt free and went from renting to owning its office building and parking lot
- 0 - Traffic tickets traveling Nebraska visiting schools, workshops and conferences



TRUST: My son-in-law, an Associate Professor at Washington University in St. Louis, is in research and studying the area of "trust." My colleague, Dr. Dan Smith, Executive Director of the Iowa School Administrators Association, wrote about trust in his recent article to Iowa School Administrators.

Trust is important in many ways as discussed by Stephen Covey in his book "The Speed of Trust." Peter Drucker, the father of modern day leadership, states

it this way: "Organizations are no longer built on force, but on trust."

Joe Paterno, Penn State Football coach states: "Whether you're on a sports team, in an office or a member of a family, if you can't trust one another there's going to be trouble."

Dan Smith highlights trust with the example of leavened bread, which lifts everything around it. In a school, trust improves communication, collaboration, execution, innovation, partnering, and relations with all stakeholders. Trust begins with the leader/administrator.

What is your level of trust with your school? What is the level of trust with local, state and federal political leaders?

As we look at the challenges for school achievement and economic growth in our communities, state and country are we getting the results we need in a way that inspires trust?

The behavior that inspires trust is acting in the best interest of others.



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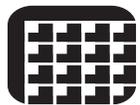
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Calendar of Events

MARCH

12-13	NAESP Legislative Conference	1:00 p.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
14	Think Tank	8:00 a.m.	Gallup University	Omaha
15	NAESP Region V	9:00 a.m.	Prairie Winds Community Ctr.	Bridgeport
16	NAESP Region II	8:30 a.m.	Millard Public Schools	Millard
21	NAESP Region V	9:30 a.m.	Valentinos	Ogallala
27	NSASSP Legislative Conf.	8:30 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
28	NAESP Region II	5:30 p.m.	Upstream	Omaha
29	NAESP Region I	2:00 p.m.	Jefferson Intermediate	Fairbury
29	NAESP Region IV	12:00 p.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
30	NAESP Region III	12:00 noon	Sports Denn	Norfolk

APRIL

3	NSASSP Region V	10:00 a.m.	WNCC	Sidney
4	GRIT Conference	8:30 a.m.	Cornhusker Hotel	Lincoln
10	EOP Workshop	9:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Kearney
10-11	NELI	10th - 5:30 p.m. 11th - 7:30 a.m.	Gallup University Gallup Univerdisty	Omaha Omaha
11	NASA Region I	4:00 p.m.	York Country Club	York
11	NAESP Region I	9:30 a.m.	ESU #4	Auburn
18	NASBO Golf Tournament	12:30 p.m.	Wilderness Ridge	Lincoln
19-20	NASBO Convention	7:30 a.m.	Holiday Inn	Lincoln
18	NAESP Region III	6:00 p.m.	Fairplay Golf Course	Norfolk
18	NSASSP Region IV	1:30 p.m.	ESU #10	Kearney
24	NAESP Region IV	12:00 p.m.	Drew Heady's House	Hastings
25	NAESP Region I	6:00 p.m.	Nebraska Club	Lincoln
25	NAESP Region II	5:30 p.m.	Boyd & Charlie's	Omaha
25	NSASSP Region I	5:30 p.m.	Evening with Friends	Milligan
25	NSASSP Region II	5:30 p.m.	UNO Alumni House	Omaha
25	NSASSP Region III	5:00 p.m.	Fairplay Golf Course	Norfolk
26-27	NAESP Spring Conference	11:30 a.m.	Haythorn Ranch	Ogallala

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

March 29-April 2, 2007 - NAESP National Convention - Seattle, WA

Candidates for NAESP (National) President-Elect

by Pat Hould

Dear Zone VII colleagues from the great state of Nebraska,

Welcome to Lewistown Junior High School Pride, where excellence and enthusiasm collide. My name is Pat Hould and I am very proud to be the principal at LJHS. In addition to being the principal of this awesome school in Central Montana, I am thrilled to report that I have been selected by the NAESP nominating committee as one of two candidates for the position of President-Elect. I can't begin to tell you how honored I am to be in the running for this golden opportunity which would enable me to support and work with principals across this great nation.

For the past seven years I have devoted myself to leadership positions within the Montana Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals (MAEM-SP) and the National Association of Elementary Principals (NAESP). From 2004 to the present, I have had the privilege of serving on the NAESP Board as the Middle Level Representative. These amazing experiences in concert with the many connections I have made with my Principal colleagues across this land have energized me for the next role I aspire to play, that as your next President-Elect of NAESP. If my aspirations come to fruition then I will work diligently to build relationships with my principal colleagues and I will assist this Association in providing the resources principals need to demonstrate a caring commitment to our young people. I will work to instill a strong sense of community into the ranks of NAESP by wholeheartedly supporting the Vision 2021 process and I will work diligently with NAESP to support and bolster the tradition of meaningful learning opportunities for our members.

Words cannot describe how excited and enthusiastic I am about this extraordinary opportunity. I would greatly appreciate your vote and the support of the principals from the great state of Nebraska in the upcoming election. I look forward to serving you as your next President-Elect of NAESP. Take care and I look with favor at the possibility of meeting you in Seattle!

by Nancy M. Davenport

Your VOICE, my VOICE: Together we influence the FUTURE.

The most important person in the schools today is the PRINCIPAL—the key person who shoulders the final responsibility for school success. I believe that principals DO make the significant difference in the quality of education for children in our schools. As a candidate for NAESP President-elect, I would be honored to represent you by emphasizing the multifaceted responsibilities of the principalship, including the importance of being an effective instructional leader and our role in school accountability. It would be my privilege to be your VOICE in the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

NAESP is an excellent professional association for elementary and middle-level principals, assistant principals, aspiring principals, and other concerned administrators throughout our nation and internationally. We can work together to be even stronger by encouraging the involvement of all members, developing collaborative relationships, and embracing the great leadership abilities and skills of our members. We need to tap the knowledge and talents of principals, throughout the United States and around the world, so we can share best practices and effectively mentor new school leaders in the upcoming years. Working together, we can positively influence the future of education for all children while leaving a legacy of excellence.

Knowing the importance of our work as principals and having a strong loyalty to NAESP, I pledge to work tirelessly to see that we are highly respected as the best professional association of elementary and middle-level principals. Collaboratively working with you, our Board of Directors and headquarters staff, we can enhance our professional development activities, strengthen services and benefits, and increase membership. I would value the opportunity to participate in NAESP initiatives, committees, and activities as President-elect. As an enthusiastic advocate for the principalship and our association, it would be important to me to work with national legislators and educational leaders about the NAESP legislative platform. It would be a great privilege to continue working with the Vision 2021 Project to address the future of education and determine the needs of our members; thereby, making our professional organization the absolute best it can be!

With your trust and confidence, we can carry the message to community leaders, parents, legislators, and all educators, no matter what their leadership or teaching position, that school principals can and do make a meaningful difference in the education and lives of children. I am passionate about being a principal. It is with a seriousness of purpose that I ask for your vote as the next President-elect of the National Association of Elementary School Principals.