

# The New Century: Is It Too Late for Transformational Leadership?

by Elaine Wilmore and Cornell Thomas

## Introduction

The principalship has been defined and described in numerous ways. Often current social concerns help to determine the type of school leadership presumed to be most effective. The principalship has been defined and described, for example, by how well learning resources have been managed; whether or not instructional leadership could be noted; how change was managed; and whether or not a safe and conducive environment has been established and maintained. It seems that many of these role definitions are guided by idealized conceptions of what principals should be like rather than on-the-job performance within given circumstances.

Reality tells us, however, that each school has a different set of needs. This reality-based reflection helps us to see that the role of an effective principal varies based on the needs of each particular campus, available resources, and support from the superintendent and school board. Therefore, school leadership can be best measured by the way a principal uses him or herself to help create a school climate characterized by staff productivity, student productivity, and creative thought (Thomas and Walker, 1999).

Two concepts of effective leadership have dominated the literature for the past twenty-plus years. During this period, other notions of leadership have been delineated. Although many of the descriptions provide informative opinions about leadership, has one emerged as a focal point, in an inclusive way to address the diverse range of situations, for the new century? As we enter the next century, how can we best define and describe effective leadership in ways that enhance student achievement and the entire teaching-learning environment? Is there really such a thing as a transformational leader, and if so, how does this leader perform?

## Leadership Defined: The Major Trends Since 1970

The effective-schools movement of the late 1970s and the 1980s described effective principals in terms of instructional leadership. Literature that focused on supporting the effective-schools movement most often stated that efforts to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process must focus on principals (Edmonds, 1979; Lipham, 1981; Cawelti, 1984). Principals are seen in this literature as instructional leaders: individuals who know what effective instruction looks like, how to evaluate it, and how to help teachers improve their instruction. Edmonds (1979) believed that the characteristics of an effective principal include: (1) strong instructional leadership; (2) the ability to lead in the development of a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; (3) an orderly and safe school climate conducive to teaching and learning; (4) high teacher expectations; and (5) program evaluations based on varied assessment measures of student achievement.

Discussions of transformational leadership emerged in the 1990s. Leadership in this literature focuses on certain beliefs.

Transformational leaders are expected to:

1. Define the need for change.
2. Create new visions and muster commitment to the visions.
3. Concentrate on long-term goals.
4. Inspire followers to transcend their own interests for higher-order goals.

---

*Elaine Wilmore, Ph.D., is the chair of educational administration at the University of Texas at Arlington. Cornell Thomas, Ed.D., is special assistant to the chancellor for diversity and community and former chairman of educational foundations and administration in the school of education at Texas Christian University.*

5. Change the organization to accommodate their vision rather than work within the existing one.
6. Mentor followers to take greater responsibility for their own development and that of others. Followers become leaders, leaders become change agents, and ultimately they transform the organization (Hoy and Miskel, 1996, p. 393).

Transformational leaders are described as values driven. They are committed to the development of learning communities. "Visionary," "change agent," and "expert at dealing with complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty" are attributes often employed when defining quality leadership. Of primary importance is the level of care principals demonstrate toward their teachers (Schlecty, 1990; Senge, 1990).

Burns (1978) stated that transformational leadership is a process within which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). He discusses transformational leadership in two stages. Stage one focuses on higher-order psychological needs for esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization. Stage two addresses moral issues regarding goodness, righteousness, duty, and obligation (Burns, 1978). Movement toward developing what Glickman (1990) calls a "cause beyond self" becomes a primary point of focus. Working together to achieve desired goals is the thread connecting all elements of a learning community.

Leithwood (1992) states, "Transformational leadership is a form of consensual or facilitative power that is manifested through other people instead of over people." Three elements make up this style of leadership:

1. a collaborative, shared decision-making approach;
2. an emphasis on teacher professionalism and empowerment; and
3. an understanding of change, including how to encourage change in others (p. 10).

Sergiovanni (1995) emphasizes a transformational leadership in which—although leadership has the ultimate responsibility and therefore final decision—input and involvement from all individuals within a learning community create optimal opportunities for success. Trying new and other options in classrooms and belief in both teachers and student capital are emphasized.

Sergiovanni thus enhances the notions of transformational leadership previously discussed. Initially, transformative leadership takes the form of leadership by building. Here the focus is on arousing human potential, satisfying higher-order needs, and raising expectations of both leader and follower in a manner that motivates both to higher levels of commitment and performance. Leadership by building responds to esteem, achievement, competence, autonomy, and self-actualizing needs (p. 119).

Transformational leadership embodies, it seems, attributes designed to empower all members of the learning community. Empowerment is defined by Giroux (1988) as "the process whereby teachers acquire the means to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world, and the possibilities for transforming the taken for granted assumptions about the way we live." We want to suggest also that empowerment be defined as the obligations and commitments each individual makes to the community and ultimately our society. With these ideals in place empowerment becomes a challenge for individuals. They can participate in determining what is right and good, not just wait to be told what to do and how to respond. In this process, all individuals are afforded opportunities to make many of their own choices in life. People, in these settings, develop an awareness of their abilities to modify and even play significant, positive roles in reconstructing the work and social environment.

There are, however, critically important ideological concepts that must be internalized by members of a learning community in order to maximize opportunities to achieve desired goals. These core concepts can become perceptual barriers that pose often insurmountable challenges toward continued development of the transformational leadership process (Thomas, 1996). The core concepts discussed here are the notions of respect, trust, and caring. These concepts should be revisited as a community of learners evolves within a transformational process. We will provide a rather brief introduction of them.

Individuals must ask themselves whether people must earn their respect, or if respect is initially given. When someone must earn another's respect, the process is often framed by concepts developed from hearsay, partial truths, negative subliminal messages, and skewed interpre-

tations about differences. We all must deal with personal instances of misrepresentation! Respect that emerges from the belief that all individuals have gifts worthy of recognition helps us move beyond this perceptual barrier in less destructive ways. Trust is directly linked to this discussion of respect and the process of building a community of learners. We must internalize the importance of placing trust in others' abilities to enhance a learning community. Members of a learning community must also care for more than the completion of assignments and other work-related outcomes. The transformational leadership process must help individuals begin to care internally for the well-being and happiness of others.

When members of a learning community embrace the notions of respect, trust, and caring, they can avoid many of the perceptual barriers regarding differences as they work within the transformational process. Leadership must understand the importance of these and similar concepts and find ways to address them in positive and productive ways.

In an attempt to bring focus to school leadership in one state, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) began studying the literature regarding effective principalship and developed a response. In 1994 the Texas Education Agency published *Learner-Centered Schools for Texas: A Vision of Texas Educators*. This document defines and describes six proficiencies designed to help administrators in Texas public schools become student focused in six areas:

- leadership style
- climate
- curriculum and instruction
- diversity
- communication
- professional development of faculty and staff

Each factor and its relation to transformational leadership will be discussed.

### **The Texas Learner-Centered Proficiencies: Learner-Centered Leadership**

*"Through inspiring leadership, the administrator maximizes learning for all students while maintaining professional ethics and personal integrity."*  
(Texas Education Agency, 1995, p. 11)

Leadership is what transformational principalship concerns itself with (Johnson and Evans,

1997). Without transformational leadership, the school becomes a ship without a sail, a journey without a map, a compass without a pointer. There are principals who are not leaders. Subconsciously, they do not even want to be leaders. They are satisfied to be managers. Content to take care of the "nuts and bolts" of operating a school, they steer clear of true leadership, because real leaders must take risks. Leadership sets them up for possible failure, because real leaders fail almost as often as they succeed (Peters, 1999). The distinction between real leaders and "wannabe" leaders is that real leaders get back up every time they fail. They get back on the horse. They "thrive on chaos" (Peters, 1988). Real leaders are never satisfied with the status quo. They are always seeking to change, to improve, and to reflect on "How can I do this better next time?" There is always a next time.

"Wannabe" leaders are afraid of failure. In truth, they are afraid of change. They would rather stick with what they have, because they at least know what it is—a primary reason so many schools are low performing. Such principals have no vision of excellence, regardless of circumstance, because they have let fear overrule the need for change. Without a specific vision of excellence, how can anyone be expected to inspire greatness in others? How can anyone sell a dream, a vision, or a plan that has not been worked out and committed to in his or her own mind?

The development of vision and its intricate implementation are the keys to successfully creating a transformational leader. First, the administrator must actively work with all facets of the learning community (Giles, 1998). Such facets include students and teachers as well as parents, churches, business leaders, community groups, neighbors, and anyone else who can be talked into helping (TEA, 1995). It is the responsibility of the leader to empower all these people in the development of a school vision and all the steps in its achievement. These people together will work toward assessing what is currently in place. What is successful? What is not? Where are the sacred cows that have never been touched, but need to be eliminated? All this should be done together. The principal's role is to develop leadership skills in others so that he or she is not left alone to carry the whole load—a classic case of multiple heads being better than one.

But the team's work is not yet complete. Its members must have continual active involvement

with the school. Program planning, implementation, and assessment should be ongoing. They must never stop. The assessment piece is very important. If new programs are put into place but never assessed, they fall into the same dangers as previous ones. They too become sacred cows. Wrong! Nothing should be immune from inspection, assessment, and modification. Even assessment itself is only half finished if the results are not studied and analyzed for modification and improvement. Not until every student is achieving to the maximum of his or her capability is a transformational leader's work done. The community's work is not done. The team has a moral and ethical responsibility to nothing less.

The days of top-down leadership are gone in favor of a collaborative leadership style that empowers the entire learning community to take ownership in what takes place at school (Behar-Horenstein and Amatea, 1996). Not every child is easy to teach. Not every child sits quietly and does everything he or she is told. In fact, not every student even cares about being in school. These are impossible issues for any one person to solve. It becomes a principal's responsibility to seek input from all stakeholders, help create the specifics of a collaboratively developed school action plan, and achieve a mutually developed mission. Then it becomes everyone's responsibility to make it happen. A transformational leader, one truly committed to transforming a school, must have a clear vision, be able to communicate it, and be able to inspire others to collaborate ethically and professionally for the achievement of all children, even those difficult to teach.

### **Learner-Centered Climate**

*"The administrator establishes a climate of mutual trust and respect which enables all members of the learning community to seek and attain excellence." (Texas Education Agency, 1995, p. 12)*

Too many people underestimate the importance of climate in creating a results-oriented, productive school. Thinking of climate as the "soft" stuff, they delegate it to lesser importance than solid curriculum, effective instructional strategies, and authentic assessment. But that assumption is not true. Without a positive campus climate, there will not be maximum success or pro-

ductivity in any area. Developing this positive climate is not easy. It is just as difficult to achieve as anything else and certainly as important (Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt, 1998).

Every school has its own unique ethos. No matter how much in common two schools may have, their campus climates and cultures are never duplicated. Even when a principal changes schools and seeks to implement similar strategies and programs in a different place, the effects are never identical. No two schools are ever exactly alike. Schools are made up of people. Not even identical twins are identical in DNA or personality. Neither are two schools. What works in one will not have the same results in any other. It is a transformational leader's role to get to know everything about the school, from the students, to the staff, to the community it serves. What makes it tick? What rings its bells? What does it value? What are the written and unwritten rules and mores (Peterson and Deal, 1994)? If a principal does not take the time to find out, he or she is headed for big trouble. Big trouble is a long way from excellence.

A transformational leader seeks to establish school as a safe place for everyone. A diligent effort must go into building open and respectful relationships, again with all people. The word "all" is paramount through each of the learner-centered proficiencies. This means everyone. "All" means "all," even the hard to teach, hard to deal with, the disenchanting, the ones who do not speak English, and the just plain crazy. Is "all" easy? No. Is "all" necessary? Yes. No one can be left out. The person who is making trouble is the very person to include. Lyndon Johnson used to say he wanted to know who his enemies were so he could keep them close at hand. If certain individuals are creating problems, involve them in the decision-making process. Empower them. Instead of keeping a distance, bring them in close. Slowly and carefully, make them a part of the solution rather than allowing them to become a big part of the problem. The more vocal naysayers are, the more important it is to bring them onto the team. The goal is to keep former naysayers vocal, but as proponents rather than as opponents of the change process. Develop openness. Develop trusting relationships. They will pay off.

Trust is of utmost importance. Without it, a campus is doomed. No organization can achieve maximum effectiveness without it. It is also very fragile. Most people will give others the benefit of

the doubt in the beginning. But once trust is broken, it is incredibly hard to rebuild. Transformational leaders know trust is a two-way street, and it must be cultivated carefully.

Once a climate of openness, respect, and trust is established, all stakeholders are free to express themselves safely. The idea that no idea is a bad idea is paramount to campus improvement. Everyone must feel free to share ideas, toss them around, change them, discard them, or whatever. The important thing is that everyone's viewpoint is valued and that everyone feels free to share. In this environment, creative problem solving is utilized. Consensus is developed. Solutions are mutually developed, not driven by just one person. The effect is greater academic and personal growth for all.

A transformational leader supports innovation. When teachers or groups come up with ideas they want to try, a transformational leader asks questions in a supportive, reflective manner and works as a part of the team to assess and analyze the new ideas. When they are successful, the transformational leader leads the celebration. No success is too small to celebrate. On the other hand, if an idea is not successful, it is still up to the transformational leader to be supportive and, again, ask insightful questions designed to analyze what went wrong and why. The goal is to encourage further innovation, not nip it in the bud due to a bad experience. No one feels worse about an unsuccessful venture than the persons involved. The old style of leadership, filled with reprimands and accusations, will not instill a burning desire in anyone to try again (Behar-Horenstein and Amatea, 1996). An insightful leader supports the idea and intent behind a concept that was not successful, yet always encourages reflection. How can we do it better next time? What specific ways can we improve what went wrong? These strategies will encourage others to try again to be innovative, rather than make them feel worse than they already do. Teachers are more motivated by leaders they perceive as being transformational (Ingram, 1997). Risk taking should be encouraged. Dialogue for improvement should be encouraged. Helping people succeed is the foundation of a great campus climate. Beating people with a stick is not.

### **Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction**

*"The administrator facilitates the implementation of a sound curriculum and*



*appropriate instructional strategies designed to promote optimal learning for all students." (Texas Education Agency, 1995, p. 13)*

This proficiency is the "meat and potatoes" of transformational school leadership. If we do not have effective curriculum and instruction, how can we expect all children to learn, much less learn to their maximum capability? Most people who aspire to enter the principalship are already excellent educators. What else must beginning administrators, as well as practicing administrators, learn in order to become transformational?

Collaboration. Lots of collaboration. A transformational leader makes use of all participants in the learning community to address the learning styles of each student. If individual needs as well as strengths in knowledge, ability to learn, and best ways of learning are not addressed, how can any school realistically expect to maximize learning for every student? Not every student learns in the same way, yet traditional schools treat all students as if they were strictly auditory learners. Surprise. They are not. Does it take time to study

what works per student? Of course. Some teachers complain that they do not have that amount of time. The real question for a transformational leader in today's society is: Do we have time *not* to study individual students? No. As long as we keep on doing what we have always done, we will keep on getting what we always have. Are any of us satisfied with that? Collaboration in planning among many players as well as continuous assessment and modification of what we are doing are the keys to improving curriculum and instructional-delivery systems.

---

*Technology is not the "be all, end all" of lifelong learning. Creating an intrinsic desire to know more and be able to use more in the minds and hearts of students as well as teachers is the goal of transformational leaders.*

Students need to be learning more than "for the test." Students need to be learning for all their tomorrows. Society depends on it. Transformational leaders will be seeking ways to address individual differences within and outside the confines of today's world as we know it. We must be producing students who create lifelong quests for learning and who continue learning when they leave the school. Technology is important in this quest. It creates a vehicle to reconnect many who are disenchanted with traditional instructional-delivery systems. But technology is not the "be all, end all" of lifelong learning. Creating an intrinsic desire to know more and be able to use more in the minds and hearts of students as well as teachers is the goal of transformational leaders. Students with this desire for learning will have no trouble acquiring the right skills as they progress from grade to grade and into the world.

Transformational leaders work with the whole learning community to study and find ways to accomplish this goal within individual schools. The strategies are as unique as the campuses they serve. The Comer School Development Program (Emmons, Hagopian, and Efimba, 1998) and the Industrial Areas Foundation (Giles, 1998) are just two examples of models that utilize community-based models to achieve these goals. There are others. The trick of transformational leadership is to first study the school with input from many different people with different per-

spectives, then together create an action plan for getting it done.

## **Learner-Centered Professional Development**

*"The administrator demonstrates a commitment to student learning through a personal growth plan and fosters the professional development of all staff in the learning community."*  
(Texas Education Agency, 1995, p. 14)

In the highly successful *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey (1990) discusses the importance of "sharpening the saw." He means that for anyone to achieve and maintain maximum effectiveness, he or she must spend time in introspection, looking inside himself or herself, assessing personal strengths and weaknesses, creating an action plan of what to do about it, and then doing it. No matter how good principals are, their bodies, minds, and souls require time for reflection and self-assessment. Principals must have the time to study themselves to determine their own leadership styles (Carr, 1997). What is working? What is not? Specific time must be set apart for this assessment. Purposeful leaders know it cannot be put off until they "get around to it." That may never happen. Just as a car requires regular fuel, maintenance, and tune-ups, so do we. This time for inner reflection is not a frill. It is a requirement for maximum effectiveness. It is particularly true for transformational leaders who are actively involved in risk taking and change efforts that may or may not have full district support (Osterman, Crow, and Rosen, 1997). Believe it or not, some administrators actually *like* the status quo.

Everyone needs time for personal retreat to refocus on goals and priorities as well as to participate in self-assessment and renewal activities (Wilmore, 1999). Without it, even principals with the best of intentions will burn out. Taking time away for professional conferences not only adds to a principal's knowledge base; it also provides important time away from the campus to learn, network, and recharge their batteries.

Biologists tell us all living things must have a time of dormancy in order to sustain life. The same is true with careers and souls. Transformational leadership is time and energy intensive. Administrators must have time to step back, far from the madding crowd, to rest, refocus, and

assess both themselves and their schools. Sometimes we cannot see the forest for the trees. Sometimes we get so physically and emotionally tired that a bit of time alone is essential. So take it. Do not feel guilty. Literally, just do it.

Where to go is of secondary importance. Again, professional conferences are an obvious choice. They take principals away from campus for what can be an important developmental activity. They provide the benefit of cognitive growth as well as reconnection with other colleagues and introduction to new ones with similar interests and concerns. Hearing keynote speakers and concurrent sessions led by known experts is another obvious benefit.

Although professional conferences are critical to the growth and development of all leaders, they are not the only avenues of opportunity. In fact, after hurrying from general to concurrent sessions and meeting with friends and colleagues, some leaders return home exhausted. Often a day or weekend in someplace quiet is needed (Wilmore, 1999). In silence we can find introspection and in so doing reconnect with ourselves. Different people find this in different ways. For some it is fishing, hunting, or engaging in golf or tennis. For others it is a day at a library or spa. For others, it is the simple pleasure of time spent quietly in the out-of-doors. Again, where is not important. Refueling your soul is what matters.

Another excellent tool for introspection and reflection for professional development as well as stress reduction and sanity is journal writing (Wilmore, 1998). Keeping a journal is inexpensive and therapeutic. It is private. No one but the writer sees it. It also serves the greater purpose of helping a leader regain perspective. There is something about framing thoughts, concepts, and problems into words and sentences that helps bring them into perspective and provides synthesis. Journal writing can be as simple or elaborate as desired. It can be done on a computer or with a pencil and paper. Format and pretty little books to write in are not important. Venting innermost feelings is. Journal writing takes time and effort to become a habit. But it is a healthy habit in both personal and professional development for all leaders in and out of education.

Back at school, a transformational leader allocates time for all faculty and staff to reflect, meet in teams, plan, and develop their own professional growth activities. Their own commitment

to professional and personal growth will be a model for others. Teachers and staff will see the importance the transformational leader places on professional and personal growth activities by the way the walk matches the talk. All members of the learning community should employ professional-development plans with specific growth activities built in. Each plan should incorporate professional and personal goal setting as well as allocate time to read professional journals, keep up with relevant research and literature, and visit other schools and business enterprises in the community. We have much to learn from the private sector. Transformational leaders seek to go outside the walls of the school to learn, just as they bring the community into the school. Above all, transformational leaders are committed to personal and professional growth for everyone involved with the school, including themselves.

### **Equity in Excellence for All Learners**

*"The administrator promotes equity in excellence for all by acknowledging, respecting, and responding to diversity among students and staff while building on shared values and other similarities that bond all people." (Texas Education Agency, 1995, p. 15)*

Transformational leaders know they are no leaders at all without this belief system. They are instead hindrances to the future of a democratic society and should resign immediately. It is one thing to acknowledge differences among people, but quite another to respect them. Beaver Cleaver's class is never coming back. Students will never again look basically alike, sit primly in their seats, and say in unison, "Yes, Miss Landers," to anything the teacher says. Respecting differences as opportunities for learning is a critical component of transformational leadership. But it is not enough. Leaders must go beyond respecting to responding. There is a hierarchy of action here. *Acknowledging* is on the lowest level. *Respecting* is a step up and worlds ahead. *Responding* is the key to appreciating and celebrating differences as well as commonalities that are traits of humankind.

Differences of race, gender, socioeconomic background, or anything else should never be allowed as excuses for lack of student perfor-

mance. Every student should be held to a high standard of achievement, and every teacher must work to that end. Anything less is discrimination, whether intentional or nonintentional. We must not accept the fact that “Poor Juan,” or “Poor Tamika,” or “Poor Susie” cannot possibly excel or even learn at grade level because, gosh, they just never had a chance. Transformational leaders work with their communities, work with their schools, and find ways to maximize Juan’s, Tamika’s, or Susie’s opportunities. A transformational leader “respects all learners, is sensitive to their needs, and encourages them to use all their skills and talents” (TEA, 1994, p. 9). The status quo is never accepted. Rationalizations are never accepted.

---

*Beaver Cleaver’s class is never coming back. Students will never again look basically alike, sit primly in their seats, and say in unison, “Yes, Miss Landers,” to anything the teacher says.*

Excellence for all is the goal. Nothing less is permitted in a transformational school. The administrator must be proactive at all times. Because school and community demographics will never be static again, it makes no sense to continue treating school leadership and governance as we have in the past. Administrators must keep a constant eye on issues and problems that schools will face in the future. The goal is to address them before they become problems. All members of the learning community must work together to develop common values. They might be simple in some schools or more elaborate in others. The important thing is that everyone has a part in their development, is empowered in the decision-making, and reaches consensus. All other issues that arise should be held up against these commonly developed values. Is this idea or program congruent with our values, our mission, and where we all agree we want to go? If not, chuck it.

Not every new idea is appropriate for every school. Find the ones that are, communicate them well, and work always toward the common goal of what is best for the students rather than what is easiest to implement. Common values foster unity of purpose, and unity of purpose is essential to school success.

## **Learner-Centered Communication**

*“The administrator effectively communicates the learning community’s vision as well as its policies and successes in interactions with staff, students, parents, community members, and the media.”*  
(Texas Education Agency, 1995, p. 16)

Having a vision is wonderful, but if it cannot be communicated clearly it is not doing the good it should. Learner-centered leaders inspire others. It is impossible to inspire anyone without communication. Both verbal (what we say, how we say it) and nonverbal (what our body relates about what we are saying) communication are essential. We may have developed a wonderful campus vision with exceptional implementation strategies, but if no one knows or cares about it, problems arise. Furthermore, it is also a problem if the communication of the vision is faulty. This is particularly true when dealing with parents, community members, and the media. Transformational leaders know what needs to be said and communicate it effectively. There is power in language. Think about what needs to be said ahead of time. Practice, if necessary. Be careful with the media. They can be your best friends or worst enemies. Their personnel are usually overworked and underpaid. They must work fast to meet deadlines. Misquotations are inevitable. But take the advice of a sage city manager: “Don’t pick a fight with someone who buys ink by the barrel.” There is power in language. Use it to your advantage.

Nonverbal skills are essential too. Active listening is critical. Give people your full attention, no matter how busy you are. Listen 1,000, not 950, times. The time invested will be productive. Active listening also promotes trust, interest, and concern, which are critical to campus climate and a supportive workplace. Listen with empathy to everyone, including parents, students, teachers, and auxiliary personnel. They are all part of the learning community. They are all part of transforming the school from mediocre to excellent. They deserve empathy and attention regardless of circumstance. Communication with people inside and outside the school is paramount to a transformed school (Johnson and Evans, 1997). It is a leader’s responsibility to be prepared, to listen and respond, to work well with the media, to have specific outcomes in mind, to articulate the outcomes, and to inspire others to greatness. It is a

tall task. A lot is being asked. But no one ever said being a transformational leader was easy.

## Conclusion

Today's schools face an array of problems that administrators in the past did not have to address. Besides societal issues, there are important policy and regulatory issues such as the future and effect of school privatization, vouchers, and charter schools. No one can say exactly where such proposals will lead. But one thing is certain. We cannot keep managing schools as if they were independent entities unconnected to the community as a whole. To produce the results necessary, a transformational leader is required to march students and teachers, academically and personally, into the new century with a love and desire for future learning. Anything less we cannot afford. A transformational leader seeks to change schools as we have known them into caring, responsible, knowledge rich, competent, change-oriented centers of the community. These schools are places where all students truly can and will learn.

So is it too late for transformational leadership? Definitely not. To give up on transforming our schools is to give up the American dream of a free and noble society. Giving up on "ideal" is certainly something a transformational leader would never do.

In future schools, leaders must be focused on children, on what is right rather than what is easy. Transformational leaders must lead with care and concern, as well as intelligence and savvy. They must focus on sound and appropriate curriculum and instruction in which all students can achieve to their capacity. They must strive toward continual, lifelong learning for themselves and those they lead. They must have a noble vision, articulate it well, and inspire others toward its success. Transformed schools must be safe places, both physically and psychologically.

For this is the American dream.

## References

Behar-Horenstein, L. S., and Amates, E. S. (1996). Changing worlds, changing paradigms: Redesigning administrative practice for more turbulent times. *Educational Horizons*, 75 (1), 27-35.

- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Carr, A. A. (1997). Leadership and community participation: Four case studies. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 12 (2), 152-168.
- Covey, S. R. (1990). *The seven habits of highly effective people*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Deal, T. E., and Peterson, K. D. (1994). *The leadership paradox: Balancing logic and artistry in education*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey Bass.
- Emmons, C. L., Hagopian, G., and Efimba, M.O. (1998). A school transformed: The case of Norman S. Weir. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 3 (1), 39-51.
- Giles, H. C. (1998). *Parent engagement as a school reform strategy*. (Report No. EDO-UD-98-5). New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED419031)
- Glickman, C. (1990). *Supervision and instruction: A developmental approach*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hoy, W., and Miskel, C. (1996). *Educational administration: Theory, research and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Ingram, P. D. (1997). Leadership behaviors of principals in inclusive educational settings. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35 (5), 11-27.
- Johnson, P. E., and Evans, J. P. (1997). Power, communicator styles, and conflict management styles: A web of interpersonal constructs for the school. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 6 (1), 40-53.
- Leithwood, K. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 49 (5), 8-12.
- Leithwood, K., Leonard, L., and Sharratt, L. (1998). Conditions fostering organizational learning in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 34 (2), 243-276.
- Peters, T. (1988). *Thriving on chaos*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Peters, T. (1999). *The circle of innovation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Schlecty, P. (1990). *Schools for the 21st century: Leadership imperatives for educational reform*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth dimension: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.
- Sergiovanni, T. (1995). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Texas Education Agency. (1995). *Learner-centered schools for Texas: A vision for Texas educators*. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency.
- Thomas, C. (1996). *Educational equality and excellence: Perceptual barriers to the dream*. Duncanville, Texas: Nellnetta.
- Thomas, C., and Walker, P. (1999). "The role of the urban principal in school restructuring." *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1 (3), 297-306.
- Wilmore, E. L. (1998). Nebuchadnezzar in the land of school administration. *The School Administrator*, 55 (11), 38-39.
- Wilmore, E. L. (1998). Reflection through journal writing. In B. Irby and G. Brown (eds.), *Women and leadership: Creating a balanced life*. Commack, N.Y.: Nova Science.