EDAD 629

Jason Harmon

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**Electronic Anthology**

Table of Contents

2 – Chapter 1 Forum

3 – Chapter 2 Forum

4 – Chapter 3 Forum

5 – Chapter 4 Forum

6 – Chapter 5 Forum

7 – Chapter 6 Forum

8 – Chapter 7&8 Forum

8 – Chapter 9 Forum

10 – Chapter 11 Forum

13 - Chapter 14 Forum

13 - Chapter 15&16 Forum

16 - Article Review #1

19 - Midterm

21- Clerk/Superintendent Interview

22 - Article Review #2

25 - Concept Paper

30 - Logged Hours and Notes.

32 - Final Paper

35- Anthology Reflection

Chapter 1

I believe that the greatest positive shift due to NCLB in efficiency and excellence in my school has been a greater focus on student achievement and college and career readiness. Although it is hard to do more with essentially less or stagnated money from the state, in the last 2 or 3 years changes are occurring, and students are learning more and more. Our expectations as teachers have risen dramatically in regards to teaching to the standards, common core, applying professional development, and curriculum enhancement. We are striving for excellence amid the pressure of doing it efficiently. Years before I got to Guernsey the teachers would receive summer bonuses and that doesn’t happen any more. Also our staff and administrators have gone without many raises recently. The push for excellence and change is exciting though, and our administration and staff are excited and on board with our shifts.

The negative shift has been struggling to teach well while being pressured to teach to standardized tests. Not all of the tests are good, and often we are testing the students too often. Too many important subject matters are left out. Creativity is spiraling downward as “NCLB places efficiency ahead of excellence in its limited focus on two subjects-reading and math” (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler, pg. 19). Our school understands that all subjects can help teach reading and math, but we can’t stifle creativity, autonomy, and choice in the process. Sir Ken Robinson talks a lot about this in his book *The Element.* He tells the story of a little girl in the mid 1930s that couldn’t sit still and focus in school. The teacher sent a request for her to go to a psychologist so they could get her diagnosed and put in a school for children with special needs. The psychologist found out that Gillian Lynne liked to dance, and recommended she be placed in a dancing school. She became a world famous dancer, actor, choreographer, and has blessed the world with her productions with Andrew Llyd Webber *Phantom of the Opera* and *Cats*.

I believe that both excellence and efficiency are good and necessary, but we can’t do it at the expense of taking from kids who they really are, and who they can become. We need a place to teach creativity, innovation, and exploration so kids can be guided to what they are passionate about, and use their unique talents and gifts to bless the world. We don’t need to be China or India in regards to education. We must demand effort, work, and excellence amidst a system of inquiry. We need students that can think, and stand on their own feet as they choose their own destiny.

Chapter 2:

Why should we test for standards and should schools and teachers be accountable?

There are a ton of reasons why we must test for standards and hold schools and teachers accountable. As I answer this question I will assume that standards are already set, relevant, and applicable, although as we see with the common core, this issue isn’t fully resolved, and standards must be continually reevaluated to meet a changing society and economy. With that said, we must test for standards for three main reasons. First, testing for standards allow teachers to know if what was taught was learned and understood. Students deserve teachers that will go the extra mile in assuring learning, not just the covering of material. Second, we should test for standards because it allows us to measure the progress of students and teachers. Teachers can know if they were effective, and students can measure their learning. Lastly, testing for standards, especially common core standards can help us measure our progress as a school to what other students are learning across the country and the world. I know that standardized tests don’t hold all the answers. The answer seems to lie in multiple measures of student performance, accountability systems that measure not only learning levels, but learning gains, and continuing to balance our curriculum with social studies, science, the arts, and other subjects (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler, pg. 27-28).

It seems that everyone wants to held less accountable in this process of educating our children. What we don’t need is any party to negate their responsibilities. If every stakeholder in a child’s life be they parents, foster parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, principals, bus drivers, Sunday school teachers, etc. takes it upon themself to influence that child for the better, and educate them in the ways of right and wrong and all kinds of learning, children will be fine. But, should teachers and administrators be held accountable, yes! The responsibility isn’t theirs alone, but they must do their best. No one should sit idly and watch kids waste away their lives in video games, pornography, drugs, and alcohol. We must believe in kids, and expect a lot out of them so they can grow up to be happy productive citizens and good parents. Our teachers are accountable to teach their subject matter well, and students must do their best to learn it. Schools and their administrators should be accountable to lead and guide their teachers to become the best they can be. As we do our part and give our all we can be pleased with our efforts.

Sergiovanni, T.J., Kelleher, P., McCarthy, M.M., & Fowler, F.C.  (2009). *Educational governance and administration. (6th ed).*  NY:  Pearson.

Chapter 3:

Name the **four critical** responsibilities of administrators and which do you feel is the most important including why you think it is the most important.

            The four critical responsibilities of administrators are norms, goals, change, and morale/coordination.  Although each of these is vitally important in the administration of a good school, I feel that the most important responsibility, which gives a base for all of the others is morale/coordination, or what is better explained as the internal integration of the school.  “Psychologically, internal maintenance refers to the building of a sense of identity and loyalty to the school among teachers and students and providing them with a sense of satisfaction and well being in return” (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler, 2009, 57).  All of the teachers and staff at a school need to have a good sense of their purpose and be fiercely loyal to the school and its students.

            I believe that without this identity as to what a school stands for and wants to become, and loyalty among the staff to uphold the highest standards of conduct it would be really hard to establish a strong culture and environment in the school.  If the moral isn’t high, and teachers don’t like their jobs, goals and movements for change can stagnate and fail.  Although I agree that without change and adaptation a school can also stagnate, unity will allow change to succeed.

            In my experience the more teachers are unified and working together in building a successful school and preparing students for their futures, the more successes occur, and the happier and more excited everyone is to go to trainings, learn new things, work on goals, and maintaining and establish a culture.  Poor communication from administrators to teachers causes problems, as well as griping about administrators without letting them know what concerns you have.  This year we have established professional learning communities, and communication seems to be better as to what we want to achieve.  I feel that we are more unified in our mission statement, and morale is high.  This is a great feeling, and is helping our school to achieve more.

Sergiovanni, T. J., Kelleher, P., McCarthy, M. M., & Fowler, F. C. (2009). Educational governance and administration. (p. 54). Allyn & Bacon

Chapter 4:

Why is there a need for professional organizations dealing with education administration?

     As one becomes more and more familiar with the current movements and trends in education it is easy to understand the reasoning behind professional organizations for educational administrators.  The reasons for such organizations seem to be three fold.

    First, there was a need to establish and develop standards to assess the competence of school administrators.  Professional organizations are great at bringing together well researched and informed individuals that can decide on standards with witch school administrators can be graded and assessed.  It is good to have several organizations in this case to assure that differing opinions are heard, and ultimately to lead to a list of assessments that can be the most reliable in assuring that administrators are doing their jobs, and focusing on the jobs that are the most critical and important to student success and learning.

    Second, there has been a lot of push to make leaders more prepared.  Stemming from the 60 page report, Leaders for Tomorrow published in 1987 by the University Council for Educational Administration, there has been a lot of discussion and rules set to assure that educational administration degree programs are best preparing school administrators (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, and Fowler, p. 78-79).  New research is always coming out, and in 1998 Brent noted: "In sum, our analysis suggest that graduate training in educational administration has no significant positive influence on school effectiveness..."(p. 82).  Controversies such as this keep everyone on their toes, and professional organizations for educational administrators can look more deeply at the issues and figure out what is true, and how better leaders can be prepared.  New standards have been established since 2003 by NCATE, and are used to assess University programs that want to be accredited (p. 85).

  Third, there has been a big push to assure that educational administrators are focusing on teaching and learning.  Professional organizations have an important job in teaching and informing their group members of new norms and standards.  The big focus on Administrators that focus on teaching and learning has been more recent, but has had a great effect on schools.  Administrators that are more aware of what is being taught and learned and how their teachers are teaching, can better understand how to guide a teacher in his/her practice and aid in the formation and implementation of effective professional development plans.

    I'm sure there are other reasons for having professional organizations for administrators, but these are the big 3 that I could pick up on in our readings.  I know that administrators need to be ever willing to change, learn, grow, and develop just like they ask of their teachers.  Schools have a big responsibility, and administrators must do their part.

Sergiovanni, T.J., Kelleher, P., McCarthy, M.M., & Fowler, F.C.  (2009). Educational governance and administration. (6th ed).  NY:  Pearson.

Chapter 5:

How do we build a positive school culture?  As we know, the answer to this question doesn't have just one answer.  We know that everyone needs to know what the school is about, and that the school purpose should "become revered" as a sacred mission to help all involved with the school feel like what they are involved in is something special (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, and Fowler, pg. 124).  I will offer a few suggestions as to how to build a positive school culture.

    One effective way is to infuse the school with value.  Every stakeholder must know the mission and purpose of the school, and be totally committed to it.  To get commitment and belief in the values, mission, and culture, an administrator must clearly paint a picture of that purpose for students, parents, and teachers.  Everything that is done in that school should align with what they are working towards, and help to achieve that purpose.  The purpose/mission must be simple, and applicable in specific ways to everything being done within the school.  In this sense, the administrator becomes the "expert in the promotion and protection of values" (pg. 125).

   My second idea comes from experience.  To build a positive culture a principal or administrator must provide the correct structure for a strong culture.  A system of tangible ceremonies, rituals, and traditions must be established that help everyone to enjoy what they are doing, and believe strongly in future growth, progress, and development.  At times these traditions must be fun and allow staff and students to get to know one another on more levels than just teacher and students in the classroom.  A few examples of this include getting student groups involved in the community, a staff basketball game where students watch the competition, pep rallies, and having traditions in the school at certain times of the year that remind everyone of what is important, and why they are there.

   I know that building a positive culture is super important for schools and any organization.  Everyone wants to work for a school or company that is experiencing success.  They want to fit in, and make a contribution with their talents and abilities.  I know that administrators must do their part to build and maintain a positive culture of success.

Sergiovanni T., Kelleher P., McCarthy M., & Fowler F. 2009. Educational Governance and Administration. Pearson, New York.

Chapter 6:

Here are my Voki Links.  I was gone to a conference and didn't have internet, so sorry this is a little late.

**http://www.voki.com/pickup.php?scid=8661950&height=267&width=200**

http://www.voki.com/pickup.php?scid=8662039&height=267&width=200

<http://www.voki.com/pickup.php?scid=8662077&height=267&width=200>

Chapter 7 & 8:

I believe that teachers need to have autonomy when it comes to curriculum.  Each teacher has strengths and areas of expertise that won't be able to shine through if they aren't permitted to have input into their curriculum and course sequence.  Creativity, ingenuity, flexibility, and innovation are being eroded by standardization, and "turning teachers and their students into mindless drones (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler, p.169).  As educational leaders we need to make certain that our teachers are teaching to the standards, but allow them freedom and creativity on how to reach the standards.  Education is stifled by predetermined scripts.  A curriculum should be flexible and give teachers guidance and ideas on how to reach the learning goals, without controlling too much of their curriculum and course sequence.

    Motivation to learn can be achieved in various ways.  First, we need to let students know we care, build our relationships with them, and let them know that we believe in them and their ability to learn.  This will help them see a vision of who they can become.  Second, we must foster a growth mindset in our students.  We must teach them through our example that with hard work and practice growth comes.  If a student isn't good at math they tend to shy away from it and think that it is a fixed trait, or that they are bad at math.  We must assure them that they can get better.  This breeds hope within them.  Also, we need to make sure that our school and classrooms have a positive culture of learning.  Students must take pride in their school, and be excited to be a part of it.

    Although there are many other ways to remedy motivation, we must balance rigor and meet students where they are currently in their learning progression.  By this I mean we must making sure we aren't teaching way above their skill level, or making school too easy for them that they get bored.  A motivated student believes in his or her ability to achieve, has their basic needs met, and enjoys the challenges of learning.  A motivated student feels loved, believed in, and has a vision of who they can become.  Lastly, a motivated student stays motivated, even on a bad day by the culture that surrounds them.  They are nurchered by teachers, administrators, friends and peers that value them for who they are and who they can become.

Chapter 9:

Reflect on how the role of the principal changed in the past 10 years?

The role of the principal definitely continues to evolve and change.  With the advent of No Child Left Behind principals have been more pressed to not only be good instructional leaders, but to ensure their schools meet mandates and don’t fail.  “In the collaborative world of the twenty-first-century school, the principal is no longer, if he or she ever was, the organizational expert” (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler 2009, pg. 187).  A principal today has to be able to do more, and must be skilled at improving teaching and learning.  Also, a principal today must work collaboratively to create a school culture and climate that promotes learning.

The average age of school principals has increased in the past 10 years.  Also principal’s roles have expanded, and many principals report that they can’t accomplish everything that is expected of them, “especially in instructional leadership” (pg. 191).  Many principals feel that workplace conditions are worsening and that they have been given not only more responsibility, but also less authority with which to accomplish their tasks.  Stress continues to increase for principals, and studies have reported that they have had to compromise a lot in terms of family and personal time for their jobs (pg. 193).  Although some of the changes are bad, the bright side is that principals continue to feel positive about their jobs, and the things they can accomplish (pg. 193).

From what I have observed, principals today must use collaboration and groups of teacher leaders to distribute responsibility within the school, and get more done. With increasing responsibility and stress, principals must delegate less important tasks to other staff so they can focus on what is most important.  I have a principal that is good at this, and he not only is our k-12 principal with no assistant principal, but he ranches and has a huge garden.  Dividing up responsibility, and giving teachers say on important school decisions has helped our school to improve dramatically, and allowed our principal to have a life outside of his job.

Chapter 11: Schools as Political Systems

EDAD 629

Jason Harmon

Ch. 11 Forum

Why is the making of school policy more difficult now than ever?

  School policy is often more hard to make in this day and age for several reasons.  Many of the difficulties stem from shifting values as to what should and ought to be taught, when things should be taught, who should teach them, and who will be accountable (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler 2009, pg. 237).  There are so many differences in opinions, and so many people wanting change.  While education used to be simple in the traditional one room school, today the increase in diversity and culture makes satisfying everyone very difficult, not to mention the increased pressure on the United States educational system to succeed.

       What should be taught has changed from the basic subjects of reading, writing, and math, to a ton of other subjects that demand the attention of schools and teachers.  Hence schools are more complex systems these days, and require a lot of meeting and planning.  It is difficult for all parties involved to agree upon what should be taught.

       Even after a school board or state board of education decides on what will be taught, they still have to decide when to teach the subjects and during which grade levels they will be taught.  In a world where drugs and morality are big issues it can be hard to agree upon when to teach D.A.R.E. and sex education classes.  So many groups want to have a say and lobby for change, and it makes decisions hard for policy makers to satisfy everyone.

       Policy has also become more difficult as hiring and firing of teachers and administrators is more protected by unions.  Teachers are required to be more qualified.  Unions are difficult to work with, and boards must work with them for salary schedules and benefit allocations.  Deciding who should teach and what their qualifications should be is a continual battle.

       Accountability is getting even trickier as the years go by.  Schools continue to try to understand where their failures lie.  School policy must be in place to make teachers and administrators accountable for student learning, but it isn’t easy to define each area of accountability.  Where does the accountability lie for parents and the school as a whole?  What about the board of education?

       Lastly, I would have to say that changing demographics make school policy hard.  “These changes have already led to political conflict among different groups over school policies” (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler 2009, pg. 237).  While it is hard to satisfy all of the above concerns for one cultural group, changing demographics complicates everything.  While multicultural schools are a great thing, school leaders have to be more open and willing to communicate with everyone and seek their opinions.  It is important the voices are heard, and groups don’t feel left out, judged, or discriminated against.

Chapter 13: The State Level of Policy Making

EDAD 629

  In your state and your community name some of the “pressure groups” that influence policy making on the local level?   What types of policies are they looking to change?

     It is very apparent that many voices and groups compete for the attention of legislatures, the state board of education, and local school boards as they try to sway policy to meet their own agendas.  A single individual means very little to policy makers, but many people working together can make an impact and cause those policy makers to pay attention (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, & McCarthy, p. 250).  Although I'm not fully aware of the many groups lobbying in Wyoming and my local community, I will explore several groups and discuss what they hope will change.

      Firstly, there are many groups that lobby for policy changes on specific decisions impacting curriculum, such as what will be taught in the state of Wyoming and how much of it is required.  Recently the Wyoming arts council together with fine art and music teachers of Wyoming lobbied to change graduation requirements in the Wyoming Hathaway scholarship.  This is a big scholarship that goes to graduating seniors that chose to study in the state of Wyoming and is dependent on their GPA's and their ACT scores.  The change they wanted to see was the requirement to go from 1 required fine arts credit to 2.  Although this didn't happen exactly as they would have liked, the legislature worded the change to say that graduating seniors need at least 2 fine arts or *language* credits by the time they graduate to be eligible for the Hathaway scholarship.

     Locally, the Guernsey-Sunrise Education association lobbies every year before the school board as they negotiate teacher pay, benefits, and working conditions.  This year they were able to negotiate a pay increase for coaches if they had more than 5 years of coaching experience.  In the past a coach would get a raise every year until their 5th year.  Starting this year they keep getting a raise each additional year until their 9th year coaching.  The year before that our school district deemed it necessary to increase the deductible on our insurance from $1000 to $1500, and the Education Association was able to get the school board to approve a $500 a year HRA for each teacher to help offset the additional costs.  The great thing about this is that even if a teacher doesn't use that $500 it carries over to subsequent years.

     Lastly, I know that parents have created groups and gone before our board of education to express concerns over an online curriculum we are currently using right now called APEX.  Although there are good things about it, the parents were able to voice their concerns and get their needs addressed.  This has been a good thing, and allowed our board to keep analyzing with more scrutiny the benefits of such programs.  As of right now we are continuing to use APEX in Social Studies and English, but one of our English teachers is hoping to get out of it next year.  I guess we will see if he can get the support he needs to continue teaching as a traditional English Teacher.

Chapter 14: The Federal Level of Policy Making

[Voki #1](http://www.voki.com/pickup.php?scid=9027212&height=267&width=200" \t "_self)

[Voki #2](http://www.voki.com/pickup.php?scid=9027225&height=267&width=200" \t "_self)

[Voki #3](http://www.voki.com/pickup.php?scid=9027231&height=267&width=200" \t "_self)

Chapter 15 & 16:

I posted about Lau vs. Nichols.  It was a case in 1974 where a Chinese American student wasn't given sufficient help in learning English.  The court ruled that giving ELL students the same instruction and materials as other students denies them equal opportunities to learn.  Many students coming from other countries need extra help and support to learn English, and understand what is going on around them in our school systems.

Board Meeting – Platte County School District #2

Monday September 9th, 2013

Troy Lake: k-12 Principal

* Professional Learning Communities – going well, have had two so far.
* Data – Milepost by Silverback – online data program, almost all the data is up. A parent portal is coming in October so parents can access all of the information. Working Well
* MAPS window is open, and most have taken it.
* Advanced ED is coming for an accreditation visit in early October. More information to come on that.

Dave Barker:

* Enrollment we grew from 200 students to 213. We grew 13 students, and that is a great thing.
* WSBA conference – if going let Rhonda know and she will get rooms.
* Homecoming – scheduled for September 20th. Will meet with student council soon to schedule activities.
* Accountability meeting tomorrow in New Castle. Will discuss the pieces and phases of leader and teacher accountability.
* Wyoming is trying to waiver the AYP determinations, so this school year we would have been held to 100% proficiency on tests, but now it is frozen at 84%. Hopefully the bill will be rewritten and revised.
* Parks and Recs board. 2 Openings. Wondering what to do. Thinking of advertising, and wondering what we should do. Asked board if they want to interview, or just appoint those with interest? Decided to interview and choose the best candidates.
* Did a survey to see how much promethium boards are being used. A lot of computers and laptops are being used, but only about 1/3 of the promethium boards are being used as something other than projectors. Board asked what we are using that TIE taught us.
* Put the state ACT accountability information in their Drop-box. Told us what ACT score correlated with proficiency in each subject area, and will now use ACT data to determine student proficiency instead of PAWS scores. Example, a 16 is proficient in reading. Said that we will still look at the benchmarks. We are looking to bump up how proficient our Juniors are in reading, math, and science.
* Board asked Dave why all scores went down but reading in the 4th grade.
* Dave talked about what we are doing to help our elementary and middle school kids who are struggling with reading.
* Curriculum Mapping – shared Atlas (our curriculum mapping program) with the board. Helps us assure we are assessing and teaching all of the standards.

School Board – Old Business:

* Revised Policy ACE – unanimously approved
* Fevised Policy JLCD –
* Discussed Continuation of Early Notice Incentive Plan. – Give $3,000 stipend to those retiring if they let the school know by December the year before retiring. Approved the Continuation of the Early Notice Incentive Plan.

New Business :

* Approved paying the accompanist as a part of the Classified Pay Scale.
* Request for upgrades and maintenance to the HVAC System. Brought in a guy to discuss options for expanding our technology systems.

1. HVAC – Computer that runs the system. Will require a hardware and software update.
2. Keyless Entry system – Adding 6 doors – Some districts like Pinedale Wyoming has like 250 cameras in the school. We are trying to get security within the school. Our keyless entry system monitors access and security in the school. Recommends us upgrading to a custom system that allows programming and tracking of entry and security.
3. Video Management System. It is basically a VCR and camera system. The new systems secure information in a secured server, and can interlock with secured systems.
4. Bid process
5. Proposals
6. About $163,000 over 3 years.

* How much to maintain each year? A little more than $3,000.
* State will help fund this.

Break

New Business Continued:

* Approved hiring a part-time payroll assistant.
* Approved changed in student handbook on searches

Payment of Bills:

* Went through the bills, and asked questions to clarify where we are spending our money. Assured nothing was wrong, or misspent.
* Motioned to pay bills, and all were in favor and motion carried.

Policy Review:

* Reviewed policies 2.10,2.11, 2.13, and 2.14

My Comments:

Overall the meeting was a little long (2 hours), but seemed to run smoothly and effectively. It was interesting to get a glimpse of all that the administrators are in charge of, and hear their reports to the board. I agree with the decisions that were made, but feel that often when things are voted upon that they are considered too quickly with too little discussion.

EDAD 629

Journal Article #1

Jason Harmon

School Organizational Culture and Inclusive Educational Leadership

I studied a Polish article written by Roman Dorczak titled *School organizational culture and inclusive educational leadership* (2011). This article talks about the research surrounding a special type of school leadership needed for contemporary schools. This type of leadership is referred to as “inclusive educational leadership”. This type of leadership redefines the old leadership roles of control, order, hierarchy, and power and replaces them with concepts of trust, mutual respect, and acceptance of the ongoing process of organizational change. “Every single individual is vital in the leadership process which becomes a socially constructed process created by professionally developing individuals (p. 48).” Important to inclusive educational leadership is creating the right conditions for the personal growth of all individuals involved in the organization (students, teachers, staff, families, and administrators). That is what allows the organization to grow and become what it needs to be. This type of leadership is big on giving autonomy to teachers. It is believed that everyone needs space to develop personally and professionally within the group, and reach their potential. “It is built on the values of autonomy, mutual respect, trust, and responsibility for others (p. 48)”.

The article goes on to stress the importance of two underlying issues. First, it is important for educational leaders to stress the vitally important role of teamwork in the interpersonal process; working together in order to accomplish goals of organizational change (p. 49). Part of this is properly organizing communication within the school and district so everyone can express their thoughts, views, and opinions. This allows a group of people to work together as they organize school change. Second, Dorczak stresses the importance of autonomous personal development. Inclusive leadership allows for the development of skills and competencies, but must foster the growth of all the individuals in the school. That is how a school will improve.

The last thing that Dorczak focuses on in his article is school and organizational culture. He says that school culture is the most important and crucial part of school transformation and describes four leadership styles that hinder or help a school culture of inclusive educational leadership. The first two leadership styles are oppressive and controlling. The third one allows too much freedom and independent work and doesn’t focus on growth of the group. The last leadership style builds an Athenian culture, and builds on teamwork and the potential of all members of an organization. A leader who creates an Athenian culture “creates the conditions for interpersonal and professional communication and makes it the main tool of solving problems. This type of a leader distributes power and authority by fostering teamwork and giving teachers authority to make decisions that foster change. This style helps make education an inclusive process, and gives teachers and students more ownership over their school and their educations.

Lastly Dorczak included several research studies of Poland’s educational system. The research shows there are far too many schools in Poland that lead systems that are too restrictive and oppressive. About 25% of school leaders in Poland are creating Athenian cultures and leading schools of Inclusive Education. There is evidence that changes are taking place, and the trends are good. Dorczak lists what is needed for change to be more broadly accepted, and looks forward to the future of the Polish educational system.

I really enjoyed reading this article, and learning form the research of Dorczak. Although the Polish wasn’t translated in such a way as to make it an easy article to read, I found it interesting to learn more about the educational system in Poland. It was very informative to think about how far our educational systems have come, and how systems of leadership have evolved over the past 100 years. I agree full heartedly with the idea of Inclusive Educational Leadership. This article helped me to see more of the good things that my current administrators are doing. I feel that they do a great job at involving us as teachers, and the students in the decision-making processes. We are continually given a say, our voices are heard, and we feel like the school is ours. We are continually working on communication, but definitely are striving to work in groups (PLC’s) and given opportunities to be on other committees that promote change within our school.

As a future educational administrator and leader, this article helped me relax. I’ve never liked the idea of controlling leaders such as kings and dictators. I love the fact that part of creating a positive school culture is using the talents of all, and helping everyone’s voice be heard. An effective leader guides a school in growth and reaches for excellence, but not at the expense of others. As everyone grows the school grows. This article was good for me, and helps me look forward with joy to my opportunities to continue making difference in the lives of others.

References

Dorczak, R. (2011). School Organizational Culture and Inclusive Educational Leadership. *Contemporary Management Quarterly, 2, 45-55.*

EDAD 629

Midterm Exam

Jason Harmon

Scenario #2

Having been a custodian in college, there are definite problems occurring here that need to be addressed. First, I would make sure that a system of accountability is put in place. I would contact the union, and find out what procedures they want us to follow in reporting and making a log of those who aren’t doing their job. Lastly, I would develop a better system for dealing with teacher complaints that would allow me to work on what is most important, improving teaching and learning.

Within any system, accountability must be in place. A worker such as a custodian must know their assigned duties (what they are expected to accomplish each day) and to whom they are accountable. In this case the night custodian is accountable to the lead custodian. The lead custodian must understand the duties of the workers that they oversee, and assure the work is completed properly. The lead custodian then reports directly to the district maintenance supervisor. The district maintenance supervisor oversees the cleanliness, safety, and repair of the building. The maintenance supervisor should report directly to the principal. The principal is ultimately in charge of making sure that the maintenance supervisor is doing his job and organizing his work efficiently and effectively.

As the new school principal Ken needs to visit with the Maintenance Supervisor and make sure that they are on the same page. The maintenance supervisor needs to be aware of his responsibilities, and what the principal will be looking for to assure that he is doing his job well. His responsibilities should be written out in a way that they are clear and easily understood by himself and easily evaluated by the principal. He should then write out the duties and tasks of his lead custodian and other custodians so they know exactly what they are responsible for. He should be in charge of interviewing perspective custodians, training those he has, and assure they are doing their jobs well. When complaints arise he should take care of them in a timely manner.

Ken should have brought his complaints directly to the maintenance supervisor, and allowed him the opportunity to do his job. The maintenance supervisor then would have had the chance to talk to his lead custodian, and find out what in the system is going wrong. If no system of accountability exists, and the lead custodian isn’t occasionally checking the work of his night custodians then there is a problem. The system would need to be created and maintained.

Obviously the custodian wasn’t doing his job. Quite possibly the lead custodian and maintenance supervisors had become lazy or lackadaisical. To avoid problems with classified teachers unions the right procedures need to be followed. Ken should contact them, and find out exactly what documentation is required to fire an employee that won’t do their work. He should then make sure everyone is aware of his or her duties and check up on the maintenance supervisor every once in a while. They should meet at least monthly to talk over the building and any issues that have arisen. The principal should be one of the first resources the maintenance supervisor goes to if he has questions, concerns, or problems he can’t solve. Just as principals deal with teachers that won’t do their jobs, the maintenance supervisor must follow procedures to correct employees that aren’t fulfilling their responsibilities. He must retrain them when necessary, and set goals for their improvement. If changes don’t occur and they don’t seem to care or take pride in their work, the correct procedures must be followed to let an employee go.

Teacher complaints can be hard to deal with, especially for a new principal. Once Ken has established the systems mentioned above he must create a system for dealing with teacher complaints. Some schools have an online computer program to document maintenance requests. Requests can be filed by teachers and administrators, and tracked to see how timely the requests are completed. There would need to be a similar system of reporting complaints so the maintenance supervisor can first deal with the issues before the principal needs to worry about the concerns. The system could be as simple as emailing the maintenance supervisor about concerns, filling out a simple complaint sheet, or talking to the supervisor in person. If concerns aren’t resolved within a certain predetermined period of time the teacher could be advised to bring the complaint to the building principal or vice principal (whoever oversees those issues in that particular building). The hope of this system is to allow the correct person to deal with the issues, and give the principal the most time possible to handle more important issues, namely enhancing teaching and learning.

EDAD 629

Jason Harmon

Clerk/Superintendent Interview

This Summer I had the opportunity to interview my principal and two superintendents about school finance issues. I didn’t want to bother them with any repetitive questions, so I decided to interview two of the central office staff. They didn’t know as much or in as great of detail as what I learned during the summer, but they were able to answer my questions and help me to understand more about the role of administrators regarding school finance.

I found out that in Platte County School District # 2 our budget is set by our superintendent and business manager. Teachers, the principal, the maintenance manager, and transportation director all let the superintendent know what they need and want to order, and the budget is reviewed by him to make sure we have enough money to buy what is requested. If we can’t get everything requested things have to be prioritized and some eliminated.

Most of the money for education in Wyoming comes from the state government. They reimburse the school for transportation costs, building maintenance budgets, and over 50% of all other expenses. They give out money to districts based on certain formulas that involve average daily membership, school size, and what money can be raised by local property taxes. There are several towns that bring in a lot of money locally (districts with high property value), so the state recaptures excess money and distributes it throughout the state to poorer districts. This is the way the state of Wyoming assures more equity in financing education for their students. The National government gives our district some money, and our other funding sources include local money (property tax), and grants.

I learned the most by asking about coding. Our district has a great way of organizing their budget and expenditures. The budget codes are organized by category and simple numbers are assigned to each budget item within each category. There are many categories within our school budget. Some of the categories include elementary, junior high, high school, travel, and special education. It is super important that they keep their records organized and up to date because the state of Wyoming requires a yearly audit.

From what I was told the board has the final say on any hiring within a school district. The business office staff are interviewed and selected by our superintendent and our principle, but the board has to approve hiring decisions. The superintendent is hired by the school board, and in our district is only given a short one to two-year contract. Each time the contract is up for renewal the board evaluates how the superintendent is doing to see if they want to renew his contract or find someone new.

Lastly, I found out more about the bid process. Bids are sent out for milk, fuel, and construction projects such as re-finishing hardwood floors in the gym. The bids are advertised in the local papers, and specs are sent out to people who call in and to those who have bid in the past. The bids are analyzed, and the best bid is selected. Our school doesn’t have any outstanding bonds (those I talked to think we paid them off a few years ago), but the community has been supportive in the past of our school and its needs. We haven’t had any major construction projects since the 70’s.

School funding and finance is a topic that really interests me, and one that I hope to keep studying. Even though Wyoming is doing a great job at funding education, there are always issues, and things that can be done better. I hope to be more involved in the school funding process in the future. One interesting thought I had is that if the national debt is 17 trillion, and the government is paying (this is a guess) about 2.5% interest on average on their t-bills, then they are paying out around 425 billion dollars a year in interest. According to our text that would just about be enough to fund all or our elementary and secondary schools in the whole United States each year.

EDAD 629

Jason Harmon

Article Review #2

How Do Principals Really Improve Schools?

In this article published by the ACSD I was able to see school improvement from a somewhat different perspective. In past articles I have read and reviewed, there has been a big push for principles to be instructional leaders, and to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. In this article Rick DeFour and Mike Mattos (2013) review the recent research on the benefits of Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s), and why they are more important in improving schools than just getting administrators into the classrooms more often.

To start out the article the authors reviewed the faulty logic of using intensive supervision and evaluations to impact teaching and learning. “Teacher evaluation does not recognize good teaching, leaves poor teaching unaddressed, and does not inform decision making in any meaningful way” (DuFour, R. & Mattos M., 2013). In fact they report that three out of four teachers say that the evaluation processes used in their schools don’t have any real impact on their classroom practices. They talk about two things that are necessary for intense teacher evaluations to work effectively. First teachers must know how to improve student learning and be motivated to do so. Secondly, principals need to have the time and ability to improve teacher practice through observations in their classrooms (2013). These conditions rarely exist.

Research has proven that merit pay doesn’t improve student outcomes or change the way teachers behave in a positive way (2013). It has also been found that effective school leaders don’t lead with fear, in fact, fear needs to be driven out of an organization, or it will be a barrier to continual improvement. Also, basing teacher assessment solely on student achievement isn’t the best idea. Coupled with these facts are the “crushing demands on the contemporary principal” (2013). Not only is there too much for principles to do to thoroughly go through the formal observation process, often, to do it right, as the experts have said it should be done is almost impossible with all of the other demands principals have on their plates. Also, every principle is clueless in many of the content areas they are supposed to observe. This leads to an inability to correctly determine the appropriateness of content and the level of rigor in many content areas. Hence, in those areas principals must use more generic observations that apply to effective questioning and teaching strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. This is why the conditions for intense observations to have a real impact on classrooms rarely exist.

Finally the article concludes that although classroom observations can be meaningful and beneficial, principals shouldn’t use them as their “key strategy for improving their schools” (2013). Marzano and DeFour found that “the checklist approach to providing feedback to teachers doesn’t enhance their pedagogical expertise…it’s antithetical to true reflective practice…(and) is profoundly anti-professional”. So, what is more important to the improvement of schools?

Principals must focus on the collective analysis of the evidence of student learning (2013). The key to student learning is better teaching in more classes, more often. “The most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning, however, is not by micromanaging instruction but by creating the collaborative culture and collective responsibility of a professional learning community” (2013). Research shows that simply providing time for teachers to meet won’t have an impact on student learning. In their article they mention five steps to success on the PLC Journey. These steps will help a school to establish effective PLC’s. DeFour and Mattos argue that PLC’s create ongoing, collective analysis of learning, and are far more likely to improve teaching than a principle coming by a classroom several times a year to see if they are doing everything right. The steps involve meaningful collaboration and deep focus on the personal and individual needs of the students. They also note the importance of using their groups to enhance one another’s curriculum, assessments, and teaching skills. PLC’s aid in breaking down the walls of teacher isolation, and motivate teacher to help each other in the education process. They also allow lower performing teachers to learn strategies that will help them be more effective.

Lastly, A very effective principal will align the PLC group goals and norms with their individual teacher goal setting sessions. “Results-oriented goals help create the interdependence and mutual accountability vital to effective teams” (2013). Positive peer pressure is created as PLC teams collaborate and seek to improve teaching and instruction. Principals must stop striving to monitor teaching personally, but set goals collectively as a school in order to do a better job of monitoring student learning. Today we need learning leaders instead of instructional leaders that will help focus our schools on learning for everyone, including the adults that serve our students.

I’ve read several articles focusing on the importance of principles as instructional leaders, so it was interesting seeing the opinions of these authors. I agree with the importance of creating a culture of collective responsibility where everyone works to learn and grow, and help each other improve. Definitely we can’t do away with observations and teacher improvement plans(in fact they are important), but that isn’t the purpose of this article. This article is presenting the research as to why intense classroom observations aren’t the answer to our problems. They can be good, but we need teachers to feel intrinsically motivated to improve. A teacher can be taught to reflect daily on their teaching practices and learn new skills, but these can be done effectively as PLC’s set group norms and work effectively to improve student learning in their spheres of influence. This article was good for me to read as a future administrator so I can remember the importance of PLC’s, but also currently as this is the first year our school is embarking on the journey of Professional Learning Communities.

EDAD 629

Concept Paper

Jason Harmon

November 26th, 2013

Guernsey-Sunrise: Becoming an Impact School

This research paper will focus on what Guernsey-Sunrise school (a small k-12 school in eastern Wyoming) can do to become an impact school and achieve their goals. We currently have a condensed school mission, vision, goals, and values page (see appendix) that is posted around the school and in each classroom. This paper will focus on what we will do to implement the research of Jim Knight presented in his book *Unmistakable Impact* (2011) so we can reach our goals and become a school centered on impactful teaching and learning. Our goal is to design and deliver professional learning that will help us achieve our mission, “to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of each learner, empowering individuals to grow into responsible, productive, global citizens”. In Guernsey-Sunrise Schools we are absolutely committed to preparing each learner for the future.

To simplify things this paper will center around 5 key concepts found in Knight’s book (2011), and what specific strategies we will implement in the next few years to assure that we become an impact school. The 5 key concepts are Humanity, Focus, Leverage, Simplicity, and Precision. For organizational purposes a timeline can be found at the end of the paper.

**Humanity**

When Knight (2011) talks about the concept of humanity he is referring to the importance of recognizing the value of everyone in a school, community, and culture. He states, “nothing will transform education if we fail to cherish and challenge the human heart that is the source of good teaching” (pg. 7). When one talks about empowering individuals and reaching goals, it is super important that everyone involved in the process of a school feels valued and important. This facilitates a growth mindset, and helps schools achieve much.

Coupled with this concept our school will implement the strategies downplaying status (pg. 22-23) and partnership (pg. 50-54). All administrators, instructional coaches, team leaders, teachers, and staff will make sure they treat everyone as equals, and as individuals with great potential. Although roles within a school differ, leaders must always demonstrate their respect for others. Respect is manifested and demonstrated by seven principles: equity, choice, voice, reflection, dialogue, praxis, and reciprocity. These partnership principles allow open communication, growth, and freedom for all stakeholders to become their best selves. As our school focuses on humanity and implementing these strategies we will be witness to the self-fulfilling prophecy that people live up to your expectations of them, be they high or low. Students and teachers will begin to realize their potential.

**Focus**

Our school will need to make a core instructional plan to go along with our goals, mission, and vision document. Once created, focus will be key. Focus in a school is so important because lasting change can’t occur without focus, support, and system wide accountability (pg. 11).

After creating our instructional plan, the strategy we will implement to enhance our focus will be instructional coaching. As of right now we don’t have any instructional coaches, and are rarely evaluated by our principal. As a school we will hire an instructional coach that is highly trained in understanding what constitutes good teaching in our district. The principle and the instructional coach will meet often to discuss where we are. Teachers will be evaluated often in a friendly manner that doesn’t attack them or take away their autonomy, but in a way that helps them grow and learn to reflect on their teaching. The instructional coach will be a means of maintaining focus as we reach to achieve our target.

**Leverage**

Leverage is referred to as focusing on what has the greatest impact with the smallest effort. “Enormous influence comes from focusing on just a few vital behaviors. Even the most pervasive problems will often yield to changes in a handful of high-leverage behaviors. Find these, and you’ve found the beginning of influence” (pg. 13).

The strategy we will implement here will be to take the focus from our instructional improvement target document, and use is to plan a few powerful workshops that make an impact. “One-shot traditional workshops rarely change professional practice” (pg. 133). Realizing this we will couple the workshops with continued coaching and practice, so changes really occur. The workshops will provide multiple ways for teachers to apply what they are learning to their specific classrooms. The workshops will be clear and powerful. Lastly, those who present will have high energy, tell stories, and use many strategies to connect with the audience. This focus will help our school to get more leverage as we seek to change.

**Simplicity**

For simplicity to impact our school we must remove distractions so that only the most important things remain. We must have clear goals, clear action plans, and clear methods of fulfilling and reaching our goals. “The real truth is that only simple solutions will get the job done” (pg. 13).

The strategy we will implement for simplicity will be to implement effective intensive learning teams or professional learning communities. This year we began meeting weekly with a professional learning community. It consists of a group of 4 or 5 teacher teaching similar classes or content. Although we have begun this process there are several changes we need to make in the near future for our learning teams to be more simple and impactful. We need to have greater simplicity and focus in our weekly meetings so our time is used wisely. We also need to take the time to unpack our curriculum and find ways to implement the high leverage teaching practices described on our schools target as we teach (pg. 205). These intense learning teams will simplify the process of reaching our target.

**Precision**

This concept deals with making sure that all leaders have precise knowledge of what they are asking for from their teachers. It requires precise explanations. Change leaders must have deep, complete understanding of practices so they can teach them clearly, and know exactly what they are looking for as evidence of what they are evaluating during teacher evaluations (pg. 14).

This last step will be fairly simple in theory, but critical, and not that simple in practice. Our strategy will be to get our administrators and instructional coaches in depth training on our instructional targets to assure they can teach, use, monitor, and assess them. They need to be experts in our instructional targets. After the training we will provide opportunities for the administrators to practice. Then evaluators will come in to make sure they are evaluating teachers correctly. We will not assume understanding by an administrator or instructional coach until they can competently demonstrate and teach the skills clearly. Doing this will assure precision in the implementation of our targets.

**Conclusion**

Creating an impact school will be a lot of work, but less than one might think. It is a matter of simplicity, focus, and leverage. As we create an instructional improvement target and fully implement it our school will change. In Guernsey we don’t have anything even remotely close to the role of an instructional coach, and this will be key to help all teachers implement trainings we receive. Administrators must treat teachers with respect, and everyone needs to feel validated. As all of these steps are followed, lived by, and completed our school will change, and learning will increase. Our students will be more prepared for their futures, and become empowered responsible, productive and global citizens.

**Strategy** **Begin Date Full Implementation**

1. Create Instructional Improvement Target Dec. 2013 Jan. 2014
2. Downplaying Status and Partnership Now March 2014
3. Instructional Coach 2014 August 2014
4. Workshops that make an Impact Feb. 2014 September 2014
5. Follow up coaching and practice Feb. 2014 Nov. 2015
6. Intensive Learning Teams Now February 2014
7. In Depth Training of Administrators Jan. 2014 March 2013

And Instructional Coaches

8. Follow up on learning by administrators Feb. 2014 May 2014

and instructional coaches

DuFour, R, & Mattos, M. (2013). How do principals really improve schools? *Educational Leadership*, 70.7, 34-40.

**Logged Hours and Notes:**

Date Hours What I discussed and/or learned

**Sep. 16th 15 min.** I talked to my principal about our school and how we can improve it

**Oct. 2nd 45 min.** I talked with my superintendent and assistant principal about what could be done to better our school culture, and the relationships among faculty.

**Oct. 8th &9th 3.5 hours** I finally had time to sit down with our assistant principal/councilor (I traveled with him to a Common Core Conference). He is retired and only part time this year, but he was the school principal for many years and two years ago he was the president of the NASSP (the National Association of Secondary School Principals). He is very knowledgeable and still very involved in his organization, our school, and state education committees. I talked to him about the first 6 chapter questions.

Chapter 1: Ken told me that the good of NCLB is that it helped everyone be on the same page, and pushed everyone to common curriculum. He feels that before many teachers lived by a textbook. On the negative side it wasn’t ever funded properly. The money never came to fix the schools that didn’t meet the mandates. Also many teachers lost the ability to teach creatively. Now he feels we are teaching to the test. On another note charter schools didn’t have to meet the rules and mandates of NCLB, so it was kind of unfair.

Chapter 2: Ken said that accountability comes from the business world. We need multiple measures of assessment. Character and work ethic aren’t assessed. If standards are tested we prepare students, but this consumes us and we don’t have time to assure students are building work ethic and character. He said that everyone needs to have a role and be accountable. Schools should be accountable to get all the resources to teachers, and teachers should be accountable to get better everyday and to use strategies to grow, learn, read, and think.

Chapter 3: With this question I asked ken what he thinks the 4 critical responsibilities of administrators are. In order of importance he mentioned these…

1. Educational Leader – Know about teaching, stay out in frond and lead teaching
2. Relationship building – build relationships with everyone. Principal is the shock absorber between groups.
3. Deeply involved in the curriculum and how it all fits together
4. Mundane – budget, discipline, etc.

Chapter 4: Professional organizations are needed to provide professional development, for advocacy, and to provide resources for educational administrators. Professional development is missing, so it provides them an opportunity to learn and grow. Principals are also too busy to advocate for administrators, so the professional organizations bring issues to the forefront. Lastly, they need a place to go where questions can be answered, so they are a great resource.

Chapter 5: Ken Griffith believes strongly that a school culture depends on the attitudes, behaviors, and relationships of the adults in school. He said any culture building should start with teachers and faculty. If staff love their work environment and collaborate effectively, the school culture will improve. We also discussed what can be done to build pride in the school, but he feels that answer is the same. If teachers are proud of their school and classrooms, students will be too.

Chapter 6: Ken talked quite a bit about the importance of leading instead of managing. He believes that managers aren’t as effective unless they lead. A leader will lead by example, be understanding, and know exactly what they are looking for to help other improve. They aren’t there to judge or cut down, but to help build a great learning environment.

**Biweekly meetings with Principal 3.5 hours –**

In these meetings we have been discussing our school accreditation visit that happened recently. We are coming up with things that we can do better as a school, and deciding upon what we can improve. As a result of these meetings we have created 5 new committees that teachers sit on to discuss improvements to our school such as PLC’s, our extra 25 minute Viking period, curriculum and assessment, school leadership, instruction, PD, and communication. We have also reworked several school policies such as late work, drug testing, and other issues that we have had.

**Work on Final Paper to rework school improvement plan – 2 + hours**

This is time that I spent going over Knight’s book again and seeing what our school should do to become an impact school. This time was valuable as I was able to understand what it will take to be a better school, and help our students to learn even more.

**Total Hours: 10 +**

EDAD 629

Jason Harmon

Final

Accepting that the job is never finished

From the scenario, it is obvious that Anita needs help balancing her job duties or her life and family are going to suffer. Although it is good that she is so dedicated, one can be too obsessive and perfectionism can be a big problem if not dealt with adequately. In this paper I will discuss two ways that she can involve others in the governance structure of the school, and give several suggestions for her to consider in her management style. It is my hope that as Anita takes and uses these suggestions she will find more balance in her work life, and have more time to spend with her family and do the things she needs to get done in her personal life.

First of all, in order to be an effective leader it is important to give other stakeholders some autonomy and decisions in the directions the school will take. Overall, for Anita to succeed in her work and cutting down the time spent at work she will need to understand her duties, and prioritize her time according to what is most important and most pressing. To do this adequately her school must have a concise mission, vision, and improvement plan. Everything that Anita does should help the school to achieve their mission, vision, and goals.

Anita should go through a thorough review of the school improvement plan, mission, goals, and vision. A critical key in this process will be to involve the teachers and other stakeholders. Teachers, parents, students, and other community members should be able to voice their opinions as to what the school wants to achieve, and what it will take to get there. It can be good to have an outside agency come in to help create this document so Anita isn’t pressured, and people don’t feel like she is biased. Once everyone is on board, it will be important for Anita to get others involved in the governance structure of the school.

First of all Anita should get all or most of the teachers involved in committees that allow teachers to use their talents, knowledge and expertise to help the school improve. Committees will be specific to the needs of the school, but will allow teachers to give input as to how they will achieve their goals, and live up to the schools mission and vision. When specific training is required certain committee members and teachers can get trained, and bring what they learn back to the rest of the staff so the knowledge gained can be implemented in the school This will take stress off of Anita, and allow her to focus on her priorities.

Second, Anita should divide her responsibilities adequately with the school councilor, the assistant principal, instructional coaches, and others. Teacher must know the discipline process, and only send students to the principal when great needs arise (the process our school uses currently is Boys Town, and I would recommend this to Anita). The appropriate person in charge must also deal with other problems. Maintenance and Janitorial concerns must go to the maintenance manager. Transportation concerns must go to the transportation director. Instructional coaches can and should be a big help in training and monitoring teachers in their effective teaching practices. The assistant principal should be given sufficient work and responsibilities. Another idea is that Anita could have a closed-door policy during certain parts of the day when she is really busy. This will allow her to get pressing jobs done on time without staying late at school.

In reference to Anita’s management style I would suggest that she work on becoming a leader instead of a manager. She seems so preoccupied with getting everything done, and doing all of her jobs that she is forgetting how important it is to lead. Anyone can find a ton of things to do, and have endless work. Anita must refocus her attention to the critical aspects of her work as a school leader. As she prioritizes her time and gets done what is more important, she will learn that as a leader many things can wait until tomorrow. She will learn to get others involved, and give them opportunities to grow and shine.

My second suggestion is that Anita needs to set boundaries as to what she will do. She sounds like the kind of person that likes to do everything, but if she keeps doing everything it will become an expectation, and her life will be her work. Anita needs to know that sometimes it is ok to say no. I would suggest she set a goal to be out of her office by a specific time each day. This will help her understand what she can realistically get done, and where her boundaries should be. Her boundaries must allow her to focus on the direction and goals of the school, and help increase student learning.

Anita cares a lot, and wants to be a great principle. She wants to succeed, and get all of her work done. She is a perfectionist. Hopefully she can learn from my suggestions and use some the advice I am giving her to become an effective leader, and give more time to her spouse and family. Anita deserves time outside of school. She will benefit from it, but her school will also, as she spreads leadership opportunities around her school, and gets everyone in the community involved in the education of their children.

Anthology Summary:

This really has been a great class. One of the things that has been good for me is that a lot of the material seems similar to other classes, but I am getting a chance to review it, and in many cases to go more in depth. Also, this semester our school had an accreditation visit from our state department of education, and it was neat to see that 3 of the 4 suggestions they made for our school to improve were suggestions that Knight makes in his book. Actually, most of the suggestions are topics he spends a whole chapter on such as coaching and mentoring. I still have a lot to learn, but I am grateful for the contributions I can make to our school by making small suggestions with the things I have learned so far. I actually met with my superintendent a few days ago and mentioned to him about the things I am learning, and what I believe our school needs to do to become an impact school. It was kind of neat because he was really open to my suggestions, and we had a good talk.