EDAD 632 Supervision of Instruction

Article Analysis #2

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I chose three articles from the SREB Conference Report (Norton, 2002). The articles I read are “*No More Self-selection: Tapping only the most promising leadership candidates”, “A New Breed of Principal”,* and *“Educational Leadership Faculties need a new reward system – and some new blood”.* All three of the articles are based on the main theme of the conference that school leaders, and school leadership programs need to be better. The focus of the conference was to discuss how to “Breed principals who know how to lead schools to the highest levels of student achievement” (Norton).

The first article stemmed from a strong opinion that candidates for educational leadership programs at universities must be sought out and selected, not self -chosen. It focused on the issue of “tapping”, which is basically the process of selecting individuals for principal preparation. The current problem they posed is that many people who choose to be administrators aren’t the type of people who have the best leadership skills, and the best understanding of curriculum and instruction. The solution that is proposed in the article is creating a selection process where the university and the school system “take a joint, in-depth look at each candidate’s record of accomplishments and demonstrated leadership skills” (Norton, p. 9).

The principal pool tends to be “saturated with certified, but not qualified, candidates” (Norton, p. 10). I believe that it will be impossible to stop those who desire an educational administration degree from getting one. I agree with the desire to collaborate with school districts to seek out those qualified candidates. One concern I have is that many of the best teachers I know would never want to be administrators, even though they would do a great job. What I think should and could be done, is assuring that the students who are accepted are students who care, are motivated, and demonstrate great potential, so we are training school leaders who will be affective, and make a difference for change.

The second article discussed a “new breed of principal.” This article was a neat look into the success of administrator Yvonne Chan with a Charter school in Los Angeles, California. She had wonderful results as she budgeted to increase school days, attendance rates, improved the campus by buying up surrounding property and completely renovating it, and helped significantly improve students achievement. She obtained very complete parent involvement by supporting a health center, literacy programs for adults, and career programs for parents. 100 percent of Chan’s students receive free lunch, and she is defying the odds. At the end of the article Chan is quoted as stating, “That’s my message to anyone who wants to be a successful leader. No risk? Sorry, no opportunity!” (Norton, p.15). I love reading about the risks that Chan took. She not only stuck to the basics of her job, but also took it upon herself to improve her community. That is the kind of school leader I must be. Interestingly, she uses the framework by Danielson (2007) as a way to give bonuses to high performing teachers. This is a proof that Danielson’s framework for teaching is effective.

The last article discussed the importance of rewarding education faculty, especially faculty teaching in educational administration programs, based more upon their involvement within local public schools and improving school leaders and their programs, than on their scholarly research and writing. I was brought to believe that in most university settings faculty receive a lot of pressure to publish scholarly articles, that mostly don’t have the time to focus where they could make the most difference. “Universities are missing the boat when they fail to seize the opportunity to carry out scholarly work in edcucational leardership “on the ground” in schools” (Norton, p. 20). The second point of the article was that universities “need some new blood”, or new faculty members with fresh energy and enthusiasm. “These new faculty members should be selected because they are able to bring deep knowledge of effective school practices and how to make changes in schools (Norton, p. 21).

I would definitely agree with this article. Professors in visual arts are required to practice, create, and show their artwork publicly, so why shouldn’t educators practice their professions? Although education needs research, it should be the kind that gets these professors (professionals) out into the schools where they can make big contributions to bettering education. When I pursue my doctorate degree I need to remember what I am learning in these articles. Nothing should take precedence over really making a difference in the lives of others, and helping with the teaching and learning of students. As I work as an administrator I should aid in finding those future leaders who are “willing to take a hard look at themselves, happy to embrace change, and urgent about improving student achievement (Mezzacappa, 2008). Then I can take an active role in helping them prepare to be future leaders.

References

Danielson, C. (2007). Enhancing professional practice:  A framework for teaching (2nd ed.). ASCD, Alexandria, Virginia

Mezzecappa, D. (2008). “A Better Pipeline to the Principalship: Atlanta builds education leaders from within.” *Journalistic Accounts: Improving Leadership for Learning: Stories from the field. 12-16.*

Norton, J. (2002). *Universities in the Lead: Redesigning Leadership Preparation for Student Achievement.* SREB Leadership Initiative, Atlanta, GA.