DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 548 EA 021 318

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TITLE In Search of Critical Skills for Beginning Principals.
PUB DATE Oct 89
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration (Phoenix, AZ, October 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Qualifications; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Management Development; *Principals; *School Administration; Superintendents
IDENTIFIERS *Ohio

ABSTRACT

In this paper critical skills needed by beginning principals are identified in order to guide mentors as they support and assist novice principals by indicating effective ways of dealing with critical responsibilities. A review of related literature and research-based information is presented followed by a description of the study. Findings were derived as the result of the use of the Delphi Technique with a group of 20 selected superintendents across the state of Ohio during 1989. Individuals were asked to identify the types of activities that they believed should be addressed by first-year principals. Skills identified were in three major areas: socialization in the field of administration in general, technical skills, and role-clarification skills. Of these three, the most important skills were related to the ability to engage in personal role-clarification by beginning administrators. Least important, as a group, were technical skills. Two lists of skills selected by the superintendents are appended. (10 references) (SI)

IN SEARCH OF CRITICAL SKILLS FOR BEGINNING PRINCIPALS

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
University Council for Educational Administration
Phoenix, Arizona

October, 1989

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The certification standards for teachers and all other educational personnel in the state of Ohio, effective July, 1987, require that all people hired by school districts must be provided with a planned program of learning experiences in their first year of employment under a classroom teaching certificate or any other educational personnel certificate. The stated rationale for this policy suggests that such learning experiences will increase the likelihood that newly-hired individuals will achieve some degree of success. This mandate, commonly referred to as the Entry Year Standard, has grown from a perceived need by practitioners across the state of Ohio who worked with the Department of Education to design approaches to helping their beginning colleagues. The Entry Year Program reflects the concerns of school personnel who want to see educational improvement resulting from the improvement of leaders.

In addition to these views included as part of the rationale provided to support the adoption of the Entry Year Standard in Ohio, two other issues serve as the basis for the enactment of this policy:

1. There is a clear recognition that, in the next few years, there will be a need for many new school administrators to enter the field. For example, the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators has noted that as many as 50% of the state's elementary school principals may retire by 1992. It is possible the this turnover will not be quite this high, but it is clear that many newly hired principals will be called upon to join the field in the next few years.
2. The second issue addresses the concern that many realities facing a new administrator cannot be addressed within a college or university atmosphere, but need to be learned on the job. There must be planned learning experiences pro-

vided to people when they take their first jobs, or there will continue to be significant problems with "reality shock" during the first year.

There is no single "Entry Year Model" that has been mandated for adoption across the state of Ohio. Rather, school systems are expected to look at their own needs, characteristics, and priorities as a way to devise programs that fit the needs of their particular situations. This lack of prescription has led to some frustration on the part of leaders across the state as they attempt to fulfill the requirements of the state.

Problem Statement

One element of the way in which the Entry Year Standard is to be addressed across the state requires that each local school district designate experienced administrators to serve as mentors to beginning educators. In turn, these individuals would provide guidance to assist less-experienced colleagues by indicating effective ways of dealing with the development of critical responsibilities and skills that are needed in the performance of the new job.

The problem that exists is that there is no clear set of defined skills that have been developed to provide guidance to those who will work as mentors to beginning school principals. Instead, the prevailing expectation is that novice administrators will come to their mentors to seek support and assistance as they encounter problems in their jobs. Such a view is clearly a reactive one in that it expects that beginners would need to experience specific difficulties before contact would occur between a mentor and the beginning principal. There is little information currently available to guide the work of mentors who might be able to serve their colleagues in a more proactive and effective manner if they would be able to know what types of issues are normally encountered by beginning administrators. In short, little data currently exists to assist in the development of understanding related to the critical

skills needed by beginning school principals.

As a result, the study reported in this paper was carried out as a way to identify the critical skills needed by beginning principals. It is expected that the findings may serve as the basis not only for administrative induction programs in Ohio, but also in other states across the nation. Data from this research will be available to those who wish to develop programs that anticipate the needs of those who are taking on their first administrative positions.

The central questions investigated through this study were:

1. According to a group of selected superintendents, what are the critical skills that need to be demonstrated by beginning school principals in their employ?
2. Of the critical skills identified, which ones are viewed as most important?

As the criterion used to determine the extent to which any particular identified skill might be classified as "critical," participating superintendents were asked to judge whether or not the performance of an activity was central to a novice principal's success on the job, i.e., continuation and offer of an extension beyond the terms of an initial administrative contract.

Related Literature

The identification of problems faced by newcomers to the field of professional education has been increasingly recognized as an issue worthy of attention by researchers. The majority of this work to date has been directed to the role of the classroom teacher. However, a review of existing research on the problems that are faced by beginning administrators indicates clearly that there is a major difference between the needs of teachers and administrators (Daresh & Playko, In Press, [a]). Scholars have traditionally not spent much time looking at the issue of how people become administrators; instead, research has more typically been directed at what practicing administrators do--or are supposed to do--on the job. Despite this

limitation on the quantity of data, there are some fairly strong statements that emerge related to how people move into administration.

The research-based information that is available concerning initial socialization to educational administration makes it clear that any type of support, such as formalized entry year and induction programs, would be a welcome addition to the scene. Only sporadically have activities been designed to assist new administrators to come "on board." Among some of the most recent investigations completed have been relatively small-scale studies conducted by Nockels (1981) and Turner (1981), and doctoral research by Marrion (1983), Sussman (1985), and Diederich (1988). A common finding in all of these works, and also in a broader study by Duke (1986), has been that the administrative entry year may be best characterized as a time filled with considerable anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt.

Another study of a considerably wider scale was recently completed in England by Weindling and Earley (1987). This ambitious project revieved the characteristics of the first years of secondary school head teachers (principals) throughout the United Kingdom. Surveys and interviews were carried out to gain information from beginning principals, their teaching staffs, and their administrative superiors concerning the ways in which principals were frustrated in their new positions. Among the many recommendations that came from this study was that beginning principals need to receive special consideration and support from their employing school systems. Weindling and Earley also noted that a major problem for head teachers has been isolation from their peers. As a result, the researcher strongly suggested that some ways need to be found to reduce the sense of separation that tends to be felt so much by novice administrators.

In another study of beginning principals in Ohio (Daresh, 1986), we found that administrators' concerns may be seen in three distinct areas: (a) problems with role clarification (understanding who they were, now that they were principals, and how they were to make use of

their new authority); (b) limitations on technical expertise (how to do the things they were supposed to do, according to formal job descriptions); and (c) difficulties with socialization to the profession and to individual school systems (learning how to do things in a particular setting--"learning the ropes"). Duke found many of these same themes to be present in his recent study (1988) of new principals who were discouraged to the point that they were considering leaving the principalship, despite the fact that they were generally viewed as being quite effective in their roles. In particular, Duke found that these administrators experienced considerable frustration over the fact that they did not understand the nature of leadership responsibilities before they got to the "hot seat."

Most studies of beginning administrators have found a rather consistent set of themes that have obvious implications for the ways in which individuals might be better prepared to take on leadership roles in schools. It seems clear, for example, that people should receive a good deal of "hands on" learning of administrative tasks and responsibilities before they ever get to their first job. Universities, as the agencies traditionally charged with the duty of providing much of the preservice preparation of administrators, need to find more ways to help people develop skill and confidence about their work before signing their first administrative contracts. Second, entry year or induction programs need to stress the development of strong norms of collegiality within those who are taking their first administrative jobs (Daresh & Playko, In Press, [b]). In this way, there may be a realization that a school administrator will rarely be effective by trying to "go at it alone." A lesson that needs to be learned early in a person's career is that success as a school administrator is often based on the ability to seek support from many people. Third, entry year programs must include a component wherein people are able to test some of their fundamental assumptions and beliefs concerning the nature of power, authority, and leadership as they step into a principalship or some other administrative role.

In general, there is not a particularly rich tradition of research into the problems faced by newcomers to the world of school administration. What is known, however, provides some useful insights into the fact that beginners believe that they need some forms of special assistance and support, and that help should be directed toward some fairly clear and consistent themes. What is not as clear at present is the extent to which the insights that new principals have concerning their learning and support needs are necessarily consistent with the expectations held by more experienced administrators, and in particular, employing superintendents, for effective performance on the job. It was for this reason that we carried out this study as a way to determine more precisely what the critical skills for beginning school principals should be.

Research Design and Methodology

The findings reported here were derived as the result of our use of the Delphi Technique with a group of selected superintendents across the state of Ohio during 1989. We believed that this approach was appropriate for this study because it represents a way in which a wide variety of alternative perceptions can be gathered concerning a topic which is not well-defined at first. Erlich (1989) indicated that the Delphi Technique is a fluid process that allows participants with the opportunity to clarify their views, add important issues not included in their first responses, and identify concepts that are particularly relevant to the topic at hand.

We invited a group of 20 superintendents across the state of Ohio to participate in the first round. These individuals were selected on the basis of the fact that they had been identified by multiple sources as district administrators who were likely to have useful insights into the problems encountered by beginning principals. Further, each invited superintendent had hired one or more principal during the previous school year, and so it was expected that the issue of important skills would be fresh in their minds. A

letter was sent to each administrator describing the nature of the Delphi Technique, the responsibilities that would be included for participants, and an outline of our timeline in completing the data collection process. It was noted that we expected that the demands of the technique might make it impossible for some of the respondents to continue with the study. We were correct. Seven superintendents expressed their support for our work, but declined further participation because of other commitments. Those who continued to participate were asked to provide a list of the items that they believed were most critical for skills to be demonstrated by beginning principals.

The first round of data collection provided us with a list of 133 items (See Appendix A). These represented a simple list of brainstormed items that were not prioritized in any way. Further, it was clear that there was a considerable amount of overlap among the items, and many of the items were unclear or poorly developed. As a result, a second round of the Delphi process was initiated. Participating superintendents were asked to read through the complete list of skills generated during the first phase and cross out any items that they believed no longer belonged on the list. Second, they were asked to modify the wording of any ambiguous or unclear items. Finally, we asked respondents to rank order the remaining items on the lists.

The results of the second round of the process yielded a list of only 55 separate items (Appendix B). Many of the former skills were either dropped from the new list, or combined with similar items from the earlier list. This newly-combined list was then forwarded to the 12 superintendents who continued to participate in the study. Again, the instructions provided called for revievers to clarify items on the current list, drop skills or modify wording, and rank order each issue. This time the list of items were classified according to three major groups of skills that were consistent with our earlier analyses of the needs of beginning principals. These areas were technical skills, socialization, and role clarification. Respondents

were asked to rank order their final lists of items across the established sub-categories.

Findings

The third and final survey sent to participating superintendents yielded a refined list of 24 individual items that we now classify as the critical skills of beginning principals. The list below indicates the final skills, their ranking, and the sub-grouping in which the individual items were found:

Area I: Technical Skills

Overall Rank	Item
14	How to evaluate staff (i.e., procedures for the task, and also the substance: What do standards really mean?)
15	How to facilitate/conduct group meetings (large and small)
16	How to design and implement a data-based improvement process, including goal setting and evaluating
20	How to develop and monitor a building budget
21	How to organize and conduct parent-teacher-student conferences
22	How to establish a scheduling program for students and staff (master schedule)
23	Awareness of the Ohio Revised Code and other issues associated with school law
24	How to manage food service, custodial, and secretarial staff

Area II: Socialization

4	Establishing a positive and cooperative relationship with other administrators in the district

5	How to determine who is responsible for what in a school setting
5	Knowing how to relate to school board members and central office personnel
8	Knowing where the limits exist within the district or building, and balancing that knowledge with one's own professional values.
9	Understanding how the principalship changes family and other personal relationships
9	Developing interpersonal networking skills that may be used with individuals inside and outside of the school system
11	Ability to encourage involvement by all parties in the educational community
17	How to develop positive relationships with other organizations and agencies located in the school's surrounding community

Area III: Role Clarification

1	Demonstrating an awareness of what it means to possess organizational power and authority
2	Demonstrating an awareness of why one was selected for a leadership position in the first place
3	Portraying a sense of self-confidence on the job
5	Having a vision along with an understanding needed to achieve relevant goals
12	Demonstrating a desire to make a significant difference in the lives of staff and students
13	Being aware of one's biases, strengths, and weaknesses
18	Understanding and seeing that change is ongoing, and that it results in a continually changing vision of the principalship

18 How to assess job responsibilities in terms of the "real" role, as contrasted with the "should be" role of the principal

Conclusions and Discussion

The first thing that might be noted concerning this study and the findings that result from it is that there are several severe limitations to the work. For one thing, the superintendents invited to participate in this study were selected primarily because they were considered to be district administrators who were "above average" in their abilities to provide leadership in schools. As a result, they may not necessarily be representative of what "typical" superintendents out in the field believe to be the most important skills for beginning principals. A natural concern, then, is related to whether or not the items listed here are truly the sorts of things that need to be considered by all, or even most, novice building administrators. One might even argue that, if most superintendents do not espouse the same beliefs as the people involved with our study, some new principals might in fact be at risk if they attempt to demonstrate the kinds of skills listed here.

Second, a reading of the list of skills presented here quickly yields the fact that it is an uneven presentation. There are some items that appear to overlap others. Some items may not fit neatly and cleanly into one of the three categories we have established. There may be some skills that are not even listed on the list. And, a few of the items appear to beg for further description.

Despite these and other limitations that may come to mind, however, we believe that these findings provide us with some important basic insights into the nature of the kinds of things that are expected of beginning school principals. And there are some surprising findings that call for additional comment and further investigation.

It is clear from a review of the findings in this study that

superintendents place a much higher premium on the demonstration of skills that are related to the ability to of the individual principal to engage in personal role clarification. In fact, four of the five items that are rated as most critical skills that need to be demonstrated by beginning principals are in the area that is related to the ability of an individual to show a sense of personal understanding of what leadership is, and how that understanding relates to a particular role. If the superintendents involved with this study reflect the views of many of their colleagues, we can assume that beginning principals need to demonstrate self-confidence, a personalized definition of authority, and the reasons why they were selected for a leadership role in the first place.

By contrast, the individual items receiving the lowest ratings of critical skills by superintendents were all in the area of technical skills. Included are such items as how to develop master schedules, work with classified staff, and make use of an understanding of school law. Items found in the category of socialization are somewhere in the middle of the ratings, showing that the superintendents in this study viewed the establishment of harmonious working relationships as generally more important than the ability to carry out technical duties, but less important than the ability to understand self.

These findings are important for at least two reasons. First, they support rather clearly the findings of a number of other studies of the needs of beginning principals. In virtually all of the work that we cited earlier (Daresh, 1986; Weindling & Earley, 1987; Duke, 1988), it was shown that novice principals report that their primary concerns are related to developing a clear understanding of what leadership is, and what they are supposed to do now that they are in charge. The superintendents who participated in this study seemed to be saying that they placed great stock in those principals who demonstrated a sense of self-awareness. While they also indicated that beginning principals also needed to demonstrate skills related to technical competencies, these areas were considerably lower in the

overall ratings provided. This also reinforced findings from other studies wherein principals' self-reports indicated that they were not as frustrated by their inability to carry out assigned tasks and duties on the job as were with anxiety caused by a lack of self-confidence.

The second important issue related to the findings of this study concerns the nature of the ways in which people are prepared for administrative positions in the first place. By and large, there is considerable emphasis placed in most university programs in educational administration in the area of technical skill development. The curricula of most programs now include almost exclusively courses which are associated with administrative tasks: personnel management, law, finance, computer applications, business management, and so forth. That emphasis appears to be in direct contradiction to the kinds of things that superintendents in this study seemed to be the kinds of things that make the most difference in terms of on-the-job success for novice administrators. Few existing programs of educational administration include structured learning experiences wherein aspiring administrators are led through self-awareness exercises that may increase the likelihood that they will be able to demonstrate the critical skills identified as so important in this research. Rather, the prevailing view of administrative preparation content seems to be one of increasing the amount of information that is provided to people relative to technical skills issues.

We would hardly suggest that administrator preservice preparation programs should be devoid of content related to administrative functions and tasks. Such a recommendation would be contrary not only to the data here, but also to any intuitive notions of what should be included in the "making of a school leader." As the findings of this study, beginning principals are expected to know things about working with staff (personnel management), school law, resource allocation (budgeting, business management, and finance), and other areas that have traditionally been included in educational

administration programs. But it is our belief that the treatment of these task areas may need to be modified, and that they might well be supplemented by learning experiences which are very different in nature.

Most existing administrator preparation programs built upon the belief that the tasks of administration should serve as the foundation of their curricula feature courses in law, finance, personnel, and so forth that are not differentiated according to the level of placement desired by the students enrolled in a particular course. As a result, a course in school finance tends to contain the same material regardless of whether students enrolled are first moving into the field of school administration, or if they are experienced and veteran administrators who are now seeking additional endorsement to serve as more senior administrators (i.e., as superintendents or central office administrators). In general, the operating view has been that "school finance is school finance," and content remains the same for all. Based on the findings of this study, there may be some value in considering the development of alternative courses for those who are first entering administration, as contrasted with those who might need considerably more detailed information about various task areas. Does a beginning principal, for example, need in-depth knowledge about alternative state support models for school finance, as might a superintendent of schools? And, in most systems, is the beginning principal likely to need the same information about personnel administration that his or her colleague in the central office will use?

Reducing the material to be included in administrative tasks areas for beginning administrators might well provide the opportunity for programs to include additional learning experiences that are more compatible with the apparent need to lead aspiring administrators through self-awareness activities as part of their preservice activities. Such an approach would be consistent with a view that we have expressed earlier (Daresh, 1988) and which called for preservice administrator preparation to be comprised of three types of learning

experiences: Academic learning (to learn fundamental concepts and terms), field-based learning (to develop skill and competency in the specific tasks and duties of administration), and personal and professional formation (to permit aspiring administrators to engage in a time of reflection and review of personal strengths, weaknesses, and commitments to the field of leadership). This type of tri-dimensional approach to leadership preparation has been the hallmark of many of the existing innovative leadership preparation programs currently being supported by the Danforth Foundation. At Indiana University-Indianapolis, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and the University of Washington, for example, considerable time is built in to students' programs for the purpose of enabling individuals to think about their own personal views of leadership and authority, relative to significant issues that will be faced in the field. This approach to leadership develop also encourages the individual administrative candidate to engage in a review of his or her own personal values orientation so that it may be possible to develop a repertoire of behavior that will be appropriate and consistent in the field, after initial placement as an administrator takes place.

The findings of this study also seem to lend credence to the view that people in their first administrative assignments deserve and need the opportunity to receive special support during their entry year. Administrative induction programs are still relatively rare across the nation (Daresh & Playko, In Press, [b]); Anderson, 1988). However, it seems clear that people need some type of support while they struggle with their first year responsibilities. In light of the findings here, it seems likely that he kind of support needed will be related to helping people form personal visions of administration, as much as it might be to assisting people to carry out assigned technical duties of the job. It seems likely that increasing use will be made of mentor administrators as people who can work with novices on a continuing basis as a way to help develop personalized responses to understanding authority, power, and

leadership. This study reaffirms the fact that beginners do not "get into trouble" by not knowing how to conform to district policies and procedures. Instead, they fail when they give no recognition of how to be "in charge" of an organization. Mentors might serve to help in this regard.

So, What's Next?

Clearly, the findings of this study are limited because of the reasons that we listed earlier. This was a small sample study which made use of a rather select group of respondents. We will soon begin work on follow-up research that makes use of the findings reported here in the construction of an instrument that will be administered to a much larger sample of randomly selected superintendents and other central office administrators across the nation. We need to know if the "vision" of critical skills needed by beginning administrators is reflective of the feelings of most decision makers. or if we have merely determined the biases of a rather small and select group.

Another issue that will be pursued in the future is concerned with determining perceptions regarding responsibilities for providing learning experiences related to each of the identified critical skills for educational leaders. Earlier in this paper, we discussed the improvement of programs, and our discussion was based almost exclusively on the notion that universities would be the primary agencies assigned the task of developing future leaders. Such an assumption is probably not warranted. In the future, the preservice preparation of school administrators and other leaders will be a function of collaborative relationships formed among universities, local school systems, and a variety of other educational and non-educational interests. For example, increasing attention is being paid to the role that might be played by private industry in the development of leadership talent. Our research in the future will be directed in part toward an effort to determine what groups might be

most directly involved with the formation of leaders.

Finally, another issue that we intend to pursue deals with an examination of the whether or not aspiring administrators are truly aware of the kinds of skills and competencies for which they will be held accountable in the future. Most individuals who have worked with preservice administrator candidates are well aware of the fact that aspiring administrators typically express great anxiety over the fact that they want to learn "how to administer;" they want to gain as much practical information as possible while in training so that hey make few mistakes out on the job. It is not uncommon for beginners to express the desire to learn a whole host of job-related skills so that they can survive on the job. Again, we do not wish to suggest that such skills are not important for beginning principals. However, if the findings of this study are accurate for a large number of school settings, then we can see that the desire for learning "how to" do many specific tasks may not be as important as many might believe. Our work here suggests that "learning how to think" as an administrator may be considerably more important than "learning how to behave" like an administrator.

Summary

In this paper, we presented the findings of a study that has been taking place during the past few months to identify the critical skills for beginning administrators, according to a group of selected superintendents in the state of Ohio. Individuals were involved with a Delphi-Technique project where in they were asked to identify the types of activities that they believed should be addressed by first year principals. Skills identified were in three major areas: Socialization to the field of administration in general, technical managerial skills, and self-avareness skills. Of these three, the most important skills were related to the development of self-awareness by beginning administrators. Least important, as a group, were technical managerial skills.

We provided a discussion of some of the possible applications that might be made of the findings from this study. For example, we suggested that modifications might be made in the structure and curricula of administrator preparation programs at universities. We concluded the paper with a series of suggestions for future research that might follow the work reported here.

APPENDIX A

Skills listed in the first round of the Delphi Technique with selected Ohio superintendents

1. How to read computer printouts provided by the district business office
2. How to set up for assemblies and lunch
3. How to deal with daily legal issues
4. How to operate the bells, clocks, and fire alarms
5. How to get a work order processed
6. How to read and analyze school data such as attendance, grade summaries, and staff attendance data
7. How to read and analyze standardized and non-standardized test data
8. How to complete a schedule for instruction (i.e., class and duty schedules) in a variety of models
9. How to evaluate staff (i.e., the procedures for the task, and also the substance: What do the standards on the instrument mean?)
10. How to develop and monitor a budget
11. How to design and implement equipment/textbook distribution, collection, and control systems
12. How to conduct large group meetings
13. How to facilitate small group meetings
14. How to develop and implement a custodial schedule
15. How to assess physical plant needs (i.e., plumbing, locker replacement, floor coverings, safety equipment, etc.)
16. How to conduct and design fire, tornado, and bomb threat drills and evacuations
17. How to design and implement a data-based improvement process, including goal setting and an evaluation stage
18. How to prepare and present introductions and short speeches
19. How to interview and select staff
20. How to design nad produce readable newsletters and correspondence
21. How to involve parents and non-parents
22. How to resolve conflicts
23. How to design special area scheduling (music, art, p.e., etc.)

24. How to organize parent-teacher conferences

25. How to schedule daily opening and dismissal of school (and coordinate with transportation)

26. How to schedule students and teachers in classes and classrooms

27. How to design a discipline plan

28. How to develop intervention programs

29. How to use media technology

30. How to write and design a newsletter

31. How to use standardized testing

32. How to manage food service, secretarial, and custodial employees

33. How to develop recognition programs for staff and students

34. How to write press releases

35. How to schedule specialists (art, music, p.e., speech, etc.)

36. How to run special education assessment, placement, IEP, ER teams

37. How to manage an office

38. How to analyze problem areas and move to correct them (systems analysis skills)

39. How to establish a scheduling program for students and staff

40. How to evaluate safe/unsafe physical environments (steps, playgrounds, concrete, etc.)

41. How to manage budgeted funds

42. How to schedule art, music, p.e., recess, etc.

43. How to prepare a purchase order

44. How to develop a schedule

45. How to turn on/off the boiler

46. How to operate a computer

47. Organize student scheduling

48. Adhering to the stated requirements of the formal job description

49. Avareness of the Ohio Revised Code

50. Understanding of the State Department of Education standards

51. How to develop, prioritize, and manage a building budget

52. How to develop a master schedule for student class assignments

53. How to engage in effective planning

54. How to manage the student co-curriculum and athletic programs

55. Knowing the written and unwritten policies to be followed in getting things done in a particular school system.

56. Appreciating the political and social realities of life in a school system

57. Behaving and dressing in a way that is consistent with the local image of administrators

58. How to get to know a community and its leaders

59. How to work with different socioeconomic levels of parents

60. How to determine who is responsible for what in a school setting

61. How to develop relationships with other organizations/agencies in the community

62. Understanding how the principalship changes personal relationships

63. Understanding how the principalship changes family relationships

64. Knowing how to relate to board members and central office personnel

65. Knowing who to call for help

66. Knowing how to lead PTO groups

67. Knowing how to lead teachers

68. Knowing where the limits exist within the district/building and balancing that with one's own professional values and expectations

69. Establishing a cooperative relationship with other administrators

70. Knowing the particulars of the labor-management contract

71. Understanding that schools are "open systems"

72. Understanding the need for the administration to be involved in the community beyond the school

73. Knowing who the "key people" are to make things happen

74. Implementing policies even though one disagrees with the board's or the superintendent's stance

75. Developing high student and staff morale

76. Knowing how to deal with the PTA, boosters, and other publics

77. Secondary principals need a sense of the importance of athletics

78. Knowing how to work with central office personnel in staff positions

79. Knowing how to develop IEPS with special education staff, students, and parents

80. Identifying the informal power bases in the school

81. Organizing for enhancing power through the developmentg of your own base

82. Developing networking skills for inside and outside of the system

83. Knowing the written policies and procedures

84. Knowing the organizational chart and persons designated as responsible for specific functions

85. Knowing the rhythm of a school year and patterns of behavior of students and staff related to it

86. Knowing and practicing good human relations skills with staff, students, and the community

87. Knowledge and skills in dealing with ineffective staff; staff evaluation techniques

88. Knowledge of team management concepts

89. Knowledge of good decision making skills

90. Positive attitude

91. Ability to motivate others

92. Inclination and ability to obtain involvement from all facets of the community

93. Demonstrating an awareness of what it means to possess organizational power and authority

94. Portraying a sense of self confidence on the job

95. Demonstrating an awareness of why one was selected for a leadership position in the first place

96. Demonstrating a take charge (or command, or initiating) stance

97. Demonstrating a desire to make a significant difference in the lives of students and staff

98. Demonstrating a desire to have the best school

99. Demonstrating an expectation of "high" expectations

100. Demonstrating a sense of mission

101. The ability to implement strategies to accomplish goals

102. The vision and understanding to create goals

103. Creating the relationship needed with peers and the central office that would enable the principal to take strong philosophical and real positions/points of view that may not be the commonly-held perspective

104. Take risks

105. Trust your teachers--or at least learn the ones that you can trust

106. Share power, authority, and responsibility

107. Being aware of one's biases

108. Demonstrating a sense of the importance of teacher evaluation

109. Demonstrating a knowledge of what it means to be an effective instructional leader

110. Demonstrating a sense of staff development needs

111. Demonstrating a knowledge of curriculum and instructional strategies

112. Portraying a well-planned organization

113. Demonstrating a decision making process

114. Demonstrating a value system and a belief system

115. Demonstrating the ability to share ownership of ideas

116. Understanding the organizational goals and implementing them

117. Understanding internal school politics

118. Knowing when to get out of the way and let things happen

119. Knowing your philosophy about students and learning how it meshes (or doesn't) with the school

120. Establishing a thrust for the organization

121. Openness for substantive evaluation for improvement

122. Understanding and seeing that change is ongoing and that it results in a changing nature of the position

123. Being prepared for the different expectations/viewpoints about the nature of the position

124. Understanding the dichotomy between superior/peer views of the position

125. Demonstrating the ability to de-escalate conflicts

126. Moderating interpersonal and professional conflicts

127. Observing teachers effectively

128. Monitoing lesson plans

129. Planning effective inservice activities

130. Demonstrating the ability to mediate conflicts

131. Occasionally creating conflicts in such a way as to promote effective and open dialogue concerning controversial issues

132. Handling parental complains regarding library censorship issues

133. How to react to different structures/settings

134. How to assess job responsibilities, the "real" role and the "should be" role

135. How to confront individuals positively

136. Demonstrating an awareness of the role of the instructional leader

137. Being aware of professional educational literature

138. Demonstrating an awareness of recent educational research

139. Being able to take a stand, even when it might be offensive to one teacher or another

140. Making decisions based on a sense of personal values/ethics, rather than simply as a way to appease an unhappy (or potentially unhappy) staff member

141. Engaging in time management based on sense of true long-term and life personal and professional priorities, not immediate "political" needs

142. Making the tough decisions

143. Teacher evaluation skills

144. Teacher evaluation knowledge

145 Teacher supervision

146. Instructional expertise

147. Writing skills

148. Decisiveness

149. Organizational ability

150. Student discipline, skills, and strategies

151. Interpersonal forcefulness

152. District level expectations

153. The ability to read the future by looking at the best and learning from mistakes

154. Keeping the central office and other administrators informed

155. Taking additional courses at local universities to keep active in the research

APPENDIX B

Items listed by superintendents as part of the second review of critical skills for beginning priincipals (Items are not listed in any priority form)

1. How to read and analyze student achievement test data
2. How to analyze typical school data such as attendance information, etc.
3. How to evaluate staff (i.e., the procedures and the substance: What do the standards "mean?")
4. How to develop and monitor a budget for the building
5. How to conduct group meetings
6. How to assess the physical plant of the school
7. How to design and implement a data-based improvement process, including goal setting and evaluation
8. How to interview and select staff
9. How to organize parent-teacher-student conferences
10. How to design a discipline plan
11. How to manage food service, custodial, and secretarial staff
12. How to schedule specialist classes
13. How to run special education assessments and placements
14. How to schedule students and staff
15. How to interpret the Ohio Revise Code and other issues associated with school law
16. How to engage in effective planning
17. How to observe and evaluate teachers
18. Knowing the unwritten policies of the school district
19. Appreciating the political and social realities of life in a school system
20. Knowing the community and its leaders
21. How to determine who is responsible for what in a school
22. Understanding how the principalship changes personal and family relationships
23. Avoiding making promises to one staff member or another to avoid conflict
24. Avoiding making public statements about individual teachers or the staff as a whole (at least in a negative sense)
25. Knowing who to call for help

26. Knowing where the limits exist within the district/building and balancing that with one's own professional values and expectations.

27. Establishing a cooperative relationship with other administrators

28. Understanding the need for administrators to be involved in the community beyond the school

29. Knowing who the "key people" are to make things happen

30. Developing high student and staff morale

31. Developing networking skills for inside and outside the system

32. Knowing the formal organizational chart

33. Knowledge of team concept skills

34. Ability to serve as a member of a team

35. Ability to motivate others

36. Inclination and ability to obtain involvement from all facets of the community

37. Demonstrating an awareness of what it means to possess organizational power and authority

38. Portraying a sense of self confidence on the job

39. Demonstrating an awareness of why one was selected for a leadership position in the first place

40. Demonstrating a desire to make a significant difference in the lives of students and staff

41. Demonstrating a desire to have the best school

42. A vision and understanding to create goals

43. Ability to share power, responsibility, and authority

44. Being aware of one's biases

45. Knowing one's professional strengths and weaknesses

46. Knowledge of effective staff development techniques

47. Demonstrating a knowledge of what it means to be an effective instructional leader

48. Openness for substantive evaluation for improvement

49. Understanding internal school politics

50. Understanding and seeing that change is ongoing and that it results in a schanging nature of the principalship

51. Demonstrating the ability to use conflicts effectively

52. Knowing how to assess job responsibilities, including the "real" role and the "should be" role

53. Demonstrating a consistent decision-making process

54. Understanding organizational goals and how to implement them

55. Knowing when to get out of the way and let things happen

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