

The Wisdom of Leadership:
Tips and Advice

MASA Fall Conference
October 4th, 2010
Kay Worner

The Journey

The only ones among you that will be truly happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve

Albert Schweitzer

Target Audience

- Aspiring Superintendents

- New Superintendents

Church Bulletin Story: the mind of a five year old

The minister, caught up in the moment of his sermon, raised his arms and looked upward and said, "Dear Lord, without you we are but dust!"

Before he could continue, a little girl in the audience turned to her mother and asked in a her 5 year old squeaky but loud voice, "Mom, what is butt dust?"

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Charlie Kyte
MASA Executive Committee
Roman and Littlefield Education, Inc.
Tom Koerner, Publisher
Theodore Kowalski, Author
AASA
Review Committee

Contributors and Supporters

Don Draayer
Ken Dragseth
Ted Blaesing
Dale Gasser
Don Helmstetter
Ben Kanninen
Jim Rickabaugh
Greg Vandal
State and National Superintendents of the Year
All Superintendents

Topics/Chapters

- Leading with Integrity
- Keeping the Focus
- Developing an Effective School Board
- Building an Administrative Team
- Enhancing School-Community Relations

Topics/Chapters

- Monitoring Efficient Operations
- Thinking Strategically
- Facilitating Meaningful Change
- Advocating for Students
- Seeking, Retaining, and Transitioning Positions

Leading with Integrity: Wisdom

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything

Mark Twain

Tips and Advice: Leading with Integrity

- Expect position accountability
Pass credit, take blame
- Work to establish trust
Work on building relationships: The Open House
- Recognize tests of leadership
Share beliefs and values
- Model integrity
Follow Administrator Code of Ethics: The Contract Says

Keeping the Focus: Wisdom

Overnight success takes a long time
Steve Jobs

If you don't know where you are
going, you'll wind up somewhere else
Yogi Berra

Tips and Advice: Keeping the Focus

- Know the mission
Communicate the plan
- Assess district strengths, weaknesses, priorities
Allocate resources to highest priorities:
Handbook or Strategic Plan?
- Use the administrative team
Don't let planning become the focus: Whose
Plan is It?

Developing an Effective School Board:
Wisdom

The source of stress is not high expectations but rather, unclear expectations

Unknown

Tips and Advice: Developing an Effective School Board

- Start early
Discuss operating principles, clarify roles:
Raise your Hand?
- Communicate well and with purpose
Develop a communication plan
- Keep the focus
Be consistent, follow process: Fire the Coach
- Use common sense: be proactive
Anticipate controversial issues

Building an Administrative Team: Wisdom

Start by doing what's necessary,
then what's possible, and suddenly,
you are doing the impossible

St. Francis of Assisi

Tips and Advice: Building an Administrative Team

- **Understand the purpose**
Keep the focus, meet often: Are There Any Questions
- **Be prepared**
Develop an agenda, minutes, & follow-up
- **Encourage the team model at all levels**
Trust others to do their job, be an example:
Cooperate or Compete?
- **Develop the team members**
Strengths, needs, professional development

Enhancing School-Community Relations: Wisdom

I really didn't say everything I said

Yogi Berra

Tips and Advice: Enhancing School-Community Relations

- **Embrace communication responsibilities**
Meet the public on their turf: The Night Shift
- **Apply communication rules**
Plan well for events, meetings, committees
- **Communicate with a variety of audiences**
Include internal, external, school board
- **Over rather than under communicate**
Use recognizable, common vehicles: The Communication Plan

Managing Efficient Operations: Wisdom

Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and let him know you trust him

Booker T. Washington

Tips and Advice: Managing Efficient Operations

- Review and assess operational functions
Effectiveness and efficiency is key
- Assure regulatory compliance
Orient/train employees well for their job
- Communicate with the business office
Set expectations early for communication
- Value all employees: Super Switch
- Be a leader and manager
Be a systems thinker; help others be as well:
The Mission Connection

Thinking Strategically: Wisdom

If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six sharpening my ax

Abraham Lincoln

Tips and Advice: Thinking Strategically

- Rely on the administrative team
Obtain status reports
- Develop “what if” scenarios
Not all decisions are either right or wrong
- Keep the board informed
Tell all sides of an issue
- Have courage:
The School Play
- Think ahead:
Test Scores and Other Achievements

Facilitating Meaningful Change: Wisdom

The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken

Samuel Johnson

Tips and Advice: Facilitating Meaningful Change

- Prepare for resistance:
The Emotional Reaction: Closing a school
- Change is a planning process
- Study expert advice
- Avoid one size fits all reforms
- Prepare staff:
Good Intentions, Bad Results: Literacy
- Evaluate results
- Keep the focus

Advocating for Students: Wisdom

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children

Nelson Mandela

Seven horizontal lines for writing.

Tips and Advice: Advocating for Students

- Review the district plan
Assess current goals, initiatives, priorities: Keep the Plan
- Gather, analyze, and use meaningful data
Students are the priority: The Transition Plan
- Make the best hiring decisions
Hiring is a planned process
- Assure professional development is a priority
Match development with performance expectations, goals, vision and mission
- Speak up in the political arena

Seven horizontal lines for writing.

Seeking, Retaining, and Transitioning Positions: Wisdom

The thought of being President frightens me and I do not think I want the job

Ronald Reagan in 1973
(elected President 1981)

Seven horizontal lines for writing.

Tips and Advice: Seeking, Retaining, and Transitioning Positions

- Understand the role and its expectations
Have mentors: The Martini Lunch
- Assess the fit
Study the district ahead of time
- Adjust to a new role
Listen and learn: The Three Questions
- Develop trust
Trust is not automatic
- Read the signs

What I Learned Along the Way

I am still learning

Michelangelo

A calm sea an expert sailor does not make

Anonymous

Thoughts

- Few people understand the complexity of the superintendent position
- “The future ain’t what it used to be” Yogi Berra
- Significant issues in leadership are about relationships and communication
- Keeping the focus on the highest priorities is essential for survival
- Superintendents are awesome leaders

Future: 5 Years

- Leading change is and will be the greatest challenge for administrators
- Partnerships and collaboration will be required
- Developing effective, well-functioning teams will be a key and sought after leadership skill
- Shortage of qualified administrators will be a crisis
- Social responsibility will be expected

2020 Predictions

- Social networking is accepted and used—by everyone
- School board- superintendent relationships look different (CEO, Board of Directors)
- Technology rules: uber-connections, Web 3.0, global systems
- Superintendents hire “their teams” and focus on organizational goals
- Superintendents are systems analysts

2020 Cont'd

- Schools offer program options for individual and small and large groups of students
- Professionals (educators) serve on Diagnostic Teams to PLAN education for students. Others deliver instruction
- Schools serve large segments of the community in a variety of ways
- Four year old education programs are commonplace

Conclusion

The “stock” of educational leadership will continue to rise because, if for no other reason, educational leaders will be among the few in society that have the skill, ability, and courage to fight for this nation’s most valuable resource, children.

Thank you for all you do.
