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A preferred vision for administering elementary and secondary schools : a reflective essay

Abstract

As I think about the question of becoming an administrator, all sorts of things run through my mind. Things such as, am I really cut out to do this job ? Do I have what it takes to be an administrator? Will I fail or will I succeed? Will I have the support of my staff? Will I be able to perform the paper-pencil tasks of an administrator? Will I be able to handle the school's budget ? I mean the questions just go on and on. So, as I look at the driving forces behind my decision to become an administrator, I feel very confident with the decision that I have made. I would like to share some of those driving forces with you in this reflective research paper.

A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

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A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,

and Postsecondary Education

University of Northern Iowa

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

_____

by

Tim T. Moses

May 2004

Dr. Robert Decker

This Research Paper by: Tim T. Moses

Entitled: A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTRATING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirements for the Degree of Master

of Arts in Education.

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4-26-04
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As I think about the question of becoming an administrator, all sorts of things run through my mind. Things such as, am I really cut out to do this job? Do I have what it takes to be an administrator? Will I fail or will I succeed? Will I have the support of my staff? Will I be able to perform the paper - pencil tasks of an administrator? Will I be able to handle the schools budget? I mean the questions just go on and on. So, as I look at the driving forces behind my decision to become an administrator, I feel very confident with the decision that I have made. I would like to share some of those driving forces with you in this reflective research paper. The first driving force occurred when I was born to Mr. and Mrs. James Moses, who has allowed me to become who I am today. They instilled in me the respect for others, a strong work ethic, and a positive attitude, as well as other things that are important to being a successful human being. Both of my parents were born in Mississippi, and as most African Americans they moved north for better job opportunities and the pursuit for equality. To the credit of their parents, they were raised with strong discipline, a sense of self- respect, and family pride. My mother grew up as the youngest in a family of eight. She taught my three brothers, one sister and I how to love one another, and also how to fight for things in a positive way if we wanted it bad enough. My dad, on they other hand, taught us how to work and what it meant to have a strong work-ethic. All of these characteristics are very important driving forces that I believe I have. I want to share these characteristics with my students because, as it is today, most students are missing out on the learning of these important elements. The second driving force behind my decision to become an administrator is a person that was a role model to me in my days as a student in the Waterloo Community School System. His name is Dr. Walter

Cunningham. He was well known by many within and outside the Waterloo community Dr. Cunningham was the first African American principal in the state of Iowa, and also the first African American principal in the Waterloo Community Schools.

Dr. Cunningham was the principal of East High School, which I attended from 1979-1982. He was born and raised in Waterloo, Iowa and he was also a product of the Waterloo Community Schools. He was a very positive role model for both black and white students. In my conversations with Dr. Cunningham, he would say things like, "if you don't stand for something you will fall for anything," or "sports are only temporary, education is a life time". He would always tell us that to make it in this world you have to have respect for everybody, and treat people the way you wanted people to treat you, and to always be honest and truthful in everything you do. I still live by those same values today and I am trying to pass them on because they have helped me. Dr. Cunningham now has a school named after him in Waterloo. It is called the Dr. Walter Cunningham School of Excellence, and that is exactly what he expected out of the students he worked with on a daily basis. A third, but definitely not the last driving force, is me. Being in education for the past seven years has allowed me to answer some of those questions that I mentioned earlier. I feel in my heart that this is something that I want to do and I believe that this is what I have been lead to do in life. I love teaching students and being in the classroom, but I want to make myself available to all students. I believe that I have been around the block enough times now, and it is time for me to really lend myself to the whole school, not just the classroom. I want to go to the top of the mountain in secondary education. I know that task is going to be a hard road, but I have prepared myself for 40 years and I am ready to roll up my sleeves and go to work. I have always said that by the time I turn

40, I wanted to have my Master's degree not knowing in what, but I do now. The first component of my reflective research paper looks at positive school cultures. I believe that in order to create a positive school environment, I as an administrator must develop leaders to take on the responsibility to help lead and motivate the school culture in which they learn. The first thing I plan on doing is going to all teachers at the different grade and levels finding out which students show the characteristics of natural leaders, and which students show the characteristics of potential leaders. After I have developed a list of names, I will look at their involvements in school, their grades, and their attitudes because I believe these three characteristics are critical in developing young leaders and creating the right environment for my school. If I can create the right environment in my school I believe I can then fulfill the concept of leaving no child behind which is the new model for the 21st Century. Over the years, I have read my share of pedagogical books. Reflecting back on the books the administration of education is a complex process.

The principal implies a different conception of educational practice than we usually find in the classroom down the street. It calls for educational settings where students learn by way of thinking about and with what they are learning, no matter what the subject is --- history, mathematics, English, science, geography, you name it. Thoughtful learning in turn requires informed and energetic schools, setting where teachers and administrators know a lot about both learning and working together and have time to learn themselves and where the management style, schedules, and forms of assessment create positive energy in everyone. Thus, smart school---informed, energetic, and thoughtful. One might dismiss the smart school as something of a luxury, okay for especially able students and for

wealthier communities but nothing so very essential for the larger part of our population. This would be a great mistake. While educational goals make for en endless debate, almost everyone could agree on at least three: retention, understanding, and the active use the active use of knowledge. Because without these three, what students learn in school would not be very useful to them (Perkins, 1992, p. 185)

If this synergy were to take place, I believe that we would have students reading at the appropriate grade levels, able to solve math problems, and eventually they would become better problem solvers as a whole. Secondly, I would work closer with staff, other administrators, and teacher associates in helping to develop new strategies, concepts, beliefs, and ideas to create an environment that is energetic, enthusiastic, hard working, a willingness to go the extra mile, and most important, fun. If I can create this sort of atmosphere I believe that teachers would come to school excited about their jobs and looking forward to teaching our young leaders of tomorrow. Forget about the socioeconomic status of students, just teach them all that you know, and let everything else work itself out!

Educationist frequently point to societal attitudes about learning to explain slumping test scores, but they cannot escape their own responsibility for helping to shape those attitudes. They have encouraged Americans to settle for watered-down standards and to be suspicious of any education that demands hard work and intellectual challenge. Indeed, Americans often seem more worried about developing children of self-actualization and self-esteem than whether they will graduate dumb. But such attitudes don't form the whole picture. Opinion polls show the public wants schools that provide an orderly environment

and a curriculum focused on "the basics." The vast majority of Americans think that "schools should hold students accountable for doing their best," which they define in starkly traditional terms. Nearly nine out of ten parents do not think that students should be able to graduate from high school "unless they can demonstrate they can write and speak English well," and more than four out of five want schools set up "very clear guidelines on what students should learn and teachers should teach in every major subject." (Sykes, 1995, p. 8).

I truly believe that this all ties into creating the right environment that is conducive to learning. If you can do this and students feel safe and they feel like they can trust you, and feel like you really care about them and their future, you will see a change in self-esteem, test scores, attendance, and their attitudes. Thirdly, I would build a stronger relationship between staff, parents, and community. This is not an easy task. It is going to take determination, sacrifices, and a vision. If it were not for the support and trust of parents and the community where would our schools be ? My answer to this question is, not very far, and definitely not where we are today. We, as educators, have one of the most respected, appreciated, and important jobs there is.

The role of the principal has been defined and redefined throughout generations of study of school administration. Changes in how the role of the principal has been redefined seem to occur as the topics of interest for schools have varied. Strong instructional leader principals are seen as "visionaires who are out and around." Their presence is created by day-to-day behavior that is consistent with their values. For example, if they expect a clean, well-kept building they do not pass paper on the floor in the hall without picking it up. They can espouse a philosophy about education and their school while at the same time going about

the more mundane routine of running the school. They have a keen understanding of how that philosophy must be "played out" daily in the school. (Thomas, Fitzhugh -Walker, & Jefferies, 2000, p. 43).

Visionary Leadership Skills - " The moon moves slowly, but it crosses the town (West African (Ashanti) proverb)."

As educators, we have to be flexible to change, because it just so happens that with the profession we have chosen, change takes place quite often. Some examples of those changes, are receiving new students half way through the semester, one of your colleagues taking a leave of absence, an increase in class sizes, having to teach an extra class with no extra pay, or any other crisis that might occur. We must be able to adjust and keep the best interest of our students in mind. As educators, we ultimately hold the key to the future of our students. I am looking forward to that day so that after I retire I can say, "I worked my butt off and made a difference in someone's life". I have noticed over the past five years, they importance of developing a positive community within the building itself. Building a positive environment is very important for all stake holders involved with the development of our students. Building learning communities within your school setting will help to establish an environment conducive to learning and a feeling of safety. As a future administrator, I feel as though it is my responsibility and role to develop this concept of learning communities between staff, students, family, and outside community members. To build this community, my plan of action is to make sure that all parties involved feel welcomed when they enter the building, and that they feel like the doors to my office, other administrators, counselors, and classrooms are open to them. People shall see students and teachers getting along with one another, the hallways will be clear of students when classes are in session, everyone will treat each other with

respect and the language used by everyone in the building will be professional. It is through these details, that a school's learning community is developed. All of these characteristics are how members of a school community teach and learn from each other. They also learn how to interact, communicate, express themselves, work together, and form this wonderful thing called an education. There is so much to learn from the daily life of school that we can not let time pass us by without providing our students the best that we have to offer.

> In order to achieve lasting reform, teachers and others in the school community need to go beyond learning to work together in teams, create interdisciplinary curriculum units, or examine issues in study groups. They need time to understand and integrate the research - based principles of learning and teaching that underlie successful schools. Collaboration is not easy. Every school and district has its share of the interesting "messiness of humanity," and sometimes this messiness can overwhelm attempts to achieve an ideal of collaborative harmony and productivity. Still, it's the process of trying to work together that enables stakeholders to build a strong foundation of collaboration and learning. In successful schools, the vision of a collaborative environment where all are learners and all are leaders provide momentum for the journey towards shared responsibility and continuous improvement (Atkins, 2002, p. 42).

I believe that in this process it is very important to raise expectations for our students, reminding them that there are no shortcuts to success. Success is gained by hard work, determination, and perseverance. If we allow students to take short cuts we as educators will begin to do the same and that is how we fall behind. We must maintain a clear and focused vision with the end in mind. That means we must think about the lives of the

students that we teach on a daily basis. Are we preparing them for the real world? The world that is going to challenge them every inch of the way. Will they be able to take the things that we have taught them and make solid and sound decisions?

Visionary leadership and continuous school improvements are synonymous. Something as simple as enforcing classroom size can be conducive to a positive learning environment.

> Small school / learning unit proponents typically declare that a major reason these schools are safer and more successful than large schools is that staff members are much more likely to know all of their students well. When teachers and students are able to build relationships, both are motivated to work and to make a success of the schooling enterprise (Cotton, 2001, p. 29).

Collaborative Leadership - " It takes a whole village to raise a child " (African proverb).

My role as principal is to make sure that this relationship takes place. It is obvious that when people get along together and work well together in any relationship good things are going to happen. It is no different in a school setting. When a teacher, student, administrator, family members, and community members establish a positive relationship your chances of student success increases, which is what we all want to happen.

> There is considerable evidence that children can learn much better in well - configured cooperative grouping than solo. Almost any cooperative grouping may help to achieve certain ends --- for example, better socialization --- but for gains in conventional educational objectives, careful design is needed (Perkins, 1992, p. 63).

I believe that we must set curriculums that allow teachers to teach the content that is discussed and read in the text books, instead of teaching to the test. If teaching to the test is more important than teachers testing over the information discussed and read over

the two or three weeks that it takes to cover a unit, then what is the point of having text books? Why don't we just spend that time teaching the test? Collaboration are so important and delicate to the success of our schools and the future of our students. We must be very careful about building this bridge that connects the whole community, and not just certain individuals. We must make sure that all parents, whether they are biological parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, or foster parents, we must make sure that they feel like they are just as important as the next person, and treat them with equal respect. No one is bigger or better than the next person. We have all been created as equals. As the sayings go, "perception is reality" and "one person's junk maybe another person treasure". This validates the "village" concept. Developing relationships with the community outside the walls of the school building is a critical element for the survival of the school. I have found this to be true because of the projects that I have worked on myself. It became very clear to me that the success of those projects depended upon the strong support of community members.

The community member's expectation for the leadership of the principal has gone through a metamorphosis over the past century. Where originally the principal teacher of a school was a director of other teachers and a coordinator of educational resources, today the principal's role is expected to meet all challenges in everyday operations and to also move the entire school toward accomplishment of the established mission. The role of the principal is by no means a simple one. Thus, identifying factors that influence how principals perform their professional roles is equally complex. To gain insights into how or why principals perform as they do, we need to know what parts of the job principal typically consider to be the most important and how they perceive they ideally should

spend their time as they perform that role (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002, p. 19).
My role as the building principal is to encourage and empower all people involved with
the education of our students and seeing that we meet all goals that are set by the stake
holders. The "village" principle applies to providing students with a quality education. It
is going to take the support of all people to accomplish this awesome goal of making
our students become life-long learners. As a future administrator, I understand that it is
going to be a very difficult challenge to get all stake holders to function as one group,
as opposed to one individual. My role as administrator is to lead this group of people,
and to get them to understand that it is not about personal gains for us as individuals.
The overall goal for us as stake holders is providing all students with the greatest
opportunity for the highest level of education that we can provide for them as students.

Deciding how to improve student learning can be rather difficult. When a new
group of parents, teachers, students, and other outside stake holders get together,
they probably have never worked as a group before, may have no experience in
collaborative decision making, as a group before, and many may not have an idea
of how to change the school's instructional efforts. Staff, parents, and student
advisory groups contribute to the decisions that govern that school. People feel
valued for their opinions and express pride and ownership in the school. Finally,
the principal is always alert external resources to link with the school's resources,
and staff development options are made available (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002, p333).
Dealing with this will no doubt be a challenge, because you are going to get some
individuals that will try to dominate and dictate a task force team. Some individuals will
have to be told in a very tactful manner that they are micro - managing the task force
team and their behavior can not continue to happen. It is not my job to hurt or offend

anyone, and it is not their job to hurt or offend anyone as well. All decisions will need to be made in the best interest of all students and stake holders. Building this partnership in an urban community school setting will be another challenge that I will face as an administrator. Low socioeconomic and educational attainment levels tend to predominate most urban communities. This lends itself to lack of support of parent participation, support from local businesses, and sometimes the support of teachers and other employees that work in the building.

> Such approaches ignore the fact that alternative organizational forms will not overcome the technological and institutional failure of the past which results in educational failure for black and poor children, increased racial tensions, faculty discontent, student dissatisfaction, and political or economic inequities in the dispensation of educational resources. Such approaches seem to presume that biases and inequalities in the distribution and provision of educational opportunity are directly tied to the way in which school systems are financed and administrated (Grant, 1979, p. 3 - 4).

Ethical Leadership - " How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because some day in life you will have been all these (George Washington Carver)."

Bringing all races, all genders, and all socioeconomic backgrounds together is a very critical component in building this partnership with the community. Another critical component is inclusion of all people. It is important that they are valued and appreciated, and not looked down upon because of their socioeconomic status. As an administrator, I will work very hard to create this environment by using the uniqueness

of all races, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to build this bridge that connect us all together. The school and educational experiences that we provide our students with will also help us to build this bridge of togetherness.

Partnership power, in contrast, requires a fundamental mental shift from bureaucratic and dominator practices to learning and partnership values within systems thinking and social constructivist beliefs. Here, balance between personal and organizational power is viewed as transcending bureaucratic boundaries of dominator control to become transformative and facilitative power (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). Partnerships by their nature utilize the unique skills and talents of all individuals to achieve collective and organizational results; they engage others in making a commitment beyond self-interest to communal, mutual interests valued by all members (Acker - Hocevar & Synder & Synder, 2000, p. 118). Understanding that we all have different skills and talents will help us move forward in bridging the gaps that have been created over time in our society. If we stand stagnant and do nothing to improve the partnership within our communities, we are failing to meet the needs of the most important people of those communities which are "our" children. From the results of the Life Style Inventory (Lafferty, 1990) an area that I need to improve in is management of time and organization. Although I believe that I make pretty good use of my time and organization, I understand that as a future administrator the job demands will increase. I have therefore decided to focus on quality management as a critical element of this reflective research paper as well. As a future principal I believe that quality management is a very key component to the success of my career in administration. I believe it is key to balance both work, personal, and family life. The workaholic administrator is definitely on the road to burnout, which is

becoming a very common practice in the school district in which I work. It is vital to get this balance right, sharing responsibilities and delegating tasks are strategies that help you deal with being an administrator. The development of management expertise is an important contribution to professional growth and is best achieved when the whole staff is involved in school development and management.

> That notion requires a shift in perception about who are the managers from head and deputy, perhaps, postholders to everyone including the newest recruit. Each has a responsibility and each has therefore an entitlement to management training. The studies of effective schools consistently point out the importance of the principal's leadership and their attention to the quality of instruction. This is observable by their participation in curriculum planning and implementation and by their presence in the classrooms, helping in such matters as identifying and diagnosing instructional problems. Principals in effective schools handle discipline problems better and control events that would disrupt teaching and learning, such as disturbances and interruptions and student absenteeism and tardiness (Dunham, 1995, p. 143).

Good decision making skills are also vital for effective management. As a future administrator, I believe that having clear objectives, gathering crucial facts, consulting with all stake holders, and using the data provided effectively will assist me in my role as an administrator. I believe my weakness, which is listening is another area that I am going to have to strengthen. Listening is a very important skill and it allows administrators to be very effective in that role. I am sure that most administrators feel that their biggest frustration is listening to people who take twenty minutes to say what should take them five minutes. As we all know there will be breakdowns in our quality management

system. We have to have back-up plans to assist us during these times of breakdown. The job of an administrator, is comparable to having a used car. You know that car can only go so long before it needs some service. That same theory applies to an effective quality management system. Any quality management system can only go so long before you have to make some form of an adjustment or service.

> Breakdowns can and do occur frequently in the operation of every quality improvement team. They show up in the team's interactions with its own members, with suppliers of information to the team, with the customers the team is seeking to serve, and with other individuals in the system, such as support staff or management. They may be small, as when one is five minutes late for an appointment, or large, as when a project is completed six months late and substantially over budget. Thus dealing with breakdowns and their consequences is a common task in any quality improvement team's life (Kaufman & Zahn, 1993, p. 159).

It is very important to understand that breakdowns will occur at one time or another. It may be a small breakdown or a large breakdown but it will happen. Dealing with these breakdowns is an all too often task in the day-to-day operations of an administrator. Denying that these breakdowns happen will not make them go away any faster. It is best to fix them before they mushroom into a larger problem that could create more problems and headaches for you down the road. Developing a management system that you feel comfortable with is very important to your longevity as an administrator. Administrators have their own style of management with the same outcomes in mind. Those outcomes are seeing that all stake holders are on the same page and that students' achievement is at it's highest level. All organizations have multiple goals and objectives

that exist within their school improvement plans. I believe that as a future administrator my managerial style, my teamwork attitude, and my open communication style will allow me to be very successful.

Research on educational effectiveness enhances one's understanding of how participatory management can affect school quality. One intriguing study of effective teaching surveyed teachers attitudes toward the management styles of their principals as well as student perceptions of effective learning related to the action of teachers. The research revealed that schools in which the principal practiced a consultative management style through seeking the opinions of selected members of the staff (i.e., those who possess expertise or pertinent information and use the information in making and implementing decisions) also had the most effective learning environments (Keith & Girling, 1991, p. 34).

Organizational Leadership - " Both tears and sweat are salty, but they render a different result. Tears will get you sympathy; sweat will get you change(Jesse Jackson)." Quality management is without a doubt the success of an administrator. I know that I must work harder in this area. My score on the LSI indicates that this is a stumbling block area for me and I must strengthen this. I must strengthen my efficacy, which is the ability to bring about change and make a difference in the way things are, and I believe having a strong management system in place will allow me to do so. Within this framework of quality management you may also add goals. Goal setting is very important because it provides us with a vision, and a vision is very important because you have to know what it is that you are trying to accomplish. These goals should be shared with all stake holders I believe that it is very important to involve those stake holders in the goal setting process because they play a very important role in helping

you to reach whatever those goals are that you have set. You want them to have the feeling of ownership as well.

A coach would not think of starting a season without emphasizing both team and individual goals. Goals are a standard component of many, if not most, employee evaluation criteria. What about goal setting in classroom learning? Although teachers have goals in mind, how often are these goals for themselves? From a motivational viewpoint, goals and goal setting play a central role in self - regulation (Schutz, 1991). Goal setting influences learning and motivation by providing a target and information about how well one is doing. When an individual sets a goal, what is the focus of the goal? A goal may be a vague idea that is difficult to communicate or it may be a clear vision. The focus of a goal can be a product, such as making an A on an exam, or a process such as using steps for writing an essay. Although a number of goals may be operating at the same time, people tend to function with core goals---a set of one to five personnel goals that guide the behavior (Ford, 1992). Schutz (1994) identified three core goals that tended to be the most important for preservice teachers--- family, occupation, and education. Most of their reported activities centered around these three goals (Alderman, 1999, p. 88)

Making sure that you have both long-term and short-term goals is very important. Setting short-term goals and completing them is very important because, it gives a sense of accomplishment. This increases your drive towards the long-term goals. Goal setting is something that I feel that I have always been able to do fairly well. I would credit this to being a former athlete and a current coach. I believe that when you set goals it allows you to have focus and a vision. Therefore, the hard work that you are putting in

to achieve those goals does not feel like it is hard work. In the end, the accomplishments of those goals feel so rewarding and deserved especially when these goals are benefiting the young students of our school community.

      Communication inside and outside the school is imperative to the accomplishment of the school's goals as well as to the public image and perception of the school. Image starts at the top, with the principal. It filters down into all aspects of the school culture and climate. The attitudes and persona displayed by the principal have a direct effect on how the school is viewed, perceived, and responded to in the community. It is imperative that school leaders have a systematic plan for open, viable communication and collaboration inside and outside the school with staff, parents, and every other member of the learning community (Wilmore, 2002, p. 56).

Communication is very important because it allows for all stake holders to be on the same page which is very important when you have a community of people working together. When you do not have effective communication in place you are going to have problems, and you want to avoid those the best that you can. When setting goals, I must make sure that these goals correspond with the goals that have also been set by the school district. I must make sure that these goals are followed closely, because you never know when something could come back and influence you.

      An organization's mission and goals may be powerful determinants of organizational learning. This is the case when the mission and goals are used by members of the organization to help them understand and evaluate information coming to them from outside sources, such as the state or department of education, for example, or as feedback from actions taken within the district or

school. Serving as " perceptual screens," the mission and goals potentially help people decide what to attend to from the full array of demands, expectations, and information with which they come into contact. However, if an already established district goal is to improve literacy levels, for example, it is safe to assume that the achievement test results will be seen to be related to that goal. An organization's mission and goals serve as instruments for sense making and choice only to the extent that individual members of the organization understand them and adopt them as guides to their own personal-professional decisions and actions. Without such understanding and adoption, a mission statement serves, at best, as a public relations tool---as a hollow sop to the public expectation that schools and districts will have a clear sense of direction for which they are accountable (Leithwood & Aitken, & Jantzi, 2001, p. 65).

Missions, along with goals, are very important to know. There are a lot of different resources that you have available to you as an administrator and you have to be able to chose those that match your school's community environment. The different resources that you will evaluate will also have to match the diversity and make up of your school. All schools are not alike, and therefore the decisions have to be made based on your school's community environment. Strong missions and guiding visions are important, but they are not enough alone to make strong, powerful organizations. for organizations to succeed, they need ways to translate vision, values, and purpose into action, which is the role of strategy. Formulating strategy is the hard, serious work of taking a specific step towards the future.

Strong missions and guiding visions are important, but they are not enough alone to make strong, powerful organizations. For organizations to succeed, they need

ways to translate vision, values, and purpose into action, which is the role of strategy. Formulating strategy is the hard, serious work of taking a specific step toward the future. **Strategic management** is the set of decisions and actions used to formulate and implement specific strategies that will achieve a competitively superior fit between the organization and its environment so as to achieve organizational goals. It is the leader's job to find this fit and translate it into action. **Strategy** can be defined as the general plan of action that describes resource allocation and other activities for dealing with the environment and helping the organization attain its goals. In formulating strategy, leaders ask questions such as "Where is the organization now? Where doe the organization want to be? What changes and trends are occurring in the competitive environment? What courses of action can help us achieve our vision?" Developing effective strategy requires actively listening to people both inside and outside the organization, as well as examining trends and discontinuities in the environment (Daft, 2002, p. 487).

As, a future administrator I understand that my job will be extremely important to the future success, and the lives of all stake holders. The decisions that I make will have to be made very carefully. I believe, that if I use the value system that I was given by my parents, and other influential people the decisions that I make will be made based on trust, honesty, and good faith. Leadership is a very important quality to have in the role of an administrator. When you are in charge of 100 teacher and 1500 students, it takes a great deal of organization and vision to make things run smoothly on a daily basis. Not all administrators perform this task successfully. I believe that I have characteristics of a good leader. I also have confidence in my abilities and therefore I believe that I will be a good administrator.

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