Leadership Is Not a Solo Act

By Rick and Becky DuFour

Busy school leaders who are looking for ways to enhance the effectiveness of their schools can find guidance from a variety of authors who have compiled lists of tasks successful leaders must address and traits they must emulate. School leaders have been offered the 21 responsibilities they must fulfill (Marzano, 2005) and the 21 "indispensable qualities" of a leader (Maxwell, 1999). The number of these recommendations, however, is daunting to educators who find it difficult to address even the most modest "to do" lists as they struggle with the demands of their daily routine and the frequent "crises" that pop up on a regular basis. Doug Reeves (2006) offers school administra-

tors the seven dimensions of leadership. Seven is more reasonable, but can we do better? Indeed, we can! It seems there are five actions leaders can take to transform their organizations (Jennings and Stahl-Wert, 2003). But those who have been holding out for the most succinct statement of the true secret of leadership need wait no longer. We have now been told there is only "the one thing" we must know to lead (Buckingham, 2005).

Americans are fascinated with lists, and leaders are in constant search of the concise list that will provide the specific things they must do to lead successfully. We concur with Buckingham that "one" is the number leaders must keep in mind as they attempt to improve their schools. However, whereas Buckingham concludes there is a single thing leaders must know, we defer to the wisdom of Three Dog Night and urge leaders to recognize that, "one is the loneliest number."

The image of the heroic individual who swoops in to save the day is burned into our national psyche. But all evidence suggests that the substantive and sustained improvement of any organization is a collective rather than a solitary endeavor. In studying thousands of cases of effective leadership, James Kouzes and Barry Posner (2003) could not find a single example of extraordinary achievement that occurred without the active involvement and support of many people. As they wrote:

We've yet to find a single instance in which one talented person— leader or individual contributor— accounted for most, let alone 100 percent, of the success. You can't do it alone. Leadership . . . is a team performance. Collaboration is a social imperative. Without it, people can't get extraordinary things done in organizations (p. 20).

Jim Collins (2001) concurred. In his study differentiating great organizations from their less effective counterparts, Collins found that unsuccessful organizations pursued a structure of one charismatic visionary leader with lots of helpers, while "great" organizations purposefully dispersed leadership throughout the organization.

The importance of widely dispersed leadership is repeatedly cited in educational research as well. Milbry McLaughlin and Joan Talbert (2001) could find "no instances to support the 'great leader' theory, charismatic people who create extraordinary contexts for teaching by virtue of their unique vision" (p.117). The most successful principals in the schools they studied "empower and support teacher leadership." Michael Fullan (2005), who has studied the change process in schools as much as anyone in North America, has concluded that distributed leadership is essential if improvement efforts are to be sustained. Doug Reeves also urges leaders to disperse

Contents
Educational Leadership

The Special EDge

Letter from the State Director

By Mary Hudler, Director, California Department of Education, Special Education Division

Applying the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Act requires leadership. Congress has found that the implementation of this act of is ". . . impeded by low expectations, and an insufficient focus on applying replicable research on proven methods of teaching and learning for children with disabilities." Further, they noted that the education of students with disabilities is predictably improved by establishing high expectations for them, while assuring them access to the general education curriculum. For many schools, these two factors present a challenge to everyone, but particularly to school leaders.

To realize the intentions of IDEA and to help students, it is helpful to reflect on what it means to be a leader. Wayne and Nancy Alderson outline the following essential qualities:

1. Leaders encourage each individual, including students with disabilities, their families, and fellow educators, to articulate a vision to become reality for the student with disabilities.

Malcolm Forbes stated that "The best vision is insight." When students with disabilities are given opportunities—and expected—to reach their full potential, their achievement levels rise. Providing access to the general education curriculum and supports is one very important way to ensure their success and their construction of a positive vision for themselves and their futures.

2. Leaders engage in the lives of others—in their joys, hopes, and pains.

"One of the great secrets of leadership is that before one can command the respect and followship [sic] of others, she or he must demonstrate . . . commitment to those in the organization who work day by day on the ordinary tasks that are necessary for those purposes to be realized" (Thomas J. Sergiovanni). Celebrating the successes of students with disabilities and getting involved in their struggles provides the effective leader with insights to ensure continued student success.

3. Leaders accept change as opportunities for growth and development.

Often, to facilitate change, leaders must themselves change. As Leo Tolstoy noted, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." Nurturing one's own professional and personal enhancements models this behavior in others.

4. Leaders give of themselves to serve others, which in turn helps others realize their own potential.

It behooves many educators to recall that the needs of others come before their own. The educator may begin by asking simple questions like: "What resources does the student with disabilities need to be successful in the general education curriculum? How may the classroom be altered to ensure success for the student with disabilities? What kinds of support does the general education teacher need to ensure meaningful classroom participation for students with disabilities?" The more the educator considers the needs of others, the more willing others will be to follow.

5. Leaders recognize the quality of relationships by treating others with esteem, dignity, and respect.

When students with disabilities are allowed to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect them in the general education classroom, they begin to own the process and realize their individual potential. In addition, teamwork and

Leadership: A Philosophical Perspective

By Maureen Burness, Assistant Superintendent, Placer County SELPA

I n the world of real estate, everyone is familiar with the refrain, "Location, location, location." A fitting parallel in the world of leadership is "Integrity, integrity, integrity." But what exactly is this quality that is central to being an effective leader?

Integrity has something to do with "walking the talk" and being transparent and real; with standing by your principles and being honest. But in my experience, one of the most important dimensions of leadership has to do with this fact: if you want to lead, you must have people willing to be part of your team.

The concept of "teaming," then, is integral to leadership. Being committed to a mutual purpose allows a team to form. And once formed, the leader's work begins at a different level, a level that operates alongside the overt task that brought the team together. In addition to guiding the team to accomplish that task, a true leader works to foster the talents of the team members, to support their efforts, and to express an ongoing appreciation of their talents and strengths.

When my kids were little, I considered writing a book to be called "Recharge!" because of my observations of them toddling off into the world, but returning to me for a recharge of emotional support to continue in their road to independence, whether it was a quick grab of my leg then back off to the world, or a kiss, or a hug. Later, as they grew, these recharge moments became rich conversations about the meaning of life and its purpose. As a parent, I loved that nurturing role,

helping my children blossom into wonderful, caring, principled people. As a leader, I see the same need for my teams. Each person will do his best, will perform as well as she is able, if each is similarly—consistently and individually—nourished.

Support can be delivered in many ways. One aspect includes staff development in the broadest sense: mentoring, coaching, and encouraging team members in their work to serve the goals of the group and to realize their larger,

professional goals. This might take the form of providing technical assistance; it might involve sending people to (or otherwise providing) trainings, conferences, or other opportunities to share and receive information.

When my daughter was deciding to go to medical school, one of her friends asked her why in the world she would want to put herself into debt and work such long arduous hours, and then devote her professional life to working for needy populations. Her response was, "How can I not???" Leaders in the field of special education possess an identical attitude. If they know that something is in the best interest of children, their only response is "How can I not???" This attitude, when truly felt and consistently lived out, is contagious. It is the best kind of modeling.

Leaders also need to be life-long learners themselves and, again, "walk the talk," if they want others to grow and develop professionally. As we face an ever-growing shortage of folks who are trained, appropriately credentialed, and willing and able to work in special education alongside us, we face the moral imperative to support our staff in their professional development—and to show them through our actions how to do it. Modeling habits of lifelong learning serves to help others appreciate their own continual growth as humans—and the growth of others. In addition, when the people in charge are striving to learn more and to "grow their game," not only do they model a positive attitude toward growth; they

Leading Thoughts . . .

". . . Meaningful change happens systemically and is neither top-down nor bottom-up. As an example, if funding for community colleges was focused on student success and retention, every level from the instructor to the president would begin to focus on the true mission of any educational institution—teaching and learning."

—*Rachel Rosenthal, Dean of Planning, Research, and Development, American River College, and student in CANDEL (Capital Area North Doctorate in Educational Leadership), a joint doctoral program in educational leadership*

leadership throughout their districts and schools because "no single person can achieve the essential demands of leadership alone" (p.28).

But while it would be difficult to find researchers opposed to the concept of widely distributed leadership, specifics regarding how to promote leadership throughout a school have been lacking. We offer the following suggestions for those interested in exploring strategies to build the capacity for leadership within a staff.

1. Create a guiding coalition

No one individual could possibly have the skills, wisdom, and stamina to be the sole source of leadership in a school. Furthermore, no individual can launch and sustain an improvement initiative until it becomes part of the school culture. Therefore, the creation of a guiding coalition should always be a part of the early stages of any change effort (Kotter, 1996). The structure of the coalition can take many forms— a school improvement committee, department chairs, grade-level team leaders, etc. The coalition should be expected to find common ground and speak with one voice on such matters as the fundamental purpose of the school, the future it is creating, the collective commitments that must be made to fulfill the school's purpose, the indicators of progress the coalition will track, and the specific actions that must be taken to move forward. Principals who fail to build a coalition of supporters and collaborators will be unlikely to transform their schools, and any improvement efforts they initiate will almost certainly be abandoned upon their departure.

2. Create collaborative teams and designate team leaders

When schools organize teachers into collaborative teams, they create a structure conducive to widely dispersed leadership. Teams can be organized by course, by grade level, by program, or as interdisciplinary groups. Regardless of the format, each team can and should have the benefit of a member who has been designated as the leader.

Teachers should be given incentives to serve as leaders—release from a supervisory assignment, release from committee assignments, or a small stipend—and should be provided with the training and support to lead their team effectively. Imagine, for example, an elementary school in which the guiding coalition has called upon each grade-level team to create a series of common math assessments for all students. Team leaders could work together to develop the skills necessary to lead that task at their grade level and could continue to

meet to help each other discover ways to address the inevitable obstacles that arise. Instead of a single principal or a small guiding coalition assuming responsibility for common assessments, team leaders would take the responsibility, and taking responsibility is at the very heart of leadership.

3. Promote situational leadership

The collaborative team process also creates a rich opportunity for situational leadership in a school, leadership based upon expertise in the task at hand rather than position. For example, a collaborative team could assign leadership responsibility for developing different units in the curriculum on the basis of who is most knowledgeable regarding the content, or members could revise their instructional strategies based upon the ideas of the person achieving the best results. Effective team leaders will not hoard authority but will identify ways to give every member of the team the opportunity to lead from time to time, based upon individual interest and expertise.

4. Utilize task forces

Task forces differ from committees in that they are provided with a charge to address a specific issue, research best practices, develop recommendations for improvement, and build consensus to support their recommendations. Unlike committees, task forces are not ongoing, but rather are operational only until their task has been accomplished. For example, imagine a school that confronts a brutal fact: the response to students who are experiencing academic difficulty varies widely from teacher to teacher. A task force could be created to consider ways the school might respond to these students in a more timely, direct, equitable, and strategic way. Once its recommendations were implemented, the task force would be disbanded, but its members would feel the pride that comes with ownership and authorship. Over time, a school that creates one or two task forces each year to address different issues will dramatically expand the number of staff members who will have played a leadership role in improving some aspect of the school.

5. Make developing leaders an explicit expectation and requirement for every formal leader in the district

Fostering self-efficacy—that is, helping people to believe in their own capabilities—is one of a leader's highest duties. All leaders should be expected to develop the leadership potential of those with whom they work. For example, the job description of those in a formal leadership position in Brevard County, Florida, stipulates they are responsible for developing the leadership capacity of those they oversee. The superintendent, central office staff, principals, and managers of every department at both the district and site levels are evaluated, in part, on their attention to and effectiveness in developing others.

So, what is the best way to develop a leader? The Center for Creative Leadership (Van Vesor & McCauley 2004) was specifically created to answer that question, and for 35 years it has worked to

increase the leadership capacity of individuals and organizations. It concluded: The best strategy for developing leaders is placing people in the midst of the challenge of leadership work. Leadership capacity grows when people are put in positions that call upon them to lead because leading is, in and of itself, learning by doing.

In every district and in every school, key leaders will inevitably come and go. If we continue to associate improvement initiatives with the individual leader who launched them, sustained school improvement will always be elusive. There is, however, an alternative. As Fullan writes, "the main mark of an effective principal is not just his or her impact on the bottom line of student achievement, but also on how many leaders he or she leaves behind who can go even further" (p. 31).

We must let go of the myth of the principal as superman or the superintendent as savior. We must abandon the idea that the capacity to lead is reserved for the elite few. We must understand that developing internal capacity for leadership is essential to the continuous improvement of any school or district. We must recognize that collective leadership is not just a "feel good" philosophy: it is the best way to achieve results and is consistent with our moral purpose of helping all students learn at high levels. We will increase the likelihood of fulfilling that purpose when we recognize that school administrators must be leaders of leaders. No one person can meet the challenge. When it comes to improving schools, one is still the loneliest number. ◆

Rick and Becky DuFour are educational authors and consultants. Rick can be reached at *rdufour@district125.k12.il.us* Becky at *mzprinci@charter.net*

Bibliography

Buckingham, M. (2005). *The One Thing You Need to Know . . . About Great Managing, Great Leading and Sustained Individual Success.* New York: Free Press.

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't.* New York: Harper Business.

Fullan, M. (2004). *Leadership and Sustainability: System Thinkers in Action.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Jennings, K. & Stahl-Wert, J. (2003). *The Serving Leader: Five Powerful Actions that Will Transform Your Team, Your Business, and Your Community.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Kouzes, J. and Posner, B. (Spring 2003). "Challenge is the Opportunity for Greatness." *Leader to Leader.* 28, 16–23.

Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading Change.* Boston: Harvard Business School.

Marzano, R., Waters, T., and McNulty, B. (2005). *School Leadership that Works.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Maxwell, J. (1999). *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader: Becoming the Person Others Will Want to Follow.* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

McLaughlin, M. and Talbert, J. (2001). *Professional Communities and the Work of High School Teaching*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Reeves, D. (2006). *The Learning Leader.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Van Velsor, E. & McCauley, C.D., eds. (2004). *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Parent Leaders

our sense that this work was important, that we need to do it, and it lent an enormous legitimacy to our efforts.

Olivia: I've experienced a great deal of joy in helping others develop their leadership skills and become involved in the CACs [Community Advisory Committees] and experience the satisfaction of having of their voices heard and change happen because of their efforts.

I have a friend I helped in her role as a parent-leader. She has two daughters; both are in the school system; one has disabilities, the other does not. I love watching her work as a parent-leader in both the general ed and the special ed world. Her principal takes her to conferences and she is welcomed and respected in both arenas. I love the fact that I may have helped her in developing her confidence and her leadership skills. I am always concerned with who's going to come after and continue to work. ◆

Leading Thoughts . . .

". . . One of the most difficult issues we face is achieving relevance for students' lives, and in that endeavor, knowing when the search for relevance, as it would be recognized or defined by students, has led us away from an insistence on a core of learning that students themselves might not see as relevant. In the past this issue was essentially curricular in nature—whose 'great books' would we stack one upon another in building a citizen; what would move the turf-stakes of 'general education' a foot in one direction or the other; what program would 'meet the needs' of business and industry. But now not just the individual bits of curriculum or the usefulness of discrete programs, but the whole process of post-secondary education and the value of its largest learning outcomes are under scrutiny. And while the value of our various credentials still seems to be high, one senses that our certifications may someday look as quaint as, and ultimately as narrow as—as irrelevant as—the beautiful and hard-to-earn Boy Scout badges I remember on those long-discarded uniforms . . .

As to solutions or approaches to solutions, the search for institutional or degree-level . . . outcomes might extend the period of our relevance and introduce a grammar that might . . . might . . . allow us to connect vividly with the wider world and its busy concerns with the bottom-line and its peevish insistence on evidence. But those could go the way of the SCANS competencies, enjoying a season of hope and then an age of derision."

—Bill Karns, Vice President of Instruction and Student Learning Cosumnes River College, Sacramento, California, and student in CANDEL (Capital Area North Doctorate in Educational Leadership), a joint doctoral program in educational leadership

A Systems Approach to School Improvement

McKinleyville: How Leadership Is Done

The students in Julie Giannini-Previde's eighth-grade class are studying the Civil War, and they're ready for battle. Assigned to teams representing the North or the South—complete with generals in blue and gray caps—they're playing "Battle Jeopardy," a game of answers and questions based on the popular television show. As they take turns answering questions, it's apparent that the students are having fun while reviewing the tumultuous events of 1863. What isn't apparent is that a number of them are students with disabilities who also receive special education services.

From segregation to leadership

Where once these students at McKinleyville Middle School would have been segregated—and stigmatized—in special education classes with a remedial curriculum, they now sit alongside their peers and receive the same grade-level, standards-based education. And the numbers show what a difference that makes: Academic achievement is up; disciplinary problems are down. Students who receive special education services—resource students—have been seamlessly integrated into general education classes. This accomplishment has earned McKinleyville a designation as both a California State Superintendent's Model Middle School and a CalSTAT Leadership Site.

The integration may be seamless now, but it took a culture change at the rural northern California school to bring this model to fruition. The key ingredients included the leadership of one very determined special education teacher, a supportive administration, and a staff willing to give collaboration a try.

How they got there

Mindy Fattig arrived in McKinleyville in 1999 to teach a traditional special education core class (language arts,

reading, and social studies) to students in grades six through eight—students who bragged about getting their last teacher fired. "I couldn't teach," she recalls. "I spent 100 percent of my time on behavior issues. I had almost no contact with the rest of the school—which I'm sure is also how my students felt—and I felt I wasn't serving the

kids." Exhausted by November, Fattig told then-principal Dale McGrew that she would finish out the year but wouldn't be back. Teacher turnover in the position had been so high that McGrew knew something had to be done. Instead of accepting Fattig's resignation, she recalls, he asked, "What do you want to do?"

After conducting research online and attending a special education conference, Fattig had her answer: "I knew my kids had to be with their peers." She found a willing collaborator in Julie Giannini-Previde, and the two started a pilot program in 2000, team teaching an eighth-grade general education core class with 15 of Fattig's resource students in the mix. The resource students got extra support from Fattig while the high-achieving students benefited from having two credentialed teachers in the classroom. And soon those behavior problems that had plagued Fattig the previous year began to abate. "Just by being in general education with

support, detention for these kids went down by 60 percent," she says.

Getting others on-board

Knowing that teacher buy-in was critical to expanding the model, Fattig and Giannini-Previde talked up their successes in staff meetings. As those successes increased, more teachers—initially reluctant to accept students from special education programs in their classrooms—were willing to try integration and collaboration. With backing from McGrew and current principal Doug Oliveira, implementation of the program was gradual. The effort was voluntary for the first two years—a teacher-drive program that turned into a classic example of "leading from the middle." In the second year, sixth- and seventh-grade core classes were added; in the third year, math and science. If some of the teachers were still skeptical of her presence in their classrooms, Fattig says, "I told them that I'm not here to evaluate you; I'm here to help."

Getting buy-in from the students was much easier. The teachers planned activities to emphasize that all students have both strengths and weaknesses, that students learn differently, and that every student would get whatever he or she needed in class. Students quickly accepted the program and welcomed the extra support and attention that came with having two teachers in the classroom. When asked at the end of the first year to compare the segregated and integrated classes, one resource student responded, "I think this was a good class because you really did not know who was not the smartest person and who was a computer genius" [spelling corrected].

Today, integration and collaboration are ingrained in the culture at McKinleyville, where 12 percent of the school's 390 students receive special education services. "It's a program that makes sense," says Oliveira. "Everyone has bought into it." The results are

impressive: In just two years (2003–5) McKinleyville's Academic Performance Index (API) score rose from 7 to 10, the highest ranking, when compared to similar schools; and resource students' scores on standard English and math tests have risen steadily since the program began.

Student behavior

As for student behavior, Oliveira says, "What we don't get now are the routine behavior problems we had under the old system. Kids in special education don't stand out at all in terms of disciplinary actions." And turnover among the 24 certified teachers is so low that the person with the least seniority has been at the school for five years.

Two integral elements of the program have contributed to its success: academic support (in special classes and in free, after-school tutoring) and differentiated instruction.

When it became evident that some students needed extra time and assistance to keep up in general education, academic support classes were added in 2002. Taught by Fattig and another resource specialist, the classes offer guidance on how to study, assistance with homework assignments, preparation for upcoming classwork ("pre-teaching"), and review of material already covered in class ("re-teaching"). The classes are open to general education students as an elective and are so popular that there is a waiting list.

The program in action

The students in Teri Waterhouse's seventh-grade core class, one-quarter of them resource students, are quietly poring over a test on feudalism. Fattig and Waterhouse, team teachers, walk among the desks, offering help when a hand shoots up. After class the two teachers confer about what's coming up that week. Waterhouse says the students will be asked to write an essay on why feudalism developed in medieval Europe. She gives Fattig a diagrammed "essay organizer" that Fattig will use in the academic support class to prepare her students for the assignment.

This part is central to the program's success: Having a sense of what's going to happen in the general education classes gives the resource students

Recruiting Paraeducators for Special Education

California suffers from a shortage of special educators. This is not news. The real news is any effective response to filling the need.

TEACH California and the California State Employees Association (CSEA) are taking on this task by collaborating to recruit paraeducators, whose vast classroom experience makes them ideal candidates for becoming special educators. By coordinating outreach work with CSEA (one of the unions that organizes paraeducators), TEACH California hopes to elevate these efforts to a statewide scale. Getting information out through CDE's structure *and* through CSEA's communication system should greatly increase paraeducators' understanding of the importance of their obtaining their education specialist credential.

The effort started in 2005 when Janet Canning, CDE Special Education Division, and Kris Marubayashi, TEACH California, lead workshops at CSEA's annual paraeducator conference. While focusing on the special education credential process, they also paid particular attention to the academic and financial roadblocks that can prevent paraeducators from obtaining their credential. Participants liked what they heard and asked that the same team lead similar workshops at the 2006 conference.

Rather than continue outreach efforts at the same level, TEACH California has approached CSEA to "up the ante" and proposed ways the two organizations could work together. This year, in addition to conference presentations, the two organizations are jointly creating a brochure that informs paraeducators of what they need to become special educators. The brochure will be made available on the TEACH California website (*www.teachcalifornia.org/*) and distributed to CSEA's membership.

This collaborative approach is new—and there is still much to be done. Bur, as one paraeducator (who will soon be a credentialed special education teacher) said, "I just hope that more of the paraeducators would take that step and become credentialed teachers. After all, after the classroom teacher, who would know better than paraeducators about the satisfaction, the joy, the many intangible rewards, and sometimes the sadness and the disappointments of the classroom, in other words, the reality of the teaching profession?"

Supporting Each Other, Their Children, and the System
Parents Share Their Experience as Leaders

What do parents have to say about their role as leaders in the field of special education? To find out, *The Special EDge* talked with three parent-educators from California; Angela McGuire, an institute coordinator at WestEd; Fran Goldfarb, the Director of Parent and Family Resources at the University of Southern California's University Center on Disability; and Olivia Hinojosa, the Community Liaison for the Community Advisory Committee and a peer support partner at the Koch Young Family Resource Center.

EDge: What prepared you to be a parent-leader?

Angela: My own mom was very involved in all aspects of our school. It was what she did; it was what I did.

I'm a graduate of Partners in Policymaking, a training program for parents of young children with disabilities and for adults with disabilities. We work together in shaping policy at the local, state, and federal levels. Since some of our colleagues in this work have disabilities, I got to see, through what these individuals had achieved, the potential and possibilities for my own child.

But nothing prepared me better than my own child, Cassi.

Fran: The first IEP for me was the real motivator. I went in with the naïve expectation that people there would take care of things. Things did not go well, and that was a reality check. It made me see that, unless I became knowledgeable and proactive, good things were not going to happen for my son.

This motivated me to learn everything I could. But what really prepared me was the devastating sense of isolation I first experienced when we learned that our son was not developing typically, but no one could say anything except that his condition was rare. Preschool teachers said, "We have never dealt with a child like your son before."

I was counseled not to waste my money on child development books, because I would never find descriptions of my son in them.

When he was first officially diagnosed, and the psychologist addressed my husband and me with the words "Children like your son," I burst into tears—out of the intense relief from finally knowing that there were others like my son out there. That we could find a community. This experience made it very clear how important it was to connect with other parents.

Olivia: What prepared me was all

Nothing prepared me for being a parent-leader better than my own child.

---

the information I needed to seek out when my daughter Sarah was born with Downs Syndrome. I learned what I needed to know to meet my daughter's needs and my own. And then, as I spent hours sitting in waiting rooms talking with other parents, I saw the larger need that eventually motivated me to take a leadership role.

EDge: What are the necessary qualities of an effective parent-leader?

Angela: You have to be able to look down the road and make decisions that are not easy in the moment, but that will be the right thing years from now. It's important to learn not to settle for what's easy, but to take the path that leads to a life that has quality. I like to think of myself as an advocate for kids, making sure my daughter and others have choices as adults.

You have to be able to cultivate a kind of indifference and toughness to how people think about you. You have to not be afraid of what people say or how they view you because, if you speak your mind and advocate actively for either your child or other children,

you may make people angry.

And then there's resilience. The challenges never go away. So you have to figure out a way to bounce back after the inevitable bouts against an unrelenting system that can make you very tired. Every year we're given a new team for Cassi. And every year team members challenge me. And every year I have to help them see my child, not as a diagnosis, but as an individual with potential and a life to live.

Fran: Leaders learn along the way and are seasoned by practice. But there are intrinsic qualities that allow them to take advantage of an opportunity—like a failed IEP meeting—when things don't go our way. Leaders don't just whine. They seize an opportunity and act.

They are also able to recognize that their experience is not the universal experience; that every child is a point on a continuum, just as every parent's experience is a point on a continuum. And there are thousands of different points. When we work as leaders to get people energized, we must recognize that everyone is different. We must respect and be able to listen to that difference.

Olivia: A leader has to be a good listener. And be able to learn what you need to learn in order to be clear on what the issues are. It's easy to take off running with something that we hear "going out the door," only to find out that there's a lot more to the situation. It's so important to build bridges between parent and professional groups, and learn how to work together. To do this, you have to know about and have a thorough understanding of the issues.

Effective leaders need to be comfortable with agreeing to disagree. It doesn't have to ruin a working relationship; know that you can still move forward and work together in a group or across groups, even if you don't agree with everything.

EDge: What are the challenges that a parent-leader can expect to face?

Angela: One of the biggest challenges I consistently faced is that of being patroized. It doesn't matter what you know, what you've been able to accomplish, or what good ideas you bring to the table; you are first and foremost a parent and, because of that, some professionals are going to patronize you.

In all of the challenges a parent-leader faces, it's probably most important to keep a sense of humor about it, and then make sure you have plenty of friends who are willing to listen to you vent.

Fran: We start with a very full plate. We have families; we have the needs of our children; we have the needs of our child with a disability. All of these needs consume time, energy, and emotion. Some of us work as parent leaders on top of a separate source of employment. So whether we're asking ourselves or someone else to take on the role of leader, it's important that we recognize that we are asking a very busy, preoccupied person to do even more.

Another significant challenge for a parent-leader is that there is no university degree that demonstrates generally approved training or an agreed-upon body of knowledge. Training for it comes mostly from the School of Hard Knocks—from a scattered set of efforts and experiences. There is no way to factor in the life experiences, innate wisdom, and independent study and learning that really good parent-educators bring to their work. And then how do you make all of that commensurate with a college degree? How do you apply for a reimbursement from Medi-Cal, for example, for family support that many parents say is every bit as critical to their survival as advice from an M.D.? The whole movement toward parent leadership as a professional designation is in its infancy right now. It is, however, making great strides to establish itself.

Olivia: You will face opposition and intimidation if you try to hold people accountable—expect opposition and intimidation even to simple and reasonable requests, and even when you are the voice in support of federal and legal policy.

EDge: What is your best piece of advice

for parents who want to be leaders?

Angela: One of the best pieces of advice that a mentor gave me was the permission to sit back and learn for the first few years; to just listen for as long as I needed in order to learn what I had to say and feel confident in what I wanted to do. That let me off the hook and kept me from jumping in before I was ready.

And then I meet so many parents who are intimidated by the "suits" or the titles of those in charge of various organizations. But it's important to remember that those people with titles or in positions of power are just people like the rest of us. It's so important to remember that.

Fran: Be terrible at saying "no;" and be very good at saying "no."

Never say "no" just because you're scared of an opportunity; never say "no" just because you don't feel like doing something. It could represent the most important crossroad of your life. But be very good at saying "no" if it interferes with putting your family first or taking care of your own health—mental and physical. If you burn out, you're no good to anyone.

Olivia: Remember that the system is slow; progress and change are slow. Stay determined and keep trying. The changes and the fruit of my efforts may not be seen until my daughter is out of the school system. And I need to be OK with that. But it helps to know that some child out there will benefit from my work. This encourages me and keeps me working.

You don't have to have all of the answers or be an expert. You can take things slowly and learn as you go. Take advantage of all of the resources that are out there to find the information and answers that you need; they will allow you to be successful.

Remember that this is not a one-man show. The system depends on the power of the parent voice. We must stay involved and engaged. It is an ongoing effort.

EDge: What is your favorite story from your career as a parent-leader?

Angela: When I first participated in a special education advisory committee, I was introduced as a "radical inclusionist." I think this was because my Cassi, who has a disability, was going to a general ed preschool, and because I'm willing to speak up. I'm not afraid to engage others, and I don't back down. I'm actually pretty proud of this, and of being a "radical inclusionist."

Parents, particularly those who have a child with a disability, are overwhelmed and, as a result, maybe too willing to settle for what they're told when it comes to their children. I would like to encourage others to be "radical inclusionists."

Fran: During my first year as a faculty member in our interdisciplinary training program, I was working with parents who were very nervous about being part of the effort. These were parents who were working shoulder-to-shoulder with Ph.D.s. The parents were full of doubts about whether or not this was something they could actually do. But their presence added so much to everyone's learning.

And then a year and one-half ago, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) and LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities: *www.uscuap.org*/) determined that our program, along with 37 other family training programs around the country, represented the Designated Discipline of the Year. This gave us the chance to get together with people around the country who were working to develop parent-leaders. It validated

where we can bring forward our intuitions, our knowledge, our memories, and our experience. We ask questions of ourselves and of others, and we listen carefully to one another's responses. For leaders in early childhood, it means stepping back from the role of family member, supervisor, assessment team leader, program planner, and/or administrator to ask questions and to think about what might make us more effective in our work and in our leadership.

In the story above, the program director demonstrates some familiar attributes of effective leadership in any field: initiative, knowledge, trustworthiness, and action. She combines these with attributes of reflection—pausing, stepping back, asking questions, and bringing knowledge and experience to bear on her decisions and her recommendations for action. Perhaps most importantly, she demonstrated the value and habit of reflection.

What does reflective practice look and sound like?

Just as leadership involves an ongoing flow of decisions, reflective practice consists of an ongoing flow of questions. The questions are designed to encouraging an exchange: of experiences, thoughts, feelings, and ideas. "Can you describe what happened?" "Have you ever experienced anything like this before?" "How was this different from

---

Leading Thoughts . . .

". . . I don't have to . . . execute every task myself . . . if I utilize the team that has been collectively built around me to accomplish our goals and mission; that will make us a stronger, more cohesive unit. A leader is someone who can get others to work toward a common goal. . . . The challenge is not necessarily to lead, but to build other leaders within our school community.

—Allen Dosty, Vice Principal of Don Julio Junior High School, North Highlands, and student in CANDEL (Capital Area North Doctorate in Educational Leadership), a joint doctoral program in educational leadership

---

what you had expected?" "Is there something you have seen work elsewhere that might work here?" These are all questions that feed reflective practice—although the question is just the beginning. Listening to the responses is at least as important. And to be effective, it is done with full attention. Good communication strategies—such as clarifying, expanding, and rephrasing—are part of the process as well. Judgment is suspended, but decisions are made and a course of action is determined.

Reflective questioning is an art that requires careful crafting and practice. In the busy lives of educators at all levels, it might seem that just asking more questions amounts to a waste of time. Particularly when first trying it out, and it feels clumsy and unfamiliar. But, like many educational practices, it becomes more effective the more we are willing to risk doing it and practicing it. We learn not only which questions to ask, but also when to take some time for reflection, and when not to. Leaders are frequently expected to be decisive and active, but a planned or on-the-spot reflection rather than a quick decision can frequently save hours, if not days, of misdirected work.

How is it used to inform leadership?

Reflective practice can be embedded in many of the routines that make up leadership, management, and supervisory roles. It can be included in regularly scheduled events. At the end of routine staff meetings, for example, some programs make sure that they devote about ten minutes to thinking about what worked, what they learned, or what they would like to try next time. In situations where staff are dispersed, as in some rural areas, or in programs where staff are scattered to home visits or multiple sites, reflective questions are sometimes used at the end of conference calls or electronic communication. Sometimes it happens "in the moment," as it did in the example above, in response to a family's needs or to another staff person's dilemma. In all of these examples, the information elicited is used to continually improve events or interactions for which those in leadership roles are ultimately responsible.

Another dimension of this approach is reflective supervision, which is designed to promote thoughtful and helpful supervisory interactions and ultimately support and encourage individuals to grow personally and professionally. Jeree Pawl (1998) reminded the field of early care and education to "do unto others as you would have them do unto others." This reminder is particularly important for those in leadership roles in a field where much of the work is with vulnerable young children and their families. When supervisors guide staff and support them to grow through reflective practice—that is, when the staff are "done unto" as they are supervised and mentored in their own work—the practice serves as a model for how children and families are to be respected and valued.

Why has it been so helpful in early care and education?

Reflective practice is highly valued in early care and education and important for leadership in the field for several reasons. First, working effectively with young children requires skilled observation. Assessment—both formal and informal—in early childhood is done primarily through observation. Those observations then must be interpreted and decisions must be made based on those interpretations. Family members, practitioners, and others who know the child will bring their ideas, their understandings, and their knowledge of the child to the process of decision-making. This can happen both in formal team meetings and in the everyday work of adapting interactions and materials to best fit what is being observed in the child's behavior. Asking reflective questions of the observations and bringing forth as many perspectives as possible will generate decisions that lead to more effective interventions.

A second reason that reflective practice is highly valued in early care and education is that it supports relationship-based practice. Enfolding the work with infants, toddlers, and young children and their families in relationships at every level is a practice that is highly valued in the field. It is driven by research that supports the belief that early

development and learning take place in the context of emotionally and cognitively supportive relationships. It follows that when we work within a cascade of supportive relationships— among the staff, the children, and the families—we increase the possibility of optimal development for the child. Leaders are charged, therefore, with the task of modeling reflective practice throughout their ongoing work as staff and family members scaffold one another in developing the value and habit of reflection.

California's Desired Results for Children and Families system has been working to develop ways to effectively evaluate and support its care settings. Many of its evaluation tools and training practices integrate reflective practices. Go to *www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/ desiredresults.asp* and *www.sonoma. edu/cihs/desiredresults/* for more information.

If you're not sure you want to start on the path toward adapting reflective practice and reflective supervision in your own work, you might want to spend some time thinking about it. Helpful resources are available to further explore—and reflect on—the topic. ◆

Order from the RiSE Library (see page 17)

The Handbook of Training and Practice in Infant and Preschool Mental Health by Karen M. Finello
How You Are Is As Important As What You Do by Jeree H. Paul, Mari St. John, and Zero to Three Press.

added confidence about their ability to do the required work. This kind of collaborative academic planning between resource and general education teachers takes place regularly in all subject areas. In addition, grade-level teams consisting of science, math, core, and resource teachers meet weekly to discuss curriculum and concerns about individual students.

Adapting to students' needs

All McKinleyville students are taught the same curriculum in integrated classrooms, but not all learn at the same speed. Teachers soon recognized the need for a "tiered" curriculum and were trained in differentiated instruction, a plan that allows a teacher to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of both struggling and high-achieving students. The students in Giannini-Previde's class will be tested on their knowledge of the Civil War, but not everyone will receive the same exam. While many questions are identical, the resource students' test, for example, will have fewer options in a multiple-choice question. Weekly homework assignments covering the same subject matter may be modified for resource, general education, and gifted students.

Cultural shift

The staff has embraced the change in culture at McKinleyville. Teachers who used to work in semi-isolation now spend much more time together—in and out of the classroom; and they learn a lot from each other. When the sixth-grade teachers gathered for lunch on a warm spring day, they spoke about the changes they had experienced: "It opened my eyes to other methods of teaching." "Before, there was no time to coordinate with the resource teacher." "It was initially overwhelming, but you do it bit by bit." "You work on problem kids and situations as a team."

The speaker of the last quote had a problem kid in class. The boy was tested and shown to have a learning disability, and the team that gathered in the classroom was working on the problem. Present were Oliveira; school psychologist Lisa Miller, the woman who had administered the diagnostic tests; the teacher; Fattig; the boy's mother; and, at the end of the table, the sixth grader himself. The goal of the meeting was to develop for the boy an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that would put him in academic support. Miller had discussed the program with the boy's mother ("I can get 100 percent behind this model and speak sincerely to parents about it," Miller had said earlier.) The test results were discussed; the teacher talked about what had been observed in class. Then Fattig spoke to the boy, asking questions to draw him out, telling him how she would work with him and help him in the fall. It was the same easy, direct manner she used in dealing with another student to do some homework before making a phone call, in exchang-

ing high fives with a boy crossing the airy campus between classes, and in kneeling beside the desk of a struggling seventh grader.

A conclusion, but no ending

It's been seven years since Mindy Fattig walked into the principal's office to resign. Former principal McGrew remembers "Mindy's desire to change something that didn't work into something that did." Three years later, McKinleyville Middle School had integrated students with special needs into all aspects of the general education program—from core curriculum to extracurricular activities. The integration is so complete that Oliveira says, "Not many kids know who the resource students are." The school's collaborative model has been presented at educational conferences throughout the United States. McKinleyville was one of four middle schools designated as "California's 2006 Schools to Watch" by the state superintendent of education. And this spring Mindy Fattig was named Humboldt County teacher of the year. ◆

cooperation, since they emphasize interdependence, have a powerful effect on schools. Students with disabilities have experiences and skills to offer the general education environment. Everyone benefits from the relationship, and leaders need to acknowledge this and model and promote these relationships.

The most effective school leaders recognize the potential contributions that students with disabilities can make to their school and community. Providing these students with access to the general education curriculum goes far towards ensuring that these students meet their potential. "Nothing is more important than creating an environment in which people feel they make a difference. You can't feel good about what you're doing unless you think you are making a difference" (Jack Stack). Seeing students with disabilities as individuals with tremendous potential and providing them with opportunities to develop that potential and contribute to the world will make a tremendously positive difference for them—and for the rest of us. ◆

also implicitly demonstrate respect for the potential in everyone.

While staff development involves a commitment to mentoring others on the job, it also applies across disciplines and organizations. I am fortunate to be one of a large number of SELPA administrator in this state. As a source of professional support, these administrators offer a wonderful model: SELPA administrators are a group of professionals who are knowledgeable and willing to share their expertise, problem-solving strategies, best practices, and even problems and challenges—all to help each other.

Another example of a mentoring and supportive organization is the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA, go to *www.acsa.org/events/index.cfm*). Their academies offer special education as one of many areas of expertise, along with specific leadership goals:

- Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community
- Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth
- Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment
- Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources
- Modeling a personal code of ethics and developing professional leadership capacity
- Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context

A truly all-encompassing leadership style includes not just practical skills, but more personally challenging strategies as well, such as reflective practice (see article page 16). A corollary requirement is the ability to problem-solve with an open mind. And then there's the ability to think ahead, to be proactive.

This all starts to sound like a list of abstractions. Ultimately, it's all about honoring and respecting others. We can only do our work in relationships. Perhaps a foundational belief for a good leader is that relationships are both the starting point and the goal. If a relationship falls apart—whether it's a relationship with an administrator, a teacher, a service provider, a parent, or a child—nothing is accomplished, no matter how well articulated our goals or mission statement or how well our schedules and work plans and organizational charts are designed. Listening and responding empathetically is a significant component of this. The adage "It's better to be kind than to be right" also holds here. "Kind" keeps everyone working together. But an insistence on a personal perception of "right" too often contributes to things falling apart.

Much is demanded of leaders in the field of special education today. We must collaborate with our many partners who support the education

---

You Just May Be
Outstanding in Your Field

There is money and prestige waiting to reward an promote the efforts of middle school and high school educators. CalSTAT, a special project of the California Department of Education, Special Education Division, is pleased to announce the 2007–8 Leadership Site Award program. The purpose of this award is to identify California public schools that have created innovative and successful programs focusing on one of five areas: general and special education collaboration, transition to adult life, reading, positive behavior supports, or family-school partnerships.

Finalists will be invited and financially supported to attend the CalSTAT State Leadership Institute. Winners of this award will share their work with other educators and be provided with resources to continue the success of their efforts.

The benefits of this award are many:

- $5,000
- $2,000 stipend for leadership site teams to participate in the annual CalSTAT State Leadership Institute
- Support for presentations at regional institutes
- Ongoing opportunities to network and share information with other successful sites
- Press coverage in statewide publications, including *The Special EDge* newsletter
- Professional development training for continuous improvement in non-awarded core message areas
- Assistance in developing a project Web page and Web-based information dissemination

Applications and eligibility criteria, along with additional information, will be available on the CalSTAT website on August 1, 2006. CalSTAT must receive all applications by October 12, 2006. Applications received after this date will be disqualified. If your program is effective and replicable, visit the CalSTAT website at *www.calstat.org* for more information and to download the application form. For more information contact, Marin Brown: email *marin.brown@calstat.org*; or phone707-849-2265.

---

of our children, whether it is with our Regional Centers, our mental health partners, California Children's Services, public health staff, or others.

It's also crucial that we work with our legislators, both at the state and federal levels. While training to get my administrative credential, I became aware of how both of those bodies, in Sacramento and in Washington, DC, legislate and direct our education system. What I have discovered is that in both places there are many well-meaning people with many ideas and some perspective. But they don't do our jobs or see what we see. It becomes our responsibility to help inform them so that they have the broadest and most accurate perspective possible on the potential impact of proposed legislation, and the impact of existing laws, on those students we ultimately serve—oftentimes, those students who are least capable of serving themselves.

I started out as a counselor, with the goal of being as effective, open, and honest as I could. Recently, one of my "small district" superintendents thanked me for taking the time to help him with a problem, "even though" he was in such a small district. That same week, I received an email from a fellow member of the Braille Task Force for Math Standards, thanking me for serving on that committee, "even though" it was for such a low incidence population. I was astounded that there was even any question about each of those individuals, and those they serve, being as equally deserving of my time and care as any other person. And I believe readers of this publication would feel the same way.

But we cannot do it alone, especially in special education today. The amount of work—and the requirements—involved in serving those children and families to whom we have committed our lives is too big for any one to take on alone. Therefore, to be a leader requires another commitment—that of ensuring that your team members get the support they need to do their job. The bottom line rests at the golden rule. This is what drives the best—and usually most successful—leader. ◆

2006 Calendar

July 10–12
Reaching "At-Promise" Students National Conference
This conference, sponsored by the School for Integrated Academics & Technologies (SIATech), helps instructors and administrators meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind by teaching proven strategies, practices, and theories. San Diego. For more information, go to *www.siatech.org/summit* or call 800-871-7482.

July 10–14
Building the Base Institute: Language Arts, ESL, and Social Studies
Sponsored by WestEd's Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) Project, this five-day institute, a combination of seminar, lecture, and small-group work, presents strategies on teaching English learners, particularly in social studies, language arts, and ESL classrooms. San Francisco. For more information, go to *www.wested.org/cs/we/view/we_e/222* or call 415-615-3170.

July 18–22
Charting the Course for Change
This conference, presented by the Association on High Education and Disability (AHEAD), addresses topics related to transition to adult life, such as collaboration in high schools, best practices on transition plans, multicultural issues, and more. San Diego. For more information, go to *www.ahead.org/training/conference/2006_conf/cfp.htm* or call 781-788-0003.

July 23–28
The UC-Berkeley Summer Institute in Reading
This event features the nation's leading researchers discussing strategies for supporting high standards for young children, adolescents, and English language learners. Berkeley. For more information, go to *www.textproject.org/ucsir/ucsir-2006-event-info* or call 831-458-2711.

July 24–28
Building the Base Institute: Science for English Learners
Sponsored by WestEd's Quality Teaching for English Learner (QTEL) Project, this five-day institute presents strategies on teaching English learners to be successful in science classrooms. San Francisco. For more information, go to *www.wested.org/cs/we/view/we_e/224* or call 415-615-3170.

August 15
Disability Statistics: What Are the "Real" Numbers and How Do You Make Sense of Them?
This teleconference trains participants on how to use various statistical databases to measure the number of people with disabilities in a variety of categories. The training also helps participants understand how statistics are collected and reported. Teleconference. For more information, go to *www.ada-audio.org* or call 312-413-1856.

October 4–6
Supported Life Institute
This 20th Annual conference of the Supported Life Institute features 49 workshops and numerous nationally recognized speakers, all with the focus of improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. Sacramento. Contact Andy Faletti by emailing *sli@supportedlife.org* or phoning 916-567-1974; or go to *www.supportedlife.org/*.

November 3–5
No Child Left Behind: Annual Parent Leadership Conference
Presented by the California Association of Compensatory Education for Title I parents and school staff, this event addresses issues related to collaboration and leadership, along with proposed changes in laws and regulations that affect Title I schools. Sacramento. For more information, email *conference@caceinfo.com*, go to *www.caceinfo.com/* or call 415-759-1994.

November 8–11
Teacher Education Conference
This event, hosted by National University, features more than 300 professional papers and two keynote presentations and offers networking opportunity for more than 600 attendees involved in both pre-service and in-service teacher preparation. San Diego, CA. For more information, go to *www.tedcec.org* or call 858.642.8371.

November 30–December 2
Meeting of the Minds II: A National Adult Education
This symposium is designed to provide opportunities for adult education practitioners and researchers to share and discuss the current research related to goals, accountability, policy, and practice in literacy. Sacramento. For more information, go to *www.researchtopractice.org/* or call 800-427-1422.

Web Resources

Early Childhood Leadership

www.zerotothree.org/
Zero to Three is a national, nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization that works to inform, educate, and support adults who influence the lives of infants and toddlers.

www.dec-sped.org/
The Division of Early Childhood (DEC), part of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), is dedicated to improving the educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities, and/or the gifted. DEC especially supports individuals who work with or on behalf of children with special needs, birth through age eight, and their families.

Educational Leadership

http://www.asbj.com/executive/
The publishers of *American School Board Journal* presents occasional articles, in print and online, for and about school executives.

http://depts.washington.edu/uwcel/
The **Center for Educational Leadership**, part of the University of Washington's College of Education, works to eliminate the achievement gap that runs along the lines of race and class. It targets the development of leadership capacity—specifically the leadership necessary to improve the quality of instruction in every school and classroom—as the key to improving educational results for all children.

www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/L2L/spring2003/kouzes.html
"Challenge is the Opportunity for Greatness," an article in *Leader to Leader*, discusses the future of educational leadership by looking at key leaders in history.

IDEA Parent Guide

www.ncld.org/content/view/900/456084/
The National Center for Learning Disabilities has created an online guide primarily for parents, but it is also a valuable source of information—in accessible language—for classroom teachers who do not have a background in special education. Teachers and parents can use the guide to better understand the rights and requirements of their students with disabilities.

http://csmt.cde.ca.gov
Through the **Clearinghouse for Specialized Media & Technology**, the California Department of Education provides accessible instructional resources and learning environments to students with disabilities. This media guide lists available resources in various formats, including Braille, large print, recordings, and American Sign Language VideoBooks, that support access to the general education curriculum by students with disabilities.

www.e-lead.org/
e-Lead: Leadership for Student Success offers free resources for principals looking to provide better professional development. One feature is the LeaderShipShape blog, which provides leaders with current news, research, events, and more.

www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/dropout/
Increasing Rates of School Completion: Moving from Policy and Research to Practice is a manual intended for state- and district-level education agencies in their development and implementation of interventions to decrease dropout rates for students with and without disabilities. This manual takes research and turns it into practice, providing a set of strategies and practical information on improving outcomes.

www.ucea.org/html/cases/
Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, provided electronically by the University Council for Educational Administration and Miami University, features peer-reviewed case studies that can help prepare and improve educational leaders in effecting change at their schools.

www.education.uiowa.edu/jrel/
Journal of Research for Educational Leaders, an online journal from the University of Iowa's College of Education, aims to provide educational leaders access to current research about improvement of schools, student learning, and educational leadership.

www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/le0cont.htm
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, provides high-quality, research-based resources for educators and policymakers. Topics include "Guiding Principals—Addressing Accountability Challenges," "Establishing Collaboratives and Partnerships," and "Leadership Checklist."

www.urbancollaborative.org/
Urban Special Education Leadership

Assessing Students with Disabilities

www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/index.asp
The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education, provides online a toolkit that brings together the most current and accurate information about assessing students with disabilities.

Collaborative is a collaborative network of general and special education leaders dedicated to improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The website provides information about current initiatives (like schoolwide behavior support), as well as publications and professional development opportunities.

www.k8accesscenter.org/sharing/Co-TeachingWebinar.asp
Supervising Co-Teaching Teams: Whose Line is it Anyway? is an archived Web seminar with supporting PowerPoint slides from the Access Center, presented by Dr. Stacia Rush. Dr. Rush presents educators' perspectives on co-teaching and how general and special educators can work together to support and evaluate students.

Parent Leadership

www.frcnca.org
Family Resource Center Network of California supports families of children with disabilities, special health care needs, and those at risk by ensuring the continuance, expansion, promotion and quality of family-centered, parent-directed, family resource centers.

www.familyvoices.org
Family Voices is a national, grassroots clearinghouse for information and education concerning the health care of children with special health needs.

www.familyvoicesofca.org
Family Voices of California (FVCA) is a statewide grassroots clearinghouse for information and education about ways to assure and improve health care for children with disabilities and chronic conditions.

www.pai-ca.org
Protection and Advocacy, Inc., is an organization dedicated to "advancing the human and legal rights of people with disabilities."

RiSE Library

The RiSE (Resources in Special Education) Library lends materials to California's residents free of charge. The items listed on this page are just a sampling of what is available. Go to *www.php.com* to view the library's complete holdings and to request materials by email. To order by phone, call Judy Bower at 408-727-5775.

Books

The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader
By John C. Maxwell. Thomas Nelson, Inc.: Nashville, TN, 1999; 161 pages. Dr. Maxwell suggests there are 21 key "character qualities" that make a good leader, all of which can be learned. In addition to discussing these qualities and the good leaders who possess them, the author also addresses how leaders can formulate and implement their vision. Call number 23803.

Assessing Student Outcomes: Performance Assessment Using the Dimensions of Learning Model
By Robert J. Marzano. 1993; 143 pages. This practical guide connects teaching, learning, and assessment. Call number 21280.

Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement
By Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, and Jane E. Pollock. 2001; 178 pages. The authors distill decades of research into nine broad teaching strategies that have positive effects on student learning. Call number 23759.

A Different Kind of Classroom: Teaching with Dimensions of Learning
By Robert J. Marzano. 1992; 191 pages. This book provides models and strategies that base learning on "dimensions of thinking," an alternative learning approach. Call number 14213.

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't
By Jim Collins. HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.: New York, 2001; 300 pages. This book discusses the heart of truly great companies as being a culture that rigorously finds and promotes disciplined people to think and act in disciplined ways. Call number 23806.

Leveraging Resources for Student Success: How School Leaders Build Equity
By Mary Ann Burke, and others. 2003; 100 pages. Grounded in more than 30 years of field research, this guide offers practical solutions for access to quality education for all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or cultural heritage. Call number 23274.

Professional Communities and the Work of High School Teaching
By Milbrey W. McLaughlin and Joan E. Talbert. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, 2001; 216 pages. This book examines the teaching community as "the leader" and explores how classroom practices, colleague relations, and teachers' responses to students influence the success of high schools. Call number 23804.

School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results
By Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian A. McNulty. 2005; 194 pages. Combining rigorous research with practical advice, this book gives school administrators the guidance they need to provide strong leadership for better schools. Call number 23760.

Teaching Adolescents with Disabilities
By Donald D. Deshler and Jean B. Schumaker. 2005; 304 pages. This blueprint for teaching secondary students with disabilities provides effective, detailed, research-based practices that are aligned with federal legislation. Call number 23802.

What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action
By Robert J. Marzano. 2003; 219 pages. This book aims to make effective public education a reality. Grounded in research, it offers positive approaches to what school staff can do to engage each other, students, families, and the community. Call number 23758.

Articles

"Models of Reform: A Comparative Guide"
By M. C. Wang, G. D. Haertel, and H. J. Walberg. In *Educational Leadership,* April 1998; 6 pages. This article compares 12 of the most widely implemented education programs for at-risk students. It examines classroom practices, curriculum and assessment, and school organization and climate. Call number 21163.

"Survival Skills for Administrators"
By Robert W. Reasoner. In *Thrust for Educational Leadership,* April 1995; 4 pages. This manual provides strategies for administrators on achieving positive results, evaluating progress, and avoiding stress and burnout. Call number 13927.

"Teaching All Students"
In *Educational Leadership,* September 2003; 96 pages. This entire issue focuses on school inclusion. Call number 23519.

Audiotapes

The Mind's Wealth, Promise of a Golden Harvest
By B. Joyce, and others. 1995; 6 audiotapes. These taped presentations from the ASCD 50th Annual Conference include presentations on a variety of topics: staff development and school renewal, achieving reading gains from the bottom third, success in inclusive schools, and more. Call number 20861.

Mail this in . . . for your free subscription to *The Special EDge*

Subscription Request
❑ New subscription ❑ Address change ❑ Unsubscribe
❑ E-subscription: *The Special EDge* will be emailed to you as a PDF

Position
❑ School administrator ❑ Educator
❑ Family member ❑ Other _____

Mailing Address
Name _____
School/Organization _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Email Address _____

Other Interests
❑ Online courses ❑ Workshops and training
❑ Parent leadership ❑ Educational consulting

Mail To
Sonoma State University
CalSTAT/CIHS
1801 East Cotati Avenue
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
707-284-9552

California Services for
CalSTAT
Technical Assistance and Training

Early Childhood Educators Lead the Way

Reflective Practice as It Informs Leadership

By Helen Bair Heal, Early Childhood Education Consultant

Over the last decade, reflective practice has become embedded in the work of early childhood professionals as a way of informing decisions at every level of leadership and practice. How is reflection used? The following story illustrates how many of its features can inform effective leadership.

Recently, a fairly new physical therapist walked into the office of her program director and said, in great frustration, "there is no way this is going to happen." After an invitation to sit and talk about the "this," the director asked a few questions. She established that the physical therapist had just come back from visiting the parents of a two-year-old who was rolling over, but not yet sitting up. As the child was growing into a robust toddler, the physical therapist had been asked by the home visiting team to help the parents learn some techniques for lifting and moving their son during day-to-day routines, such as getting in and out of bed and bath. The parents had insisted that they wanted him to be walking within the next six months, and the physical therapist was convinced that this was not a realistic expectation.

The director suggested that she and the therapist take a few moments to reflect on what might be happening. She began by asking some key questions, such as "Can you tell me what happened?" and "Why do you think they might be asking this now?" and suggested some things for the physical therapist to find out on her next visit, such as why there seemed to be so much concern about the child walking. Throughout this conversation, the director listened carefully and thoughtfully and tried to remember situations from her own experience that she might bring to bear on this dilemma. She helped the therapist think about how she could respect the parents' request while developing some realistic targets for the next few months of therapy.

A few days later, the physical therapist went back to talk with the parents. She asked what they had seen the child doing that could be used to move him toward walking. She also asked in what ways the child's walking would make things easier for the family. Twice, the mother mentioned her strained back and her conviction that, if the child could walk, this problem would be eased.

With the director's guidance and encouragement, the physical therapist was committed to listening and thinking about what she was hearing. She asked how the mother's back had become strained. She heard about how hard it was for the parents to lift and carry and transfer their son, and about how much easier it would be if their son could walk. After more conversation, it became clear that "walking" was not as important as some help in lifting and carrying; but "walking" was the only way the parents knew how to imagine not carrying him. At this point, the therapist, because she could remember how her director had reshaped her perception of the situation, could guide the parents toward reshaping their own perceptions and expectations for their child. Together, they then could redefine the parents' needs and desires and begin to address them in a way that would be helpful for both the child and the parents.

In this case, the reflective conversation with the program director had helped the staff person carefully examine what might be the needs of the family. In addition, the conversation helped the therapist frame the situation in terms of the family's relationships. By modeling the process, providing guidance, and then turning it over to the therapist, the program director had effectively scaffolded a staff member through a reflective process. That experience then enabled the staff member to use that reflective process successfully with a family.

What is reflective practice?

The essence of reflective practice involves pulling back from the work and examining it. The approach is driven by the belief that we can continually improve what we are doing. Reflective practice requires us to pause and create a space

Sonoma State University
CalSTAT/CIHS
1801 East Cotati Avenue
Rohnert Park, CA 94928-3609