Rethinking the Professional Development of School Leaders

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By almost any yardstick the work of school leaders has become more complex in recent years (Kochan, Jackson, & Duke, 1999). Principals of the 21st century must help create appropriate school and classroom environments, develop supportive school cultures, ensure the productive use of human and other resources, and become involved in new forms of policy development and implementation. The principal's job responsibilities have been further complicated by expanded demands from external constituencies, rapid growth in research on teaching and learning, changing demographics of our population, and burgeoning access to information resulting from an explosion of new technologies.

The myriad changes and demands related to the job of the school leader make it imperative that principals engage in a continuous cycle of learning (King, 1999). Not only is the professional growth of principals vital to their job performance, but there are also indicators suggesting that principal learning has positive effects on teacher development, school culture, systemic educational reform, and student learning (Bredeson & Scribner, 2000; NSDC, 1995). The importance of the principal as learner led one educator to conclude that the litmus test for the selection of a school leader should be to "find the one man or woman most genuinely committed to their professional development and (that of) their colleagues" (quoted in Pohland and Bova, 2000, p. 137).

In the educational realm, the phrase "professional development" often conjures up a vision of people sitting in small groups or "lecture style" rows, listening intently as an "expert" explains the secret of how things should or must be done. Often these professional development

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activities are organized into one-day to one-week seminars conducted in a residential setting that is separated from the context of the job. These types of activities, which are supposed to enhance principals' abilities and performance, are seldom related to the realities of the job and rarely result in changes in participant behavior or in improving either the school or student learning (Sparks & Hirsch, 1997). Nonetheless, this traditional model presents a formidable challenge to newer models of professional development that require considerable time, commitment, and effort from administrators and those who plan and deliver instructional activities for them.

This chapter discusses the professional development of principals as it exists and as it might be. We begin by examining the problems and paradoxes traditionally associated with the professional development of principals. Next, we propose a new conceptual framework to enhance the continuous learning of school leaders. Our framework includes a definition of professional development as well as strategies to design and deliver learning experiences that complement it. It also recommends that principals take a leadership role in their own development and the development of others by assuming three interrelated roles: model learner, steward of learning, and community builder.

Problems and Paradoxes in the Professional Development of Principals

The call for school leaders to engage in continuous professional growth is replete with problems and paradoxes, making what seems a simple concept an idea fraught with complexity (Murphy & Hallinger, 1987). One of these problems arises out of the nature of the job of the school leader. Principals' work is marked by variety, fragmentation, and brevity of activity. Rarely do principals spend more than ten minutes at a time on a single task, and much of their day is spent reacting to problems that others bring to them (Kochan & Spencer, 1999). The resulting pressure to address immediate and concrete problems tends to bias principals toward solution-oriented learning that fits into their hectic schedules. Thus, quick fixes and nuggets of knowledge that can be immediately applied are preferred over solutions requiring reflection and long-term study, which are more likely to result in a change in practice.

A second barrier to principal professional development is that there is little general acknowledgment that principals need to engage in learning as part of their daily professional work (Bredeson, 2000). In

the educational realm, there exists a public mindset that professional development, which tends to occur during "in-service" or "teacher days," constitutes "days off" rather than an integral and essential part of the work life of educators. When professional development is not viewed as legitimate and essential work, schools and communities hesitate to invest time, money, and institutional support to sustain ongoing learning for principals (or teachers).

A paradox that may limit principals' professional growth stems from external accountability requirements that are imposed upon schools. Mandates that dictate curriculum standards, performance assessments, and in some cases even teaching materials and instructional strategies can cause principals to focus on compliance with external demands rather than on the creative development of new ideas and approaches. Thus, while accountability measures are often coupled with calls for school reform and change, the mandates that come with these measures make it unlikely that administrators will choose to engage in professional development opportunities that involve reflection, innovation, and risk-taking actions. Rather, they may tend to select those that deal with efficient ways to respond to legislative requirements (Bruckerhoff, 1995).

In order for school leaders to engage in meaningful professional development experiences that overcome these problems and paradoxes, we must alter the definition and focus of professional development, restructure the way professional development is designed and delivered, and reframe the role of school leaders in the professional development process. In this chapter, we present our perspective on reshaping the professional development process for school leaders by addressing each of these requirements.

A Framework for Redefining and Reculturing the Professional Development of School Leaders

REDEFINING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bredeson (1999) defines professional development for school leaders as "learning opportunities that engage educators' creative capacities in ways that strengthen their own practice and the practice of other educators." We have adapted this definition by adding the words "critical and reflective" to modify the capacities that are engaged. This definition acknowledges the importance of leaders' capabilities to anticipate challenges and to develop innovative strategies to deal with them. It also recognizes the necessity for leaders to continually examine and critique their values when considering the ways in which they

use power and their willingness to share power with others. Our definition incorporates the notions proposed by Schön (1983, 1984) that individuals must engage in reflective learning and inquiry to be successful leaders. Finally, our definition stresses the notion that the leader's learning is integrally connected to the work and learning of other educators and thus must be designed to enhance the learning of all.

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development built upon our definition requires that adult learning principles and high quality standards be incorporated into the process. We will deal briefly with each of these elements and then propose four areas that should be included when designing and delivering professional development for principals.

One reason traditional approaches to professional development have been unsuccessful is that they have not considered the needs of adults in the learning situation. Those who lead professional development activities often simply adapt the teaching and learning techniques used with children to adult learning settings. An early leader in adult education, Malcolm Knowles (1973; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998) suggested that this approach was inappropriate and proposed that adult education activities be built around the theory of andragogy. Although recent scholars (e.g., Brookfield, 1986, 1987; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) have explored new dimensions of adult learning, such as the notion of "critically reflective practice" and the relationships between learning and power, the basic principles espoused by Knowles appear to be well accepted as a foundation upon which to construct learning experiences for adults. The theory of andragogy proposes that adult learners are self-directed, have life experiences that are a learning resource, seek learning based on their experiences and needs, focus their learning on solving problems, and want their learning experiences to be experiential in nature and have immediate application to their needs.

The theory of andragogy is closely aligned with the high quality standards for professional development proposed by the National Staff Development Council (1995). The NSDC standards, which include criteria for the context, process, and content of professional development activities, point to the need to engage people in understanding the processes of teaching and learning, aligning professional development with the goals of the individual and the institution, and providing follow-up and support. They stress the need to make adult learning activities meaningful and related to the context in which participants must operate.

Using adult learning principles and effective professional development standards as a foundation, we propose four areas that should be addressed when designing and delivering professional development for school leaders. First, the learner's motivation must be considered, and learners must have a role in directing their professional development. Second, there should be a rich combination of learning opportunities in diverse settings to meet learner needs. Third, the process should include support personnel who are prepared, willing, and available to assist the learner. Finally, learning must be related to the practice and role of the educational leader.

CONSIDERING LEARNER MOTIVATION

Continuous professional development for its own sake is something we would hope all educators seek. However, professional growth is not necessarily easy or comfortable. Thus, a principal's disposition toward learning and growth is an important factor in his or her learning. Also of vital significance is the individual's capacity to deal with cognitive dissonance, abstraction, uncertainty, and role ambiguity. What principals bring to their learning experiences (personal biography, prior knowledge, experience, values, desire, habits of mind, and innate curiosity) greatly influences the quality and outcomes of their professional development.

Principals' motivations may emerge not only from their personal attributes but also from their personal and professional goals. Career advancement, evaluations, salary increases, and pay-for-performance contracts can be important elements in stimulating principals to seek additional knowledge and abilities.

While it can have both negative and positive consequences for the school and students, a powerful influence on principals' desire to develop higher levels of competency may be the accountability environment in which they now function. The emphasis on student test scores and other assessments, often publicly displayed in the media, can exert a strong force on principals' drive for further learning. Likewise, the adoption of national standards and tests for school leaders, as well as the push by state education agencies to assess professional competence, can motivate, encourage and, in some cases, support principals' desire to learn.

A good way to determine what motivates individuals to learn is to involve them in the design and delivery of their professional development. Providing opportunities for principals to examine and reflect on their values and beliefs, competencies and strengths, areas for improvement,

and professional goals can help to foster such involvement (Day, 2000). Self-inventories, evaluation results, and examining data related to past performance can also provide rich resources to engage school leaders in creating a learning plan for their own development.

PROVIDING DIVERSE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

If the professional learning needs of school leaders are to be met, a variety of learning opportunities must be available to them. This requires a combination of appropriate materials, conditions, and resources. A range of activities and settings for professional development is now emerging that can provide such variety. While we do not offer a complete description of the array of possibilities, we discuss some of the more promising possibilities for fostering professional growth for school leaders, in the hope of facilitating a more extensive discussion on this topic within the field.

A principal's school provides the first context for that leader's learning (Louis, Kruse, & Associates, 1995; Scribner, 1999). Thus, all of the on-site opportunities generally available for the professional development of teachers, including collective reflection on instructional practice, review of data-based indicators of school effectiveness, and action research, should be available to the school leader as well. Principals who avail themselves of these opportunities not only benefit from learning that is tied closely to their actual work environment but also convey crucial messages about the importance of everyone's learning within the school context.

In addition to learning within the school, principals should seek experiences in other settings to examine the practices of their colleagues. Observing others through shadowing, engaging in peer visitations and job exchanges, and taking a sabbatical to learn in another context have all proven effective in principal growth. Such activities are particularly valuable in facilitating reflective and critical thinking about values and practice.

While some of the off-site activities such as peer visitation may be easier in urban settings than in rural school districts where many miles separate professional administrative colleagues, technology—especially the Internet—provides promising opportunities to enhance principals' collegiality, learning, and practice outside their accustomed environment. Email-based discussion groups can provide a wide network of colleagues to answer specific questions and/or discuss general issues facing school leaders. Chat rooms on the websites of professional associations provide another avenue for growth, as do the variety of materials

and resources that are available through education-related websites and full-text journal services. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Administrators website offers bulletin boards, live chat sessions, and chat transcripts for administrators, in addition to online courses. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development offers online courses and tutorials as well as full-text availability of its professional publications.

Another form of learning that can enhance school leaders' professional development is participation in graduate programs that include a wide variety of relevant learning experiences. Cohort groups, case studies, field-based and applied research, and mentoring relationships are among the most successful strategies presently being used in graduate leadership programs. A growing number of online courses, along with electronic communication networks with professors and peer students, also offer promising new graduate school learning opportunities for principals, especially those located far from universities, and can make learning available to school leaders around the clock.

PROVIDING SUPPORT

One of the most efficient means of developing professional competence is through the support and counsel of other professionals. Principals often rely on other principals or school system administrators as a source of information. Using telephones or email, principals can easily consult trusted colleagues to obtain insights, ideas, solutions, and—perhaps most important—support, as they gain insights into their practice.

Although it may be a very practical and valuable approach to acquiring insights and expanding professional capacity, relying on supportive colleagues within one's own setting may be limiting in several ways. First, most school leaders who serve as consultants to others are themselves fully employed as administrators and thus have limited time and opportunity to orient and initiate the novice or re-engage the seasoned principal. A second limitation is that within one's own school system, a principal may feel obligated to adopt or adapt the advice given by a mentor rather than to challenge assumptions and reflect upon the positive and negative aspects of the mentor's work or ideas.

Using individuals from outside the school or system as support team members often eliminates these difficulties. For example, some new state regulations for licensing principals call for support teams that include representatives from higher education. Including someone from outside the system with expertise in leadership may give the principal a greater opportunity to question status quo thinking. However,

many higher education programs do not have sufficient faculty to adequately serve on school support teams. A number of educational administration programs across the country are currently examining ways they can use technology to overcome such barriers and provide the support required by state licensing regulations. Another possibility for enhancing support teams is to involve retired principals who have been successful administrators, since they may have more time.

Another means of gaining personal insight is through mentoring relationships. Principals can use such relationships to reflect collaboratively on their work and find guidance in areas in which they feel they need to improve. Mentoring relationships can include individuals within or outside of the school system. These relationships can focus on a single skill for a short period of time or, over a longer term, delve into a complex series of issues that are related not only to the context of the principal's work, but to the essence of his or her professional life. School leaders can be assigned a mentor through their school system, or a mentoring relationship can emerge from the personal contact of two or more leaders.

Another powerful means of creating support is by linking individuals or schools in supportive learning relationships to solve common problems. School board members, parents and community leaders might all be a part of these groups. These arrangements, connected to but simultaneously removed from the day-to-day exigencies of school leadership, can provide opportunities for fostering collaborative work in researching problems and proposing solutions as well as in strengthening norms of collaborative learning and mutual support.

Another promising strategy for working with others is the notion of "critical friends," in which school leaders form dyads or groups to examine one another's practice and to offer challenging and constructive reflections on each other's work (Costa & Kallick, 1993). Critical friends partnerships and groups require the development of new norms of openness and critique. Although they may be time-consuming endeavors, they are based on a firm foundation of support and offer fresh opportunities for collegiality.

In some states, such groups are being recommended as a means of improving schools. In North Carolina, for example, the State Department of Public Instruction has recommended that principals ask their school districts to conduct regularly scheduled meetings to evaluate and critique school improvement plans. Principal study groups aimed at creating a support network have also been implemented in Boston, New York City, and other locations (National Institute, 1999).

LEARNING RELATED TO PRACTICE

Professional development activities, whether held on- or off-site, with school-based colleagues or with others, will be most successful in enhancing principals' leadership if these activities are related to the professional knowledge base of school administrators and to the role of the school leader in practice. Principal effectiveness is not measured merely by the possession of knowledge. Rather, it is based on the principal's ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and values into purposeful action working with and through other professionals.

The highly complex nature of principals' work and the expansive knowledge base that supports their practice suggest that leaders' learning activities must range over a wide spectrum of content and application. However, this very complexity means that creating meaningful professional development experiences can be daunting to everyone involved. Activities that enable principals to integrate and apply what they are learning must be rich in substantive content and clearly situated in a leadership context, provide for opportunities to practice, include time to reflect on the application, and provide opportunities to consult with others.

Although connections to practice are critical, a cautionary note is necessary. When professional development is sponsored by and tightly coupled to specific contexts, such as schools and school districts, there is a risk that it will be conceived in terms that are primarily instrumental and focused on explicit targets and measurable outcomes. Thus, while professional development focused on accountability certainly has its place, it is also vital for school leaders to have opportunities to apply a longer-term and potentially more transformational perspective when engaging in activities to enhance their professional growth. In this regard, we refer to Anderson's and Jones' (2000) and Kochan's (2000) discussions of Habermas' (1971) knowledge interests and their relationship to educational leadership practice.

School leaders pursuing technical knowledge through professional development will seek to acquire knowledge that helps them predict and control situations. Leaders pursuing practical knowledge through professional development will acquire knowledge that helps them understand and interpret situations. Leaders pursuing emancipatory knowledge will engage in critical examinations that enable them to be freed from tradition, coercion, or self-deception. It is this last form of knowledge that can foster a more deeply critical and reconstructive approach to school leadership. Yet it is the form of knowledge that is most often left out of the professional development process. Such

knowledge may be most easily explored when it is removed from the specific leadership setting, but it cannot be divorced entirely from the realities of that setting.

An intriguing learning opportunity for school leaders that related theory to practice while fostering in-depth analysis and thoughtful reflection was described by Nelson and Sassi (2000). Twenty-four school administrators met voluntarily with teachers and educational consultants/researchers in a yearlong professional development seminar to reflect on teacher supervision in elementary mathematics. During each meeting of the seminar the administrators viewed a videotape of a mathematics lesson, practiced and discussed the mathematical content of the lesson, and discussed their views of the subject matter content and pedagogical strategies of the lesson. They explored different strategies for observing lessons and for making practical judgments about instructional performance. Over time, the administrators came to value the need to attend both to the intellectual demands of classroom lessons and to the teachers' pedagogical strategies for fostering student learning. This project demonstrates how administrators can develop their critical eye with regard to teaching and learning. It also underscores the need for supervisory leadership to be a distributed practice involving subject matter experts, teachers, and administrators.

Another approach to fostering continuous professional growth is maintaining a portfolio that documents work and facilitates reflective thinking about it. Dutschl and Gitomer (1991) suggest that principals establish a "portfolio culture" within their schools as part of their own growth and the growth of others. The term "portfolio culture" connotes taking responsibility for one's own learning and practice and helping others do the same. In this model the principal and teachers in a school create an individual or a joint portfolio to compile information about activities, goals, or operations of the school and use the portfolio as a tool to foster reflection, performance, and improvement. The portfolio presents evidence of learning and relates to the performance of everyone in the school. It includes artifacts and reproductions demonstrating knowledge, skills, and competencies and how they have been applied in practice. Portfolios provide a valuable tool to document the continuum of competence and learning from beginning to advanced stages. They enable leaders and school personnel to embed their learning within the context of the school while documenting their progress as individuals and as an organization (Guaglianone & Yerkes, 1998). This information is used to foster individual and organizational growth and development and promote reflection and critical analysis.

The Principal's Role in Fostering Individual and Organizational Learning

Individual learning is an important aspect of professional development for school principals. But in a professional community such as a school, professional development should not occur apart from the development of others. One of the most important elements in a school leader's professional development is forging connections between the principal's learning and the work of others in the school.

In a recent study, Bredeson and Johansson (2000) found that school principals have a significant influence on teacher professional development in four ways. First, what principals believe and espouse and what they do greatly affects teacher work and professional learning. Second, principals have an impact on creating and maintaining healthy and productive learning environments in schools. Third, using resources and expertise, principals directly influence the design, delivery, and content of professional learning opportunities in their schools. Finally, principals, in collaboration with others, evaluate professional needs and outcomes.

We agree that the role of the principal in professional development should include these tasks, but we believe that it should be even more encompassing. We propose that the principal must become a transformative leader who reflects upon and engages in personal growth and development and facilitates the professional development of the faculty and staff. The ultimate goal of such professional development should be to improve teaching and learning in the school (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2000). To that end, we recommend that principals assume three key roles: model learners, stewards of learning, and (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000) community builders.

MODEL LEARNERS

There are indications that principals' beliefs about their own learning and the learning of others have an impact on the school culture, teacher development, and student learning (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000; NSDC, 1995). The school leader sets the tone, direction, and climate for learning. It is therefore imperative that the principal serve as a "model learner" in the school.

To be model learners, principals must share their beliefs about the importance of continuous learning with their faculty. It is vital that their espoused beliefs about the need for professional renewal are reflected by their actions. Being a "model learner" requires that principals

demonstrate curiosity and become engaged, enthusiastic learners. They must also develop a plan for regularly updating their knowledge and skills in ways that strengthen their practice and improve the quality of learning and life experiences for everyone in their schools. The plan should include learning goals and methods that demonstrate a willingness to be accountable for their professional growth (King, 1999).

School leaders should participate in school-based professional development and should also be involved in local, state, and national professional associations focused on leadership, management, teaching, and learning. Principals should attend professional conferences and make presentations at these conferences. They should also make presentations to their faculty describing what they learned at these meetings. School leaders should create opportunities for sharing their own learning and use these occasions for stimulating discussion and dialogue among faculty and other administrators in the school and school system.

As model learners, principals should be actively engaged in reading professional journals and books, have them prominently displayed in their offices, and make faculty aware of what they are reading and why. School leaders should stress that their learning is an ongoing, continuous process and that they view this learning as part of the professional responsibility of everyone in the school. Such an attitude can influence not only teachers, but also students—indeed, the entire school community.

An important dimension of being a "model learner" involves assuming the role of active researcher. Having people actively engaged in knowledge generation inside the school has great potential for the field and for the setting in which the research occurs (Anderson & Jones, 2000). Although the concept of teacher as researcher is often discussed in the literature, the notion of school leader as researcher is not as prevalent. We believe that the principal should be continuously engaged in collecting, analyzing, and sharing data and findings so that research activities are a vital part of his or her development and the life of the school.

STEWARDS OF LEARNING

Closely aligned with the idea of the principal as a model learner is the concept of the school leader as the steward of learning. Social, political, and economic forces that sometimes veer sharply away from the core purposes of schooling constantly buffet the educational system.

While adjusting to new realities and imperatives stemming from these forces, principals must become stewards of learning who strive to keep the focus of the school on learning for students, teachers, and themselves. Just as McNeil (1986) found that ideologies of control filter from administrators through teachers to classrooms, principals' norms about learning likewise extend from leaders to teachers to students. Thus, it is vital that principals, as stewards of learning in the school, commit themselves to the fair and ethical treatment of all learners. Principals must recognize and stress that educational equity and justice call for both understanding of and responsiveness to diverse needs and learning styles.

As stewards, school leaders must continually identify and articulate the connections between and among leader professional development, teacher professional development, student learning, and school quality. They must use these connections to stimulate collaboration and learning across varied dimensions and levels. School principals can also influence the learning of others by sharing professional expertise in teaching, learning, and leading.

Principals who are stewards of learning communicate the message that learning is central to the life of the school and everyone in it. Among many other responsibilities, school principals should assume the roles of mentor, coach, and collaborator to work with others to create, support, and maintain a healthy, accepting, and successful learning environment for everyone.

As stewards of learning, school leaders should work with faculty, students, parents, and the community to help frame and measure what they collectively believe really counts in making their school successful. Today's environment of mandated, narrowly based accountability measures makes it imperative that principals enable those who work and learn in the school to become a force in deciding how they will be judged (Reed & Kochan, 2001). Addressing what type of learning matters and how it will be measured and judged should become a part of the total professional development process of all those responsible for school success. The principal should be the leader in this initiative.

The final role of principals as stewards of learning is to ensure that adequate resources are available to support their own learning and that of their entire staff. School leaders must be innovative in structuring adequate time for staff to learn together, to share their knowledge with one another, and to develop necessary competencies and skills. Creative methods for ensuring that such time can be provided without the loss of instructional time for students is particularly important. Some principals

have incorporated "community learning times" when community members or outside groups come into classrooms to teach special skills, read to children, or offer theatrical or musical presentations so that faculty can engage in their own learning activities. "Learning lunches," where teachers gather in a quiet room to eat together and share ideas, readings, and teaching strategies, are another approach that provides professional development time. Principals should work with their staffs to develop methods for guaranteeing that the learning of students and adults in their school is nurtured and supported.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

The third role of the school leader as an instrumental part of the professional development of the entire school is that of community builder. Since principals' professional development activities are anchored in the learning and success of others in their schools, they must become involved in forming a community of learners within their school environment and beyond. As community builders, school principals must work daily to infuse learning into the everyday lives of students, faculty, and staff. Principals should use symbols, rituals, traditions, and ceremonies to encourage and celebrate learning and to place it front and center in the school community. They must work to make learning a community value and capacity, not an individual activity.

A number of theoretical constructs support the importance of building learning communities in schools. First, theories of human cognition suggest that individual learning is primarily a social process that occurs most successfully when situated within authentic activity within a community of practice (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Wenger, 1998). People learn more when nestled in a community in which others pursue similar activity and talk about it in similar ways.

Similarly, theories of organizational behavior suggest that the "learning organization" is an important context for individual learning. Learning organizations are characterized by strong cultural norms that support learning that is clearly embedded in their routine structures and practices (Weick & Westley, 1996). Learning organizations are flexible entities that support innovation and risk. Educators who wish to foster ongoing learning and continuous improvement anticipate that this will be most probable within schools that are deliberate learning organizations.

Finally, educational research suggests that both teacher and student engagement and accomplishment are higher in schools where a value-centered community with strong and positive norms for learning

flourishes (Louis, Kruse, & Associates, 1995). Schools with strong learning communities are those in which experimentation, collaboration, and reflective practice are common approaches among teachers, and where students benefit from an enthusiastic and thoughtful faculty.

Traditional cultural norms and existing structures tend to counteract the development of powerful learning communities in schools. Therefore, school leaders must focus on helping people inside and outside the school to reevaluate current norms, expectations, structures, and cultures so that new ways of thinking about teaching, learning, and schooling can emerge. Such reevaluation is being incorporated into the structure of schooling through innovations like collaborative planning time; increased noninstructional days in the school calendar for professional learning; teacher and administrator practical research efforts; and more school-based, collective forms of professional development. The school leader should be a vital force in developing and implementing such strategies.

Principals can link the school learning community with external entities and stakeholders to form broader communities of practice. At present, much of this activity is relatively unorganized, but it has the potential to create useful alliances between schools and other institutions, such as religious organizations and social service agencies. Learning opportunities that currently are shared between parents and educators, for example within the context of parent-teacher organizations, could be redesigned as more powerful opportunities for learning for all parties. In addition, school leaders can promote seamless learning connections among initial preparation, early socialization, and ongoing professional development experiences. Graduate programs in educational leadership can provide linkages to connect prospective and current students with alumni. These linkages could include technology-based communication forums, internship experiences that connect prospective principals with experienced leaders, and collaborative research opportunities that connect universities and schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have offered ideas that we believe will facilitate a reconsideration of professional development for school leaders. We have redefined the concept of professional development for school leaders, proposed a framework for its design and delivery, and reconceptualized the role of the school leader in the wider context of school-based professional learning. Our proposals have stressed the

need to connect the learning of the principal with the learning of the faculty and staff and showed how this will ultimately improve student learning.

School leaders are pivotal agents in assuring their own development and the development of others in the school environment. Creating environments where everyone is engaged in self-development and organizational learning does not happen by accident. Leaders must devote sustained attention to creating structures and cultures of learning if they wish to become continuous learners and stimulate others to learn along with them. To accomplish this, school leaders' efforts must be valued and supported by superintendents, parents, teachers, and others. We hope that our proposals will assist in making such support a reality.

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