

Questionnaire: Before We Get Started . . .

Directions: Using the Likert scale below, circle the answer that best represents your on-the-spot belief about each statement. The questionnaire serves as an advanced organizer of sorts for some of the key topics in this book, although items are purposely constructed in no particular order. Discussion of each topic, though, occurs within the context of relevant chapters. Responses or views to each statement are presented in a subsection following the questionnaire (this section begins “Now, let’s analyze your responses . . .”). You may or may not agree with the points made, but I hope you will be encouraged to reflect on your own views. Reflective activities follow to allow for deeper analysis. Elaboration of ideas emanating from this brief activity will occur throughout the text and series. I encourage you to share reflections (yours and mine) with colleagues. I’d appreciate your personal feedback via the e-mail address I’ve listed in the “About the Author” section.

SA = Strongly Agree (“For the most part, yes.”)

A = Agree (“Yes, but . . .”)

D = Disagree (“No, but . . .”)

SD = Strongly Disagree (“For the most part, no.”)

- | | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|--|
| SA | A | D | SD | 1. I believe that long-term planning is important but impractical, because very few of us have the time. |
| SA | A | D | SD | 2. There’s no difference between long-term planning and strategic planning. |

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- SA A D SD 3. I see little, if any, connection between action research and strategic planning.
- SA A D SD 4. Data-driven decision making is a laborious process that is, in reality, quite simple and has marginal value at best because of the lack of a standard form of assessment.
- SA A D SD 5. I never let politics interfere with my work.
- SA A D SD 6. Strategic leaders realize that change is inevitable and therefore plan for it.
- SA A D SD 7. I am committed to social justice.
- SA A D SD 8. Building leadership capacity and sustainability are imperative for a strategic leader.
- SA A D SD 9. Transformational leadership is a principal's primary responsibility.
- SA A D SD 10. Learning about strategic planning would be facilitated by reading a sample Strategic Plan.

Before we analyze your responses, consider the fact that our beliefs influence our actions and, more specifically, our commitment to strategic planning. Do you really believe that the time spent on short- and long-term planning makes sense, given the volatile and ever-changing nature of the educational landscape? Some might posit that principals merely need to be able to “think on their feet” and respond well to the crises that are inevitable occurrences in the life of a building principal. Principals, they might say, do not have the luxury of sitting in their offices and devising long-term plans. This book does not share these views of the dubious value of strategic planning. On the contrary, not only are such planning initiatives necessary and beneficial to the school organization, but without such efforts, the school will wallow in mediocrity, at best, and will constantly remain vulnerable to the vicissitudes of social and political forces. Still, this work does concur with the notion that in-depth planning and adhering to such plans have limitations. Principals must be prepared, indeed, to alter their plans and remain flexible enough to modify or revise them based on newly accumulated data. Such flexibility does not mitigate the value of long-term and strategic planning. Without a firm belief that such strategic work will make a difference to the school organization, a principal will not commit the time and energy it takes to actualize strategic planning. Of course, sometimes principals are not afforded the luxury of choosing to strategize; sometimes, they are compelled by local school district or state policy. Examine the premises that follow to determine your commitment to strategic work. Do the following ideas and activities match your own sense of how you see yourself involved in such work?

A strategic leader:

- considers the present social, cultural, economic, and political realities that shape a school;
- utilizes the unique talents of school faculty and staff to collaborate on planning initiatives;
- sees and envisions future possibilities for nurturing, developing, and maintaining school excellence;
- commits to visioning and possibilities for future growth and school improvement;
- thinks creatively about different ways of improving his or her school;
- conducts action research to generate ideas and to field-test possible solutions to problems;
- involves many in-school and out-of-school officials in planning initiatives;
- collects data to inform decision making;

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- is willing to change course if necessary based on newly accumulated data;
- encourages innovative ideas and thinking by all members of the school community;
- connects, in purposeful ways, strategic planning to promoting student achievement.

As you consider the meaning and relevance of strategic leadership, share your thoughts about these questions with a colleague:

Reflective Questions

1. Do you really believe strategic initiatives are essential to your work as principal? How so? Be specific.
2. How much time would you devote to such strategic efforts? With all that you do, how would you find the time to strategically plan and conduct all the necessary follow-up activities involved in the process?
3. How would you go about initiating a strategic plan initiative?
4. What does strategic leadership mean to you, and why is it so important (if it is)? Explain.
5. What are specific ways you solicit school and community collaboration for your strategic initiatives?
6. What strategic practices or plans have you seen that really work well? Share with a colleague.

Examine these quotations on strategic leadership. What do they mean to you?

“Thinking about and attempting to control the future are important components of planning.”

—Henry Mintzberg

“One of the major differences between conventional planning and strategic planning is that conventional planning tends to be oriented toward looking at problems based on current understanding, or an inside-out mind set. Strategic planning requires an

understanding of the nature of the issue, and then finding of an appropriate response, or an outside-in mind set.”

—D. J. Rowley

“Critical is the realization that a school can engage in strategic planning—but lack strategy.”

—Theodore Creighton

“The effective principal is like the quarterback of a football team. She pulls together a staff that is unified on where it is going and committed to the highest performance.”

—James O’Hanlon and Donald O. Clifton

“Once the change has been identified, establish short- and long-term goals and corresponding strategies. Consider the following:

- *Who will be involved in making the change? . . .*
- *Who will the change affect?*
- *How will those affected respond?”*

—Barbara L. Brock and Marilyn L. Grady

“Strategy . . . is something school leaders do before a problem arises.”

—Theodore Creighton

“In the world of change leadership, every act is a political act.”

—Francis M. Duffy

“[N]ot every plan is a strategic plan.”

—Richard Mittenhal

Now, let’s analyze your responses to the questionnaire:

1. I believe that long-term planning is important but impractical, because very few of us have the time.

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Someone once said to me, “Although long-term or strategic planning may have benefits, they’re really unrealistic since there’s little time. Besides, any potential benefits are outweighed by the overwhelming nature of the strategic planning process.” Certainly, strategic planning may be time-consuming, but effective principals will report that the benefits outweigh any potential difficulties. The benefits described below are enumerated from the Alliance for Nonprofit Management (2003–2004a) and from McNamara (1999). Each benefit below can be readily seen in practice:

- A framework and a clearly defined direction—Wayne Smith, principal in a midwestern suburb, reports that strategic planning is a “process that enables faculty, staff, and community to look to the future with excitement and purpose.” He continues, “The process is often even more important than what we achieve in the end. As people collaborate and rally around the plan, goodwill and a culture of sharing are evident. Strategic planning gives us a framework in which to conduct our work. People feel united toward a worthy set of goals.”

- An increased level of commitment to the organization and its goals—Rubin Kravechuck, principal in an urban school in Madison, Wisconsin, describes to members of the school board how his staff has “never really been committed to anything with any modicum of zeal. This is the first time,” he continues, “that my staff demonstrates by their increased levels of participation in committee work that they have bought into the strategic goals. The school as an organization is more cohesive than ever.”

- Improved quality of services for clients and a means of measuring the service—Noelia Quesada, principal in an urban school in San Francisco, is proud of the assessment system in place “that is so integral to our strategic initiative.” She explains, “We are more attentive than ever before that we are delivering high-quality instruction to all our students. We have established as part of our plan specific learning outcomes that are measurable. We in fact collect data on an ongoing basis now and use those data to inform the decisions we make about instruction and curriculum. Furthermore, our assessment system provides a base from which progress can be measured.”

- A foundation for fund-raising development—Zechariah Kamara, principal in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois, reports that “the strategic plan has enabled our school to apply for local and state grants in a more efficient and effective manner. Our success rate has quadrupled since we implemented our plan.”

- A process to help with crisis management—Steve Sharkey, principal of an elementary school in Reno, Nevada, explains that “our plan enables us to deal with crises more effectively. How we respond and what resources we select reflect goals and exigencies laid out precisely in our strategic plan.”

- Ensures that the most effective use is made of the organization's resources—*Janet Kennedy, principal of a middle school in Orlando, Florida, often laments the lack of resources her school has as compared with "some other schools." "Yet," she continues, "our strategic plan helps us to better utilize existing resources because we now focus the resources we do have on key priorities and not just frivolous items that are in no way connected to our strategic goals. Such practice allows us to more equitably turn down requests for funds that would not contribute to ultimate goals."*

Lucy Spisto, principal in New York City, reacts to the criticism that planning might be too time consuming by reaffirming the importance of strategic planning. "Strategic planning is essential to my effectiveness as a principal. I cannot begin a school year without updating my plan. We find the time for what's important."

2. There's no difference between long-term planning and strategic planning.

Although often used interchangeably, a subtle and important difference exists between the two concepts. Long-term plans are often made without considering future social, political, or economic realities that require educators to alter their plans, often to an extreme degree. Strategic planning is more dynamic and flexible. Such plans are often altered to accommodate new realities. Matthews and Crow (2003) state, "Effective planning is dynamic and continuous. It occurs not as a step in the process but as an integral part of the whole process. Once the plan is established, it should be continually improved as it is implemented and results are determined" (p. 183). Strategic planning is a process that considers the fact that organizations and circumstances change and that any plan must acknowledge this reality. Such planning considers changes occurring outside the organization (long-term planning considers only internal changes) (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Long-range planning is differentiated from strategic planning, according to some authorities, in that the latter may include the former. The key difference, however, centers on the word strategy. Strategy, according to Hax and Majluf (1996):

1. *determines and reveals the organizational purpose in terms of long-term objectives, action programs, and resource allocation priorities;*
2. *selects the businesses the organization is in, or is to be in;*
3. *attempts to achieve a long-term sustainable advantage in each of its businesses by responding appropriately to the opportunities and threats in the firm's environment, and the strengths and weaknesses of the organization;*

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4. *identifies the distinct managerial tasks at the corporate, business, and functional levels;*
5. *is a coherent, unifying, and integrative pattern of decisions;*
6. *defines the nature of the economic and non-economic contributions it intends to make to its stakeholders;*
7. *is an expression of the strategic intent of the organization;*
8. *is aimed at developing and nurturing the core competencies of the firm;*
9. *is a means for investing selectively in tangible and intangible resources to develop the capabilities that ensure a sustainable competitive advantage. (p. 14)*

3. I see little, if any, connection between action research and strategic planning.

Strategic planners utilize action research (see, e.g., Mills, 2000; Glanz, 2003) to develop goals and objectives and to assess the degree to which these goals and objectives have been implemented. In the case that follows, see how action research is used in one school to promote reflection among teachers to improve student learning. In this case, the principal decides to expand the action research initiatives to support strategic goals, as is discussed briefly after the case.

In this case study, we find Maria Rodriguez, Bill Evans, Fred Alvaro, and Martha Cunningham (names and events are fictionalized) working together on a team. Reflection is integral to professional development at International High School. Time is structured into the workweek for planned reflection. Team members are free to brainstorm ideas on a wide variety of topics. Any team member can raise a problem or concern for group reaction. During one of these “reflective” sessions, Maria was concerned about students’ test scores in writing. Other members shared her concern. Statewide examinations in writing had been mandated two years earlier, and the team was concerned that preliminary data indicated students were significantly deficient in this area, especially because little attention had been paid to writing under the former administration. Team members met over the summer to decide on a curriculum plan for teaching writing, eschewing the prepackaged writing programs all too common in other schools in the city. After much research and in consultation with a prominent local university, the team decided to implement a rather well-known writing program sponsored by the university, although with significant modifications. Infusing writing in all content areas

together with individual and small-group “writing consults,” the team set out to make writing a priority in the fall semester. The team decided to field-test the new program with a randomly selected group of students in 10th grade and identified a comparable group of 10th graders not in the program.

Supporting the team, Eric Nadelstern, the principal at the time, provided targeted professional development and encouraged action research strategies to track program success. He encouraged teams to use action research to demonstrate the impact of teaching on student writing achievement. As part of the program, students kept detailed writing portfolios that contained writing samples over time illustrating writing maturity. Writing assessments were continuously administered. Detailed monitoring of student progress along with constructive feedback were hallmarks of the program. After the administration of the statewide writing examination in May of that academic year, team members met to assess the impact of the program on student achievement, on student writing motivation, and on the effectiveness of the teaching strategies employed by the teachers.

The chart below summarizes their findings:

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Percentage meeting</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Standardized writing achievement test	50% above 50th percentile	65% above 50th percentile (25% improvement over previous year); only 35% of girls scored above norm	Expectation met; examine achievement of girls (interviews, etc.)
Writing portfolios	At least 50% scoring “acceptable” on portfolio rubric	55% scored “acceptable,” but only 15% of girls did	Expectation met overall, but examine achievement for girls
Monthly teacher-made exams	At least 50% scoring “acceptable” on writing rubric for idea development, sentence structure, and grammar	80% scored “acceptable,” but significantly less for girls	Expectation met overall, but examine achievement for girls
Student surveys	At least 80% registering satisfaction with new approach to writing	70% approval rating, but only 10% for girls	Expectation not met; further study needed

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Team members analyzed the data and conducted a comparative analysis with the control group. The team shared their findings with other teams and charted a course to expand the program and address the reasons why girls did not score as well as boys.

Eric Nadelstern encouraged Maria, Bill, Fred, and Martha to reflect on the process of using action research to monitor student writing progress but also to consider how such research strategies provide evidence of the impact of their teaching on student achievement. During one brainstorming session, the dialogue went something like this:

Fred: *I felt kind of empowered using alternate means of assessment to measure student writing progress. Not relying on the standardized test alone was refreshing, even though in this case the state exams reflected our qualitative and quantitative findings.*

Martha: *I know what you mean. Using research strategies to track student progress helped me greatly to adjust my teaching approaches in the classroom. For instance, after monitoring their progress, I realized what worked and didn't work, and so I made changes.*

Bill: *Well, that may be true, but it appears we weren't sensitive or attuned to the needs of girls. Having these data alerts us to something we may not have picked up as readily or quickly.*

Martha: *You're right, Bill. I guess we first have to analyze the data more closely and perhaps collect some more information through focus groups or one-on-one interviews with some of the girls. Then we'll have to differentiate instruction to accommodate their needs and do some more action research to ascertain any improvements. [Bill nods in affirmation, as do the others.]*

Maria: *For me, this action research project provided structure to make sure I—I mean, we—reflected as we proceeded. I'm not sure I would have done so myself.*

Fred: *Yeah, we acted as a team . . . participating to solve a common problem.*

Martha: *Also important is the fact that we were always conscious of the relationship between our teaching practices and the impact they would have on student achievement.*

Eric *No need to formally observe these teachers . . . action*
Nadelstern *research provided the means to encourage reflection in order to*
[to himself]: *promote instructional improvement and student learning.*

The principal decides to expand the action research project to other teachers in the school. He confides to a fellow administrator:

I am so pleasantly surprised and gratified that this initiative worked out so well. I intend to incorporate action research to help us build our strategic goals in various areas. Clearly, as a result of this last project we need to ensure in our plan that the academic standards are being achieved by both genders. Exploring the literature on gender inequities in school will be useful. Overall, though, I intend to use action research in these ways: (a) to help determine which academic and instructional areas might need support through our strategic initiative; (b) to identify, through action research, other nonacademic areas of concern within and outside the school building; (c) to use action research as a means to assess strategic initiatives, and more. Yes, action research will come in handy as we develop and carry through on our strategic plan.

4. Data-driven decision making is a laborious process that is, in reality, quite simple and has marginal value at best because of the lack of a standard form of assessment.

Data-driven decision making is an essential skill for school building leaders involved in strategic planning. Refinement of strategic goals and objectives is based on the quality of the data obtained. Data, for instance, may indicate student failure in acquiring literacy skills such as delivery effectiveness in oral presentations. The instructional part of the strategic plan may then be extended to include curricular modifications to support this aspect of literacy development. Ideally, data, once analyzed, may lead to teacher change in behavior, which in turn influences a change in instructional delivery, which should affect student achievement. Data-driven decision making is purposeful, if not laborious; is comprehensive and ongoing, if not simple or episodic; and has the potential to promote instructional excellence in the classroom. Data-driven decision making is most effective within a larger strategic initiative.

Data-driven decision making, however, does not often represent best practice (see, e.g., Kerr, Marsh, & Ikemoto, 2005; Wayman, Midgley, & Stringfield, 2005; V. M. Young, 2005). Simply collecting data does not mean it will be used or used properly. Teachers and principals need training and experience in data collection, analysis, and interpretation as well as how to draw conclusions that will effect changes in classroom practices. As Wayman

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et al. (2005) have stated, "To read policy and news accounts, one might surmise that the mere act of providing student data is sufficient to create a school culture driven by this data." They continue, "On the contrary, although many educators embrace the notion of becoming more reflective practitioners, few educators have the preparatory background to engage in such analysis and reflection" (p. 2).

For data-driven decision making to have a chance of working, you as principal must provide systemic support that includes, among other areas:

- Fundamental belief and vision in results-oriented leadership
- Establishment of a school culture that supports data collection, analysis, and use of data to promote student learning
- Availability of technological and other resources that facilitate continuous data-driven decision making
- Involvement of diverse internal and external community members in the process
- Implementation of meaningful and ongoing professional development so that educators develop the important skills of data collection, analysis, and use

5. I never let politics interfere with my work.

"I try to avoid politics at all costs, even though I realize it's a reality of my work" may appear to be an astute comment, yet it's shortsighted, because as principal you cannot avoid the political arena. However, one traditional approach to leadership that characterized the 19th and 20th centuries was an avoidance of politics. Removing corrupt politicians from school governance was the mainstay of early school reformers (see, e.g., Glanz, 1991; Tyack, 1974). It was an appropriate focus at the time, but even after its usefulness had waned, vestiges of such an apolitical frame of reference existed throughout much of the last century. The term politics today refers to the influence of various vested interests, groups, or individuals who wish to put forth a particular agenda. Your work as principal inevitably involves interacting with various parties who hold a particular viewpoint and wish to influence some aspect of the school as an organization. Principals today must be equipped to confront political realities and utilize them as agents to create more effective schools.

First, you must think politically. Asking yourself, "What vested interest does this group or individual have?" does not mean you are suspicious but rather indicates your recognition of the need to fully understand a particular perspective in order to make some sort of informed decision. Drawing on Bolman and Deal's (1991) five political propositions, you should be aware of the following:

- Schools should be viewed as “coalitions” composed of individuals and groups with vested interests.
- People of varied backgrounds and experiences hold “enduring differences” that include their beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, values, and perceptions, and understanding these differences is critical to strategic leadership.
- Deciding how to distribute and who receives the scarce resources of the school organization will take up much time and possibly lead to disagreements and dissatisfaction.
- “Conflict” is a reality. Conflict resolution techniques may help, but they are no panacea; “power” is vested in the principalship, as it is in various other school positions, to varying degrees.
- Bargaining, negotiation, and “jockeying for position” are commonplace in school organizations.

Principals as politicians, then, think about coalitions; enduring differences; allocation of scarce resources; conflict and power; and bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position. Understanding power in its various forms is critical to our success as principals. As principal, you can draw on five types of power that are reviewed by Matthews and Crow (2003, citing French & Raven, 1959). As principal, you wield the following types of power:

- The power to dispense rewards (e.g., “I am going to give you released time to attend that conference.”)
- The power to coerce individuals or groups (e.g., “If you don’t attend the meeting next week I will not release you to attend the conference next month.”)
- Legitimate power, by virtue of the position you hold (e.g., “I want you to do this because I am the principal.”)
- Referent power, by virtue of identifying with someone who has greater power (e.g., “The superintendent wants me to ask you to attend the conference.”)
- Expertise power, which works because you have specialized knowledge that is respected by others (e.g., “I will attend the conference because Ms. Beyerback, the principal, is such an authority in special education, and she highly recommends this conference.”)

Politics need not be seen as a dirty word. Effective principals do not fear politics. Rather, they understand its role in schools. Blase (1991, as cited by Matthews & Crow, 2003) identifies certain characteristics of ineffective political leaders: “authoritarian, inaccessible, unsupportive, inequitable, inflexible, and inconsistent and . . . known to avoid conflict” (p. 214).

6. Strategic leaders realize that change is inevitable and therefore plan for it.

We certainly realize that change is inevitable, yet the nature and direction of change are not always easy to anticipate. Effective strategic leaders are very much aware that their plans are tentative and must remain flexible to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. Concrete strategies are provided in more detail later in this volume.

7. I am committed to social justice.

Strategic planning is not a simple technique or strategy that a principal employs to accomplish a particular objective. It emerges from a deep commitment to improve schooling and the experiences students have in them. Therefore, principals, like all educators, must affirm a commitment to the highest ideals of education so that all students, regardless of background or ability, can achieve their potential in an atmosphere of support, opportunity, and justice.

Principals affirm the following four notions that form four basic purposes of education (i.e., why we are in the business we are in). We help students achieve:

1. *Self-Realization*—Included in this broad category are ideas such as striving for intellectual growth, aesthetic interests, personal development, character building, self-worth, and so forth.
2. *Human Relationships*—Included in this broad category are ideas such as developing friendships, respecting others, fostering cooperation, developing ethical and moral reasoning, promoting democracy, and so on.
3. *Economic Efficiency*—Included in this broad category are ideas such as work, career, money, consumer education, and so forth.
4. *Civic Responsibility*—Included in this broad category are ideas such as seeking social justice, exhibiting tolerance for others, promoting world peace, respecting law and order, fulfilling obligations to government, and so on.

Education is conceived as the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit knowledge, skills, and values that a society deems worthy (see, e.g., Cremin, 1966). Schooling represents a small part in one's overall education. Life indeed educates. You may walk down the street one morning and meet a friend who "educates" you about a specific matter. Museums, TV, family, religious institutions, theaters, libraries, salespeople, and prisons educate. Schools certainly play a vital role in education. Three purposes can be identified: (a) helping children acquire knowledge and skills; (b) transmitting ideals and values of society; and (c) preparing children to live creative, humane, and sensitive lives.

We, as principals, encourage teachers to ask the question, “Who are the students in my class, and what impacts do race, gender, and social class have on their academic, social, and emotional development?” We know that race matters, as do gender and class. Students’ backgrounds and the way they have been treated by society as a result influence their behavior. Have we as a society used race, gender, and class to classify and stigmatize our students? In an effort to promote a sense of justice, we might ask the following questions:

- 1. What ways might teachers either overtly or unintentionally discriminate in their classrooms?*
 - 2. What ways might schools either overtly or unintentionally discriminate?*
 - 3. How might we as principals contribute to inequities, albeit unintentionally?*
 - 4. What are some prejudices we might have about some people or groups, and how might they affect our interaction with them?*
 - 5. What groups or individuals might be targeted for discrimination?*
 - 6. What are some ways we might promote equality, opportunity, and justice?*
 - 7. What are some ways society might promote equality, opportunity, and justice, and what role can we play as transformative principal leaders?*
- 8. Building leadership capacity and sustainability are imperative for a strategic leader.*

Strategic leaders always have the big picture in mind; they look to the future and consider an array of factors or forces that may influence the school. Strategic leaders also realize they cannot do it alone. They need to encourage others to participate in building the academic and social climate of the school. They realize that strategic goals transcend their duration in office. As such, as principal you know you must build leadership capacity (i.e., involve others in carrying out the school vision and mission) and leadership sustainability (i.e., ensuring reform efforts last over time, even beyond your term as principal).

Leader capacity, according to Lambert (1998) includes five assumptions:

- Leadership is a reciprocal learning process that enables participants “to construct and negotiate meanings leading to a shared purpose of schooling.”*
- Leadership is “about learning that leads to constructive change” that involves the many.*

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- *“Leading is skilled and complicated work that every member of the school community can learn.” Lambert adds that members of the school community have the right to “actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives.”*
- *“Leadership,” put simply, “is a shared endeavor.”*
- *If leadership is to be truly shared, then principals must build capacity by redistributing “power and authority” within the school to allow for the meaningful participation of the many. (p. 9)*

Strategic leaders also understand fully the importance of sustainability and institutionalization of reform (see, e.g., Datnow, 2005). As principal, you work hard to ensure that the innovative practices you and the school community have established will last. To do so, you would frame the strategic plan as a “live” document, not one that sits on the shelf after being signed. The plan is a guide and is meant to be revisited. You would establish structural support mechanisms (e.g., revision of lockstep class periods to, perhaps, block scheduling), procedural activities (e.g., revising standard operating procedures to accommodate the new changes), and cultural norms (e.g., provide forums for discussion of beliefs and values of school community members).

9. Transformational leadership is a principal’s primary responsibility.

Transformational leadership has received much attention in the educational leadership literature (see, e.g., Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Although transformational leadership has been examined by other theorists (e.g., Bass, 1997; Burns, 1978), Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi have more recently addressed implications of transformational leadership for schools. According to the authors (Leithwood & Jantzi), “three broad categories of leadership practices” can be identified: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. The authors explain that setting directions is a “critical aspect of transformational leadership . . . [by] helping staff to develop shared understandings about the school and its activities as well as the goals that undergird a sense of purpose or vision” (pp. 38–39). They explain that people are more apt to participate when they have had a say in developing ideas and practices. Transformational leaders realize that anyone can set a direction for an organization, but it is the effective leader who considers and solicits the participation of other key school personnel to share in the development and actualization of the institutional vision and purpose.

Transformational leadership also involves marshalling others beyond the initial stages of school transformation. Organizations will not improve and move forward without the active and purposeful involvement of many key individuals. Effective principals as transformative leaders are people oriented and know how to motivate them. More important, they truly respect teachers

and other school personnel. They discover the unique talents of each individual and suggest ways that each one can contribute meaningfully to the school mission and vision.

Redesigning the school organization is the result of setting directions for the school and the collective contribution of people in the organization. As transformative principal leader you aim to establish, nurture, and support a learning community environment in which high achievement for all students is encouraged (e.g., Sullivan & Glanz, 2006). Effective transformational leadership must be intimately connected to promoting student achievement by nurturing and personifying knowledge, skills, and dispositions that promote student achievement.

Transformational leadership is also concerned about the creation and use of knowledge by leaders to accomplish their objectives for high achievement for all students. Michael Fullan (2003a, citing Brown & Duguid, 2000) has culled ideas about a knowledge community and created a list of Brown and Duguid's beliefs about the effective use of knowledge:

- Knowledge lies less in its databases than in its people. (p. 121)
- For all information's independence and extent, it is people, in their communities, organizations, and institutions, who ultimately decide what it all means and why it matters. (p. 18)
- A viable system must embrace not just the technical system but also the social system—the people, organizations, and institutions involved. (p. 60)
- Knowledge is something we digest rather than merely hold. It entails the knower's understanding and having some degree of commitment. (p. 120)

Learning communities are clearly not unique to the world of education. Gladwell's (2000) prescription for changing people's beliefs and behavior is completely consistent with the current educational thoughts about schools:

To bring about a fundamental change . . . that would persist and serve as an example to others, you need to create a community around them, where these new beliefs could be practiced, expressed and nurtured. (p. 173)

Envisioned change will not happen or will not be fruitful until people look beyond the simplicities of information and individuals to the complexities of learning, knowledge, judgment, communities, organizations, and institutions. (p. 213)

Transformational leaders, in the end, are concerned with changing schools through democratic processes of collaboration:

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Democratic schools in postmodern times require stronger leadership than traditional, top down, autocratic institutions. The nature of that leadership, however, is markedly different, replacing the need to control with the desire to support. Ironically, such leaders exercise much more influence where it counts, creating dynamic relationships between teachers and students in the classroom and resulting in high standards of academic achievement. (Nadelstern, Price, & Listhaus, 2000, p. 275)

10. Learning about strategic planning would be facilitated by reading a sample Strategic Plan.

I think so. Although plans may vary greatly, the sample below incorporates some of the essential components. Please note that some plans are quite concise, whereas others are lengthy. The plan below is culled from a rather lengthy document. I have tried to excerpt only certain parts in order to give you a sense of strategic planning. Your superintendent or district may require a different format. Many thanks go to E. Scott Miller, local instructional superintendent, and Karina A. Constantino, principal, who gave permission to use this plan. Read the plan, and answer the guiding questions that follow. The plan was signed and approved by the following constituents: team chairperson, principal, union leader, parents' association president, a student representative, the local instructional superintendent, the community school district superintendent, the regional superintendent, seven School Leadership Team teacher members, and seven School Leadership Team parent members.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Educational Plan

All school planning requires a systematic review and careful analysis of student needs and existing activities to determine how instructional areas can be improved. The process of developing the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) allows School Leadership Teams an opportunity to access the effectiveness of the current instructional programs; discuss proposed modifications and alternatives; develop goals and objectives; and create action plans that will translate into observable, effective strategies to improve student achievement. These strategies must include effective, scientifically based methods for the delivery of high services (Academic Intervention Services [AIS]) for students who score below the State-designated performance level on State assessments or who are at risk of not achieving the State standards. Lastly, the School Leadership Team is asked to develop a mechanism to assess whether the proposed activities have resulted in improved student performance.

This plan should be a product of the collaborative decisions of all stakeholders: parents, staff, administrators, and students (if appropriate). Once the CEP is approved, it will serve as a focus for implementing