HOW COMPETENCY IN WISCONSIN STANDARDS FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSURE ENHANCE LEADERSHIP IN ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS

Approved: Lisa Emendorfer       Date: May 2, 2011
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An Educational Project

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

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In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree

Masters of Science

in

Education

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by

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2011
Abstract

HOW COMPETENCY IN WISCONSIN STANDARDS FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSURE ENHANCE LEADERSHIP IN ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS

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This paper will show how competency in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure enhance leadership in Administrative Standards. Moreover, it will connect a specific teacher standard to an administrative standard by explaining how skills used in the classroom and as a teacher translate into being an effective administrative. This paper will also discuss how effective administrators must be competent in all ten teacher standards because they lay the foundation for the other six administrative standards.

More specifically, this paper will reflect upon how proficiency in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure 1, which states “the teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for pupils” (Wisconsin, 2008), will enhance leadership skills in Administrative standards 3, 5, and 7. The third administrative standard states “the administrator leads by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth” (Wisconsin, 2008). The fifth administrative standard states “the administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources” (Wisconsin, 2008). The seventh administrative standard states “the administrator understands, responds to,
and interacts with the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context that affects schooling” (Wisconsin, 2008). One important idea is being able to understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of mathematics as well as create learning experiences that make mathematics meaningful for pupils. Having this knowledge and these skills will enhance an administrator’s ability to be an effective administrator because not only must he/she be knowledgeable about the current initiative, discipline, etc., he/she will have to make learning experiences meaningful for his/her staff as well. These learning experiences will take place through professional development and staff meetings. Knowing material and being able to effectively communicate it will enhance ones leadership because it relates directly to having a school that is conducive to pupil and staff learning and growth along with collaborating effectively.

This paper will also reflect upon how proficiency in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure 6, which states “the teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom” (Wisconsin, 2008), will enhance leadership skills in Administrative standard 4. The fourth administrative standard states “the administrator ensures management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment” (Wisconsin, 2008). Being able to effectively communicate using verbal and nonverbal communication techniques in order to foster active inquiry and collaboration in the classroom will definitely help to do the same with an entire school. It will assist to assure management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
Lastly, this paper will reflect upon how proficiency in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure 9, which states “the teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effect of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally” (Wisconsin, 2008), will enhance leadership skills in Administrative standard 5 and 6. The fifth administrative standard states “the administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources” (Wisconsin, 2008). The sixth administrative standard states “the administrator acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (Wisconsin, 2008). Administrators take great pride in being reflective practitioners who continually evaluate the effect of their choices and actions on everyone and this is the path that every new administrator should follow. Administrators must also seek out opportunities to grow professionally in order to continually hone their craft. Being a reflective practitioner will help each administrator to collaborate more effectively and to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
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Chapter One: Introduction

The Master’s of Science in Education with certification in Educational Administration program at UW-Platteville has been a magnificent experience. During the two-year program, students have had the opportunity to work with some wonderful administrators and aspiring administrators, and attend several conferences relating to technology, leadership, and school law. As part of the program, students have been required to complete a practicum that is a minimum of 300 hours. This experience has provided them with a great deal of knowledge regarding a wide variety of issues such as community relations, school law, school culture, diversity, budgeting, finance, and policy use. In addition, they have been required to complete a portfolio that provides proof of their competency in the seven administrator standards. This paper will detail how competency in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure enhance leadership in Administrative Standards. Moreover, it will connect a specific teacher standard to an administrative standard by explaining how skills used in the classroom and as a teacher translate into being an effective administrator. The paper will also discuss how effective administrators must be competent in all ten teacher standards because they lay the foundation for the other six administrative standards. Lastly, while focusing on the portfolio process and internship hours, it will describe how those experiences have helped the students become better administrative candidate and a more proficient educational leader in their schools.
Statement on the Problem

What knowledge, skills, and dispositions are necessary to become an effective educational administrator?

Method and Procedures

A brief review of the Master’s of Science in Education with certification in Educational Administration program at UW-Platteville was conducted. A review of literature, Wisconsin teacher and administrator standards, and the portfolio and practicum experience, and its impact on being an effective educational administrator was conducted. The findings were summarized and synthesized below.
Chapter Two: WSTDL 1

Being proficient in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure 1, which states, “the teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for pupils” (Wisconsin, 2008), will enhance one’s leadership skills in Administrative standards 3, 5, and 7. One important idea is being able to understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of mathematics as well as create learning experiences that make mathematics meaningful for pupils. Having this knowledge and these skills will enhance one’s ability to be an effective administrator because not only must the principal be knowledgeable about the current initiative or discipline, but will also have to make learning experiences meaningful for staff. These learning experiences will take place through professional development, staff meetings, and other activities. Knowing the subject matter content and being able to effectively communicate it will enhance one’s leadership because it relates directly to having a school that is conducive to pupil and staff learning and growth along with collaborating effectively.
Administrator Standard 3

The third administrative standard states, “the administrator leads by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth” (Wisconsin, 2008). As discussed in the philosophy of leadership, having high expectations is something that should be very important to every teacher. Most students will live up to the expectation set forth for them; therefore, when one becomes an administrator, he/she should continue to have high expectations for staff.

On a similar note, implementing a rigorous curriculum in a building should be a priority for each administrator as well. Each administrator should focus on the common core standards and make certain that all staff members have rigor as one of their top priorities. This idea was reinforced during the Wisconsin School Leadership Academy. One of the speakers emphasized the importance of rigor. In order to ensure that this is taking place, an administrator will make certain that supervision and evaluation of staff is monitored on a regular basis as to assess the impact and improvement of the instructional programs. The candidate monitored teachers’ instruction for rigor at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
Administrator Standard 5

The fifth administrative standard states, “the administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources” (Wisconsin, 2008). In order to make this happen, an administrator must make it a priority to attend and participate in school-wide and community events. An administrator’s presence is a necessity at many events to develop relationships with people in the community. This can be practiced by attending and supervising many extracurricular events as a part of one’s practicum. Doing this gave the administrator candidates a great baseline in terms of knowing what is expected of them while present at certain activities.

Administrators must also work hard to collaborate with the community. As an administrator, it is important to communicate the positive things that are happening in schools. For example, publicizing a math team’s success is a good way to inform the community on school related positive events. Likewise, in order to be an effective administrator, one must utilize multiple communication techniques to successfully inform and engage the entire school community. For example, many administrators write monthly columns in a newspaper, have a website, or even write a blog.
Administrator Standard 7

The seventh administrative standard states, “the administrator understands, responds to, and interacts with the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context that affects schooling” (Wisconsin, 2008). The candidates have a stronger base of the legal knowledge needed to be an effective administrator after attending the school law course and the Lathrop and Clark school law seminar. The candidates learned about bargaining, first amendment issues, bullying, technology, nonrenewal, and employee misconduct. Prospective administrators need to understand the connection that they must have with the district’s school attorney. It is also important for administrators to keep current and the district informed on all of the new legal issues that districts are facing. Administrators must be able to communicate these emerging trends and issues to all of the important players so that the district is in compliance with all legal requirements and is prepared to handle any issue that comes their way.

In addition to fostering a collaborative relationship with the district’s school attorney, the administrator must also work with the local legislative representative to make sure that the voice of education is being heard. This can be done by showing public support for the representative, attending meetings or forums, and attending legislative sessions. The administrator needs to also stay informed of the events affecting education at the state and national level to ensure the district’s forward looking mission.
Chapter Three: WSTDL 6

Being proficient in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure 6, which states, “the teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom” (Wisconsin, 2008), will enhance an administrator candidates leadership skills in Administrative standard 4. Being able to effectively communicate using verbal and nonverbal communication techniques in order to foster active inquiry and collaboration in the classroom is important when leading an entire school. This will be stressed by the administrator through classroom supervision. The administrator will work with the staff by promoting these things in order to ensure effective communication in the classroom. Another way to help this process is to allow staff members or invited speakers to present applicable information during staff meetings.

Good communication will increase the likelihood that proper management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources take place. This will provide for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. An administrator can make sure that this takes place through good communication with the school board. One way to increase resources in the building is by informing staff members about grants that are available at websites such as donorschoose.org, that allow donations from the public, and parent groups that are willing to donate their time and resources. The candidates ensured this process by keeping the communication lines open by attending meetings held by such groups.
Additionally, while in attendance at the Wisconsin School Leadership Academy, the administrator candidates had the great pleasure of hearing one of the nation’s most foremost thinkers, Marc Prensky, with respect to technology. The speaker emphasized that technology is incredibly important in the lives of students outside of school as well as in school. Keeping this in mind, administrators will need to use technology to ensure that their students are a part of an effective learning environment that includes 21st century skills.
Administrator Standard 4

The fourth administrative standard states, “the administrator ensures management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment” (Wisconsin, 2008). Administrators often have to make tough decisions. The administrator must listen to every key player and take sufficient time when making an informed decision that best suits the school district. This involves strategic planning, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating that focuses on student achievement. An example of strategic planning is for a school consolidation. This is a very difficult task that requires the very best of an administrator’s skills.

Monitoring appropriate funds and other resources for the educational needs of the students and staff is vital as well. To plan for a consolidation, administrative candidates analyzed data followed by deciding on strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of the situation. Tough decisions were then made and four performance goals were created. Money was allocated appropriately to each of the goals with the plan that it would increase the effectiveness of the district and most importantly the success of the students. Lastly, this project dealt with managing extracurricular activities. This is another side of management that must be continually monitored as well. This project was a great opportunity to get a sense as to what is involved on the management side of administration and gave the administrator candidates a great place to start.
Chapter Four: WSTDL 9

Being proficient in Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure 9, which states, “the teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effect of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally” (Wisconsin, 2008), will enhance ones leadership skills in Administrative standard 5 and 6. An administrator should take great pride in being a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effect of his/her choices and actions on everyone. This includes seeking out opportunities to grow professionally. The candidates have shown their eagerness to grow professionally through their practicum experience by attending several valuable professional development opportunities. In addition, they have been reading, discussing, and reporting on many wonderful leadership books including The Speed of Trust (Covey, 2006), The Difference Maker (Maxwell, 2006), Leading With Soul (Bolman, 2001), Gardening In The Minefield (Schmidt, 2002), and A Repair Kit for Grading (O’Connor, 2007). As part of the process of continuing growth, administrators must also become and model being reflective educators. Being a reflective practitioner will help the administrator collaborate more effectively and to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner because reflection requires deep thinking about decisions and their impact on others. Allowing time for reflection is important in situations involving staff ideas. There must be a time for reflection before a quick decision is made.

Evaluating educators using data is another way that an administrator can help teachers continually grow. Data gives evidence that things may need to change which will increase the likelihood of future success. During the evaluation process, the administrator will always encourage staff to reflect on their practices and make changes where necessary.
Administrator Standard 5

The fifth administrative standard states “the administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources” (Wisconsin, 2008). Administrators must make it a priority to attend and participate in school-wide and community events. One goal that each administrator should have is reaching out to the community and highlighting the positive things that are happening on their schools.

For example as a part of the practicum experiences, aspiring administrators attended parent group meetings to show support, and then shared their ideas at staff meetings about how to utilize the parent group to better meet the needs of the students. The candidates can also make certain that families are well informed with issues directly related to their children such as discipline and academics. An administrator can also learn new ideas through professional development at conferences and forums including, the Wisconsin School Leadership Academy, Lathrop and Clark’s School Law Seminar, and Rick Smith’s workshop.

Another way an administrator might collaborate with the community is to fundraise for a new playground. Working with volunteers to assist in the assembly of the playground would be a beneficial experience as well. Other possibilities include organizing public informational meetings regarding an upcoming referendum, attending parent group meetings to show support, attending parent-teacher conferences, attending school board meetings, and helping organize and participating in a family fun night or school fair to show off student work.
Administrator Standard 6

The sixth administrative standard states, “the administrator acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (Wisconsin, 2008). Power and politics in schools is an important administrative concern. Administrators must be fully aware of who the political players are that will attempt to affect their decision making process. Power is another significant part to being an administrator. Legitimate power is one power that comes with being an administrator. Referent and expert power must be achieved through hard work and by gaining the respect of the staff. These powers will assist the administrator in developing, implementing, and evaluating school policies programs, and practices. The administrator must also ensure that there is equity and respect between students, parents, staff, and the community with the goal of increasing student achievement. Effective administrators promote programs that address inequities in the school and apply laws and policies justly and fairly while modeling reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior.

The candidate gained experience in these areas through the practicum by listening to ideas and possible solutions from staff members because teachers and staff are the experts. The candidate must also support the teachers when disciplining students and make certain that the discipline matches the school policy so as to treat every student fairly. Administrators need to be transparent by making certain that everyone knows what is expected of them and then follow through with consequences in a consistent way.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In conclusion, the Master’s of Science in Education with certification in Educational Administration program at UW-Platteville has been an outstanding experience. Throughout the program, the aspiring administrators have worked with outstanding people, attended informative conferences, read insightful books, and gained a large amount of invaluable experience. Also as part of the program, well over 300 practicum hours were completed. This experience has provided a great deal of knowledge regarding a wide variety of issues such as community relations, school law, school culture, diversity, budgeting, finance, and policy use. In addition, candidates have completed a portfolio that provides proof of their competency in the seven administrator standards. In combination, the practicum and portfolio have helped the candidates to become better administrative candidates as well as more proficient educational leaders in their district.
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