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READING ACHIEVEMENT AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

A few days ago I read a report entitled "School Factors Influencing Reading Achievement: A Case of Two Inner-City Schools."¹ It is a document which every school administrator should study and consider carefully. The report is an account of an in-depth examination of two elementary schools, and the findings suggest that many of the major determinants of student achievement are factors over which the school *has* control. The two schools selected for study were similar in student population, teacher preparation, equipment, and resources. Nevertheless, pupils in School A consistently outperformed the pupils of School B on reading achievement tests. The major area of difference between the schools was that the administrators of School A had identified reading as a significant school problem and had developed a coherent plan of action to provide leadership for classroom teachers. School B had not. Many professional personnel in the less effective school apparently considered the students' reading problems to be due to non-school factors and were pessimistic about the school's ability to cope with these problems. Consequently, they created an environment where children failed because they were not expected to succeed.

Administrative behavior, policies, and practices have significant impact on a school's effectiveness. The quality and attitude of the administration can strongly influence the learning situation. An administrative team capable of developing and implementing a plan for dealing with reading problems can dramatically affect students' performance in reading.

The administrative team of every school system throughout the land needs to examine its practices in order to determine whether they are doing all they can to develop within their schools a stimulating and positive learning environment. The administrative team needs to answer critically and conscientiously the question: Are we really providing the kind of leadership in our schools which is essential to effective reading achievement? The administrative team should not lose sight of the fact that many of the major determinants of student achievement are factors over which the school *does* have control.

Dorothy J. McGinnis
Editor

¹ A copy of the report may be obtained from Daniel Klepak, Director, Office of Education Performance Review, State Capitol, Albany, N. Y. 12224.

