

**The Crazy Visiting Elk and Other
True Tales of School Administration**
A Primer

By Richard L. Dodson, Ed. D

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my father, Dr. Lee Dodson. Although we had major differences, without him I would not have had the desire or inclination to be a school administrator or leader. His successes in the world of school leadership were always a source of pride for me and something to which to aspire.

It is also dedicated to my wife, Alyssa, whose unwavering support of my career goals has truly made me a fortunate man. She inspired me to write this short book, asserting that my advice is both entertaining and unique and that my school administrative stories, such as the crazy visiting elk, must be told.

Cover Illustration by Alyssa Dodson.

Introduction

I received my doctorate in School Administration in the spring of 1994. During the last semester, soon-to-be graduating students in my program were invited to a symposium in a nearby city where we ate and then were obliged to listen to retired and august school administration professors speak. They praised us for our recent hard work and offered some words of wisdom and encouragement as we ventured out into schools unknown.

“After you receive your doctorate,” one smiling, sagacious professor remarked, “your world will change forever.” He added, “You will now go on to lots of adventures you will not have anticipated.” I look back now after two decades and realize how wise he was. Some of my forays into the wide world of school administration were well planned, while others were unanticipated detours necessary at the time in order for me to endure and reach goals. Whether pre-planned or accidental, each administrative endeavor I took on indelibly marked my view of school leadership.

My administrative experiences varied greatly: K-12 public school principal in a small, rural, southwestern school district; assistant principal in a large, urban middle school in the northwest; assistant principal in a junior high located in the largest gang per capita town in the north of a southwestern state; grades 6-12 site director in an at-risk charter school; and PK-8 principal in an urban private school in a major metropolitan area of the southwest. Some of these schools were healthy organizations; others displayed deep dysfunction. I worked with excellent leaders, and I worked with cruel, lazy, inept administrators. Through it all, I can honestly say I tried my best to make each school a healthier and happier place than when I first walked through its doors.

Some people have asked me why I have not pursued a superintendency, especially since I possessed a doctorate and had plentiful principal experience. Even though I served as an administrator for years, *pure* administration held no appeal for me: I never wanted to work in a central office where I could not be around students and teachers. An additional aspect of my personal history sullied the idea of superintendency for me: my father had been the superintendent of a small school district near Topeka, Kansas, when I was a boy. He was dead-set against unification of schools. In the spring of 1966, when I was ten years old, his school board voted 3 to 2 in favor of unifying with another small district to form a consolidated one. My father was out of a job. I vividly remember him talking on the phone at home and my crying mother telling us kids to be quiet because “Your father is on the phone trying to get a job.” The lesson to my young mind was clear: Being a superintendent meant you would lose your job. Years later, after he retired from a successful administrative career at a local university, my father and mother visited me in Arizona where I was teaching in a small unified school district. As I showed him around the campus, he spotted a unified school district sign. His response: “The cancer has spread everywhere.”

Recent research shows that aspiring principals want practical administrative experiences before they begin a principalship, while those who are already principals wanted practical activities before becoming a principal. In recent studies (Dodson, 2013, 2015), over a thousand principals in seven states responded in surveys regarding their perceptions of the utility and comparative effectiveness of field experiences in the principal preparation program each attended. Nearly all principals agreed that field experiences positively affected their readiness for the job, and 80% who did not complete

field experiences agreed that they would have been better prepared had their program included such experiences. From the studies, there was widespread agreement that future principals need abundant prior hands-on practice to step in as effective school leaders. Current principals identified the most valuable field experiences to be those involving practical, hands-on, typical principal responsibilities, such as leading, identifying, interviewing, and working. Least useful were observation-type experiences.

Students in the principal preparation program at the university where I teach continuously tell me that in addition to the numerous hands-on practical activities they must complete in class, they value the real-life short stories and advice I offer them. They also comment that it is important to examine genuine scenarios or case studies for various diverse learners they will encounter on a daily basis. The purpose of this short book is to offer pragmatic advice to aspiring principals based on years of practical experience.

I hope you enjoy reading this brief exploration of school administration's joys and challenges and the advice offered. All stories in this book are true – sometimes painfully so.

Chapter One

“WE’RE NOT ABOUT CHANGE HERE” THE CHANGE PROCESS

Change is a natural part of life – that much is cliché. The beast of school administration hungers for a particular type of change: New leadership blood. In the course *The Superintendency*, one of my classes for the doctorate in School Administration, I recall my professor saying that the average number of years one lasts in a superintendent position is three. I was surprised by this relatively short tenure. He then offered an adage that summed up those three brief years: In his first year on the job, a new superintendent makes small changes; in the second year, he makes changes he wanted to make the first year, but did not; and in the third year he begins to look for a new job. Grim. I wondered: Does the same rule apply to school principals?

To my knowledge there is no national study revealing the average number of years in a school principal’s tenure. Some local figures suggest clear limits. For example, a study of principals in New York City indicated the average principal tenure was 3.4 years. No principal remained at a school for longer than 4.7 years, and the average tenure for a school’s *founding* principal was 4 years (Weinstein, et al., 2009). Similarly, in Miami Dade County Public Schools, principals in the lowest-performing schools lasted an average of 2.5 years at those schools -- less than half the average tenure of principals in the district’s highest-performing schools, which was 5.1 years (Loeb, et al., 2010). And in Texas, Fuller and Young (2008) analyzed employment data from 1995 to 2008 for more than 16,500 public school principals. Here, principals lasted an average of 4.96 years

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in elementary schools, 4.48 years in middle schools, and 3.38 years in high schools (Viadero, 2009).

What conclusion can we draw? While school principals' longevity might not be as brief as superintendents', it is not much better – three to five years versus three years. What about the adage describing a superintendent's experience? Does the average principal make small changes her first year, then implement big changes her second year, and then start looking for a new job her third year? Maybe. In my experience, a principal's tenure depends as much on the number of changes he or she makes and when these changes are made as it does on his or her leadership skills.

In the commonwealth of Kentucky, where I am currently a professor of school administration, aspiring principals must pass the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards test in order to become a certified administrator. To date, over 40 states have adopted these standards (National Council of State Legislatures, 2014). Originally presented by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in 1996 and updated in 2008, the ISSLC standards were designed for leadership preparation programs (North Dakota Lead Center, 2009). The standards “define strong school leadership and represent the broad, high-priority themes that education leaders must address in order to promote the success of every student” (School Leadership Briefing, 2013). One element of ideal leadership as codified in the Standards is the ability to understand and effectively implement change.

The word *change* appears three times in the 2008 ISLLC standards (see Appendix A). First, it appears in Standard 2, which deals mainly with instructional practices. Under the Knowledge section, it says, “The administrator has

knowledge and understanding of: the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals.” Next it appears in Standard 6, which deals with the promotion of a political, social, economic, legal, and cultural environment. Under the Knowledge section, it says, “The administrator has knowledge and understanding of: models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling.” It appears again in Standard 6 under the Performances section, saying, “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate” (CCSSO, 2014).

There are several questions to ask when addressing change in the 2008 standards. What models and strategies for change should be used? What framework for change do you use? When do you implement the change or changes? How do you know if the change or changes have worked? What kind of communication should be implemented for initiating change in a school? What factors in the school environment constitute a need for change?

When the ISLLC standards were further revised for consideration in 2014, I hoped they would address such questions. They do not. In fact, the 2014 revised version, described by CCSSO as “broad policy standards that provide direction and guidance,” omits the word change from Standards 2 and 6, including it only in a new Standard 11 called Continuous School Improvement. Here it says, “An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development of a culture of continuous school improvement. Functions: B. Initiates and manages system-wide change; C. Enables others to engage productively with change experiences; and D. Navigates

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change in the midst of ambiguity and competing demands and interests.

While the ISLLC standards only minimally address change, undertaking changes in schools is a process that is too important to gloss over. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus once declared, “The only thing that is constant is change.” I have always liked this axiom. Is it true for schools? Does change need to take place at the average school? If it does, how much of it is “natural” development driven by factors beyond our control as administrators, and how much must we drive it ourselves, often against the wishes of our staffs? How often should change occur in a school? Experience has taught me that successful implementation of change in a school depends largely on the school’s culture – the attitudes, values, beliefs, and standard practices of its teachers, staff, administrators, and students. In most cases, a healthy working school environment permits change.

Teachers tend to be ambivalent toward change. Not surprisingly, like most of us, they resist change when it affects or threatens their jobs. Case in point: In the past five years alone, over two-thirds of states have made substantial changes to how teachers are evaluated (Hull, 2013). For most states, the change was driven by incentives available through the federal program Race to the Top, No Child Left Behind waivers, and the Teacher Incentive Fund. As Bornfreund (2013) pointed out, state applications for these funds earned additional credit for upgrading teacher evaluation systems so they take place annually and are based in part on student achievement. Whether it is right or wrong, the inclusion of state test scores as an assessment element of a teacher’s competence is driving many teachers across the nation to abandon education.

Some administrators make changes in their schools simply for the sake of making change. Others avoid making changes because they fear upsetting faculty and staff.

Students, on the other hand, welcome change, unless they are at-risk students. These students tend to have less stable home lives and often have learned that changes bring hardships.

I have learned from personal experience that making changes -- both big and small ones -- will largely determine one's success as a school administrator. It sure did during my career!

Let me present a few personal examples:

“Hello, Brother-in-law”

In the late nineties, I accepted an assistant principal position at Ponderosa Middle School, located in the Northwest. I learned about the job when I was an itinerant music teacher in a southern Arizona city. One of the assistant superintendents there told me that Dr. Hall, the superintendent of the district, had just accepted a new superintendent position of the school district in the Northwest and was recruiting administrators. I had a brief interview on the phone with Dr. Hall.

At the beginning of the school year, a gala was held for all district administrators to meet their new superintendent, Dr. Hall, in downtown Franklin, Washington. I arrived and noticed several people behaving rather icily towards me. I talked to one school administrator who explained that many people in the district were wary of me because they had

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heard I was Dr. Hall's brother-in-law and was hired to help "clean things up" and make drastic changes in the district. What a story, I thought. I had never met the new superintendent, and my new position as a junior assistant principal now made me a major player in the third largest school district in Washington! Incidentally, Superintendent Hall saw me later that evening at the gala and greeted me, "Hello, brother-in-law." We both laughed.

A few days later, when I began my new position as assistant principal at Ponderosa Middle School, Phyllis, my immediate boss and principal, took me on a tour of the school campus. As we walked through the science and math section of the campus, she showed me a room that looked like a teacher's lounge. I remarked to Phyllis it was interesting that a school had two teacher's lounges, as I had seen another one earlier on the tour. She then said she wished she could remove this lounge because "this is where they talk about getting rid of me." This comment surprised me, and I started to wonder about its accuracy: Who was against Phyllis? Was there a movement underway to get rid of her? Shortly thereafter, the answers to both questions would reveal themselves.

Two months after my campus tour, I was called into the district office. There, a school district attorney interviewed me, each of her words encased in frost that I could feel in my bones. *This is odd*, I thought, wondering what was happening. She asked me several questions about my boss at Ponderosa Middle School. Soon it became clear that this interview was actually an interrogation aimed at gathering compromising information about Phyllis. Conspiracy theories aside, there did seem to be something akin to a persecution afoot. Was the second teachers' lounge the epicenter or just an echoing ripple? Either way, Phyllis' perception of their discussions was accurate.

On the night before school was to resume after the holidays, Phyllis called me and asked if we could meet early the next morning for breakfast before school began. At breakfast, she informed me that she was being removed as principal at Ponderosa Middle School immediately. I was surprised but, at this point, not shocked. Her replacement would be an elementary school principal who aspired to become the new superintendent but was told he lacked middle or high school administrative experience. Taking over Phyllis' post would rectify this.

It seems changes were indeed being made at Ponderosa, but I was not the one "cleaning things up" in the district. What was supposed to be my role in this unfolding drama? Was I brought in as assistant principal to help shepherd the chosen school leader after Phyllis' eviction? Was I considered a more cooperative witness than my predecessor had been, and I simply would help advance the inevitable plot? By this time, shortly into my tenure as it was, I did not care: clearly, the measure of my effectiveness as a school leader in this environment lay beyond my control. And by Christmas, I could not take the rain and dreariness of the Northwest any longer. I decided then to return to the sunny Southwest at the end of the school year.

"I sold your soul to the devil."

In 2001, I accepted a K-12 principalship in a small school district in northern Arizona. Prior to becoming the school's principal, I taught there for twelve years. My time there as a teacher – I taught grades 4-12 music, high school psychology, even a cinematography course, and was also

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sponsor of the K-12 yearbook and newspaper – was the happiest time I spent at one school. I also coached boys and girls middle school basketball, became the high school boys varsity coach for six years, and then coached the girls varsity squad the last two years I was there. In addition, I was the high school athletic director for the last seven years. I was extremely busy but my work there was rewarding and well respected, as evident when I became high school teacher of the year during the 1989-90 school year. I developed many close friends who were also my colleagues. They knew I was pursuing my doctorate in Educational Administration from a nearby university. I knew, however, that someday I would grow tired of the demands of the many hats I wore in the district. Nevertheless, I stayed there another three years after I completed my doctorate degree. The inevitability of burnout eventually came and after twelve years I began to pursue administrative positions in the area. I wanted to become a full-time administrator in this tiny district, but neither of the two full-time administrative positions -- superintendent and K-12 principal -- was available. I then turned down assistant principal positions in Wisconsin and Oregon and instead made an imprudent decision and took a leadership administrative position at a charter school for high-risk students in the area (more on this position later).

Four years later, I was hired as the new K-12 principal of the district. One evening after I accepted the job, I received a phone call from my new boss, Superintendent Schepps. The first thing he said to me was, “I sold your soul to the devil.” “Excuse me,” I said and he repeated himself. I immediately thought *What in the world did I do by accepting this new position, with Schepps as my boss!* He then informed me that last year’s elementary reading scores on the state tests were poor and that he had met several times with the elementary staff in the spring to discuss strategies to improve student reading skills. The teachers and he decided to write

a grant and hire a reading specialist company, based out of Washington. A reading expert from the firm would meet with our teachers and me all day every other Friday, to teach them (and me) their phonics-based program. Thus, as my new boss reiterated, he sold my soul to the devil. I was to spend many Fridays with my staff learning the latest in reading strategies. Schepps quickly pointed out to me, though, that he, too, would be at the meetings. However, at the beginning of the first Friday workshop, he walked around the room, glad-handed the teachers, drank coffee in the back, and then disappeared an hour later. This was the only time he showed up. I noticed some of the teachers seemed resistant to being at the workshops. A few told me they felt forced to be there because Schepps – contrary to what he told me -- had not met with them to discuss how to improve reading test scores. Instead, he had written the grant and hired the reading firm himself. The teachers were nowhere near the change decision process. Their role was simply to submit and implement.

“So where are we going to put the brown kids?”

After the school year began, Schepps also told me that the elementary teachers were ability grouping or leveling their students in reading. That is, teachers were allowed to group their students homogeneously into high, middle and low reading groups. In addition, these same teachers were departmentalizing their students in several subjects, including math and social studies. For example, a second grade teacher would send her students to a fifth grader teacher during math time and the fifth grade teacher would teach math to the second graders. This was done, the teachers claimed, because the fifth grade teacher was a better

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math teacher than the second grade teacher. Schepps told me that these teaching styles or practices needed to stop, and it was part of my job to ensure that they did. I told him that, as a former high school teacher, I would need to take time to study these practices before I could make any big changes.

I then began watching and learning what leveling and departmentalizing was and what was going on in the elementary school. I found out that some of the newer teachers were against the leveling and departmentalizing. They were afraid to voice their opinion for fear of retribution from the few older and more vocal and dominant elementary teachers who had implemented and held on to these practices years ago. In fact, after talking with each of the elementary staff individually it was discovered that all but two were against the leveling. Through leveling, I learned, these teachers were able to hand pick the students they wanted to teach. This, unfortunately, led to placing students into excelling and non-excelling groups. This was “tracking,” I realized. It appeared that the levels students were placed in depended on their ethnicity. This discriminatory approach to placing students into classrooms became clear to me when during a teachers meeting one teacher asked, “So where are we going to put the brown kids?” This was wrong! It was apparent to me that for years my predecessors had allowed the elementary teachers to choose their own class rosters, and that had led to this unethical teaching practice. The elementary reading test scores for the previous five years were indeed low and indicated a need for change, but this discriminatory practice also cried out for redress. Knowing that my boss Schepps already had decided on the need for change, I felt confident he would support me as I broadened the scope of that change.

Research at the time also showed that departmentalizing younger students was not a good teaching strategy. Again,

after talking with each of the elementary staff individually I found out that all but two were against departmentalizing. I believed one of the reasons that the few elementary teachers who forced departmentalization in math and social studies throughout the school was done to increase their prep time. Having taught in this school district before, I might have realized this was happening. But I was not an elementary self-contained teacher. One of my teaching duties was to teach elementary music, and this did not make me privy to academic practices used by the elementary staff.

During the course of my reconnaissance in the elementary classes, a few of the alpha teachers (who were also some of my best friends) discovered my intention to discontinue the leveling and departmentalizing. They were not happy. I admit I was cocky, buoyed by my belief that eradicating leveling and departmentalizing was the right thing to do. I also believed the changes needed to be made sooner rather than later.

I informed the teachers that departmentalizing would end after the first semester. Each teacher would have to teach math and social studies to her own students. It was too late to change the leveling practices for the current school year, but starting in the next year, heterogeneous grouping of students would replace leveling.

I soon learned that the dominant and disgruntled elementary teachers had approached Schepps and complained about the changes I was making. His response to them? He told them that he did not know why I was making these changes. So much for my boss' support!

It later became clear to me that Schepps had wanted to make the same changes I now intended when he himself had been principal, but he had not made them. Instead, he placated the

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elementary staff by allowing them to continue these practices, even though he knew they were unfair and counterproductive. He then waited until he was safely ensconced in the superintendency, comfortably removed from the front lines of the school, to order his new K-12 principal to make the dreaded changes.

“I can’t do that to them.”

During the spring when the school budget was being finalized, Superintendent Schepps called me into his office to inform me that one of the budget cuts would be the middle school computer teacher’s position. Also in the room was the newly-hired business manager. It was only an hour before we were to hold a meeting with the whole teaching staff to announce budget cuts. All three of us were aware that the computer teacher’s wife, one of our finest elementary teachers, was gravely ill in a local hospital. Schepps said that, since I was the K-12 principal, I would have to inform the staff of the computer teacher’s position budget cut. I said I would not do this because this was the first time it was mentioned to me and we should first look into other ways to save money. I said that, even though this teacher was an ineffective teacher, this was not the way to relieve him of his duties, tenured or not. Schepps said it was too late and ordered me to say it at the meeting. *What a chicken shit weasel you are, Superintendent Schepps*, I thought. I reluctantly agreed to do it. At the meeting, however, when it was my turn to make the recommendation for the cut, I broke down and cried and said, “I can’t do that to them. I cannot make this cut.”

The following day, the school counselor remarked to me that my sobbing in front of the staff was very effective and that I could not have planned it any better. I told her that I did not plan this. Less than a month later, the teacher's wife died. Although we never discussed it, I am sure that my boss was upset with me. However, we started to look at ways to cut the budget without getting rid of this position by involving a committee of teachers. Maybe he wanted me to make the budget cut in order for him to save face. Maybe he wanted me to make this budget cut to toughen me up. Either way, I knew that I was too close to the teaching staff. I had taught side-by-side with most of them for twelve years and also had taught and coached many of their children. That was fun and rewarding. But that was then, and now I am their principal. Many of these teachers were (yes, **were**) close friends of mine. This job was definitely not a healthy fit for me. It was especially difficult learning that your boss was not supporting you and instead stabbing you in the back.

“We’re not about change here.”

Years later, I was hired as the new assistant principal at Browne Junior High School in a town that had the highest per capita gang membership rate in northern Arizona. I was invited to attend their luncheon for faculty and staff on the last day of school. I was happy to be there. Along with other new hires, I was introduced to the teachers. I then sat down with teachers and had lunch. As I was talking with a few of the teachers and enjoying my lunch, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned to find two middle-aged teachers standing behind me. One asked, “Are you here to make big changes?” The other one then said, “We’re not about change here.” I was astounded that they had the temerity to say that

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to me. I then smiled and remarked to these pushy ladies that I was not planning on making changes, unless told otherwise. Having learned my lessons with Schepps, and having had my soul sold to the devil, so to speak, I had learned not to promise any immediate big changes!

“That’s the way things are done here”

Years later in my last principalship, this time in a private school, my new boss was the church and school’s pastor. He addressed the staff during my first staff meeting before the start of the school year saying, “That’s the way things are done here kind of talk” will not be tolerated anymore. Obviously, he said this because it was a line used before with previous administrators who had tried to implement change at the school. I knew I was replacing a principal who, as the school’s teachers told me, “caved in to parents’ needs” and did not back up the teaching staff.

A month into the school year, a member of the School Advisory Board (SAC) came in to my office and said she overheard one of my secretaries say to a parent, “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of him.” The board member heard the secretary add that she is the one who makes changes in the school -- not the new principal. After a meeting with the secretary, it was obvious that a culture of resistance to change had existed at this school for quite a while. I quickly noticed I had to make many changes. Despite staff opposition, I was able to successfully make these changes largely because I had my boss’ support.

Change Models

It is unusual to see school principals make drastic changes in their schools in the first year of employment. Instances where the principal declares “war” on the existing school culture, like that which involved Principal Joe Clark at Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey in the 1980s, are very rare and depend on absolute support from above. Clark, as you may recall, “expurgated” hundreds of students and dozens of teachers he thought were dead weight, clashed with the school board and eventually turned the school into a sanctuary of order and school spirit” (Van Biema and Moses, 1989). Some of Clark's memos to his teachers are legendary. In June 1985, he sent a memo titled "Denunciation of Your Anarchistic Activities" to three teachers who were Paterson Education Association delegates (Rimer, 1988). The memo concluded, "I invite you to purge yourselves of the demons that make you so dangerous to the very institutions and ideologies to which you should be dedicating your professional lives or to purge the Paterson school system by leaving it." The association filed 44 grievances against Clark. His leadership made for good Hollywood drama; rarely are such polarized school conditions publicized or dealt with so openly.

Several effective models of change have been developed in the business world. I wish I had known of them when I was a principal. For example, psychologist Kurt Lewin developed his Management Model in the 1950s. He observed then that “most people make an active effort to resist change” (Mind Tools Ltd, 2014). This is no less true today in our schools. The key for a leader seeking to implement reform, Lewin argued, “is developing a compelling message showing why the existing way of doing things cannot continue.” The trick is framing the issue in a way that is immediately meaningful and recognizable to one’s audience. An organization’s leader might point to

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declining sales figures, poor financial results, and/or troubling customer satisfaction surveys. The school equivalents would be declining enrollment numbers, low test scores, and complaints from teachers, parents, and/or students. Such evidence makes the case for change clear in a way that everyone at the institution understands and already considers important.

Another change model is the McKinsey 7-S Model. It was created in 1978 by several business consultants during a meeting for the McKinsey Consulting firm. It has 7 factors that operate as a collective agent of change: Shared values, Strategy, Structure, Systems – known as *Hard Elements* -- and Style, Staff, and Skills – known as *Soft Elements* (McKinsey & Company, 2014). Although it lends itself particularly well to businesses, this model can be useful to schools because the organization of the school, leadership style and teacher capabilities can be effectively analyzed using this model.

I particularly like John Kotter's Change Model because it can easily be adapted to making change in school settings. Kotter presents an 8-step process for change (See Appendix C). He notes that "no one person, no matter how competent, is capable of single-handedly developing the right vision, communicating it to vast numbers of people, eliminating all of the key obstacles, generating short term wins, leading and managing dozens of change projects, and anchoring new approaches deep in an organization's culture." He adds, "Putting together the right coalition of people to lead a change initiative is critical to its success. That coalition must have the right composition, a significant level of trust, and a shared objective" (Kotter International, 2012).

In his book, *Our Iceberg is Melting* (Kotter and Rathgeber, 2005), Kotter relates a fable about penguins whose iceberg is

melting to illustrate his change model. One of the penguins is known as “NoNo” because he constantly criticizes and resists change. When I teach Kotter’s change model in my beginning principal preparation courses, it is required that the students read this book. When we discuss the fable, I ask them if they know any “NoNos” in their schools. Invariably, students smile and then talk about the negative and resistant persons they work with. It is essential that future school administrators realize that there are people in schools who for whatever reasons will not embrace change.

Kotter recommends using a SWOT analysis in order to implement changes in your organization. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and was originated by Albert S. Humphrey in the 1960s (see Appendix D). Using an adaptation created by *MindTools* (2012), I introduce the SWOT tool to my students who then analyze their school’s capabilities for change (see Appendix E).