

Joseph Wright  
EDUC 6540  
Professor Montgomery Lee  
October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Week 8 Chapter 8 Reflection

*Since educational leadership does not exist in a vacuum, leadership styles, approaches and models are always operating in a state of dynamic flux and change. Irrespective of the leadership approach adopted in school, each of the elements in school leadership generates certain amount of tension in the process of influencing the practice of leadership in resources distribution and decision-making. What steps do you take in the decision-making/problem solving process to ensure that the ‘tensions and political dynamics’ of other individuals don’t get in the way of important decisions? What 3 tips of advice would you give a new school leader in making decisions that may be politically charged?*

*Include at least TWO insightful questions based on the content of this chapter for possible discussion in class.*

I think that it is incredibly important that everyone feel like they are a valued member of the team. Although I as the admin / principal / etc. have a different role than a teacher, or other staff member, everyone is valuable. We can illustrate this by giving staff and teachers **choice** and freedom to make their own decisions in their classrooms; **voice** in allowing them to share opinions, challenges, frustrations, etc. in a safe and welcoming setting; we also need to allow them (and ourselves) time to **reflect** and think about what we are doing, and the impact it is having. Additionally, we need to allow for **dialogue** between individuals and groups, and that all are listened to and respected. Finally, they can engage in **reciprocity**, or expecting and doing the same thing they expect from their teachers. A leader that is unwilling to change or accept criticism is going to have a hard time asking the same of their employees.

**3 tips** that I’d offer a new school leader, especially when making politically charged decisions, are as follows:

**Practice Humility:** realize that you are not the most experienced person in the world, no matter how long you might have worked in a particular district, school, etc. Be willing to listen and respect others, and treat them with kindness and honesty, and you will get the same in return.

**Reflect:** As you make decisions, reflect on how things have gone. Ask for feedback from other administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders, with a willingness to listen and even perhaps take criticism. Find others who are willing to help you, and use their feedback and suggestions as much as possible.

**Reach Across the Aisle:** There will be others at your school that will disagree with your ideas, policies, etc. It is important however, especially with groups like the PTA, etc., that you appear to have a united front for the general public. If you sense that this may not be the case, offer to meet these people in a more private, non-threatening setting (over lunch, etc.) with some of these individuals who you can sense may be itching for a fight. Nip that in the bud by meeting with them, letting them know that you care about them, and giving them a chance to air their grievances. It will allow you to come to terms with some differences of opinions you may have, and also allow you a chance to see things from their perspective, and often allow for understanding and compromise. Fixing and solving things in this manner will go over much better than if differences of opinion are being shouted and yelled at board meetings, letters to the editor, etc. Such things make you as a leader look weak, and reflect poorly on your ability to do your job.

**Questions for Discussion:**

*What can you do to avoid ugly public conflicts as an admin?*

*What/ who might be some good sources of assistance / feedback / etc. for new admins as they begin their administrative career?*

*How might we help create more school funds, thus alleviating some of the natural tension that develops over allocations of limited funding?*