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7

Education Integrity

This chapter explores various professions involved in the field of education along with their responsibilities. The professions that will be discussed involve school administration. The administration of a school includes the Board of Education, the Principal, and the teacher. Each of these professions has distinct responsibilities to the school district in which they are involved. Other areas to be discussed in this chapter that affect integrity in education are the roles and responsibilities of students and parents.

In addition to the information in this chapter it is important to note that I have written additional information related to integrity in education. I have written an article titled Integrity in Education and publication is expected to be late August or early September 2005 as part of the Education Division of ASQ (American Society for Quality). The article will be posted on my web site www.myqualitywriting.com and can be found on the free articles or published articles link.

The student plays an important role in the success of a school system and its projection of integrity as seen by the public. This statement is true in that those students who do not exhibit integrity by applying their learning capabilities affect the projection of a successful school system. While some students may not realize the

impact to them or their community, it is important that we try to give examples where the impact can be shown. This can be accomplished through news articles and magazines. Another method is through the Internet. If students do not apply themselves with their best effort and capabilities, the performance statistics of the school are affected.

Schools are rated and compared to other schools in their local economy and in national trends and data. Students must have integrity in their efforts to learn the subjects being taught. A code of ethics for students will be discussed through examples later in this chapter.

Students have requirements for integrity and parents have a responsibility to know about their schools and their operations. The success and reputation of the school can also have an impact on local economies from business expansion to drawing interest for new companies and jobs. Companies in the past have looked at several aspects before deciding to locate in communities. Only one of these is the school system. Other areas involve such things as traffic control, shopping, business services and population in regards to employment resources that may be needed to satisfy their company needs now and in the future.

The existence of or nonexistence of integrity in the professions, students and parents shown above has a big impact to a school district or even a private school for its successful operation. If each of the groups identified above do not exhibit integrity in everything they do, the success of the school district or school not only can but will be affected. A school that does not portray quality and integrity in the management of the learning capabilities will not attract new business or new students. This is especially true in the area of private schools. Private schools are especially hard hit if they develop a reputation, for instance, that the teachers are not qualified to teach the subjects they are assigned or actions are not taken when there appears to be failure in specific classes.

It is therefore important for any school to exhibit integrity and to take actions needed to protect its public image. Part of the integrity of any school is the qualifications of the teachers they employ to

teach the subjects within it. If there is a lack of knowledge by the teachers for teaching specific subjects, the success of the students to pass will be impacted. This will or may affect their success in the job market and acceptance in future schools. Companies look to grades in specific subjects for certain categories for the needs of their companies. You need good grades in specific subjects to be successful in certain industry fields. Some of these subjects are math, English, and science. An example would be if a job requires writing reports that are understood and clear, a good background in English would be helpful.

In public schools, the professions that are operating under an umbrella of integrity can be impacted as much as those, which are not. This is based on the process of communication. If proper communication exists and parents are involved with their school operations, they know if integrity exists and how well the teachers are teaching the subjects they are assigned. The perception of integrity can and does affect school funding when schools propose bond issues on the local ballot. Those schools that earn a reputation of not managing the money they receive with integrity will have a much harder time passing a bond issue than those that do project and communicate a sense of integrity.

The role of school administration has responsibilities along with the Board of Education. Administration of the school district plays an integral part in establishing a district with integrity. The public's perception of integrity within a school district depends upon the management in place and their method of operation. If schools do not operate their finances with integrity and watch how they spend the money they now receive, future-funding issues could or will be impacted. I have seen this in my local area through news reports on school operations giving a perception that makes it harder for schools to obtain increased funding. Once a reputation is earned by a school district that it is not managing its money wisely, bond issues are harder to get passed.

Changing this perception can be difficult and may be accomplished over time. Even if the need exists, the perception of mismanagement of funds makes people dissatisfied with the

operation of the school. The only way a school can change its perception is to have the public involved in its operations. Also parents can play an integral role in changing this perception by becoming involved with their children's education and seeing the examples where credible efforts are being used to teach the required subjects.

School administration responsibilities according to the Department of Labor at <http://www.bls.gov/> has the following requirements. First in elementary and secondary schools the people who are in charge of the schools are called principals. This position and the people who occupy it set the academic tone of the school. This makes this position an integral part in the school's operation, success and reputation. Principals also have responsibility for hiring, evaluating, and helping to improve the skills of teachers and other staff members. Principals have a responsibility to meet with other administrators, students, parents and representatives of community organizations.

This helps to communicate activities of the school and the problems that the school may be facing regarding a successful operation. This gives the public a chance to give input as to the methods in place to operate the school successfully. If the principal does not perform this aspect, communication between the public and the school administration is lacking. Open communication is always a plus when dealing with the education of children in a community.

Principals also get involved with the budget aspect of running a school system and typically oversee the allocation of supplies. This is an important aspect of managing a school system. The money spent must be done wisely to get the best benefit for everyone, the teachers and the students. If the money is misused, the efficiency and perception to the public can be impacted. Principals must assure that there is money for needed school activities with a priority on the supplies needed to teach the subjects required. Teachers must have the best textbooks and supplies that are available on the market within the money available.

Principals must also become involved to assure that methods are in place to ensure that the students of the district meet any state or

national academic standards. This part of the responsibility involves assessing the performance of teachers within the district and determines the proper assignment of subjects to the teachers that have the credentials to teach them. Therefore, any person who applies for the position of principal should possess the quality of integrity and be able to prove it. Past work history and any recommendation letters provided can sometimes accomplish this. In addition, this should be part of the evaluation process to determine if the principal is accomplishing the tasks assigned.

The position of school principal is an important aspect of any school system as identified in the responsibilities noted above. In this situation the quality and integrity of the school district are in the hands of the principal. However, even though he or she is responsible, they have other team members, which also play a role and have an impact. While the principal is an integral part of the system, it is made up of teachers, students, the Board of Education and yes the parents. The impact of integrity or the lack of it will be discussed with examples provided through personal experiences and research.

The principal has an important role and it must be one that is performed to the best of his or her capabilities. The tasks that were identified above are important to the success of the school district in teaching students. If a bad teacher exists in the system or one who is not properly trained, it is the responsibility of the principal to take the necessary action or actions to achieve the desired results. A teacher who does not perform or meets established guidelines for their subject should be counseled and provided further training where it is needed. If a teacher receives a complaint from a parent, the principal should work to establish the problem and take any necessary action. Everyone deserves a fair hearing before disciplinary action is taken.

The principal should hold teachers to a high degree of integrity in accomplishing their assigned task or tasks. If teachers do not exhibit integrity and quality in the process of their teaching, it may be time for the principal to start looking for a replacement. It is the principal's responsibility to have teachers who care about their

profession and to make the necessary changes to assure that the students receive the attention needed for them to be successful. This can involve passing tests for college or meeting the grade and/or requisite requirements for the job market. Again some companies look at how well a student performs in regards to specific subjects that apply to specific industries and companies. A student that does not do well in school for certain courses may not get the chance to achieve success in certain industries. This does not necessarily mean the student does not have the knowledge or potential to succeed but that they will not get the opportunity to prove it.

It is also the responsibility of the principal to ensure that teachers teach subjects for which they are qualified. They should not be assigned to teach subjects that they have no specific training or certification based on their degree. Qualifications to be included are a degree with a major or minor for specific subjects along with any certification that is available or required. It is important to note that any responsibilities that are given to a principal in a public school environment, the authority must also be given to enforce the rules as they are identified. Giving someone the responsibilities without giving them the authority is doomed to failure. There can be a review process to assure that the rights of individuals are protected but the principal should be given the resources to assure success of the school system and the students within it.

Principals in private schools may not have total control of school operations as it exists in public education. Therefore, the authority granted to a principal or administrator is usually limited in nature. Whatever authority is given should be documented in the contract that the principal signs when the position is filled. However, where limitations do exist they should be clearly defined in writing. This principal or administrator is dependent upon the language used at a private school. He or she should have input in the process for any actions that are taken where he or she does not have the authority.

If the school principal or administrator in a private school disagrees with the policies, he may not have much choice. The governing body of a private school is similar to the organization in the public schools but the authority is more specific. Those bodies

should give the responsibility to the principal but there should be an avenue for appeal. If the principal is right in whatever action he or she takes, then the governing body of the school should be supportive. While this may not be popular in some cases, it would add credibility and integrity in the operations of the school. As parents we would then know that the principal has both the authority and responsibility to make decisions necessary for the school and students to succeed.

If you were anticipating sending your child or children to a private school environment, it would be advisable to determine the level of control a principal or administrator has over the school operations. Is there a defined process that is both efficient and logical? There should be avenues for appeal and any governing body should be available to the parents for appeal of any decisions made. Different schools have different structures. It would be best to determine the level of action needed to be taken to correct any situations which surfaces associated with teacher failure or student problems. Also parents should know the process when they have a complaint about their child's education and the teacher's performance in that endeavor.

Later in this chapter information will be presented to identify the level of teaching qualifications for this country as collected by the Department of Education. This information will show how many teachers are teaching out of their subject areas. Numbers do not tell the whole story, however, since there may be teachers or other people that are qualified to teach specific subjects that are not considered before being granted access to the teaching profession. Being certified or meeting the qualifications of teachers within a state can vary widely. If you are considering being a teacher, it is best to search information within your state for the qualifications of teachers for the public school system.

Our public schools and the private schools should have the most qualified teachers that meet the necessities of the students within the school or school district. This aspect is governed by the money available for the public school district through bond issues for its operation. The private schools are governed by how successful they

are in getting new students and retaining the ones they have. A school that does not have the most qualified teachers will be hurting when it comes to its public image and reputation. A school with a bad reputation can impact the success of its students to be successful in the job market. This can be true if the reputation becomes public knowledge and is known within the business community.

Teachers should also be paid a decent salary. With a decent salary comes the requirement that they be evaluated properly as to their successful teaching methods. Each teacher has his or her methods to teach the classes they are assigned. They should be afforded some leverage in this respect. However, the success of the methods used should be evaluated against the passing percentage of the students in the class. If the passing percentage is low for the class, the reason should be explored and not arbitrarily assign the blame to the teacher. There could be circumstances that affect the percentage of passing students that may be out of the teacher's control. If it is found to be the case, the teacher should not be penalized.

If students fail a class, especially several of them, the teacher may have failed in his or her duty to provide the proper method to reach the students. The teacher may have failed because they are teaching subjects they are not qualified to teach or have not taken the effort to reach the needs of individual students. The student does have some responsibility, however, in their attendance in a classroom environment. They should provide their best effort to learn the subject being taught. If students do not want to learn, a teacher must reach out to motivate a student's desire. One thing to look at is whether the student is successful in other classes.

Teachers deserve a fair hearing when there are failures in the classroom. If it is determined after looking at the information available that a teacher has failed in his or her duties and holds the proper credentials, the principal must take any appropriate action. The principal or administrator must take necessary action (s) to protect school integrity, the integrity of the remaining teachers, and the successful education of the students.

The integrity of teachers is important as it provides either a good or bad example for the students they teach. To have integrity, teachers should have the necessary qualifications to teach the subject for which they are assigned. Also, teachers also should take great care in establishing the lesson plans for their individual subjects. This they must do to verify the information and to assure it is accurate and complete to the best of their knowledge. This does not mean that they should analyze all the data in the textbook only that a reasonable effort should be made to validate the data it provides. In making this effort, the teacher should have data that this effort was accomplished, if asked. This may happen if facts presented are in error.

Choosing a textbook for specific subjects should be carefully done to accomplish the mission of teaching with the best textbook for the money available. Sometimes this authority is not given to teachers. If this is the case in a school district, the person making the determination has a responsibility to assure it is the best textbook available for the price. Price should not be the overriding factor in the decision to choose a textbook. The publisher should be reviewed as to quality, accuracy and content before a decision is made to select a specific textbook.

Teachers do have a responsibility, however, to make sure the information is as accurate as can be determined before it is presented to their students. Textbooks should be up-to-date with the access of current information to add to the subject, as new information is available. In today's world information is fast becoming outdated, in some cases daily and the tools need to be available to teachers to keep the information current.

Teaching qualifications are important as it impacts the learning potential and sometimes the capability of students to learn. If a teacher does not have the applicable state or national certification required in teaching a given subject, the course integrity is impacted. The principal of the school should be assured that teachers who teach in their school have the valid credentials for their assigned subjects. A principal should not assign subjects to teachers who do not have the proper qualifications or background for subjects

assigned. The principal in this respect is responsible for assuring that proper assignments are made to teachers with the qualifications for the subject. If a teacher does not have the required credentials, it is not the fault of the teacher if he or she fails in the effort to teach but the failure is that of the principal and the Board of Education. They should assure teachers are assigned to teach subjects for which they are qualified.

Integrity as a teacher should be such that if they are assigned to teach a subject, for which they are not qualified, they should inform their principal to make other assignments. The rules that govern teaching must also be equally applied. Teachers should strive to provide the same level of education to all students not just a few. While there are good and bad teachers, this chapter will attempt to provide examples through research and personal experience as a teacher how integrity plays an important role. Some examples were provided in the preceding chapter on personal integrity. Students can sense whether the person teaching has integrity. If teachers do not project the quality of integrity, then the message being taught could be lost in the process.

The Department of Education web site identifies the definition of out-of-field teachers as those who do not have a major, a minor or certification in the subject taught. In the next two paragraphs is the statistics as listed on the Department of Education web site for teachers with the above definition?

Teacher qualification is critical for the subjects they teach. The following statistics for grades 5-9 identifies that in 1999-2000 11-14 percent of the students taking social science, history and foreign languages and 14-22 percent of students taking English, mathematics, and science were led by teachers without credentials to teach the subjects.

“In the high school grades 10-12 between 5-10 percent of the students in classes in English, mathematics, science and the sub fields of biology/life science and chemistry, social science and the sub field of history, arts and music, and physical education/health education had teachers who were without a major, a minor, or certification in the field taught, and thus are considered out-of-field

by this measure. Within the sub fields of science, 17 percent of the high school students enrolled in physics and 36 percent of those enrolled in geology/earth/space science were in classes led by out-of-field teachers. In addition, 31 percent of the high school students enrolled in ESL/bilingual education classes had out-of-field teachers.”

“When the definition of out-of-field is expanded to include teachers who do not hold certification and a major in the subject taught, the amount of out-of- field teaching percentages with this measure, at a minimum six out of every 10 middle-grade students in classes in English; foreign languages; mathematics; science, including the sub fields of biology/life science and physical science; history; and ESL/bilingual education was in classes led by out-of-field teachers in 1999– 2000. The proportions were higher for some subjects, with 73 percent of the students enrolled in ESL/bilingual education classes, 69 percent of the middle-grade students enrolled in mathematics, 71 percent in history, and 93 percent of the students enrolled in physical science in classes led by teachers without majors and certification in these fields.”

The numbers in the above two paragraphs reflect an improvement from the 1987-1988 time period. For specific details and comparisons between 1987-1988 and the 1999-2000 you can go to the Department of Education web site and search under teacher qualifications. The web site is <http://www.ed.gov/>. Student integrity is also important. Students who come to class either as children or adults need to come with a willingness to learn the subject being taught. This aspect affects both public and private schools.

From <http://www.teacher.com/> web site it states that
A good teacher explains.
A superior teacher demonstrates.
A great teacher inspires.

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Should Know and Be Able to Do; <http://www.nbpts.org/>. All rights reserved.

There is a process to establish a National Board of Teacher Certification. This certification is part of the National Board of Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS) organization. This board has what is called a Master Teacher Certification examination. As of the writing of this book more than 24,000 teachers in the United States have this certification. The certification involves the following five core propositions.

- . Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- . Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach the subjects to students
- . Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- . Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from their experience
- . Teachers are members of learning communities

The certification involves a strict examination and a track record of excellence as demonstrated by student achievement. The cost of the certification examination is \$2,300. This is a fairly new program and it is having a positive effect upon the teaching profession. The following paragraphs identify the details of this certification process. As of November 2002 there were almost 24,000 National Board Certified Teachers in the schools across America. This information was obtained through the National Board of Certified Teachers web site.

In a report issued in 2001 called the Impact of National Board Certification of Teachers it stated that Ninety-one (91%) percent said that the certification positively affected their teaching practices. A total of 61% reported positive changes in students, engagement, achievement and motivation. A total of 81% said the process was better than other professional development experiences.

The process of a National Certification for teachers involves two major parts. The first is a portfolio, which consists of videotaping their teaching, gathering student learning products and other teaching artifacts, and providing detailed analyses of their practice. The portfolio requires that teachers describe, analyze, explain, and reflect on their practice. They must provide insight into not just what is happening in their classroom, but the rationale for those events and processes. This causes more work for the teacher but it results in a better quality student. This increases the ability of the student to succeed further in school and the job market.

The second part of the certification process is the assessment center, which contains assessment exercises that are focused on a candidate's content knowledge. The exercises are computer-administered in the spring and summer months at testing centers, which are located in every state in the nation. There are more than three hundred centers.

After these are accomplished there is a scoring portion. It is based on all of a candidate's responses: videotapes, student work samples, candidates' analysis, and written responses to assessment center exercises. There is no one approach to a National Certification. There is a scoring institute, which guides' participants in the scoring process.

From the details of the examination process you can arrive at the conclusion that those who go through this process are dedicated to their profession and want to do a good job. This national certification is building quality assurance and professional accountability in the profession and is providing a new definition of excellence in teaching. There is a direct connection between what teachers know and what students learn.

The National board has developed a cutting-edge, performance-based assessment to measure teaching practice against the high and rigorous standards. The information in the preceding paragraph was taken from the National Board of Certified Teachers web site. This National certification is not meant to be a replacement for any licensure requirements as defined in each state. However, it does add some credibility and recognition to those teachers who go the extra

mile to be the best in their profession. Also because of the expense involved in a national certification and the fact that it marks a strong commitment to be the best they can be, schools should support teachers who take this initiative. If it is possible school systems should recognize this effort and help in the cost of the certification process.

For more details you can visit the National Board of Certified Teachers web site at <http://www.nbpts.com>.

Also to be mentioned further is the need to recognize that people in private industry who are in positions of authority or responsibility may have the knowledge to teach specific subjects. Some of this knowledge can be exhibited by working in specific positions for companies. Other evidence of knowledge may be the result of certifications that are earned for specific topics. The people that have the knowledge or experience should be afforded the opportunity to teach those subjects. If we can have people teach specific subjects that they are qualified to teach, this would add a mechanism to apply real world experiences to the classroom environment.

Some of the certifications that are possible were identified in the chapter on quality and integrity. For additional subjects for which certifications are available you can search the Internet for the term professional certifications. There are so many certifications available that they could not be listed in this book.

I believe that there exist today people who would add integrity to a classroom environment by bringing knowledge of real life situations for the subjects to students. In this way having the capability of providing the connection can add importance to the subject. A teacher must be able to project the application of the subject being taught to real life situations and how it applies in the job market. Without this, the students may not recognize the importance and not apply themselves. While this aspect may be limited within public schools under the present system there are ways available for people wanting to provide this connection to teach what they know. Anyone interested in teaching should check

with their state governments for qualifications and their local community colleges for adult teaching.

Students should work within their capabilities to learn the subject being taught. As an adult taking a class you have an interest or need for the subject. There are cases where taking a class may be a requirement to maintain your current employment or increase your chances for promotion. In either case a student should fully apply his or her efforts to learn the subject. The following characteristics of student integrity should be a part of all students' characteristics. These are being identified for information purposes. It is important to note that all levels of education from the school administration to the students themselves should possess integrity. If integrity is not present for the successful operation of a school or university, it will affect the successful entrance into the work place. A number of colleges and universities have a code of ethics, which involve integrity characteristics, which students must adhere to, and they identify consequences for violation of those requirements.

Student integrity characteristics or expectations are identified with the following example.

The University of Puget Sound has developed six standard codes of integrity. The web site for this information is <http://www.ups.edu.com/>. The following is the listing of these codes. They are reprinted with the permission of the University of Puget Sound as they are written on the web site.

. **Standard One.** —A member of the Puget Sound community must not harm someone physically or psychologically, or cause him or her to fear being harmed.

. **Standard Two.** —A member of the Puget Sound community must not engage in activities that threaten the safety and security of the University or its members.

. **Standard Three.** A member of the Puget Sound community must not possess, use, distribute, sell or engage in activities with the intention of distributing any controlled substance or illegal drug on University premises or at University—and sponsored activities.

. **Standard Four.** A member of the Puget Sound community shall abide by the university's alcohol and drug policies and procedures

and shall not consume alcohol, serve alcohol to host parties at which alcohol is served or consumed in violation of University policies or state, federal or local regulations.

. **Standard Five.** A member of the Puget Sound community shall become informed about the rights and responsibilities inherent in the Integrity Code. All members will refrain from any interference with the procedures related to the enforcement of the Code or any disciplinary decision will agree to fulfill any sanction properly imposed under the provisions of the Integrity Code.

. **Standard Six.** A member of the Puget Sound community shall not violate published University regulations and policies, including, but not limited to, the University Residence Policy, the Alcohol and Drug Policy, academic regulations, or other university policies required for the safety and orderly operation of the University.

Under the above code the students have certain rights identified under the code.

The first one listed is the right to specific information about an alleged violation of the Standards, so that a student may prepare a defense. The second involves the right to receive written notice about both the alleged violation and a description of the process by which it will be adjudicated, as well as sufficient time to prepare for such adjudication.

Another right involves the right to choose options for the adjudication of an alleged violation including an opportunity for peer adjudication by the Student Honor Court as well as less formal administrative methods. The fourth right is the right to due process, which provides for the reasonable and fair enforcement of the policies and procedures which accompany the Principles and Standards, including the right to timely resolution of a crisis and, where appropriate, confidentiality as an important consideration governing a student's return to full participation in the community.

Another source of student integrity requirements is identified in the UCLA Student guide to Academic Integrity. The information from this source is good but as of the submittal of this book for publishing, permission was not granted to allow the use of the information. I do wish to acknowledge that the effort was made to

determine if the use of the information was within the objectives of the University of California at Los Angeles. I respect that my request was considered in relation to the integrity of the University. Without identifying specifics about the university guidelines and requirements, the University of Los Angeles has a defined program to promote integrity and identifies the process involved when the requirements appear to be violated. If you wish specific information regarding the Student Guide to Academic Integrity, I encourage you, the reader, to access the university web site for more information.

The above are examples of two universities guidelines/requirements for academic student integrity. These examples are excellent for students to follow anywhere. However, there is currently no set standard for student integrity within the United States as part of the Department of Education. There is a site <http://www.collegepubs.com/> that identifies a student code of ethics and includes much information. If more information is desired on the subject of student integrity, you can access the web site noted in the previous sentence and paragraph. I would like to give thanks for the identification of this site as it was provided as part of the permission to use the University of Puget Sound information.

The next chapter covers political integrity. The information presented identifies the rules and regulations that are part of the federal government. We should be aware of these and make sure that our public officials adhere to the rules set in place.

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