



# The Beacon

A Publication of The Pennsylvania  
School Study Council

Fall 2006

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

## “Fast-food Discipline’ and Principals Decisions”

Dr. Gerald K. LeTendre  
The Penn State University

*And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea.*

*In a minute there is time  
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.*

T.S. Eliot. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. The Waste Land and Other Poems, Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1934: 4-5

## Decisions, Decisions, Decisions: Linking the Principal’s Work with Naturalistic Decision Models

The modern life is replete with decisions. Many of us can easily feel overloaded by all the choices we have to make, and can even come to find ourselves in a deadlocked state of mind, with hundreds of decisions racing through our heads, much like J. Alfred Prufrock. Scholars of decision-making argue that people, especially professionals, deal with the problems posed by all these decisions by relying on past experience – recognizing patterns that have occurred in previous, similar situations (Klein, 1998). This formulation is similar to those employed by psychologists who study “judgment” (see chapters in Kahneman, Slovic & Tversky, 1982).

There is a hierarchy to our decision making, from quick, impulse-driven choices that cereal marketers like to study (Mariampolski, 2006). Much of the work on decision-making, particularly within administrative science, has aimed at making decisions more “rational” (see Bell, Raiffa & Tversky, 1988 for an overview of aims and methods in decision science). The “rational choice” models have, at their core, assumptions about human decision-making that have not held up well in actual studies of how people make decisions. Rather than being dispassionate, rational actors who weigh costs and benefits, human beings are driven by emotions, beliefs and even ethics in their decision making. An alternative set of theories and models has arisen from naturalistic decision making studies that have examined how people make decisions in real life (Janis & Mann, 1977; Freeland, 1997; Klein,

## Editor:

**Todd Hosterman**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

## Editorial Board:

**Bernard J. Badiali**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Dennis Baughman**  
*Northeastern School District*

**Marilyn Begley**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Paul T. Begley**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**William L. Boyd**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Susan C. Faircloth**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Vito Forlenza**  
*Pennsylvania School Study Council*

**Debra M. Freedman**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Albert Glennon**  
*Pennsylvania School Study Council*

**Preston C. Green**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**William T. Hartman**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Salvatore F. Luzio Sr.**  
*Riverside School District*

**Daniel J. Marshall**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**James F. Nolan**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Kai A. Schafft**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Roger C. Shouse**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Jacqueline A. Stefkovich**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Iris M. Striedieck**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**John W. Tippeconnic**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

**Karen Tzilkowski**  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

1998; Zey, 1992).

Why are these theories of value to principals or scholars interested in questions of leadership, values and ethics? There are two main reasons. First, these models suggest that traditional training (like that offered in many educational leadership programs) in rational decision making may ill prepare principals for the decisions they will actually encounter. Second, these studies give us insights into how other professionals make decisions (especially in high stress situations when human life and safety are at stake), and provide possible models for understanding how to better prepare principals. As Wolcott (1973:88) states: "The greatest part of a principal's time is spent in an almost endless series of encounters, from the moment he arrives at school until the moment he leaves. Most of these encounters are face-to-face, tending to keep the principalship a highly personal role." The implication is that most of a principal's decisions will also be made in this "highly personal" mode – not decisions that entail elaborate, rational processing of risks and outcomes.

In this paper I use two ethnographic studies that contain specific studies of principals (e.g. Wolcott, 1973; LeTendre, 2000) to illustrate how social contexts drive principals to what I call, "recognition primed" decisions. Like Klein, I argue that principals make decisions quickly by relying on past experiences. However, given that principals work in much more institutionalized environments<sup>1</sup> -- and make highly emotionally charged decisions that frequently have significant legal repercussions – their decisions are much more likely to be affected by institutional scripts or "storylines" of behavior. Scholars like Simon (1976) and Meyer (1970) have already noted the importance that rational myths play in the organizational structure and process of schooling. My own work (LeTendre, 2000) shows that certain rational myths provide institutionalized packages of meanings that drive students, teachers and principals' expectations and beliefs. My work also shows that these myths can drive the emotions of school participants in any given situation – an important element in driving how decisions are made (see LeTendre, 1991; 1999).

### **Literature Review**

#### The Crucial Role of the Principal

Although it is likely redundant for this audience, U.S. literature to date shows that school principals play key roles in a wide-range

of school functions, particularly those involving student behavior and the prevention of violence, drug-abuse, depression and a host of other social and emotional ills. Perhats et al. (1996) and Gottfredson et al. (2000) found that principals are the single individual most critical to program adoption and support of program quality implementation in delinquency prevention programs. Principals also play key roles in long-term maintenance and implementation of ATOD abuse prevention programs (D. C. Gottfredson, Fink, Skroban, & Gottfredson, 1997). While U.S., principals are key gatekeepers in the decision-process for adopting school-based prevention programs and strategies, the empirical evidence is somewhat conflicted. Hallfors & Van Dorn (2002, p.24) state: "Schools have been more likely to adopt a "zero tolerance" approach to drug use [than a prevention approach.]" Over time, studies of U.S. school administrator decision-making regarding drugs, search and surveillance practices, and "zero tolerance" routines suggest that principals' decision-making often relies on informal networks to gain knowledge of what "works" and, thus, may not be responsive to national efforts to disseminate information on what programs truly are effective (Crockett, 1995; Greenberg, 2004).

Within the last two decades preventing substance abuse and delinquency have been added to the public school's charter. Over time the list of social change functions required of schools (both legally and socially) has expanded. School administrators and teachers now face classic limitations on organizational resources. The school staff may not be able to do all the law requires them to do. This means that administrators must "satisfice," appearing to satisfy broader social or legal calls for change functions while protecting resources to support the core function of classroom instruction (see Simon, 1976). U.S. principals are also constantly pressed for time and resources. This means that programs with delayed results or non-measurable results, such as prevention programs, may be not be adopted. Instead, principals' time and resources are often focused on what needs to be fixed immediately rather than what might need to be fixed in the future.

Research to date suggests that patterns of program adoption in public school districts are significantly influenced by administrative attempts to attain legitimacy by appearing "tough on drugs." Administrators must respond to demands for legitimacy from local constituencies. Problems can arise when

exclusionary practices are carried out over the objection of parents or in opposition to parental perceptions of legitimacy. For example, in the highly publicized "Midol Case," an eighth grader was suspended for ten days for taking Midol from the nurse's office to relieve her menstrual cramps and then giving one of the tablets to another student under the school's "zero-tolerance" drug policy. The student was also given an 80-day expulsion (later modified to the three days), and subsequently brought family members and attorneys to school. The potential for significant opposition from local parents or student rights groups means that administrators must be sensitive to the organization's local environment. During the principal's busy day, he or she must rapidly assess the impact of discipline decisions in terms of their political, legal and emotional outcomes.

#### Unique Characteristics of Discipline in U.S. Schools

U.S. principals are under particular pressure to engage in multiple decisions with extensive, cross-cutting repercussions due to the organization of discipline in U.S. schools. For example, in Japanese schools, virtually all discipline matters are taken care of by the teachers (LeTendre, 2000). Similar structures also appear to be in place in Sweden (Shimahara & Sakai, 1998). There does appear to be considerable variation within the U.S. pattern. However, much of this appears linked to the individual principal's policies on discipline. As Wolcott (1977) noted, some principals may "hold the line" and force teachers to deal with difficult or persistent discipline problems in their class. However, the fact that individual principals must make a decision to "hold the line," already exposes one key rationalized myth of U.S. school organization – teachers should teach, not "waste" time on disciplining students.

U.S. schools employ a variety of organizational responses to dealing with discipline. Larger schools frequently assign a vice-principal for discipline to buffer the principal from such demands. Other, more democratically organized schools, may create school governing committees like those I studied in California (LeTendre, 2000). These committees often meet on a weekly basis and consist of senior teachers representing multi-disciplinary teams, grades as well as administrators and specialists like the principal and vice principal, a representative of the special education, and the school counselor. These committees may serve multiple purposes, and

often deal with "burning" issues and pressing problems. As such, they probably offer the best model of ways to keep administrators well abreast of emerging patterns of disruption. Such committees help to make classroom teachers feel that they have a closer link to the principal and discipline decisions. Unfortunately, we have no systematic data on how widespread these practices are.

Schools also typically coordinate with some local agencies. Use of police and local D.A.R.E. (drug prevention) programs are the most common form of prevention. Gottfredson et al. (2000) found that middle and high schools implement, on average, nine delinquency prevention programs per school, with some schools (in a nation-wide study) implementing 14 separate programs. In these kinds of schools, principals become more managers of processes and programs, rather than "first responders." Many schools also employ specific classroom management techniques, which can help alleviate the tide of discipline referrals flooding the school office. Some curricular innovations or reforms (e.g. cooperative groupwork, Cohen, 1994) actually include expectations for roles and norms and prepare teachers to re-socialize students in ways that diminish conflict and disruption. Again, we have little data on how widespread these innovations are, or of the quality of their implementation.

However, even in affluent districts with ample school resources and relatively few severe individual or family-background related problems, these systems can break down. The following case illustrates how a principal's (vice principal in this case) decision-making is swiftly molded by the immediate demands upon his time.

#### **Case 1: Whodunnit?**

**[Source: LeTendre, 2000: 48-50]**

*The first two hours of the morning, Dave Jarvis, the vice-principal at Pleasant Meadows, has been responding to various calls from teachers about classroom disturbances. He has just returned to his office after quieting students in a class with a substitute teacher. There are two boys waiting for him on the chairs outside his office.<sup>ii</sup>*

*Ben is a tall, slightly overweight African-American boy. His Bengal Tiger's sweatshirt has streaks of yellow dirt, and he slumps back in his chair. Oliver is a slender, angular Euro-American boy dressed in a clean white*

shirt and jeans. This will be the first time meeting Ben. Oliver, on the other hand, is well known to from classes and from teacher gossip. His older brother, Jesse, has been the subject of much rumor around the school for his disruptive behavior and defiant attitude.

Oliver accuses Ben of stealing his holographic video game cards: the video-age equivalent of baseball cards where figures from cartoons, comics or video games are depicted in a three dimensional layout. The problem surfaced in third period English class when the boys got into an argument. Oliver discovered his binder of cards was missing. Both boys have been here for about 20 minutes. Dave calls Pierre (a third boy from the class) from class to be a witness for Oliver. Dave expresses his exasperation:

"Should I even waste my time on this? Oliver, you know you are not supposed to bring cards in. Should I just let your Mom call the police?"

Dave called Ben's house to confirm Ben's story that he had just bought some cards. The father was out (he works nearly 40 miles away in another city) but the father's girlfriend confirmed that Ben was given ten dollars to buy new cards. At this point, Dave departs to attend a previously arranged meeting with Stan (the principal) and leaves the boys alone in the office with me, with the door open, telling them to come to some settlement among themselves.

Oliver and Pierre accuse Ben of stealing the cards. Ben adamantly maintains that the cards were his. Pierre describes how he saw Ben "messing around" with Oliver's bag. He says that he saw Ben take something out of the bag. However, Oliver kept his cards in a green folder which many of the students have, so there is no way to identify if Ben took Oliver's folder. Pierre further accuses Ben of trying to sell some of Oliver's cards to him. Oliver and Pierre now get excited as they talk about the Spiderman card they believe that Ben tried to sell. This card, they say, is very rare (\$50 value) and can't be found readily in the local card shops. Having this card in his possession would "prove" Ben did it.

The case is full of twists and turns. Ben admits he had a Spiderman card, but said he has

already sold the card to someone else. Just as this revelation comes to light, Dave brings in Michael, Roy and Nick who have been accused of throwing an eraser at a substitute -- an offense punishable by suspension. Michael describes the scene: "The whole room was up and moving. One kid threw an eraser at the sub. Somebody yelled 'Michael you did it.'"

Dave sends Oliver and Pierre back to class, Ben however, is forced to wait in the office. Dave, meanwhile, questions Michael, Roy and Nick's story, trying to find out who threw a small, lemon-colored, heart-shaped pencil eraser at the substitute teacher. The offending bit of rubber sits on Dave's desk, and he toys with it occasionally. Rachel, a chubby girl in a stripped shirt is called in. She says that she saw Mike pick up the eraser. Dave, however, seems inclined to think that Nick did it, and tells him "If you are in here again, I'll have to suspend you." The office secretary pokes her head in and says in a strained voice that the teacher in 112, yet another classroom, needs an administrator.

Dave ignores this, and we proceed to walk to Nick, Roy and Michael's classroom. Dave takes over from the sub, a rotund man in jeans and a jeans-shirt with round eyeglasses and berates the class for not listening to the sub. Nick and many of the other kids giggle when Dave holds up the offending eraser.

We leave this class and go back to the office. Besides Ben, six other young adolescents are waiting to see Dave, and we still have not visited 112. We quickly go out to yet another classroom (not 112) so that Dave can check on a new sub, and then back to the office where Dave takes two fifth graders (a boy and girl) and brings them into the office. The boy called the girl "dumb" and the girl hit the boy. Dave brings up the young adolescents' telephone numbers on his computer screen and calls the parents. Both are given detention, the little girl is sobbing though the boy seems nonchalant.

It is now lunchtime. Ben is still waiting, but Dave has to supervise the lunch line and hand out balls for young adolescents to use on the basketball courts.

Returning near the end of lunch period, the office is now clear of students except for Ben. Ben has been there since the beginning of third

period (over three hours). Dave gives him some pretzels since the boy did not get a chance to get any lunch. Dave tries again to call the father and gets through, confirming that Ben did have money for cards. The father agrees to round up any cards Ben has at home and bring them into the school. Finally, late in the fifth period, Ben is given a pass to go back to class at the start of sixth period.

Ben and the card incident quickly dropped out of sight. Each day brought similar loads of student problems to the vice-principal's office. When I asked Dave about the incident two days later, I found out that Ben's father had come in after school the next day bringing Ben and all of his cards. Oliver was not able to positively identify any of the stolen cards. The Spiderman card had somehow been returned. I asked Dave if it might be possible that Oliver was lying, and that Ben was in the clear all along. "No, I think he took them, but he's smart enough to get away with it."

#### **Case 2: Stealing [Wolcott, 1977:140]**

Mrs. Wendy, the school counselor, came into the office one April morning and asked Ed [the principal] if he had a few minutes to talk about a problem. She sat in the chair next to Ed's desk and told him that she had just learned about a boy who had stolen two 15¢ bags of marbles from the local drug store in order to "pay back" marbles owed to another child. She asked, "What shall we do?"

Ed said, "Let's get involved. Who is it?" When the counselor told him the name of the boy, Ed said, "That's not his pattern. I'd better go see him. How many kids know about it? Everyone?"

The counselor said, "Only one other boy knows."

Ed said, "The moment I go get him he becomes suspect." They agreed that it would be better for Mrs. Wendy to go to the classroom to summon the boy to the office. Ed said, "I'll be in the office when he gets here."

A few minutes later the boy arrived. Ed explained what he knew of the problem. He confronted the boy with the question, "What could you do about it?"

"Don't steal any more," said the boy.

Ed made some comments about stealing. Then he asked, "How do you feel about this?"

BOY: I feel bad.

ED: Your parents don't know about this, do they?

BOY: No.

ED: Would they feel badly, too?

BOY: Yes.

Ed asked the boy what alternatives he saw for making things right. When the boy suggested paying back the money, Ed asked, "How could you pay the store back?"

BOY: I don't know. I don't have any money.

ED: You don't have a chance to do little jobs and earn money that way?

BOY: No.

ED: Right now I'm a little bit puzzled, just like you are. I don't know what to do.

Ed suggested that the boy talk to Mrs. Wendy, because "she's a pretty good listener." He said, "I promise I won't say anything to your mom unless I call you." He sent the boy back to his classroom. Later in the morning when he saw the counselor again he said to her, "I'm in a real dilemma. If the parents find out about it and learn that I know, they could be real upset at me."

The counselor said, "I really don't see how you can keep from telling them."

"Well, he's really afraid of his parents finding out. It's like putting him into the jaws of a lion," Ed concluded.

#### **Analysis**

These two scenarios reflect radically different conditions under which principals make decisions. The case of stealing, recorded by Wolcott over 20 years ago, evinces many of the positive aspects we would expect of leaders in education. There is a concern with correcting behavior, but also with developing ethical reasoning – an attempt to get the child to understand, take responsibility for the action, and to come up with a solution for his own problematic behavior. The principal also displayed extreme emotional sensitivity to the

child as well as a detailed knowledge of the home situation. Ed deliberately delayed notifying the parents and apparently made complex ethical decision in the process – balancing the parent’s right to know with the well being and education of the child. While we may not agree with Ed’s decisions, the case provides strong evidence that he was making decisions in the sense of actively reasoning about the situation from multiple perspectives.

This kind of case can only arise when specific conditions are met. The principal needs good communication networks with his or her staff, so that he or she has detailed information on the students and their families. The principal, most crucially, needs to have time to pursue the case – time to consider and strategize about what the best ways are to handle the situation, and consider the idiosyncratic points. It also requires a professional who is secure enough in his or her position to risk angering parents.

It is not clear to what extent these two cases form a continuum of decision-making for principals dealing with discipline issues, or rather identify clusters of conditions and behaviors. However, there is some indication that the first case is much more common in schools of poverty, large schools, and schools where there is little integration of teachers into the discipline process. My fieldwork in California, Georgia and Pennsylvania lead me to conclude that the first case is far more typical of how principals and vice-principals in U.S. elementary and middle-grade schools deal with discipline behaviors.

U.S. teachers typically are not responsible for disciplining students who commit serious offences in the ways that teachers in other nations are (see LeTendre, 2000). In the school in case one, once a student was sent out of the class by the teachers to the vice-principal, the teacher was rarely involved in what happened after that. Pleasant Meadow’s teachers even said to their students, "Look I don't want to send you out. If you get sent down to the principal's office, it's an automatic detention." This formal construction of discipline referral increased the strain on the principal, and appeared to undermine his ability to provide any kind of effective leadership in classroom management for teachers. He was reduced by the second or third period of each day, to a reactive mode.

In a school in the same district as Pleasant Meadows – with an overall lower SES level in the community, 187 students passed through the office for one reason or another on a

morning that the secretaries described as "medium."<sup>iii</sup> Typically, each of these young adolescents and their parents expect that the office staff will deal with him or her as an individual. So, even if only a fraction of students are discipline referrals, vice principals are simply unable to spend adequate time on each case. Dave did want to counsel the students he dealt with, and I watched his frustration on most days when he had to "play cop" or administer "fast-food discipline" as he described it. In his situation, it is difficult to see how he could even arrange the time to make more considered decisions.

The organization, and underlying rational myths of the U.S. school system, made the principal responsible for finding a solution. Essentially, he was made to be judge and jury. Oak Grove vice-principals were highly aware of the constraints that the organization of discipline referral placed on their effectiveness as administrators. But Dave was driven by a problem he felt compelled to address: get the cards back to Oliver, and if evidence warranted it, punish the thief. His values, beliefs and expectations were, in all likelihood, overwhelmed by the tasks facing him. The system in Oak Grove and many American middle schools denies the main actor (the vice-principal) access to the information he or she needs as well as the time for considered decisions.

For example, if all the students in Ben and Oliver’s class had been asked to write reflection papers about the incident, and the papers compared by the teacher for inconsistencies in the way Japanese teachers would typically address such an event, there would undoubtedly have been more detailed information available to Dave. Under the system then in place, Dave was never able to resolve the incident to his satisfaction. For Ben, forced to wait and miss three hours of class time, the event must have seemed a terrible injustice. Because of his prior contact with the office, he was assumed guilty until proven innocent.

The ramifications of the decision processes in these two cases go well beyond issues of rationality and efficiency. They include emotional and ethical issues that require true leadership, true modeling of exemplary behavior. More detailed naturalistic studies of principal decision making are needed if we are to understand how school organization and rational myths drive decision styles. Natural decision models offer us a way to connect the aims of

increasing effective leadership along with understanding how principals carry out effective leadership within U.S. schools.

	Vignette 1	Vignette 2
Organization of the duties as well as the structure of referral	No time for reflection and deliberation	Ample time
Community and student population characteristics	Other pressing issues	No other issues
Organization of support staff and administrator/staff relations	No staff to consult with	Supportive staff present
Relations with the school	Not worried about parent response	Worried about parent response

#### Endnotes

- i. The definition of institution used in this article is derived from works by the "new institutionalists." Like the older literature on the social construction of reality, institutional theorists tend to focus on how meaning is organized in mass society and place emphasis on the role institutions play as central elements in ordering the conceptual world. See Paul Dimaggio and Walter Powell, (eds.) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Richard Scott and John Meyer, eds, *Institutional Environments and Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994). One of the most significant works on the social construction of reality is Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor, 1966).
- ii. Sitting in these chairs, or benches generally designates one as "in trouble." Students who pass through the office occasionally query the sitters on "why" they were sent to the office. At Wade, one student remarked to another "What are you down for?"
- iii. Most of these were not discipline referrals. The majority were students needing late-to-class passes, students needing to use a telephone and students who did not feel well.

#### References

- Bell, D., H. Raiffa, et al. (1988). *Decision making: Descriptive, normative and prescriptive interactions*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, E. (1994). "Restructuring the Classroom: Conditions for Productive Small Groups." *Review of Educational Research* 64(1): 1-35.
- Crockett, L. J., A. C. Petersen, et al. (1989). "School Transitions and Adjustment During Early Adolescence." *Journal of Early Adolescence* 9(3): 181-210.
- Freeland, R. F. (1997). "Culture and Volition in Organizational Decision-Making." *Qualitative Sociology* 20(1): 127-137.

---

Gambetta, D. (1987). *Were they pushed or did they jump? Individual decision mechanisms in education*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

- Gottfredson, D., C. M. Fink, et al. (1997). *Making Prevention Work. Establishing Preventive Services*. R. Weissberg, T. Gullotta, R. Hampton, B. Ryan and G. Adams. Thousand Oaks London New Delhi, Sage Publications. 9: 219-251.
- Gottfredson, G., D. Gottfredson, et al. (2000). *National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools*. Ellicott City, Gottfredson Associates, Inc.
- Greenberg, M. T. (2004). "Current and Future Challenges in School-Based Prevention: The Researcher Perspective." *Prevention Science* 5(1): 5-13.
- Hallfors, D. G., D (2002). "Will the 'Principles of effectiveness' Improve Prevention Practice? Early Findings from A Diffusion Study." *Health Education Research* 17(No.4): 461-470.
- Janis, I. and L. Mann (1977). *Decision Making*. New York, The Free Press.
- Kahneman, D., P. Slovic, et al., Eds. (1982). *Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Kalafat, J. D. M. R. (1999). "The Implementation and Institutionalization of School-Based Youth Suicide Prevention Program." *The Journal of Primary Prevention* 19(No.3): 157-175.
- Klein, G. (1998). *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
- LeTendre, G. (1999, October) *Emotional choices: How schools affect the educational decisions of young adolescents and their families*. Paper presented at the National Academy of Education Fall Meeting. Pittsburgh, PA.
- LeTendre, G. (1996b). "Constructed Aspirations: Decision-Making Processes in Japanese Educational Selection." *Sociology of Education* 69(July): 193-216.
- LeTendre, G. (2000). *Learning to be Adolescent: Growing up in U.S. and Japanese Middle Schools*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Mariampolski, H. (2006). *Ethnography for Marketers: A Guide to Consumer Immersion*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Meyer, J. (1970). *The Charter: Conditions of Diffuse Socialization in Schools*. *Social Processes and Social Structures*. W. R. Scott. New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.: 564-578.
- Meyer, J. (1977b). "The effects of education as an institution." *American Journal of Sociology* 83: 55-77.
- Okano, K. (1995). "Rational decision making and school-based job referrals for high school students in Japan." *Sociology of Education* 68(1): 31-47.
- Perhats, C., K. Oh, S.R. Levy, B.R. Flay, and S. McFall (1996). "Role Differences in Gatekeeper Perceptions of School-Based Drug and Sexuality Education Programs: A Cross-Sectional Survey." *Health Education Research* 11(No. 1): 11-27.
- Shimahara, N., Ed. (1998). *Politics of Classroom Life: Classroom Management in International Perspective*. New York, Garland.
- Simon, H. (1976). *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization*. New York, The Free Press.
- Wolcott, H. (1973). *The Man in the Principal's Office*. New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
- Zey, M. (1998). *Rational Choice Theory and Organizational Theory: A Critique*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications.

---

<sup>i</sup> The definition of institution used in this article is derived from works by the "new institutionalists." Like the older literature on the social construction of reality, institutional theorists tend to focus on how meaning is organized in mass society and place emphasis on the role institutions play as central elements in ordering the conceptual world. See Paul Dimaggio and Walter Powell, (eds.) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Richard Scott and John Meyer, eds, *Institutional Environments and Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994). One of the most significant works on the social construction of reality is Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor, 1966).

<sup>ii</sup> "Sitting in these chairs, or benches generally designates one as "in trouble." Students who pass through the office occasionally query the sitters on "why" they were sent to the office. At Wade, one student remarked to another "What are you down for?"

<sup>iii</sup> Most of these were not discipline referrals. The majority were students needing late-to-class passes, students needing to use a telephone and students who did not feel well.

**Editorial Objectives:** The Beacon, as a publication of The Pennsylvania School Study Council, seeks to publish with emphasis on practitioner appeal regarding themes related to K-12 teaching, school leadership, and district administration.

**Manuscript Requirements:** All articles will be reviewed by the editor to determine their suitability for this publication. In addition, at least two additional reviewers will conduct blind reviews of submitted articles. You may submit attached articles electronically to Todd Hosterman at [trh180@psu.edu](mailto:trh180@psu.edu). All electronic submissions must be identified in the subject line of the email as "Beacon Submission Request." Paper submissions will also be considered provided adherence to the following guidelines. Three copies of the manuscript should be submitted. Manuscripts should be double-spaced and leave wide margins. Manuscripts should not identify the author(s) of the work. A separate page should be included which provides the author(s)' details, including contact information (address and e-mail). In addition, an abstract of 100-150 words should be included, as well as up to six keywords, which identify the central subjects, addressed in the manuscript. Diagrams, tables, and figures should be kept at a minimum, appear in black and white, and follow the manuscript in numbered order corresponding to numbered placeholders in the text. Footnotes and Endnotes should be avoided whenever possible.

References should appear in the following format:

Stanley, R. J. & Hollander, M. P. (1992). Beyond the boundaries: The quest for knowledge. *Administrative Life*, 2(3), 36-49.

References and citations should be in alphabetical order, and chronological within alphabetical order. The editor reserves the right to make changes to the manuscript to ensure that it conforms to the house style. Generally, manuscripts should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length. Prospective author(s) must include a statement which indicates they agree to the submission of the manuscript, and that the manuscript has not been published, and is not under consideration for publication, in part or in substance, elsewhere.

**PUBLICATION DETAILS:** The Beacon is an independent publication of The Pennsylvania School Study Council ([www.ed.psu.edu/pssc](http://www.ed.psu.edu/pssc)), which is dedicated to improving education by providing research information, professional development activities, and technical assistance, enabling members to meet current and future challenges.

**EDITORIAL CONTACT INFORMATION:** Address all papers, editorial correspondence, and subscription information requests to: Pennsylvania School Study Council, attn: Editor Todd Hosterman, 200 Rackley Building, Department of Education Policy Studies, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, 16802, United States of America. Tel. 814-865-0321 Fax 814-865-1480 E-mail: [trh180@psu.edu](mailto:trh180@psu.edu)

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U.Ed. EDU 05-19