

The Role of Human Resource Development in Improving K-12 Educational Leadership in Kyrgyzstan*

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Individual interviews and focus groups with 77 K and 1-11 school administrators (directors and zovuchs/assistant directors) and school observations provided the data to explore the needs and possible solutions for improving the developing K-12 school system in Kyrgyzstan. Most needs are open to human resource development (HRD) interventions.

In spite of continuing resistance to political and economic change, Kyrgyzstan currently has a climate for major change in its educational system. As a relatively small country, Kyrgyzstan has the opportunity to experiment with changes, and it is doing so. The financial constraints that exist in Kyrgyzstan call for creative approaches to its educational challenges. The connections that currently exist and the current State Department project in Educational Leadership in Kyrgyzstan (McLean, Seashore, Karimov, & Naimanova, 2001) provide a perfect opportunity to gather the break-through information on educational leadership currently going on. Leadership is a key construct within HRD.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this paper is to describe the current situation of educational leadership or management in Kyrgyzstan, including the existing structure; factors supporting effective educational management; barriers to effective educational management at the primary, secondary and high school levels; and to suggest developmental possibilities at the individual school leader level. Educational management was one of eight problem areas identified in a meeting organized under the Minister of Education and Culture in a large meeting of local and international donor groups in March, 2001 (DeYoung, 2001).

Research Methods

The sources of information for this paper include a review of the literature, though there is very little available in any language, and extensive interviews conducted by McLean and Shin (2002) between May 8 and June 8, 2002, as part of a U.S. State Department grant to the University of Minnesota, with its Kyrgyzstan partners, Arabaev Kyrgyzstan State Pedagogical University (KSPU), and Osh Humanitarian Pedagogical Institute (OHPI). During visits to ten schools in Bishkek and Osh areas, we interviewed individual school Directors (10), Assistants (zovuchs) (about 40), and two representatives from a superintendent's office (2), and conducted three focus groups (26 Directors, but 3 overlapped with individual interviews; 3 Assistant Directors, and 1 School Psychologist), for a total of 77 school administrators. Schools included a private kindergarten, a private school, an Asian Development Bank pilot school (and national gymnasium), a Soros pilot school, a laboratory school of OHPI, a village school, and other city and suburban schools.

In addition, McLean, Shin, and Karimov interviewed Jangoroz Kanimetov, Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of the Kyrgyz Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Education, Science, and Culture; the then Minister of Education, Camilla Duishebaevna; and John Clark, former President of the American University in Kyrgyzstan (AUK) and now Advisor to the Minister of Education. (Almost immediately after our leaving Kyrgyzstan, we were informed that the President had dismissed the Minister of Education and replaced her with Ishengul Bolzhurova, a former university rector of Bishkek Humanitarian University. Camilla has retained her position at AUK as Provost.)

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Existing Structure of Educational Management

Kyrgyzstan is the smallest of all of the former Soviet republics. On one hand, this is an advantage as the system is not so large and complex that it makes educational reform at the educational leadership level impossible. At the same time, its size and geographic location limit the resources available for education. Its geographic location also

creates interesting challenges in its ethnic mix and languages, with Russian and Kyrgyz both dominating, but with additional minority languages, such as Uzbek and Tajik. While Russian was the only language of instruction in schools at the time of independence, Kyrgyz is now the primary language of instruction, and the portion of Russians in the country continues to diminish. One school we visited claimed to have over 100 ethnic groups represented in its student body. Increasingly, English is present in the schools, and there is a push to develop this further in an effort to prepare a population that is ready for its role in a global economy. While ostensibly a democracy, Kyrgyzstan has had only one President since its independence in 1991, and its government is centralized.

In spite of ten years of independence, Kyrgyzstan's educational system and leadership structure still largely follow its inherited soviet system. Miroschnichenko (1998) provided an overview of the education system in Kyrgyzstan. According to her (p. 49), pre-school education (ages 2-5, including day-care) leads to admission into primary school at age 6. After the 4th grade, students enter secondary school through grade 9. On graduating from grade 9, students have the option of entering high school (grades 10-11), technical school, or vocational school. When these grades are all present in a community, they are usually found in the same school. In the rural areas, where the population is more limited, it is not unusual to find a primary school only. Students who go on to secondary education may have to walk three-four miles to the next village with a secondary school to attend. This, obviously, limits participation in secondary education. Lack of basics, such as clothing and food, also limit participation in schools. Kindergartens are a mix of public and private institutions organized as separate schools.

There is a current movement toward incorporating a 12th grade, though it is controversial. This is being done in 41 schools in Kyrgyzstan under the sponsorship of the Asian Development Bank. In a seminar conducted in Bishkek by McLean and Shin in Osh on May 27, 2002, a group of 16 school directors voiced strong opposition to the addition of a 12th grade, for a variety of reasons, primarily because they did not see the need, it would add cost that the family could not afford, and it would prohibit males from going on to university as they would have to serve their compulsory military service immediately after graduating. DeYoung (2001) also reported that the international donor community has some reservations about adding a year of education when the country cannot support the existing eleven years of education.

The lowest level of structure is the school, of which there are approximately 2,000 in the country. The School Director (*Principal*) is appointed by the superintendent, often on the recommendation of the

mayor in cities or the Akim (*Governor*) in one of the 45 Districts or 7 Oblasts. All administrative appointments from the principal up are usually relationship based rather than based on criteria of experience, expertise, or academic preparation. While almost always a School Director or Superintendent will have classroom teaching experience, seldom will they have taken any courses or workshops in education administration or management. The School Director is assisted by Zovuchs (*Assistant Principals*). The number of these will range from two to eight in large schools.

School Directors report to various levels of Superintendents. The Zavraiono (*Superintendent*) of a Raino (*District*) is at the smallest geographic level, with the country consisting of about 45 Rainos. Next, the Gorono is the Superintendent in a city or large town (31 in the country), while the Zavoblono is the Superintendent of an Oblast (7 in the country). Each Superintendent's office has a group of Inspectors. While the original goal of the Inspectors was to provide help to individual schools in improving their effectiveness, in practice they have become dictators of school policies and practices, controlling rather than assisting. The visit of a School Inspector often generates fear in the schools. At the national level, there are two policy-making agencies. The first is in the Office of the Minister of Education. This office is responsible for approving school programs and curriculum and assisting in the development of legislation affecting education in the country. However, there is remarkably little actual power residing in this office outside of its able to influence decisions and policy. Superintendents are appointed either by the Mayors (in cities and towns) or directly by the President of the country (in Rainos and Oblasts). When incompetence or corruption surfaces, the Office of the Minister of Education has no recourse. The other important educational agency influencing policy is the Chair of the Educational Committee of the Parliament. All legislation influencing education begins here. However, the President of the country also has the power, recently exercised, to influence educational policy through executive orders.

Fishman and Bamberg (1998) pointed to the difficulty in distinguishing among management, leadership, and administration in Russian. Frankly, in spite of the efforts of some, the distinctions in English are not all that clear, either. Thus, in this paper, these words may be used interchangeably, though the consistent focus is on Directors and Zovuchs in the K-11 (or 12) system.

Factors Supporting Effective School Management

As will become apparent, there are many barriers to effective school management in Kyrgyzstan. There are, however, some factors that

support effective school management. These will be detailed first, followed by barriers.

Individuals Committed to Providing Quality Leadership

During our interviews (McLean & Shin, 2002), we encountered a number of people in various administrative roles who appeared to be genuinely interested in their staffs, their students, and their performance. They recognized that they were in positions that were grossly underpaid, but, in spite of that, were making efforts to improve their school's circumstances. Most of the school directors and zovuchs taught. And, when the schools were on double- or triple-shift (frequently the case), they were required to be there for the entire time the school was open, with no extra compensation.

Specialized Support in Educational Management

A considerable amount of administrative assistance is provided to school directors through the specialized skills and assignments of the zovuchs. Whereas in the West, the school principal is often overwhelmed with tasks keeping him or her from the important tasks of curriculum and instruction, within all of the schools we visited, there were zovuchs assigned specifically to these tasks. In one school (School Number 5 in Bishkek), we actually met with the school director and *eight* zovuchs. Such specialization, if capitalized on and utilized in a truly shared decision-making way, has great potential for enhancing the educational management of the school.

Eagerness for Self-Development

In almost every school visited, the administrators expressed great interest in how we (and others) could help them improve their administration. They were interested in knowing what workshops would be available to them. They encouraged the universities to offer short-term workshops for them (at no cost). They bemoaned the lack of Internet access from which to get new information about helping their teachers improve their teaching and improving their administrative skills. They expressed great interest in visiting other countries (especially the U.S.) to observe and discuss with their counterparts there why the schools there are so successful. While some had English skills, others talked about their need to develop such skills so they could access journals, newsletters, and other sources of information and not have to rely only on what comes out of Moscow. A couple of these administrators have already enrolled in the newly-created masters degree in Educational Management at Arabaev KSPU.

Creativity in Managing

While this is not a characteristic that we would assign to all administrators interviewed, certainly some of the administrators have been very creative, especially in locating supplemental financing.

Some of the administrators had already formed Boards of Trustees, some had received external grants, some had formed business partnerships, some were selling produce grown on school land by their students, and so on. Others had taken advantage, both for themselves and for their teachers, of attending Soros Foundation sponsored workshops on “Creative Thinking.” All of these efforts have contributed to strengthening the educational management of their schools.

Financial Transparency

Within the Kyrgyz culture, today, transparency in financing is not the norm. Many questions exist at all levels of government about where money has gone and how it has been used. Several of the administrators with whom we spoke, however, recognized that the moral quality of the school demanded moral behavior on the part of the leadership. Several, on their own, had instituted processes that would guarantee the transparency of the funds acquired by the school. Several talked about having independent accountants for parent organizations and of presenting quarterly or annual reports on all finances to the parents. This is a very encouraging step in a country where such practices are definitely not the norm.

Achievement Orientation

Successes during the soviet era focused on the accomplishment of “learning,” though those in the West are often critical of this learning as “rote.” Nevertheless, a certain amount of education is related to rote learning, as found in the sciences, mathematics, and language. This orientation has not disappeared, and school administrators are rightly proud of the accomplishments of their students in these areas. We were often amazed at what students had accomplished without a formal kindergarten program, with shorter class days, and in one less year of instruction than in the U.S. If schools in Kyrgyzstan are successful in introducing critical thinking and problem solving into their curriculum while maintaining this achievement orientation, students in such schools will indeed be well served. In saying this, however, we are well aware that we are not included the performance of students in village and border schools. It will be interesting, indeed, to see the results of the first national standardized testing that took place in June, 2002, to see how widespread this phenomenon is in the country.

Barriers to Effective School Management

There are many reasons why educational management for grades K-12 is not more effective.

Cronyism

As described in the current structure of educational leadership, all appointments are at present based on relationships, or, more critically, cronyism. Relationships are endemic to the culture of Kyrgyzstan, and, according to DeYoung (2001), such practices, in fact though not in theory, go back to the soviet experiences in the 1960s. It is not likely, nor, perhaps, even desirable, to move completely away from a relationship base. But, if effectiveness is the goal, then there must be an awareness of the need for appointments to be merit based as well as relationship based. While these practices are so deeply engrained within the culture that it will be very difficult to move away from this problem, it leads to the next several barriers described in this section.

Lack of Qualifications

Because appointments are relationship based, at present, many administrators lack desired qualifications to be in a position of educational leadership. While all of the administrators that we interviewed have teaching experience, and, in fact, most continue to teach, there is no requirement that they must have teaching experience. There are no present requirements that they have any background, either experiential or educational, in school management. Thus, unless they have the personal commitment for self-development, they will be unaware of the research that exists on educational management and will not understand the impact management can and should have on curriculum, teaching, learning, development, and ethnic and language variation issues that are so critical for an effective educational program.

Lack of Accountability

Another outcome of relationship-based appointments is that there is minimal accountability in the system. Because administrators are appointed solely on the basis of their relationships with the key individual making the appointment, so long as the person maintains a good relationship with that person, he or she will be allowed to continue in his or her position. It does not matter what the quality of the education is, or the effectiveness of the school's operations, or the financial stewardship of the school, because, ultimately, the administrator is responsible only to the person who appointed him or her. Without accountability, it is difficult to know how well the educational system itself is actually working.

The country-wide standardized testing for 11th grade students referenced earlier is a major step in improving accountability. The results of the tests will directly affect the level of college and university

scholarships provided to each student. It is unlikely that parents and students who perform poorly on these exams as a result of a poor educational experience will sit still and let this continue to happen. It is likely that substantial pressure will be brought to bear on school administrators, and those appointing them, when poor educational outcomes result.

Lack of Incentives

There is very little incentive for excellence in educational leadership, except for whatever internal or intrinsic motivation may exist for an individual administrator. Excellence does not currently result in more money, either for the individual or the school. Excellence does not result in promotions; it does not result in fame or reputation. And lack of excellence does not result in loss of money, either for the individual or the school; loss of job or security; loss of reputation; or any other negative consequences usually associated with poor performance. Thus, there are neither incentives for good work nor disincentives or punishment for poor work. It just doesn't make a difference!

Lack of School Experience at Higher Levels of Administration

Because of Kyrgyzstan's Soviet legacy, what happens in higher education is what is really important. It is difficult for someone from outside the culture to understand why this does not translate into the importance of the foundational years of education. It is difficult to think about excellence in higher education without having laid an excellent foundation in the primary, secondary, and high school levels of education. Yet that is the situation in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, school decisions are often based on experiences in higher education.

Lack of Vision

Without incentives for improvement, and without an educational background that encourages creativity, breakthrough thinking, and reflection; it is difficult to create a system that is capable of moving past the old and embracing a new vision. Even when it becomes apparent that the existing system is not working well, there are too many incentives not to change. Those who are in power are unlikely to challenge the very systems that put them in power. Thus, the vision that is needed to allow Kyrgyzstan's educational system to flourish is not likely to emerge within the hierarchical and bureaucratic system currently in place.

Slowness in Adjusting to "Modern" Education

As described earlier, the soviet style of education continues to predominate in Kryrgyzstan—a system that is already over ten years old—with little evidence of efforts being made to keep current with the demands of the globalizing world. As a result, students who come

through the system are ill prepared for higher education (for those who aspire to this) or for the work world (for those who leave the school system without higher education). School-to-work programs are not in evidence for those who leave the school system early. Yet the industrial development of Kyrgyzstan is critical for its very economic survival. This requires that students have an adequate background in technical and vocational skills, including an understanding of the world of work and an adequate work ethic.

Lack of Finances

Financing of their schools was the major issue administrators identified. The federal government provides schools with teacher salaries (which begin at about \$8 per month, increasing to about \$30 per month) and partial payment for utilities. Depending on the economic situation in the locale of the school, local governments, though without taxing authority, may provide supplements, especially for buildings and maintenance, and, occasionally, for teacher salary supplements. Some schools win grants (e.g., from the Asian Development Bank, the Soros Foundation), and some receive donations from local businesses, individuals, or parents. Students are assessed 160 com (about \$3) per year per student to assist in building maintenance. Many schools also charge students 10 com (about 20 cents) per book per year, which allows schools to purchase additional textbooks each year.

Schools are, thus, grossly underfunded. Heyneman (1998) estimated that school budgets for most CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries fell by at least 50% since 1991 and, in some instances, is only 5% of what it was then. Further, since teachers were assigned to schools in the soviet era, issues of supply and demand were unimportant. Now, however, they have reached crisis level. The incredibly low salaries paid to teachers (and to administrators) is causing a severe shortage of teachers who are willing to work in the schools, especially, we heard, in geography, English, mathematics, Russian, and many others. This appears to be particularly a problem in border schools and in village schools, but it is a problem everywhere. We saw many “retired” teachers who were teaching because younger teachers were not available. As the aging population of teachers reaches retirement age, there is a looming crisis ahead for schools.

But there are many other problems caused by the underfunding of schools. Every school is overcrowded. Many are on two shifts and some on three. Furniture is inadequate in quality and quantity. Buildings are not well maintained. Computers, when they exist, are extremely old (several still from the Soviets) and not operational. Few schools have Internet access. Teachers are required to volunteer their time for out-of-class

activities and summer camps. In many schools, as many as 50% of the students are undernourished, leading to disease and inability to be attentive. A lack of funding for meal programs perpetuates this problem. There are insufficient textbooks available, especially those in the Kyrgyz and English languages. Other instructional materials are also insufficient.

Lack of Transparency in Finances

Kyrgyzstan operates as a cash economy. Receipts are almost unknown, and checks and credit cards are not used. As a result, it is impossible to know how much money from what sources come into a school and how those funds are used. According to DeYoung (2001), corruption and bribery are rampant in schools and in higher education. Formal recordkeeping for schools does not exist. It is difficult, therefore, to know how much of the problem with finances is on their availability or on their use.

Absence of Available Models for Educational Management

As Fishman and Bamberg (1998) concluded about the Russian system, because there has been no pre-service preparation of school directors, the various models of leadership that might have been available in developing a professional culture for educational management is missing. How a school director actually manages is based on stereotypes, what they have seen, and non-systematic formation of practices.

Possible Solutions

As with the barriers listed in the last section, the possible solutions emerged from a variety of sources—the literature on education in Kyrgyzstan, the interviews and focus groups described above, and the personal views of the authors arising from their own experiences.

Professionalize School Administrators

Efforts are currently underway in Kyrgyzstan to reform education. A major bill is making its way through both houses (Parliament and Senate) that would provide requirements for the appointment of school administrators. These include having five years of teaching experience and the possession of a Certificate in Educational Management based on the successful completion of a set of courses from a recognized university. This, in itself, will not change the relationship-based appointments that are currently made. They will, however, insure that the administrators who are appointed will have some understanding of both the educational enterprise and the basic principles of what it takes for successful administration of a school system. Jangoroz Kanimetov, Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of the Kyrgyz Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Education, Science, and Culture, in an interview on

June 4, 2002, estimated that this bill would make it through both houses by the Fall of 2002.

Both Arabaev KSPU and OHPI have a proposal before the Ministry of Education for a Masters degree in Educational Management. Several of the courses in this degree program could also provide the base of a Certificate in Educational Management, so that administrators could choose to obtain the Certificate rather than making the much larger commitment to a degree. With these educational efforts, models for educational management can begin to emerge, a professional culture will begin to emerge, and research on educational management models can help to strengthen educational management.

Encourage Breakthrough Changes in Curriculum and Course Content

After more than ten years, the educational system has not changed much from the Soviet style. Students still learn, by and large, in rote. Teachers still lecture and focus on learning of facts. Very little emphasis on problem solving and creative thinking appears in the classroom. Educational leadership is needed to lead the efforts to indigenize the classroom to supplement the learning of facts with problem solving and creative thinking. The offering of courses for teachers on Critical Thinking by the Soros Foundation is having an impact in this area.

One of the problems in bringing about such changes exists within the universities themselves, which are still primarily compatible with the Soviet style of education. Universities have little freedom, or at least exert no autonomy, in creating either their curriculum or their style of teaching. University curriculum is still tightly under the control of the Ministry of Education, almost all of whom were in their positions under Soviet times, and they are not prepared to change their ways.

Thus, revolutionary thinking at the very top, from the President of the country through the Parliament and Senate and from the Minister of Education, is required to promote reflection on the existing system, not just to copy western styles of education, but to capture the best from both systems as the country moves toward a market economy. The real question, of course, is, who will have the courage and vision to lead such a revolution?

Change How Schools Are Financed

As identified above, one of the major barriers facing education (and thus educational leadership) in Kyrgyzstan is the lack of financial resources. Clearly, the existing financing processes are not working. This is not from a lack of recognition of the importance of education at top levels. Rather, it is a reflection of the economic reality of a country that has, thus far, been unable to establish a solid economic base and that

currently functions with an estimated unemployment and poverty rate exceeding 50% (United Nations System in Kyrgyzstan, 1999). When the Soviets left in 1992, they took most of their industry with them, and the country has been unable to replace it. And there are questions about the appropriateness of some expenditures, bordering on what western ethics would label as corruption at top levels of the government, reducing funds that might otherwise be available for education.

Efforts are being made to change this. Again, in an interview with Jangoroz Kanimetov, Chair of the Parliament Committee on Education, he described a bill recently passed that provides for triple salary for teachers willing to go to border schools to teach and double salary for those willing to teach in village schools. The bill also provides additional benefits for new teachers: reductions on utility bills, provision of housing by local authorities, and discounts and government loans for those teachers wishing to build homes in the villages and border areas. Efforts are also under way to provide more textbooks at low cost. And, while no plans are currently under way, the goal is to provide at least \$100 per month salary for teachers as a minimum.

The challenge here is to avoid reverting to bribery and corruption as “creative” means of fundraising. According to the former Minister (as cited in DeYoung, 2001), budget transparency and the elimination of corruption in schools, as well as in higher education, are critical in providing the additional funding for schools.

A report of a working group on school management (DeYoung, 2001) contained the recommendation (made mostly by international donor representatives) that confidential surveys be conducted, unannounced, with students and parents to determine whether teachers or administrators had violated the law by taking bribes. Those identified would be dismissed and prosecuted. How realistic is this? Other anti-corruption attempts have resulted in those behind the efforts losing their jobs. Another approach to this would be to institute a receipt system and uniform recordkeeping for the schools. Of course, this could add costs that are not available either to the government (for monitoring) or the schools (for implementing).

Require Periodic External Reviews of School Administrators

This will be difficult to undertake given the existing fear already associated with the School Inspectors from the Offices of the Superintendents. The service envisioned here is truly one of support and assistance in helping administrators do their jobs better. Thus, those who are appointed to conduct these external reviews must first receive training to understand what their role is and how it is to be carried out. A process for conducting the external reviews must also be put in place. It must be valid, which assumes that it must also be reliable. The process of using

multiple raters (also known as 360-degree feedback) may be useful, IF it is clear to all involved that its purpose is for development and not evaluation (see McLean, 1997, for the rationale behind this statement). At the same time, care must be taken not to revert to the expectation of a “one-best-model” approach to educational management, recognizing that there are many different, but acceptable, ways to manage a school.

Develop Accountability Through Annual Reporting Systems

It is also critical in the process of external reviews that documentation be available for review, so that the emphasis is on outcomes, not just the personality of the administrator. This recommendation assumes that appropriate organization development processes, including a needs assessment, will be conducted to determine what kinds of reporting systems are likely to be the most effective in creating accountability that is effective, valid, and most likely to produce change. Counting is seldom an effective tool, alone, yet it is necessary as a supplement to other kinds of information. This information should, whenever possible, be outcomes based. That is, it should reflect specifically on how well the school has accomplished its mission, vision, and objectives. And this statement implies that the school have gone through some type of strategic planning process to have a clearly articulated mission, vision, and objectives to meet the mission and vision.

Provide a Model of Educational Change Through Dramatic Change in University Curricula

Preparation of teachers currently takes place in university settings. As requirements for educational administration licensure come into being, it is likely that this will also occur in universities. Yet universities in Kyrgyzstan are not exactly hallmarks of educational innovation and change. If teachers and administrators are going to be able to view their educational environments differently, they need to see a model of how this can be done. Universities are in a perfect position to do this. They, too, need to offer faculty development opportunities, to provide incentives for curricular innovation, and to insure that mechanisms are in place within the higher education systems to smooth the way for innovation, rather than providing a constant and consistent barrier.

Develop Distance Learning Opportunities for Administrators

Because current administrators are unlikely to be in a position to return to school, and may even be resistant to attending a university-based program, attention should be given to putting courses related to educational leadership into various distance learning opportunities. In today’s world, we automatically think about web-based courses. Given the lack of technology available, this is not much of a possibility presently. Other quality ways to approach distance learning, including print and videotape approaches, may be preferred. The dispersion of

schools in Kyrgyzstan and its mountainous topography support such an approach. Getting to centralized locations to take courses may be difficult and expensive for the average administrator in schools located away from populous areas.

Within Kyrgyzstan, distance learning also refers to short courses. Universities wanting to meet the needs of their school personnel, will move increasingly to short or compressed courses, offered weekends or during the summer. These should be designed to lead to the Educational Management Certificate envisioned in the existing draft of the educational reform bill.

Provide Internship Opportunities for Existing Administrators

It would be helpful to provide educational leaders with the opportunity either to work with an experienced, qualified administrator or to shadow such a person for a time to learn effective ways of dealing with the myriad of problems that confront the educational leader. In addition to learning the skills involved in effective leadership, interns would also develop a professional network. Mentoring and coaching could also be provided, assuming that appropriate training is provided for the individual doing the coaching.

Almost every administrator interviewed by McLean and Shin (2002) indicated that breakthrough thinking would occur more readily if they had the opportunity to visit schools in neighboring or foreign schools. This would be an expensive program, and it is not clear how much of this interest is motivated from a desire to travel. Nevertheless, such visits would have the potential of causing reflection on how they are currently running their schools and could allow for the implementation of innovative ideas on their return.

Create Action Learning Opportunities for Administrators

Action learning (Yorks, O'Neil, & Marsick, 1999) is a process in which a group of people who share similar backgrounds or similar problems can reflect on and help each other reflect on actions that might appropriately be taken in given situations. Everyone involved learns from this process. Thus, building cohorts of educational administrators who are in close proximity to each other could be a first step in creating action learning teams. Administrators would need to be taught processes for doing action learning and, for a time, an outside facilitator may be necessary to work with each team to help them in their processes.

Human Resource Development Implications

Almost all of the challenges presented above, as well as the suggested solutions, involve HRD approaches. Training, clearly, is a major part of most of the recommendations. Further, organization development processes and interventions underlie most of the recommendations, as well. The process used in creating this paper

followed the traditional action research model (McLean & Sullivan, 1989) as an overriding framework. The initial stages of Entry, Start-up, Assessment and Feedback, and Action Planning have all been included in this process. What remains, of course, is the implementation of the recommendations and an evaluation of the implementation to determine where modifications are needed and where the approaches have been successful.

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