Marshall Memo 121

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
January 30, 2006

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Quotes of the Week

"Often boys are treated like defective girls."
Michael Thompson (see item #2)

"One of the most reliable predictors of whether a boy will succeed or fail in high school rests on a single question: does he have a man in his life to look up to?"
Peg Tyre (see item #2)

"Most [university] presidents are too careful, too cautious, too frightened, too worried about tipping the boat, too worried about alienating anybody, too worried about offending anybody."
Alan Dershowitz, Harvard Law School professor (see item #1)

"Adolescent ELLs do not have the luxury of time to first become fluent in English and then attend to science, math, and history classes before they graduate."
Julie Meltzer and Edmund Hamann (see item #3)

"The beauty of instructional technology is the absence of bias. A computer program is not concerned with demographics or behavioral issues."
Donald Austin, California principal (see item #5)

"It is every child's instinct and every teacher's instinct as well, because it is ingrained in us. We are used to seeing hands waving in the air and some pupils jiggling so much to attract the teacher's attention that it sometimes looks as if they need the lavatory."
Andrew Buck, British principal (see item #6)

"Evaluation as it stands does not really benefit anyone. It's kind of a cursory review."
Spokesman Michael Vaughn on Chicago's teacher appraisal system (see item #7)

1. How Tough Must a Leader Be to Get Results?

In this thought-provoking article in the February *Harvard Business Review*, Stanford social psychologist and business professor Roderick Kramer pokes holes in the common assumption that leaders need to be empathetic, humble, and "emotionally intelligent" to get results. Kramer makes the case that in some situations, "Time is short, the stakes are high, and the measures required are draconian." In organizations that are "rigid or unruly, stagnant or drifting," it may take an abrasive leader to get things moving. Kramer cites some examples of leaders who took a very tough approach to leadership: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Rupert Murdoch, Margaret Thatcher, Larry Summers, Harvey Weinstein, Sandy Weill, Ed Zander, Andy Grove, Carly Fiorina, and Larry Ellison.

Calling these leaders "great intimidators," Kramer emphasizes that they are not thugs. "If you're just a bully," he writes, "it's all about humiliating others in an effort to make yourself feel good. Something very different is going on with the great intimidators. To be sure, they aren't above engaging in a little bullying to get their way. With them, however, the motivating factor isn't ego or gratuitous humiliation; it's vision. The great intimidators see a possible path through the thicket, and they're impatient to clear it. They chafe at impediments, even those that are human. They don't suffer from doubt or timidity. They've got a disdain for constraints imposed by others." They use coercion, says Kramer, but they do so creatively and strategically.

The great intimidators have tough exteriors and sharp edges, but they are high on what Kramer calls *political intelligence*, which involves having deep insights into human motivation and organizational behavior. "In all our recent enchantment with social intelligence and soft power," he writes, "we've overlooked the kinds of skills leaders need to bring about transformation in cases of tremendous resistance or inertia."

Leaders with social intelligence and political intelligence share certain skills. Both are good at sizing up other people with a keen, discriminating eye. But while socially intelligent leaders notice others' strengths and figure out how to put them to use, politically intelligent leaders focus on people's weaknesses and insecurities and figure out how to exploit the anxieties and vulnerabilities they detect. The politically intelligent leader "adopts a dispassionate, clinical, even instrumental view of people as resources for getting things done," explains Kramer. "This absence of empathy opens up branches of the decision tree, exposing options that other leaders might reject."

Here's an example. At a "let's get acquainted" session with a group of Harvard professors, newly-arrived president Larry Summers said, "Perhaps we don't really even need a

department like this." Whoa! The statement (and others like it) didn't make Summers the most popular man on campus, but his style woke people up and made them think more deeply about their purpose in the organization and the value they add. Kramer quotes Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz as saying, "Most presidents are too careful, too cautious, too frightened, too worried about tipping the boat, too worried about alienating anybody, too worried about offending anybody… Summers *is* a provocative president. I think in my 41 years at Harvard I have never seen a more exciting time, more diversity of views… and I think Harvard is a better place for it."

Kramer goes on to describe the tactics that politically-intelligent leaders use to get things moving:

• *They get up close and personal*. Some great intimidators practice their scowl in front of a mirror to increase their effectiveness. General George Patton did this during World War II and called it his "general's face." He worked on having the most terrifying and menacing countenance he could muster for confrontations he needed to win. Great intimidators also use language, including taunts and provocations, to throw their opponents off balance.

• *They use anger*. A flare of temper may be an act, but it can be convincing. "Don't have a reputation for being a nice guy," political pundit Chris Matthews once advised. "That won't do you any good… A bad temper is a very powerful political tool because most people don't like confrontation… You know, why tangle with the guy? Why ruin your day?"

• *They keep people guessing*. "Many leadership books these days tout the importance of transparency," says Kramer. "According to this view, leaders must take great pains to be sure other people understand them and why they are doing what they're doing. Intimidators don't buy into this idea at all. They prefer to remain unfathomable because this keeps subordinates on their toes and makes it easier to change direction without losing credibility." Some politically-intelligent leaders put on a cool and aloof style with their subordinates, but have a chameleon-like ability to turn on the charm with their peers and superiors.

• *They master the facts*. Knowing your stuff can be hugely intimidating, says Kramer. "'Information intimidators' always have facts and figures at their fingertips, while their opponents are still trying to formulate an argument or retrieve something from memory." British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was famous for this, as was Robert McNamara when he was president of Ford Motor Company and U.S. Secretary of Defense. Unscrupulous intimidators sometimes make up facts that sound plausible and get away with it. When people realize later that the facts don't check out, it's usually too late.

Aren't great intimidators awful people to work for? Kramer's research has found that the opposite is often true. Politically-intelligent leaders can draw extremely talented people into their orbit and inspire great loyalty and lots of hard work. One of James Watson's students commented on the famously cantankerous professor that he was inspiring to work for and "always introduced the right mixture of fear and paranoia so that we worked our asses off." One of Steve Jobs's subordinates at Pixar said of his time working with Jobs, "You just dreaded letting him down. He believed in you so strongly that the thought of disappointing him just killed you."

Are these really qualities to which good leaders aspire? One would think the answer is no, but Kramer reports that he once asked participants at a Stanford executive education program on power and leadership which qualities they wished they had more of. To his surprise, most of the seasoned leaders in the room said they wished they were tougher and more forceful and regretted that so far in their careers they had been *too nice*. "The participants felt that they had achieved less than they might have," writes Kramer, "and they attributed the shortfall in performance to their failure to fully and effectively use their positional power. To put it another way, they believed that they could stand to be a little less socially intelligent and a little more politically intelligent."

Kramer is quick to point out that "great intimidators" can easily go too far, and a number of tough business leaders have crashed and burned in recent years because they crossed the line from being demanding to being abusive, from being creative and effective manipulators to letting their arrogance become unchecked and self-destructive. Several traps lie in wait for great intimidators:

• *Being too good for their own good* – "Because they are so adept at bending others to their will," Kramer explains, "they win even the arguments they should lose."

• *Isolating themselves from critical or dissenting views* – "Everyone needs checks and balances to make good decisions," says Kramer. "Because they tend to push away anyone who disagrees with them, great intimidators often end up surrounded by sycophants who parrot back only what the intimidator wants to hear, singing his every tune."

• *Becoming so sure of themselves that they just stop listening* – "Often wrong, never in doubt," was what people said about Carly Fiorina at Hewlett Packard before her downfall.

• *Not keeping track of the number of enemies they are accumulating* – In the end, the sharks get them.

What can save a politically-intelligent leader from these pitfalls? The shrewdest learn from their mistakes and gain perspective and change their ways. One legendary intimidator who has been successful at staying on the right side of the line is Bill Gates. One former Microsoft employee had this insight about how he has managed to do this: "The genius of Bill Gates is that he listens."

What if your boss is one of these politically-intelligent, difficult-to-work-with people? Kramer has these suggestions for working with great intimidators – and bringing out their best:

• *Do your homework.* With every great intimidator, says Kramer, there are a few individuals who have discovered a way to work with them. Talk to those people and find out what works.

• *Work harder.* Matching the energy and the hours of an intimidator is a great way to win their respect and acceptance.

• *Laugh at their antics and earn their respect.* Lyndon Johnson was famous for trying to intimidate aides by asking them to meet with him while he was in the bathroom. "Come closer! I can't hear you!" he would yell at them while dictating memos and giving orders from the commode. One aide responded, "I'd be happy to move closer, Mr. President. But it seems you have the only seat in the room." This got a laugh from Johnson – and a measure of respect.

• *Call their bluff*. This is particularly effective with information intimidators when they are using bogus facts to win an argument. If you say, "I don't believe that," it puts the ball back in their court – and shows you're not a pushover. Says Kramer, "Displaying a toughness under pressure often impresses great intimidators, who are looking for people whose inner steel matches their own."

• *Keep your perspective*. Intimidators sometimes try throw subordinates off balance to see if they can handle multiple phone interruptions, sun in their eyes, etc. Stay calm and don't let these games faze you.

• *Stick around*. The temptation may be to bail out when some of these manifestations of the great intimidator personality start appearing. But as long as the boss's behavior doesn't cross the line, staying can be a great learning experience. "You can go the distance if you can learn how to appreciate genius at work," concludes Kramer.

"The Great Intimidators" by Roderick Kramer in *Harvard Business Review*, Feb. 2006 (Vol. 84, #2, p. 88-96), no free e-link available

2. Why Are Boys Doing Worse in School?

In almost every category, boys are falling behind girls in school, reports a cover story in last week's *Newsweek* by Peg Tyre. Here are some of the statistics:

- Elementary boys are 47% more likely than girls to be diagnosed with emotional disturbances, learning problems, or speech impediments.
- Elementary boys are twice as likely to be placed in special-education classes.
- The percent of boys who say they don't like school rose 71 percent from 1981 to 2001.
- Boys between five and twelve are 60% more likely to have repeated at least one grade.
- Fourth-grade girls score 12% higher on standardized writing tests than boys.
- Eighth-grade girls score an average 11 points higher on standardized reading tests.
- Eighth-grade girls score an average 21 points higher on standardized writing tests.
- Boys between five and fourteen are 200% more likely to commit suicide than girls.
- High-school boys are 33% more likely to drop out of school.
- High-school boys are 30% more likely to use cocaine.
- Twelfth-grade girls score 16 points higher on standardized reading tests.
- Twelfth-grade girls score 24 points higher on standardized writing tests.
- Twelfth-grade girls are 36% more likely to take AP or honors biology.
- 22% more high-school girls are planning to go to college than boys.
- Males make up only 44% of college enrollments (down from 58% in 1975).

What's going on here? It wasn't too long ago that we were reading about how girls were at risk in schools. But many experts agree that girls have made tremendous strides in school in the last 20 years, and now the odds are stacked against boys in school, especially if recess has been eliminated and teachers are pushed into drilling students in test prep in lecture-type classes. "Very well-meaning people," says Bruce Perry, a Houston neurologist and advocate for troubled kids, "have created a biologically disrespectful model of education." It's

just not suited to the "boy brain," which has a bunch of "kinetic, disorganized, maddening, and sometimes brilliant behaviors that scientists now believe are not learned but hard-wired." In the girl-friendly school environment, many boys begin to refer to themselves as "stupid."

The trouble begins when kids enter kindergarten. Boys may have better hand-eye coordination than girls, but their language skills, social skills, and fine-motor coordination are not as developed as girls' and they have trouble sitting still for any length of time. In elementary-school classrooms, most teachers put a premium on sitting quietly, speaking in turn, and writing neatly. "Girl behavior becomes the gold standard," says Michael Thompson, co-author of *Raising Cain.* "Boys are treated like defective girls."

In middle school, boys are loath to ask for help even if they are falling desperately behind. "Boys measure everything they do or say by a single yardstick," says Thompson. "Does this make me look weak? If it does, he isn't going to do it." Thompson and others say this is why video games are so appealing to boys: there's constant action, you can calibrate the difficulty of the challenges, and if you lose, it's private.

What can schools do about the widening boy-girl achievement gap? Many schools are working on it, and *Newsweek* reports a few anecdotes:

• *Better pedagogy* – Boulder, Colorado's Douglass Elementary School had teachers read and discuss Michael Gurian's book, *The Minds of Boys* and urged them to minimize classroom lectures and maximize fast-moving, small-group, high-involvement learning activities. Classes were noisier, but the gap between girls and boys on the state writing test narrowed appreciably after only a year.

• *Separating boys and girls* – Some schools are experimenting with single-sex classes, with boy-friendly instructional approaches for the male-only classes. Roncalli Middle School in Pueblo, Colorado reports some gains in class participation by shy boys, and achievement in the male classes was better than coed classes (but not as good as the all-girl classes).

• *Role models* – "One of the most reliable predictors of whether a boy will succeed or fail in high school," declares Tyre, "rests on a single question: does he have a man in his life to look up to?" Grandfathers and uncles can help, but psychologists say that "an adolescent boy without a father is like an explorer without a map" – and 40 percent of American boys (the number is higher in poor communities) are growing up without their biological fathers. A responsible older male models self-restraint and solid work habits. Whether he is breathing down their necks about grades or nagging them to get to school on time, says Gurian, "an older man reminds a boy in a million different ways that school is crucial to their mission in life."

At Eagle Academy, an all-boys school in the Bronx, almost every one of the 180 students has been paired with a male mentor – lawyers, police officers, or entrepreneurs from the neighborhood. The impact has been "beyond profound," declares the school's principal. Tenth-grader Rafael Mendez says his tutor "is the best thing that ever happened to me." Rafael has shelved the idea of playing professional baseball and is studying to go to college and become a forensic scientist.

"The Trouble with Boys" by Peg Tyre in *Newsweek*, Jan. 30, 2006 (Vol. 147, #5, p. 44-52), no e-link available

3. Helping English Language Learners Succeed in Content-Area Classes

"Adolescent ELLs do not have the luxury of time to first become fluent in English and then attend to science, math, and history classes before they graduate," write Julie Meltzer and Edmund Hamann in this article in the February *Principal Leadership*. "And it is not fair to allow the instruction they encounter in mainstream classes to not be responsive to their learning skills and needs." Meltzer and Hamann believe that many of the promising practices used to develop content-area reading, writing, and thinking can, with a little tweaking, help English language learners improve their academic achievement. The most effective approaches fall into three areas:

• *Student motivation and engagement* – For ELLs, a safe, supportive classroom climate is essential to overcoming shyness and embarrassment about speaking, writing, and reading English. It's key that teachers include ELLs in class activities, provide safe venues for them to hone their skills (for example, think/pair/share), show interest in students' interests and concerns, display a culturally-diverse variety of print and graphic materials in the classroom, and make connections between home experiences and school expectations. For example, write Meltzer and Hamann, "generating questions, a vital learning strategy, is not a comfortable action for students from cultures where questioning is not encouraged or permitted in school settings. Although questioning can ultimately become a useful teaching strategy to use with students, it may not be a good starting point." Better strategies are giving students choices of writing topics, assessment modes, and reading selections, as well as providing authentic reasons for engaging in literacy activities (for example, linking classroom assignments to internships or job shadowing experiences).

• *Generic literacy and learning practices* – Meltzer and Hamann believe that the following classroom practices improve reading comprehension and content-area learning:

- Teacher modeling, including the "think-aloud" strategy;
- Giving explicit strategy instruction in context;
- Using formative assessments to improve reading comprehension;
- Spending more time reading and writing – both assignments and instruction;
- Spending more time speaking, listening, and viewing texts;
- Paying more attention to developing critical thinking and metacognitive skills;
- Grouping students flexibly;
- Being responsive to students' needs.

Some teachers are concerned that ELLs won't be able to keep up with rigorous instruction. On the contrary, say Meltzer and Hamann, "the research shows that when those students receive appropriate instructional scaffolding, they often do as well as their monolingual peers. Flexible and responsive grouping will enable students to use their native languages when helpful and expose them to English and academic content discourse."

• *Content-specific literacy practices* – To succeed academically, ELLs need to "break the code" of how English speakers read, write, talk, and think within a particular content area

(for example, understanding the differences between reading a play, a business plan, and a math textbook). To help them do this, teachers need to:

- Recognize and analyze the listening/viewing, reading, writing, and thinking habits, conventions, and formats used by experts in the content area;
- Understand text structures – the reading and writing conventions, features, and logic of content-area texts;
- Develop vocabulary knowledge – the essential terminology and concepts within that area;
- Articulate the "big ideas" within the unit being studied.

Meltzer and Hamann conclude by suggesting a menu of four possible approaches to professional development that principals might offer:

- Groups of teachers share effective strategies and materials;
- Content-area, bilingual and ESL, special education, and literacy support teachers meet and plan regularly to provide extra support for struggling learners during and beyond their regular courses;
- Teachers get a connected series of teacher workshops conducted by outside literacy specialists over the course of the school year, customized to the school's needs;
- Teachers meet in study groups focused on helpful books, for example *I Read It But I Don't Get It* by Tovani or *Think Aloud Strategies* by Wilhelm.

Meltzer and Hamann say that principals should hold teachers accountable for engaging in some form of productive professional development (and provide time and financial support for it), and follow up with classroom visits, teacher goal-setting, evaluation, providing time at faculty meetings to share successful strategies, and supplying classrooms with enough content-area reading material.

"Double-Duty Literacy Training" by Julie Meltzer and Edmund Hamann in *Principal Leadership*, February 2006 (Vol. 6, #6, p. 22-27), no e-link available

4. Options for Teacher Training in the Education of ELLs

In this *Principal Leadership* feature from the National Staff Development Council, Joellen Killion lays out six options for principals who want to support and train their teachers in ways to improve the achievement of English language learners. She suggests that principals mix and match these options to fit their needs:

• *Option 1: Provide mandatory professional development for all staff members on the basics of sheltered English*. The goal here is to provide all staff with the basics.

• *Option 2: Provide coaching and in-classroom support for teachers*. In-school colleagues are often the best staff developers, and it's a smart use of their time to visit other classrooms and provide suggestions and direction on best practices.

• *Option 3: Create demonstration classrooms*. When teachers see working models implemented by trusted colleagues, their adoption of effective practices accelerates.

• *Option 4: Provide collaborative planning time*. "When teachers have time to meet to plan instruction, design lessons, write common assessments, and examine student work," says Killion, "they benefit from the collective wisdom of their colleagues… Working together, teachers can create alternative assessments or adapt existing ones to allow English language learners to demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts in ways that are not completely dependent on written or oral language skills. Teachers can engage in action research to assess the impact of strategies they implement and compare their findings during their collaborative time. By learning together, teachers feel less threatened by the challenge of adapting their instructional practices and gain confidence in their own ability to meet the needs of English language learners in their classrooms."

• *Option 5: Confront teachers' belief systems.* This means coming to grips with the attitudes and beliefs that teachers may unknowingly hold about the academic ability and potential of ELLs. Some suggestions:

- Pair teachers with ELLs so they get to know them as individuals and have a chance to learn about their background, interests, families, previous education, and so on.
- Get teachers involved in school, district, or community-based cultural programs.
- Adapt grading structures, student reviews, and conversations to emphasize what students can do rather than what they can't do.
- Highlight the success of ELLs.
- Encourage teachers to reach out to the families of their ELLs.
- Engage teachers in discussions about social, political, and economic issues related to immigrant families.
- Hold high standards for teachers about educating all students.

• *Option 6: Confront beliefs within the community.* Sometimes negative beliefs outside the school are the biggest barriers to effective teaching and learning for ELLs, especially the children of undocumented immigrants. Principals and their staffs may want to broaden the understanding of parents and community members of how ELLs enrich and broaden the education of all students.

"Staff Development Guide" by Joellen Killion in *Principal Leadership*, February 2006 (Vol. 6, #6, p. 44-45), no e-link available

5. Using Online Software to Boost Student Learning

In this article in the new *Principal Leadership*, California high-school principal Donald Austin describes the dilemma he faced a few years ago when 29 seniors were about to be denied diplomas because they had failed a government/economics course. The only way they could meet the district's requirement was to drive 10 miles to take an evening adult education class, and that wasn't going to happen. The kids had given up.

Austin and his staff did some research and found NovaNET, a Pearson Education online course software package. The software diagnosed each student's academic needs and

targeted the specific skills they needed to finish the course. By the end of the year, all 29 of the students had passed the course and graduated on time.

Heartened by this quick win, the school took a closer look at its course offerings with an eye to expanding the use of computers. They noticed that when students repeated a course after failing it, they failed again 70 percent of the time. "The answer, clearly, wasn't more seat time," said Austin. He and his staff decided to trim many of the low-level courses and substitute NovaNET courses in key areas:

- To help seniors recover credits in courses required for graduation;
- To provide academic support for incoming freshmen who were below level in English and math;
- To help students in grades 9-12 fill in holes and recover credits in core curriculum areas;
- To allow students to take required courses online from home, with teachers monitoring their progress.

Demand grew rapidly, and they had to stretch the computer lab's hours from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

"The beauty of instructional technology," says Austin, "is the absence of bias. A computer program is not concerned with demographics or behavioral issues." He also learned that the teachers he assigned to monitor students using the NovaNET systems didn't have to be techies. "It's more important," he says, "that the teacher be someone whom students want to be around and who will support students." Austin himself got deeply involved in the program, learning enough about the software to monitor students' progress and satisfying himself that the software was being used properly.

During the 2004-05 school year, students at this high school gained more than 2,000 credits using the online software. Test-score gains were impressive: from 2002-03 to 2003-04, students using the online software made the following gains as compared to a slightly more-advantaged control group, and also changed the culture of the school and boosted expectations for student learning and teaching practices:

- 50.4% of online students improved their CST math scores (versus 33.3% of the control group);
- 65.5% of online students improved California Achievement Test mathematics scores (versus 54.1% of the control group);
- 42.9% of online students improved their California English language arts scores one level (versus 25.7% of the control group);
- 62.9% of online students improved the language portion of the norm-referenced test (versus 44.4% of the control group);
- The results were stronger for demographic subgroups.

"Integrating Technology to Help Students Graduate" by Donald Austin in *Principal Leadership*, February 2006 (Vol. 6, #6, p. 8-9), no e-link available, but Don Austin can be reached at daustin@alvord.k12.ca.us

6. Don't Raise Your Hand in This School!

Andrew Buck, a British principal, noticed a dysfunctional dynamic in classrooms in his comprehensive secondary school in East London: the same eager students had their hands up all the time, and teachers regularly called on them. This made it possible for other students to tune out the lesson and let their peers do the work. Buck observed that there were four categories of students and asked himself how the dynamic was helping each:

• *Hands up, know the answer* – They got lots of attention and affirmation.

• *Hands up, don't know the answer* – Students in this category were usually boys, and they hogged the limelight and wasted the class's time.

• *Hands down, know the answer* – They didn't raise their hands for fear of being labeled a "swot" (disparaging British slang for a student who studies too much). These students missed out on the chance to take an active part in classroom discussion and learn more deeply.

• *Hands down, don't know the answer* – When teachers broke with the usual pattern and called on befuddled students who were trying to "hide," the students often suffered from panic and sometimes humiliation – not helpful to their self-confidence or to the rest of the class.

Buck became increasingly convinced that hand-raising was not helping the teaching-learning process – but he was well aware of how persistent this pattern is. "It is every child's instinct and every teacher's instinct as well because it is ingrained in us," he said in a newspaper interview last week. "We are used to seeing hands waving in the air and some pupils jiggling so much to attract the teacher's attention that it sometimes looks as if they need the lavatory."

Buck decided to take an unusual step: he asked all teachers to forbid students from raising their hands when a question was posed in class, and to call on students randomly. NO HANDS UP signs have been posted in all classrooms, and teachers and students are slowly getting used to the new policy. How has it worked? Buck reports that attention levels have improved because students know they need to be prepared to answer questions at any time. What about embarrassment for ill-prepared or confused students? The school has adopted the "phone a friend" system, which allows a flustered student to nominate a peer to answer the teacher's question.

"London School Takes a Hands-Off Approach to Q & A" by Liz Lightfoot, *London Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 29, 2006, http://www.washtimes.com/functions/print.php?StoryID=20060128-114914-2573r

7. A Teacher Peer-Review Program in Chicago

The Chicago school district is planning to pilot a teacher peer-review program this fall, with an eye to spreading it citywide if it is successful. The pilot will be in eight "Fresh Start" schools (which have more say over budget, staffing, and curriculum) and will be conducted in partnership with the Chicago Teachers Union.

What's the problem to which this is the solution? Chicago principals currently use checklists to evaluate teachers after two classroom visits that can last less than 15 minutes each. "Evaluation as it stands does not really benefit anyone," said Michael Vaughn, a district

spokesman. “It’s kind of a cursory review.” The highest-performing teachers are not recognized, he said, and the lowest-performing teachers don’t get the help they need. New teachers in the district consistently report that they don’t get enough support, and high turnover among the newbies is hobbling school improvement.

The Chicago peer-review experiment, modeled on a successful program begun in Toledo in 1981 and replicated in Columbus, Cincinnati, Rochester, Minneapolis, and other districts, will release “master teachers” from their regular duties and have them visit the classrooms of new and underperforming teachers as often as once a week. The mentors are there to help, but they can also recommend, if things don’t improve, that a teacher be fired, with the final decision made by a board appointed by the district and the union. The mentors will be chosen from the ranks of Chicago teachers and paid extra for their work. The plan is for them to return to the classroom after two or three years so they can stay part of the teacher corps.

“Teachers to Conduct Peer Reviews in Chicago” by Bess Keller in *Education Week*, Jan. 25, 2006 (Vol. 25, #20, p. 8), no free e-link available

8. Short Item:

Take our daughters and sons to work day – This year’s national event is scheduled for Thursday, April 27, and is recommended for girls and boys ages 8-12 to help them envision the kinds of options they have for their working lives. For more information, go to: http://www.daughtersandsonstowork.org

Spotted in *PEN Weekly Newsblast*, Jan. 27, 2006

Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: kim.marshall8@verizon.net

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 36 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through scores of articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the memo to subscribers every Monday (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2004-05).

Subscriptions:

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Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
Boston Globe
CommonWealth Magazine
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Jimmy Kilpatrick
Journal of Staff Development
Language Learner
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
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Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Psychology Today
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine
Teachers College Record
Theory Into Practice