

## **Sustaining Leadership**

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### **Introduction**

Educational change is rarely easy to make, always hard to justify and almost impossible to sustain. Educational changes that enhance and enrich deep learning among students are particularly problematic<sup>1</sup> and sustaining such changes over time has presented severe challenges for educational reformers. Discussions of sustainability in educational change try to address these challenges, but they often trivialize the idea of sustainability by equating it with maintainability – with how to make change last.<sup>2</sup> This article develops deeper meanings of ‘sustainability’ and examines how far efforts to sustain change are in tune with the ecological origins of the concept.

We live in a complex and fast changing knowledge society.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, teaching and school leadership are in the midst of demographic turnover and turmoil. These changes are not easy to control. They require different ways of thinking about change in human and natural systems than conventional approaches to planned change have allowed. This article therefore links our deeper senses of sustainable change to significant leadership issues in education to develop key principles of what we call ‘sustaining leadership’.

Our work draws on a five-year program of school improvement involving six secondary schools in an urban and suburban school district in Ontario, Canada as well as on a Spencer Foundation funded study of Change Over Time? including leadership over time in eight Ontario and New York State high schools.

## **From Implementation and Institutionalization**

For many years, educational change theorists and change agents have been concerned with how to move beyond the *implementation* phase of change when new ideas and practices are tried for the first time, to the *institutionalization* phase when new practices are integrated effortlessly into teachers' repertoires, and affect many teachers, not just a few.<sup>4</sup> "Institutionalization means a change is taken as a normal, taken for granted part of organizational life; and has unquestioned resources of time, personnel and money available".<sup>5</sup> Many long standing practices such as the graded school, the compartmentalized, secondary school, tracking students by ability, and teacher-centered instruction, have been institutionalized over long periods of time and become part of the 'grammar' of schooling.<sup>6</sup> The persistence of this grammar and of everyone's ideas of how schools should really work as institutions has made it exceptionally difficult to institutionalize other changes, innovations and reforms that challenge the grammar, that imply a different and deviant institutional appearance and way of operating for schooling.<sup>7</sup>

In the face of this traditional grammar of schooling, the vast majority of educational change that deepens learning, and allows everyone to benefit from it neither spreads nor lasts. This long-standing problem of institutionalization is now coming to be understood as an even more complex problem of sustainability.

## **The Meaning of Sustainability**

Sustainability is more than a temporal matter. It concerns more than a change's life and death. In line with its origins in the Brundtland Commission<sup>8</sup> on the environment, sustainability is also a spatial issue. As we have argued elsewhere:

Sustainability does not simply mean whether something can last. It addresses how particular initiatives can be developed without

compromising the development of others in the surrounding environment, now and in the future.<sup>9</sup>

This implies several things. First, sustainable improvement is enduring, not evanescent. It does not put its investment dollars in the high profile launch of an initiative, then withdraw them when the glamour has gone. Sustainable improvement demands committed relationships, not fleeting infatuations. It is change for keeps, and change for good. Sustainable improvement contributes to the growth and the good of everyone, instead of fostering the fortunes of the few at the expense of the rest. It does not promote model schools, or magnet schools, that raid scarce resources from the rest.

Second, sustainable improvement develops and draws on resources and support at a rate that can match the pace of change. It does not let change outrun its resource base and deplete the reserves that are needed by others. Sustainable policies do not lavish resources on computer hardware when long term spending commitments cannot support continuing maintenance or updates in software. As Nicos Machiavelli warned in *The Prince*, "it is a common defect in men not to consider in good weather the possibility of a tempest".<sup>10</sup> Sustainable educational policies don't squander all the resource on pilot projects, leaving little for everybody else; or invest improvement funds in coordinators who disappear once the money has dried up. Sustainable improvement requires investment in building long term capacity for improvement, such as the development of teachers' skills, which will stay with them forever, long after the project money has gone.<sup>11</sup>

Last, promoters of sustainability cultivate and recreate an educational environment or ecosystem that possesses the capacity to stimulate ongoing improvement on a broad front. They enable people to adapt to and prosper in their increasingly complex environment. Rational, standardized scientific efficiency is the enemy of healthy and creative diversity. It produces overly simple systems that are too specialized or standardized to allow the learning and cross-fertilization that is necessary for healthy development.

Standardized reform strategies make school systems less like rich, biodiverse rainforests of cross-fertilizing influence that can achieve sustainable improvement over time, than like regimented coniferous plantations, whose super-efficient ugliness is exceeded only by their limited capacity for mutual influence and their lack of contribution to sustainability of the wider educational environment.

The evidence of research we have undertaken with our colleagues on the long-term impact of educational change in Canada and New York State is that standardized reform is destroying diversity and seriously endangering the lives and futures of the weakest members of the school system - those who are poor, who are learning through a new language or who have special educational needs. Standardization is endangering these students to the point of educational extinction where failure to meet the regimented standards is denying severely disadvantaged students the right to graduate.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, high pressure improvements in test results in the short run are being bought at the expense of a long-term recruitment and retention crisis in teaching – since teaching driven by short-term results is not the kind of teaching that teachers want to do.<sup>13</sup>

In education, one important addition to our definition of sustainability is that not anything or everything is worth keeping. In education, it matters that what is sustained is what, in terms of teaching and learning, is itself sustaining. To sustain is to keep alive. Sustenance is nourishment. Sound education, good teaching and learning that matters and that lasts for life are inherently sustaining processes. Supporting and maintaining those aspects of teaching and learning that are deep and that endure, that foster sophisticated understanding and lifelong learning for all, defines the core of sustainable education. Merely maintaining practices that raise test scores or produce easily measurable results does not sustain these deeper aspects of teaching and learning.

To sum up, sustainability in educational change comprises five key and interrelated characteristics. These are

- improvement that sustains learning; not merely change that alters schooling
- improvement that endures over time
- improvement that can be supported by available or achievable resources
- improvement that doesn't impact negatively on the surrounding environment of other schools and systems
- improvement that promotes ecological diversity and capacity throughout the educational and community environment.

This five-fold definition of sustainability raises questions not only about the endurance of educational and organizational change over time, but also about its arrangement and articulation through space.

### **Sustainability in the Knowledge Society**

Sustainability involves a way of thinking that is integrative, holistic and ecological. It is an intellectual paradigm about the complex nature of human and natural systems that is particularly crucial to addressing the complexities of a 'knowledge society'.<sup>14</sup> Today's knowledge society has three dimensions. First, it comprises an expanded scientific, technical and educational sphere.<sup>15</sup> Second, it involves complex ways of processing and circulating knowledge and information in a service-based economy. Third, it entails basic changes in how organizations function so that they enhance continuous innovation in products and services, by creating systems, teams and cultures that maximize the opportunities for mutual, spontaneous learning. Today's knowledge society depends on having a sophisticated infrastructure of information and communication technology that makes all this learning faster and easier.<sup>16</sup> The knowledge society creates enormous economic opportunities as knowledge is at the heart of more and more of what we produce and how we produce it. But the

'runaway world' of the knowledge economy also creates immense social and systemic problems.<sup>17</sup>

Thomas Homer-Dixon argues that our increasingly complex, interdependent and fast-paced world generates a profusion of urgent and unpredictable problems that demand instant and effective responses.<sup>18</sup> Instantaneous and endless stock-market trading and speculation across the globe means that currency crises in Thailand immediately undermine confidence in economies elsewhere. Global warming produced by carbon dioxide on one part of the planet, and the disappearance of rainforests in another, create floods and gales in a third. The frog population is disappearing everywhere and we have no idea why. The world is more interdependent. So are its problems: September 11 brought this home to all Americans. In the computer age, there is more and more information and data to help people address and respond to these problems, but this information glut, or "data smog" becomes just another part of the problem as it assails us in ever greater quantities with increasing rapidity.<sup>19</sup> In organizations vital to society's economic wellbeing, key workers may be smarter and able to work faster, but they are less wise and less capable of drawing on experience and institutional memory to influence their judgement.

What the knowledge society needs, says Homer-Dixon is lots of ingenuity. He defines ingenuity as

ideas that can be applied to solve practical, technical and social problems, such as the problems that arise from water pollution, cropland erosion and the like. Ingenuity includes not only truly new ideas — often called "innovation" — but also ideas that though not fundamentally novel are nevertheless useful.<sup>20</sup>

The "shortfall between" (the) "rapidly rising need for ingenuity" (and its) "inadequate supply" is what Homer-Dixon means by the ingenuity gap. This 'ingenuity gap' is a by-product of over-commitment to the rationalist styles of thought that have influenced Western societies for the past 400 years and that

continue to dominate the bureaucracies of government and research which respond to increasing complexity with ever more frantic efforts to impose certainty and control. The result is that large scale reforms repeatedly get subverted and resisted locally despite the brilliance of their rational designs.

Fritoff Capra explains that ecosystems and human communities are not rational, linear and easily managed, but “networks ... open to the flows of energy and resources; their structures are determined by their histories of structural changes; they are intelligent . . .”.<sup>21</sup> What we can learn from ecosystems, he suggests is “how to live sustainably,” how to create organizational principles that we can use as “guidelines to build sustainable human communities.” He argues that:

- Ecological and human communities are interdependent. To understand both, one must understand relationships. This requires “a shift of perceptions to look at the whole as opposed to the parts . . .”<sup>22</sup>
- Ecological communities are non linear and involve multiple feedback loops. “Linear chains of cause and effect exist very rarely in ecosystems” so that a disturbance in one part of the system spreads out in “ever-widening patterns”.<sup>23</sup>
- Ecosystems maintain the flexibility necessary to adapt to changing conditions.
- Ecosystems respond to contradictions and conflict by maintaining a dynamic balance between and among competing forces. “ Diversity means different relationships, many different approaches to the same problem. A diverse community is a resilient community, capable of adapting to changing situations.”<sup>24</sup>

- Partnerships are an essential feature of ecosystems. “The cyclical exchanges of energy and resources in an ecosystem are sustained by pervasive cooperation”.<sup>25</sup>

### **Sustainability and Non-Sustainability in Leadership**

What contribution can leaders make to sustainable improvement according to the ecological sense of sustainability we have outlined? In our view, leaders develop sustainability by how they approach, commit to and protect deep learning in their schools; by how they sustain others to promote and support that learning; by how they sustain themselves in doing so, so that they can persist with their vision and avoid burning out; and by how they try to ensure the improvements they bring about last over time, especially after they themselves have gone. We will now look at three particular aspects of *sustainable leadership* that illustrate the five different components of sustainability (and non-sustainability) that we have outlined – leading learning, ‘distributed’ leadership and leadership succession.

#### Leading Learning

The prime responsibility of all school leaders is to sustain learning. Leaders of learning put learning at the center of everything they do: student's learning first, then everyone else's learning in support of it.<sup>26</sup> The leader's role as a leader of learning is put to the strongest test when his or her school faces demanding policies that seem to undermine true learning or distract people's energies and attention away from it.

High stakes testing can push teachers to deliver improved results, but not necessarily to produce better learning. What educators do in this situation depends on their commitment to student learning and on their attitudes to their own learning. In 2001, the Canadian province of Ontario introduced a high stakes literacy test in Grade 10. It was applied to virtually all students who were required to pass in order to graduate. High stakes, high pressure!



Ivor Megson was the new principal at Talisman Park secondary school. Promoted from being assistant principal at the school, Ivor was dedicated to his work as a leader but did not like to rock the boat too much. Most of his staff had been at the school a long time. They liked being innovative in their own academic subjects but were skeptical and often cynical about larger scale reform agendas. A coffee circle of embittered staff met every morning before school to complain about the government's latest, almost daily initiatives and announcements. Like many principals, Ivor saw his responsibility as being to protect or buffer his staff from the deluge of reforms that descended on the school. This, he felt, was the best way he could help them.

With his staff, Ivor therefore figured out the most minimal and least disruptive school response to the Grade 10 test: one that would produce the best results with the least amount of disruption. Quickly, Ivor and his staff began identifying a group of students who, pre-tests indicated, would fall just below the pass mark. The school then coached or "prepped" these students intensively in literacy learning, so they would perform acceptably when the real test came around. Technically, the strategy worked. The school's results looked good. But teachers' energies are finite, and as staff concentrated on those students near the cut-off point, the ones who really needed help with literacy and had little chance of making the pass threshold, were cast by the wayside. In Talisman Park, authentic literacy, learning for all, and especially for the most needy, was sacrificed to appearances and results.

Charmaine Williams was the principal of Wayvern High school, just up the road from Talisman Park. Wayvern was a culturally and ethnically diverse school and had a high number of students for whom English was their second language. Wayvern had a lot to lose on the literacy test. Yet Charmaine's school made literacy, not the literacy test, one of their key improvement goals. Charmaine engaged her staff in inquiry about how to improve literacy so it would benefit all students in the long term, instead of focusing on how to manipulate the short-term scores on the test. Working with large staff

teams, across disciplines and with workshop training support, Charmaine's school undertook an audit of existing literacy practices in classrooms, researched effective literacy strategies that might be helpful, and undertook a "gap" analysis to see what improvements would be necessary. Teachers shared their literacy strategies across subjects, then dedicated a whole month to a high profile focus on literacy learning in the school and with the community. They also continued a successful literacy initiative they had already made where everyone in the school read together for 15 minutes a day. Charmaine harnessed her staff's learning in support of student learning. The immediate test results were not spectacular (as is usual with more sustainable change), but together, the staff and parents were confident that long term improvement mattered the most. Wayvern teachers were convinced that in future years, scores would increase as genuine reflections of learning and achievement, rather than because of cynical manipulations of the testing process.

One reform; two principals; two schools; different outcomes! Especially in the most adverse circumstances, it is those principals who are leaders of learning who make the most lasting and inclusive improvements for their students in their schools.

### Distributed Leadership

Outstanding leadership is not just the province of individual icons and heroes.<sup>27</sup> In a complex, fast-paced world, leadership cannot rest on the shoulders of the few. The burden is too great. In highly complex, knowledge-based organizations, everyone's intelligence is needed to help the organization to flex, respond, regroup, and retool in the face of unpredictable and sometimes overwhelming demands. Locking intelligence up in the individual leader creates inflexibility and increases the likelihood of mistakes and errors. But when we draw on what Brown and Lauder call 'collective intelligence' – intelligence that is infinite rather than fixed, multi-faceted rather than singular, and that belongs to everyone, not just a few – the capacity for learning and improvement is magnified many times over.<sup>28</sup> For these reasons, more and more efforts are being

made to replace individual leaders with more distributed or distributive leadership. This kind of leadership comprises a network of relationships among people, structures and cultures (both within and across organizational boundaries). It is not just a role assigned to, or acquired by, a person in an organization. Distributed leadership is an organic activity, dependent on interrelationships and connections.<sup>29</sup>

Mark Warne was the principal of North Ridge High School. Three years from retirement, Mark had a keen intellect and a deep knowledge about imposed change and its effects. Mark valued and was skilled at seeing the 'big picture' of reform. When legislated reforms were announced, Mark produced detailed and thoughtful written and projected timelines for implementation responses that he circulated to staff for comment. The response was disappointing, though, and Mark confided that his staff was generally apathetic about getting involved with change. Mark's strength was that he possessed great intellectual clarity, but he could not develop the capacity among his staff to share it with him. The big picture of change belonged to Mark, not to everyone. His office was packed with policy statements, resources and materials that might better have been distributed around the school. Mark controlled the school's directions through the line management of the department heads. The department heads were quite autonomous in their areas and staff involvement depended on the leadership style of each head.

Mark delegated work to his subordinate department heads and accepted their advice in areas where they were more expert than he. The heads of department generally described him as "supportive", "compassionate", and "well-intentioned". Yet the wider staff felt excluded from decisions and ill-informed on important issues. They considered him to be "indecisive", "inconsistent", and "lacking a personal vision". At a school improvement workshop we ran with the whole staff, they were the only school of the six to identify themselves as 'cruising' – their mainly affluent students were getting good results but the school lacked purpose and direction.<sup>30</sup> The chief problem

the staff chose to address at the workshop was “communications with the administration”.

Soon after this, the school began to change dramatically, but not through a change of principal. One of Mark’s assistant principals was close to retirement and performed traditional discipline and administrative roles. The other was battling with what sadly turned out to be a terminal illness. In 1998, however, two new assistant principals were appointed. Together they infused the school’s administration with renewed enthusiasm, optimism and focus. Diane Grant’s athletic bearing and infectious energetic style brought her sophisticated knowledge of curriculum and classroom assessment to the problem of reform. Before long she was skillfully leading the staff in curriculum gap analysis or having them share successful experiences in classroom assessment by seating them in cross-disciplinary tables at the staff picnic where they scribbled their ideas as graffiti on paper table cloths. Meanwhile, Bill Johnson, the other assistant principal, drew on his counseling skills to develop effective communication and relationships with and among the staff.

As a team, Diane and Bill were able to set a common vision for the school and a more open style of communication. In this new style, staff focused on collaborative learning, inquiry and problem solving. Mark’s strength was in having the good sense to ‘distribute’ the leadership of important classroom-related changes to his assistant principals who in turn redistributed much of the leadership among the staff who learned to be critical filters for government mandates rather than mere pipelines for implementing them.

### Leadership succession

Sustainable leadership outlives particular individuals. It does not disappear when leaders leave. The departure of the initiating principal or the critical mass of early leaders from model or magnet schools is often the first symptom of decline.<sup>31</sup> Macmillan has observed that the practice in some school districts of regularly rotating leaders between schools can harden teachers

against change because they come to see the school's principalship as little more than a revolving door in a building where they are the permanent residents.<sup>32</sup> Whether principal rotation is formalized or not, leadership succession events always pose a threat to sustainable improvement.

Bill Mathews was the son of a policeman – a tall, commanding figure who brought vision, energy and intellectual rigor to his role. Bill believed strongly that students came first and pursued this belief with a sense of clear expectation and relentless determination. Some staff respected his commitment to children and his willingness to take action and put himself on the line for their sake. Prior experience of principalship buttressed his self-confidence, and in a teacher culture which reveled in argument and debate, his somewhat adversarial style which encouraged and entertained well-reasoned and supported opposition to his ideas, suited a sizeable number of staff very well. It also stimulated some lively staff meetings, not least one where student recommendations for improving school climate occasioned teacher protests about maladroitly expressed student opinions! Bill led Stewart Heights School with firm expectations and clear example, accompanied by lively argument and considerable humor. The most outstanding instance of leading by example was when he personally solved the scheduling problems of 80 students to demonstrate to staff that better service for students was possible.

In the wake of his example and expectations, Bill quickly got staff to analyze data consciously and make action plans on the basis of what they learned. He integrated several improvement teams to permit far greater voice and participation for teachers in the work of the school compared to the previous dominance of the department heads' council. In this culturally diverse school, Bill encouraged the staff to initiate a range of changes that made students feel more included, and parents feel more welcome. Structures, planning, and initiation, backed up by his own personal interactions with people and his visibility around the school, were the ways that Bill brought about change. Many staff, including most of those on the School Success team, warmed to this

decisiveness and sense of direction. Staff referred to him as a “visionary”, “change agent” and “efficient manager”. Others, especially women however, indicated that while they had respect for him, they questioned what they construed as being a somewhat authoritarian style.

The assistant principals offered complementary approaches within the administrative team. One presented a quieter, more restrained and procedural version of masculinity in leadership than his “up-front” principal. The other took a more relationship-centered approach to students, curriculum and staff development in which caring coupled with hard work and high expectations played an important role. With their contrasting styles, they too fostered greater teacher participation in the work of the school.

Bill Matthews felt it had been a struggle to change the school culture to provide “a service to kids and the community”. Yet, when he presented the staff with survey data showing that 95% of staff were satisfied with the school and only 35% of students and 25% of parents were, this created a common problem which staff then had to solve together.

With more time to help staff work through their doubts and difficulties, Bill Matthews and his team may well have been able to convert the temporary success of short-term innovation into sustainable improvement. They may have been able to complete the reculturing of the school. But by the end of his third year, changing circumstances within the school system resulted in Bill moving to school district administration; one of the assistant principals to his first principalship, and the other to her second assistant principalship. Stewart Heights’ leadership successor was new to the school and to the principalship and had to feel his way carefully into both of them. The mandated reform agenda was also gathering pace. The result of these converging forces was that staff and the new principal turned their attention to implementation more than improvement. At school climate meetings, student-centered policies gave way to conventional behavior-code initiatives. The early achievements of school improvement at Stewart Heights quickly began to fade. If school improvement is

to be sustainable, continuity of or longer tenure for the initial principal, or consistency in relation to those who follow him or her, is essential.

By comparison, Blue Mountain School, an innovative school established in 1994, planned its own leadership succession from the outset. The fate of most innovative schools is to fade once their first principals have left. Blue Mountain's principal anticipated his own departure and worked hard to create a school structure that would survive it, and 'perpetuate what we are doing'. He was especially alert to the threats posed by leadership succession where an ensuing principal might import a different philosophy.<sup>33</sup> He therefore "negotiated very strongly (with the district) to have my assistant principal appointed principal". After four years, the system moved the principal who founded the school to another school in the system and promoted his assistant in his place. In her words:

We talked about (this move) and we talked about how we could preserve the direction that the school is moving in and we were afraid that if a new administrator came in as principal that if he or she had a different philosophy, a different set of beliefs, then it would be quite easy to simply move things in that particular direction and we didn't want that to happen.

Blue Mountain is a rarity. In general, planned succession is one of the most neglected aspects of leadership theory and practice in our schools and one of the most persistently missing pieces in the effort to secure sustainability of school improvement.

### **Discussion**

Our definition and dimensions of sustainability in education and our case illustrations carry a number of implications for what it might mean to develop sustainable leadership.

1. *The future of leadership must be embedded in the hearts and minds of the many, and not rest on the shoulders of an heroic few.*

School leadership is not the sum of its individual leaders. School leadership is a system, a culture. Schools are places where principals, teachers, students and parents should all lead. To sustain quality leadership, school systems must apply systems thinking to their mandate of leadership quality, qualifications and development - not just by setting common standards and criteria, but by applying systems thinking to all initiatives – seeing leadership as a culture of integrated qualities rather than merely an aggregate of common characteristics. This is the essence of the holistic approach to sustainable leadership.

School jurisdictions should see leadership as a horizontal system across space, where leaders can learn from each other within and across their schools through peer support groups, on-line dialogue, pairing of schools and their principals, joint research and development projects, etc. As we experienced in our school improvement project, one of the components most consistently valued by school leaders is the regular opportunity to meet and converse with each other to talk openly about shared professional and sometimes personal concerns.<sup>34</sup>

2. *Educational systems should see leadership as a vertical system over time.*

The efforts of all leaders are influenced by the impact of their predecessors and have implications for their successors. No leader is an island in time. Principals and their systems tend to put all their energy into what Etienne Wenger calls inbound knowledge<sup>35</sup> – the knowledge needed to change a school, improve it, make one's mark on it, turn it around. Little or no attention is devoted to outbound knowledge - the knowledge needed to preserve past successes, or keep initiatives going once the leader has left. The moment principals get new appointments, they immediately start to focus on their new school, their next challenge; not on how to ensure their present achievements live



on after their departure. Few things in education succeed less than leadership succession. Heroic principals do not plan for their own obsolescence. The emphasis on change has obliterated the importance of continuity.

In urban schools, teachers see their principals come and go like revolving doors - and quickly learn how to resist and ignore their leader's efforts. The result is that school improvement becomes like a set of bobbing corks - with schools rising under one set of leaders, only to sink under the next. If we want sustainable as well as fleetingly successful leadership, we must pay serious attention to leadership succession. Leaders must be asked and must ask themselves - what will be their legacy; how will their influence live on after their professional departure or death? The time to think about this is when they start their leadership, not when they draw it to a close.

The recruitment and development of leaders in the public service in most western countries has become a major concern as the 'baby boom' generation moves on. For example, by 2005, 70% of the senior managers in the U.S. public service will be eligible for retirement, "causing unique challenges for numerous agencies in maintaining leadership continuity, institutional memory and workforce experience". In education, after years of top-down reforms, many existing leaders are retiring at their first opportunity, creating a crisis of recruitment and retention.<sup>36</sup>

The 'best' private sector organizations consider investing in the development of leaders as an 'asset' to the organization, not a 'cost'. These forward-looking organizations look at the long term to determine the kinds of leadership skills and aptitudes that will be needed in the future.<sup>37</sup> Education has much to learn from the private sector about succession planning.

3. *The promise of sustainable success in education lies in creating cultures of distributed leadership throughout the school community, not in training and developing a tiny leadership elite.*

In a world of high expectations, rapid change and a youthful profession in the first decades of the 21st century, teachers cannot be the mere targets of other people's leadership, but must see themselves as being, and be encouraged to be leaders of classrooms and of colleagues from the moment they commence their careers. Distributed leadership means more than delegation. Delegation involves passing across lesser and often unwanted tasks to others. The individual leader decides what will be delegated and to whom. Distributed leadership means creating a culture of initiative and opportunity, where teachers of all kinds propose new directions and start innovations, perhaps even challenging and creating difficulties for their principals in the overall interests of the students and the school. In its fullest development, distributed leadership extends beyond the staff to the students and the parents. Distributed leadership gives depth and breadth to the idea and practice of sustainable leadership.

### **Conclusion**

Schools that sustain 'deep' learning experiences for all students should address the breadth of school leadership in supporting and promoting the learning of present and future leaders themselves. They should address the length and sustainability of school leadership over time, helping leaders to plan for their own professional obsolescence, and to think about the school's needs for continuity as well as change. School systems will have to acknowledge and create conditions that distribute leadership far beyond the principal's office to the entire culture of the school, and even to the larger community. And they will need to concentrate on the leadership skills and qualities that will sustain the kind of deep learning and sophisticated teaching we need in the future rather than merely helping them manage and survive in the present. Successful leadership is sustainable leadership; nothing simpler, nothing less.

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- <sup>4</sup> S. Anderson and S. Stiegelbauer, "Institutionalization and renewal in a restructured secondary school," *School Organization* 14, no. 3 (1994): 279-293.
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- <sup>9</sup> A. Hargreaves and D. Fink, "The three dimensions of reform," *Educational Leadership* 57, no. 7 (2000): 30-34.
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- <sup>11</sup> L. Stoll, "Realizing our potential: Understanding and developing capacity for lasting improvement," *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 10, no. 4 (1999): 503-532.
- <sup>12</sup> A. Hargreaves, in press, *op. cit.*, note 3.
- <sup>13</sup> A. Hargreaves, in press, *op. cit.*, note 3.
- <sup>14</sup> P. Drucker, *Post-capitalist society* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993); M. Castells, *The rise of the network society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); OECD, "Schooling for tomorrow: What schools for the future?," (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001).
- <sup>15</sup> D. Bell, *The coming of post-industrial society*. (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
- <sup>16</sup> A. Hargreaves, in press, *op. cit.*, note

- <sup>17</sup> A. Giddens, *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives* (London: Profile Books, 2000).
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- <sup>21</sup> F. Capra, *The web of life: A new synthesis of mind and matter* (London: Harper Collins, 1997, p. 289).
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 290.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 290.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 295.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 293.
- <sup>26</sup> L. Stoll, L. Earl, and D. Fink, *It's about learning: It's about time* (London: Routledge Press; 2002).
- <sup>27</sup> J. R. Saul, *Voltaire's bastards* (Toronto: Penguin Books,).
- <sup>28</sup> P. Brown and H. Lauder, *Capitalism and social progress: The future of society in a global economy* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001).
- <sup>29</sup> K. Riley, "Leadership, learning and systemic reform," *The Journal of Educational Change* 1, no. 1 (2000): 29-55.

- <sup>30</sup> On the concept of 'cruising schools', see L. Stoll and D. Fink, *Changing our schools: Linking school effectiveness and school improvement* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996)
- <sup>31</sup> S. Sarason, *The creation of settings and the future societies* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1972); D. Fink, *Good school/real school: The life cycle of an innovative school* (New York: Teachers' College Press, 2000).
- <sup>32</sup> R. Macmillan, "The relationship between school culture and principals' practices during succession" (Ph.D., University of Toronto, 1996); R. Macmillan, "Leadership succession, culture of teaching, and educational change," in *The sharp edge of educational change*, ed. N. Bascia and A. Hargreaves (London: Falmer Press, 2000).
- <sup>33</sup> A. Hargreaves, and D. Fink, 2000, *op. cit.*, note 9.
- <sup>34</sup> For more evidence on the benefits of dialogue among principals, see B. Beatty, "Emotion matters in educational leadership" (Ph.D., University of Toronto, 2002).
- <sup>35</sup> E. Wenger, *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- <sup>36</sup> D. Fink, 2000, *op. cit.*, note 31
- <sup>37</sup> K. Jackson, "Building new teams: The next generation" (paper presented at the The Future of Work in the Public Sector, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, B.C., 2000)