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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

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How Does Your Leadership Measure Up?

In today's fast-paced world of change and reform, schools need strong leaders who can inspire, support, and guide their staffs, students, and communities into the next century. But how can district officials choose just the right leader for each school? How can those already in a position of leadership enhance their capabilities? Clearinghouse research analyst Larry Lashway explores these issues in his latest book,

- [*Measuring Leadership: A Guide to Assessment for Development of School Executives.*](#)

This lucid book offers administrators guidance on how to select, appraise, and develop leaders using leadership instruments. Many schools use informal methods of assessing leadership, but some are moving to the more systematic measuring that testing can offer. Lashway notes, "Through thoughtful use of well-designed instruments or activities, schools can add depth, breadth, and objectivity to their assessment of administrators."

Lashway explores the rationale behind leadership assessment in chapter 1, "The Measure of a Leader." With concrete, imaginative examples, he illustrates the dilemma administrators face when choosing or evaluating a leader, and demonstrates the different ways that leadership can be assessed. Lashway warns administrators that testing is not the magic answer to choosing or appraising a leader, but should be used with care. As he states, "No single test provides a comprehensive measure."

Chapter 2, "What Do Leadership Tests Measure?," examines leadership-related traits, skills, and attitudes that are measured by tests. Different theoretical perspectives on leadership lie behind the various tests; because of this, test users must choose their test with care, making sure it measures the qualities of leadership that best fit their district.

After learning about the purpose and content of instruments, district officials are then ready to select the test that best suits their district and/or school. In chapter 3, "Selecting the Best Instrument," Lashway offers a step-by-step guide, beginning with knowing the purpose for testing and ending with determining how much support the test provides for followup and professional development.

Lashway cautions that although there is no "one right test," with careful thought and analysis of the instrument and their needs, administrators can select a test that will serve them well.

Chapter 4, "Fulfilling the Promise of Assessment," deals with the aftermath of testing. Lashway notes that the best assessment is not just an event forgotten soon after the testing is over, but a process that guides leaders on a journey to improvement. This chapter discusses delicate issues such as how to deliver potentially negative feedback to participants, and how to use the feedback in an efficient way.

Lashway suggests that leaders should set a plan for development within two weeks of receiving feedback. Although the results of testing can sometimes temporarily lower self-esteem, Lashway contends that the ultimate end result—becoming a leader who can better help children and the school system—is well worth it.

In chapter 5, "Instrument Profiles," Lashway offers a starting point for officials who are ready to select a measurement instrument. Over twenty instruments are profiled. The profiles include summaries of the purpose, target group, type of instrument, format of feedback, availability of followup, theory and rationale behind the test, how it is administered, statistical validation, most appropriate uses, and cost. Information on how to contact the organization that developed the instrument is also provided.

Lashway profiles a broad spectrum of instruments ranging in scope from short to extensive, from costly to less expensive, and from those based solely on educational leadership to those based on general professional leadership. Copies of *Measuring Leadership*, at \$9.75 plus \$4.00 S&H, are now available from the Clearinghouse.

New on the Web

In keeping with our goal to provide a dynamic website with continually updated resources, in recent months we have added the following new content and features:

Profiles of approximately twenty new organizations to the online Directory of Organizations in Educational Management. Current total: 153 organizations.

Full text of two new ERIC Digests:

- [ERIC Digest 125 - Student Truancy](#)
 - [ERIC Digest 126 - Peer Review of Teachers](#)
- (Current total: 48 titles)

New or revised discussions of these Trends and Issues topics:

- [School Law](#)
- [School Reform](#)
- [School Finance](#)
- [Social and Economic Context](#)

- [School Choice](#)

Full text of two new [Research Roundups](#):

- School Size: Is Small Better?
- Preparing School Leaders
(Current total: 8 titles)

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Finally, please use the new customer satisfaction survey to give us feedback on how well we are meeting your needs.

'Charter Schools' Is Newest PBL Project

The Clearinghouse has recently added a fourth title to its lineup of Problem-Based Learning Projects.

- [Charter Schools](#) was prepared by Philip Hallinger of Vanderbilt University.

This project was developed in cooperation with the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory in Oak Brook, Illinois. It is the first of several projects that we will publish with NCREL.

The project teaches students the difficulties that may be encountered in the foundation of a charter school. The problem concerns all aspects of a charter school's foundation: beliefs about learning, strategies for achieving racial/ethnic balance, governance structure and management organization, as well as legislative and fiscal matters.

Charter Schools, like other PBL projects, consists of eight separate components. An introduction explains the project, followed by the presentation of the problem itself. Learning objectives for the project are stated, and students are presented with resources that facilitate the project. "Product specifications" detail what should be included in the performance or product the students present at the culmination of the project. Guiding questions direct students to key concepts presented through the project.

At the completion of the project, students are asked to give feedback on the problem itself. Students must juggle severe time constraints throughout the project, much as a practicing administrator would. Like other PBL projects, Hallinger's project is available in both student and instructor editions.

For instructors' convenience, the project includes a range of required and optional reading materials for students to review and digest prior to the start of the project simulation. Appearing in an Appendix, these materials give students a background of pertinent information to draw from when confronting issues integral to the project. Fees paid to the copyright holders for reproduction of these materials are included in the price of the project.

Also included in the price and bundled with Hallinger's project is a paper edition of Joe Nathan's *Charter Schools*, published by Jossey Bass, 1996 (\$18.00 retail).

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