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Collegial Governance in Schooling

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Collegial Governance in Schooling

Introduction

“Nothing is more important about a school than its culture. No one occupies a more influential position from which to influence a school’s culture than its principal.” So says Roland Barth in his endorsement of a book by Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson called *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership*, (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

It is an intriguing thought, especially in light of the shortage of qualified administrators in Islamic Schools across the country. In public school circles, the call for charismatic leadership is no less. For at the heart of reform, lies the breath of life that school leaders bring with them in communicating their vision for the school. But how delicate a thread is this? Few would deny the influence that the principal has over the climate and ethos of the school. Islamic schools feel the crunch of the administrative shortage every summer. They may feel forced to hang on to substandard principals from fear of not finding replacements. Or they simply cannot find one at all, and have to start the year without. Schools that do have good administrators sometimes find themselves in power struggles that render the school leadership ineffective anyway. Sarason (1997) points out that when school leaders actually are effective, it is often in spite of the system - not because of it. Their success depends on their rare charisma, (which is why it is in such high demand), and it lasts only as long as the

charismatic leader remains. The successes of such leaders also cannot be extended to other schools with less inspiring principals, (Snowden & Gorton, 2002), (Sarason, 1997).

This is the problem that led me to investigate a seemingly radical question put forth by Sarason (1997): Are principals really necessary? At first it sounds ridiculous. However, there is a growing consensus among school reformers around the concept of decentralized authority in schooling. Concepts such as "collegial governance" and "site-based (or school-based) management" have emerged to suggest a continuum of ways that teachers can become more empowered in the school while the principal as manager diminishes and instead transitions toward a new role of "educational leader". Further, as my research will suggest here, there already are and have historically been educational models that demonstrate the efficacy of this approach. In fact, it might be safe to say that our current paradigm of bureaucratic authority in schooling is more out of the ordinary than the historical norm.

Furthermore, collegial governance offers far more than a solution to the shortage of educational leadership. Inherent in every reformer's endorsement of collegial governance is an expanded vision of the educational climate that should be present in schools. Rather than a place where students are simply instructed by teachers, schools must become places where learning is taking place throughout - where teachers are actually role models of the lifelong learning they hope to cultivate in their students, and the school culture embodies a

climate of research and inquiry, (Allen & Cosby, 2000), (Sarason, 1997).

When rethinking our assumptions about what schooling is, we uncover the myth of a leadership void. Deal and Peterson (1999) point out that natural leaders are present throughout the school constituency, among community members, administrators, teachers, parents, and even students. The key then, is to develop a system of supervision that harnesses these talents already present within every school. Further, if one of the goals of American schools is to promote democracy and citizenship, then the school should serve as a model example for this as well, (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001).

In this paper, I would like to consider the proposed solution of collegial governance, by defining first what it is and then considering some models for implementation. It is important to remember that we are talking about a concept that can be applied on a continuum depending on the level of shared leadership that is desired and matches the needs of the specific organization. I will pay special attention to its applicability in Islamic schools, (as this is where my experience lies), while also considering the legacy Islamic schools can offer to American education in general.

What is collegial governance?

What is being discussed in this paper is the concept of shared decision-making and leadership in schools. Implicit in this idea is the notion that teachers are trained professionals

who are fully capable of making a meaningful contribution to the management and administration of the schools in which they teach. Imagine the likes of Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Augustine, or Al-Ghazali being harangued for lesson plans and biting their nails over their next formal evaluation! Yet we can hardly expect that such minds would object to the benefits of working together as a team in order to achieve their maximum potential in both gaining and dispensing knowledge. Now consider a school where teachers are regarded as hired labor, needing constant management and direction from a hierarchical authority. Which school would be preferred?

Bureaucratic vs. Human Resource Development Theories

We can attribute the character of American schools and their regard toward their teachers to the historical context in which they developed. Despite the example of classical scholarship presented above, many consider collegial governance to be something new. It is traced back to the 1920s in the work of Mary Parker Follett as a reaction to the theory of scientific management that prevailed during the late 1800s with the rise of statistics, (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). During the 1930s, social science research began challenging bureaucratic management theories (also known as Theory X) with human resource development theory (similar to Theory Y) that sought to increase productivity and give meaning to one's role in a company by drawing on the strengths and unique contributions of individual employees, (Owens, 2001).

The American school paradigm is characterized by its similarities with American corporations, both in their factory-like organization of students being processed through their courses in assembly-line fashion, and in their management/labor conception of school leadership vs. teachers, (Ravitch & Viteritti, 1997). Later in the 1980s, Deming's TQM (Total Quality Management) theory revived the human resource development concepts and were translated into educational terms by Thornton and Mattocks as follows:

1. Create a consistency of purpose
2. Adopt a cooperative philosophy
3. Provide training for all
4. Improve constantly and forever
5. Implement effective leadership, (Snowden & Gorton, 2002).

Despite the fact that these five points contain all the essential elements of the empowerment proposals being considered today, schools have still not been able to escape their heritage and redefine the role of the teacher and the nature of the school. Incidentally, Islamic schools, in seeking credibility as new institutions have imitated the public school model. However, as discussed below, there are models for schooling that are beyond this paradigm and some existing schools can more easily transition to these models than others.

Rationale

There are many good reasons summed up by Snowden and Gorton (2002) for making the transition toward some level of shared decision-making:

1. Increased number of viewpoints and ideas related to the decisions,
2. Expertise and skills within the group or community are better utilized,
3. Improved morale arises by giving value to the opinions of the group and supporting community,
4. Acceptance and implementation of decisions are more enthusiastic because those involved participate in making them and are thus committed to their success, and
5. Being consistent with the democratic principles that are the root of the basic purposes of American education.

The point about democracy is poignantly valid. Reformers argue that if we wish to demonstrate the merits of a democratic system, then our educational system must be characterized by democracy, (Snowden & Gorton, 2002), (Glickman et al., 2001). The Islamic value system also espouses the concept of "shura" or consultative governance. While this may not be very evident in the Muslim nations of today, it was certainly demonstrated in the Prophetic example that Islam is based upon. How much more important then is the urgency to bring up the American Muslim youth within this context? How much more efficacious then, it is to demonstrate consultative governance and democratic principals

within the educational environment that our youth grow, develop, and learn.

Meanwhile, the four preceding points concern other essential elements that a school should model as well, particularly, learning through listening to others, utilizing the knowledge of a variety of people in a productive way, and taking personal ownership and responsibility for carrying out the plans that are decided upon. Teachers who are isolated and managed by a "has-been" educator are hardly the example of adult cooperation we wish to pass on to students. In fact, according to Snowden and Gorton (2002), teachers resent coercive or condescending leadership. On the other hand, when teachers are empowered, they gain the dignity and respect that naturally encourages professionalism. And this example of collegiality and cooperation is the appropriate modeling of adult behavior to be put before our developing youth.

Implementation

After justifying the benefits of shared decision making, let us consider a few of its forms. We noted earlier that collegial governance could be implemented on different levels. Owens (2001) offers three degrees of empowerment:

1. Participative decision-making: This is the level most readily accommodated in typical American schools. It is implemented within the existing structure, whereby the school leadership makes decisions in consultation with staff and consultants drawn from the community. The

principal then, is not bound by this advice, but rather may utilize the input of the school constituents to make more informed decisions.

2. Democratic: Owens (2001) urges principals not to confuse consultation with voting. Within the typical school system it is not even practical to require every decision to be made by first conducting a referendum. Furthermore, there is scant research to support it as an appropriate means of empowering teachers.
3. Team Administration: This is the most integral level of shared leadership and requires a high degree of skill and training. Sarason (1997) recommends that teacher training programs in colleges and universities could help facilitate this by integrating a leadership component, rather than training teachers and principals separately. For existing teachers, such training could be included in professional development plans.

Given the context of the typical school conception of teachers as laborers, running a school through a team of teachers may sound far-fetched. Even Theory Y styled principals know that some teachers in the present context require a substantial amount of direction. Shared leadership must take differences in leadership capacity into account. Sarason (1997) argues that it is impossible to achieve the ideal within the existing system and thus it requires a complete shift in the school paradigm. As for the teacher, the role of laborer should

be replaced with what Schaefer coined as the “Scholar-Teacher” or teacher-researcher (Glickman et al., 2001). In this conception, the teacher epitomizes the “lifelong learner” by continuing to carry out research in education or in his/her specialized field. Allen and Cosby (2000) similarly conceived of the Master-Teacher, who has demonstrated mastery in teaching and even leads a small staff of assistants. Glasser (1998) also made a similar proposal in his plan for Quality Schools. Given this image it is easier to envision a school being administered by a team of such “master-teachers”. And leadership by educators empowered as such is more consistent with the concept of leading by example, than the current practice of taking best teachers out of the classroom and promoting them to function as mere managers, (Owens, 2001).

Instead, the “master-teachers” would become the educational leaders, mentoring and developing a staff of apprenticed teachers while also teaching students. This would create a new kind of hierarchy among teachers. In preparing teachers for increased responsibilities, performance can be measured against the supervision continuum provided by Glickman et al. (2001): This ranges from the level requiring directive-control → directive → collaborative → non-directive. At the directive-control, the teacher needs to be told what to do by the principal or supervisor. At the directive level, the teacher may need to be presented with options, but is responsible enough to make the actual choice of what to do. At the collaborative level, the teacher and the supervisor negotiate a plan of action

that includes both of their inputs. But at the non-directive level the teacher is entrusted with full decision-making power. Educational leaders may use this continuum to purposefully help a new or low performing teacher gradually develop toward the non-directive level, whereby they become master-teachers themselves, (Glickman et al.).

Along with developing individuals, effective leaders must also focus on group development. Effective group work is characterized by two factors: being able to accomplish its tasks and purposes, and how well members get along interpersonally (Glickman et al., 2001). Group size may also be a factor. Huge schools of several hundred or even thousands of students are hardly conducive to the intimacy and cohesiveness desired in an effective group. For this reason, it has been suggested that large schools be broken up into smaller ones, or even sub-schools within existing institutions in order to create the close-knit climate and interpersonal involvement necessary for productive learning (AWSNA, 2003), (Snowden & Gorton, 2002), (Wohlstetter, Mohrman, & Robertson, 1997). Islamic schools, due to their community base are already usually less than 250 students. As seen here, this should be considered an asset and proper planning for expansion should keep this ideal in mind.

Challenges

It must also be anticipated that groups will encounter certain challenges. Snowden and Gorton (2002) identify seven main reasons for problems in effective group work:

1. Lack of understanding by members as to why they are members and a consequent lack of commitment: This can be alleviated by making participation in school governance optional. Some teachers may not be interested in decision-making and instead may contribute the overall operation in other ways. Thus is it recommended to give teachers the choice of whether or not to participate, (Glickman et al., 2001), (Allen & Cosby, 2000).
2. Lack of understanding/acceptance of the group's goals: School goals should be considered even when hiring. It is also not uncommon for established elements in the school to be resistant to change. Change management should be integrated into the school's management plan.
3. Conflicting loyalties, competition, and individualistic needs: This is a prevalent cause for undermining shared-decision making. Initially, if boundaries are not clearly defined, problems like role confusion can set in and power struggles may erupt, (Snowden & Gorton, 2002), (Wohlstetter et al., 1997).
4. Maintaining focus: This ties back into school goals and the leadership being consistent with what it has communicated to the team.
5. Inadequate leadership, organization, or communication: Obviously, shared governance requires an additional strain on the existing responsibilities of participants. One noted phenomena in particular is the increased need for meetings in order to share time together for group work. The demand

for planning effective meetings has elicited the establishment of a website called www.effectivemeetings.com dedicated to helping people make the most of this precious time spent together.

6. Lack of knowledge, skill, or resources among members: This happens when shared decision-making is poorly implemented and participants are not properly trained.
7. Inadequate follow through on group decisions: This could be a problem if teachers are not given enough time to manage existing duties and the additional responsibilities of shared governance.

It is worth pointing out that group problems can be used by leaders to maintain its health when considering the productive role of conflict. This should not be confused with dysfunction. Productive conflict is when two professionals disagree and can hash out the issues, thereby giving rise to a firmer conclusion. Dysfunction is not honest disagreement, but rather occurs when members purposely seek to undermine productivity. A healthy group will seek to root out dysfunction quickly, while managing healthy disagreements through a conflict-resolution strategy, (Glickman et al., 2001).

Mixed Results with Site-Based Management

Given the high susceptibility to many of these group challenges, shared governance can seem daunting. Site-based management (SBM) has employed the concept to a degree, by

decentralizing the power within a district and dispersing decision-making to the school sites. Research on SBM has not been promising either. However, reformers charge that this is because of inadequate implementation (Odden & Picus, 2000), (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). Glickman et al. (2001) cautions that poorly implemented SBM simply results in laissez faire leadership where teachers are left alone by the administration, but are also not motivated to do anything exceptional either, thereby offering little in the way of innovation. As noted earlier, Owens (2001) acknowledges the impracticality of “democratic” decision making in the context of the current system, while Sarason (1997) takes the position that the current school system must be completely scrapped so that such reforms can have a chance at all. Meanwhile, Wohlstetter et al. (1997), after distinguishing between cases where SBM has proven effective and those where it has not, offers the following eight lessons in healthy implementation, capping them off with considerations for central office reform. These are highly insightful in terms of illustrating the elements of successful collegially governed school:

Lessons for Successful Site-Based Management

L1 Empowerment

- a. Wide inclusion in the decision-making body rather than concentrating power in the hands of a few: This is in order to represent the full array of interests in the success of the school, from the community members to the parents and

of course, the teachers. Sarason's (1997) proposal calls for school boards that give parents and teachers the primary responsibility for the success of the school. He argues that the current system is antagonistic, pitting the interests of each group against the other, when instead they should be working in cooperation to get the desired result of productive learning. Some may object on the grounds of conflict of interest, but this fear arises from the antagonistic environment elicited in the existing system. A collegial environment should still have a conflict-resolution policy that would allow for parents and educators to resolve issues within the context of assuming personal responsibility for the success of their students.

Islamic schools already operate with many of these elements. They are private schools that are locally governed by boards comprised mainly of parents and community members. The fear of conflict of interest has prevented teachers from taking official positions on such boards, though parents have been allowed to serve and usually constitute the majority of board membership. It is important to add that Sarason (1997) stressed the need for parents and teachers to learn how to manage schools and thus to get the necessary training for effective school governance. Most Islamic schools have not taken this essential step as of yet, though it rings of sound advice. If parents want the best out of their schools, they should

seek the appropriate training to participate in school governance effectively.

- b. Rich informational linkages & interconnectedness: This refers to internal links between teaching teams, allowing for common planning times through schedule accommodations, and accessible forums for decision-making.
- c. Focus on changes in teaching/learning rather than power relationships: Wohlstetter et al. (1997) found that when power was concentrated among a few individuals, most of the efforts were wasted in politics, whereas when power was disbursed, there was more of a focus on improving the quality of education.

L2 Professional Development is a high priority, ongoing, and linked to the school mission:

In other words, in redefining the American school paradigm, schools should become places where learning is as important as teaching, (Sarason, 1997). This can manifest in different ways. For one, the school mission should be vigilant in its pursuit of continuous improvement, thereby embodying a culture of change. Risk taking and experimentation must be encouraged in order to stimulate innovation in education, (Snowden & Gorton, 2002), (Allen & Cosby, 2000). Action research can be one of the means for educational inquiry and eliciting a research climate in schools, (Glickman et al., 2001).

Ongoing teacher training and mentoring, as mentioned above would also tie into this climate, shifting away from individual isolated teachers toward teaching in teams working with students and one another. Evaluation then also becomes an integral part of the improvement culture in a research driven school. Evaluation should not be judgmental as is the present case when a principal observes, but rather in sync with the school climate of continuous improvement and room for experimentation. 2+2 evaluation, whereby two affirmations and two qualitative suggestions are offered is but one of the tools that may regularly facilitate such an approach, (Allen & Cosby, 2000), (Glasser, 1998).

Subject teachers would also be actively in pursuit of greater understanding and knowledge in their respective specialty areas while passing on their enthusiasm for qualitative learning, reflection, and subject enrichment to their students, (AWSNA, 2003), (Glasser, 1998), (Sarason, 1997).

L3 Access to Information: Collect data on the school and disseminate data to inform constituency in order to facilitate decision-making.

In addition to the climate of learning suggested in L2, Sarason (1997) suggests that university social scientists should also be brought in to the school in order to conduct their own research while contributing to the

school in return. He also cites a case where high school students were trained to collect data, thereby involving them in the overall experience.

L4 Incentives

- a. Incentives should be monetary, non-monetary, and intrinsic: There are several intrinsic, non-monetary incentives that bring collegial governance to life. For one, educators should love the concept of getting paid to learn as well as teach. Further, the status of "scholar-teacher" or "master-teacher" coupled with the increased responsibilities engenders a new level of prestige and respect for teachers. They may also feel like they are making a more dramatic difference in the lives of students when empowered to make the changes recommended through their own professional judgment, (Allen & Cosby, 2000), (Odden & Picus, 2000), (Wohlstetter et al., 1997).

Increased salaries are another bonus along with new opportunities for promotion within the teacher hierarchy that do not require leaving the classroom. Allen and Cosby (2000) issued a 100 billion dollar challenge to raise the funds for their reform proposals. Without holding my breath for that, it may be possible to redirect funds saved from administrative salaries no longer required in a collegially governed system, (Odden & Picus, 2000). Allen and Cosby (2000) do state that ideally, master-teachers should be paid as much as principals. In Islamic schools, principals still

make less than their public school counterparts, but in most cases are paid more than the teachers who work under them.

- b. *Caution with regard to maintaining enthusiasm* in the long term: Wohlstetter et al.'s (1997) work suggests that the increased emotional commitment may prove to be draining over time. This is an issue that needs more inquiry, especially with regard to determining ways that the increased emotional commitment can be relieved through cooperative measures.

L5 Shared Vision means constant ongoing dialogue with reference to the purpose & direction of the school: Research on school culture also cites the role and communication of the school's mission in motivating a cohesive and productive group, (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

L6 Facilitate shared leadership through teams

- a. Principal disperses power & shares leadership, facilitating a learning community: This applies when existing schools are transitioning toward shared governance, as discussed above.
- b. Cadre of teacher-leaders emerges: As we have been discussing here, the teachers will naturally ascend toward the role of the "master-teacher" when empowerment is carried out properly.

L7 Cultivate external networks & resources outside the school:

This is essential to the learning and research climate discussed above. Particularly with regard to universities, due to their common endeavor with schools, more models of university/K-12 partnerships need to be cultivated. Allen and Cosby (2000) have discussed a proposed concept very similar to a laboratory school called NESAs (see below), while Sarason (1997) cites examples of existing partnerships that should be expanded upon, such as the work with social scientists discussed earlier. Other community resources, such as networks with businesses and local professionals should also be cultivated by thinking creatively about ways schools and such entities can form mutually beneficial relationships.

L8 Refocus the central office toward supporting schools rather than as the enforcer of regulations:

At the heart of the debate over reforms is the question of whether or not bureaucracies can be retrained to serve the interests of ongoing reform or not. Obviously, if the central office does not support measures toward site-based management, attempts will only be superficial. Crucial areas are:

- a. Site-based budgeting: The central office will have to relinquish control over funds to allow schools to decide how they should best be spent to meet their peculiar needs.

- b. Improve district communication: Central offices can serve as the communication hub for increasing collegiality and shared resources between district schools.
- c. Compensation & incentives restructured to match the SBM model: Again, relinquishing control of the funds and budgetary policies will be the only way that teams can best implement the above measures.

Currently, most Islamic schools function individually without the hindrance that the central office has become in public schools. While this offers Islamic schools the chance to learn more about school-based management and to implement the concept freely and properly, it also is deprived of the benefits of networking and shared management resources. Nationally organized Islamic education entities already provide some networking and information sharing forums. Being able to offer opportunities for pooling management resources has proved more challenging. (Examples of such entities include the Islamic School's League of America, the Islamic Society of North America, and the Muslim American Society's Council of Islamic Schools.)

At the site level, an innovation that has helped in Al-Iman School, an Islamic school in Raleigh, North Carolina, is the creation of a "school manager" position. This individual (along with an accountant, administrative assistant, and custodial staff) ensures that all non-

educational administrative issues are maintained, such as accounting, record keeping, building codes, and the like. This has allowed the school to remain effectively operational during leadership voids, and provides a mechanism by which the scholar-teachers can collectively take responsibility for the educational priorities of the school.

Models of Collegial Governance

Dade County Florida Schools as well as around 66 different Kentucky school districts have been cited in the research as examples of public school successes with site-based management (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). Ninety-five percent of the nation's fifty largest urban school districts have experimented with the concept in varying forms and varying degrees of success, including Milwaukee, Prince William County VA, Los Angeles, Denver, and Rochester NY. Small sized public schools have shown the most promise with regard to implementing site-based management, probably because they are already less impersonal with their community base than large urban districts, (Wohlstetter et al., 1997).

High performance school models have been gaining ground for providing schools with duplicatable templates for successful schooling. Odden and Picus (2000) have recommended them for school reform because they have been shown to improve school success by reorganizing existing resources in a more efficient manner, thereby not being dependent on increasing expenditures.

Models such as Effective Schools, Accelerated Schools, Essential Schools, and Comer's School Development Program all incorporate site-based management into their plans, (Wohlstetter et al., 1997).

Charter schools, by virtue of being contractually operated public schools also utilize some form of site-based management. This is not to say that it is always done deliberately or effectively. However, what is important is that if increased collegial governance is sought, charter schools offer the most promise of empowering individuals to overcome bureaucratic obstacles in implementing their innovations, (Odden & Picus, 2000), (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). Perhaps the same can be said for Islamic schools or other similar privately funded community based schools.

Quality Schools proposed by Glasser (1998) over ten years ago incorporated Deming's Total Quality Management into both the characterization of the professional teacher as well as the way students were to be treated. He contrasts what he calls traditional boss-managed schools with "lead-managed" schools where both the principals and the teachers accomplish their objectives through their example. In the Quality School model the teacher must be an empowered professional capable of selecting content, materials, methodology, and the means of evaluation. The empowered teacher in this model is absolutely essential since Quality Schools replace graded work with Quality work that measures up to the teacher's standards and expectations of each student, (Glasser).

NESA (National Experimental Schools Administration) is a proposal by Allen and Cosby (2000) to establish 100 experimental school districts within existing districts comprised of one high school and its feeder schools at the middle and elementary school levels. These schools would be exempted from local and state regulations. Instead they would be accountable to the staff, parents, and communities they serve. They would foster working relationships with local and national universities, education laboratories, and government agencies for the purpose of conducting educational research. This proposal, though differing in that its scope is to establish a national association of districts within districts, still incorporates both essential aspects of collegial governance: empowering teachers and invigorating the school as a center of research and learning, (Allen & Cosby).

Waldorf Schools makeup a worldwide network of over 800 schools, approximately 150 of which are located in the United States. First established in 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany by Austrian scientist Rudolf Steiner, it was intended to serve the needs of the employees' children at the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory. Steiner insisted on four conditions before agreeing to the project: 1) that the school be open to all children; 2) that it be coeducational; 3) that it be a unified twelve-year school; and 4) that the teachers have primary control of the school, with a minimum interference from the state or from economic sources. The educational philosophy attempts to incorporate science and spirituality (yet they are

nonreligious schools), as well as artistic expression. Teachers usually focus on one subject per day and work with the same students from year to year thereby emphasizing quality work and fostering strong interpersonal relationships with students and their parents. Among the descriptive qualities of the Waldorf teaching experience are freedom to meet the needs of one's students, teamwork with other faculty members, and the encouragement of personal growth in knowledge of subject matter and creative expression. These qualities demonstrate that Waldorf schools embody the ideals of the collegial governance, (AWSNA, 2003).

In examining these models one is reminded of both the existing university system and the legacy of classical Islamic education that gave birth to it. The classical educational model certainly pre-existed Islamic scholarship, as illustrated in the likes of the great educators we listed in the introduction to this paper. But it is the Islamic universities of the Middle Ages that served to bridge the cultural transmission of this educational system during the Renaissance, (Makdisi, 1981). Classical Islamic education is ideally embodied in the Prophetic example of teaching and learning. It evolved through the schools of the great masters of knowledge such as Imams Malik, Abu Hanifah, As-Shafi', and Ahmad ibn Hanbal and are at the heart of an approximately 1400 year old tradition, (Abu Zahra, 2001). The teacher-student relationship was characterized by personal relationships and even servitude to the scholar-teacher in exchange for his knowledge and the learning opportunities that

resulted from his acquaintance. Such masters were not pompous professors, but rather taught as much through their own example of humility, service, study, and morality as they did in lectures or formal instruction. A modern treatise by Al-Zarnujji (2001) offers one description of the classical manners between the teacher and the student.

Interesting that today's Islamic schools have hardly drawn any lessons from their classical heritage. While I do not pretend that any modern Muslim educator would try to compare him/herself with the classical masters, at least it may be worth imitating their esteemed methods. Yet in fact, it could be argued that the structure of modern Islamic schools, imitating in style and manner their public school counterparts, actually deter such scholar-teacher personalities from remaining or even joining such schools in the first place, let alone providing a climate for existing teachers to mature and develop into the master-teacher discussed above.

A final alternative that could facilitate the type of collegial governance and educational growth discussed in this report is embodied in a concept akin to collective homeschooling that I recently recommended to a group of Muslim parents seeking an alternative to public high school. Basically the concept draws on much of what has been discussed here. Teachers could be responsible for groups of fifteen students at the 9th and 10th grade levels, covering one core course per quarter and integrating as much enrichment as possible during each course utilizing technology, guest specialists, and field experiences.

The class size and investment of block time in each subject allow for qualitative learning to occur while standardized tests may be used to validate what is being accomplished.

Administrative costs and investment in the physical plant would be minimal because such an approach can be implemented by renting an office or apartment for actual class space and can be staffed by as little as two teachers (with complimentary specialties) and a part-time secretary to assist with organization. Partnerships with community resources, especially colleges, can be cultivated to even allow for enrollment at the college for completion of 11th and 12th grades with dual credit. Variations on this theme could be employed at lower grade levels utilizing a kind of one-room schoolhouse approach.

Existing networks of parents who homeschool, (see <http://www.muslimhomeschool.com>), offer yet another alternative that demonstrates the needlessness of huge bureaucracies to manage schools and their teachers. In homeschooling, the parent takes personal responsibility for the education of the child. Building on this, it would seem entirely feasible for a group of parents to pool their resources and collectively invest in a teacher for their kids. The only governance required is then the contract between the group of parents and the professional educator they have hired.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the efficacy and exciting potential of collegial governance for not only filling the void

of rare charismatic leaders, but to empower the natural leadership within each school to reshape the educational climate within schools toward the embodiment of democratic governance and lifelong learning. This can be approached either from within the existing system by redefining the principal role as a facilitator for shared leadership among school staff, or by establishing new schools that deliberately prepare their teachers and other stakeholders to share in the administrative responsibility for leading the school.

The argument against collegial governance on the grounds that there is not enough supportive research will bring us no further to improving the state of our schools or solving shortages in efficacious leadership. However, as shown here, schools where teachers are empowered to lead and entrusted with the responsibility to do so have historically existed and in themselves provide the means for research and development in educational knowledge. Such examples of schools as learning communities of scholar-teachers should once again become the rule rather than the exception.

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