

THE SCHOOL HEADTEACHER OF TOMMOROW

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Abstract

Educational administration can be defined as an activity of implementing policy decisions and day and operators of school. It can also mean resources for the achievement of pre-determined goals. The head teacher executes policies that are set by the management of the school and the ministry of education. In the school set up the head teacher formalize, supervise, plan and make decisions about the various activities of the organization on the basis of established authority. Educational administration is therefore the art of getting things done. The school performance or excellence depends largely on the resourcefulness of the head teacher. It is argued that the school is the head teacher and the head teacher is the school. The paper recognizes the myriad challenges faced by head teachers in the Kenyan education system consequently the paper accepts to put forth practical recommendations for the 21st century head teacher. The following are benchmarks for the tomorrow's head teacher.

Introduction

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Physical facilities

The supportive structures for academic success would not be complete without the requisite physical facilities. Some of the questions to bother the head teacher are:

- Do I have enough rooms for all classes and lessons? Are there enough reference materials for teachers and students? How equipped are the laboratories?
- Do I have adequate stationery for the whole year?
- Do I have a regulatory system for their use?
- How do I organize for the acquisitions of what is not available in the school?

The above are just supportive structures. They require creativity in usage for them to contribute to the improved academic standards.

Head teacher should be open enough to benchmark with other institutions that are doing better, to be able to learn how some of these resources are used effectively to yield maximum results improvisation of available resources.

Time Management, School Routine and Culture

The school routine should be structured in such a way that no single minute is wasted by teachers and students.

- It should be borne in mind that good results are determined to a great extent by the length of contact hours between the learners
- The head teacher should report to school at the beginning of a few earlier than others to arrange for staff meetings, to issue teachers with timetables, stationery, to allocate duties and responsibilities so that as the school opens learners do not waste time cleaning during the first few days because they are waiting for teachers who are in a staff meeting. Such a time is a poor show of professional performance which the head teacher must not allow.

- The administrator should therefore ensure that teaching commences the first day of opening so that the faith interest of the learners in their teachers is not ruined.
- The students must realize the school routine and adhere to it as much as possible. The realization of this is partly dependent upon the responsiveness of the prefect's council to their duties.
- The routine once designed, must be jealously protected and observed. Through team work the team work the learners must be reminded always of their duties and routine. The head teacher must ensure that the school assembly is attended by all teachers and students.
- In the assembly official announcements are made and other members of staff also make their announcement here.
- School assemblies help the school to begin with one voice, assembly attendance should be taken as duty.
- So if it is always the head teacher and the Deputy Head teacher that means the announcements are only meant for them.
- A good programme effectively balances between academic work, career and life's goals, guidance, co-curriculum activities, relaxation, entertainment programmes discussion group activities, and of course, breaks for meals.
- Time management so to speak is directly proportional to the quality of performance. Effective time management ensures a proper school routine is realized, hence a culture that nurtures good performance.
- Students can show their commitment to the school routine and time management by going a head and designing their own, well utilized, personal timetables. For a start, these can be drawn in liaison with careers, guidance and counseling office.
- Good time management also promotes the level of discipline, hence reducing many destructors to the focus on academia.
- Culture ensures that students and teacher get accustomed to certain policies of the school.

Effective Communication and Decision Making

The head teacher should ensure that there are regular staff meetings. These are important for the well being of the school. Staff meetings should be held at the beginning of every term, end of term, or before a special occasion and whenever there is an official issue which has arisen. The head teacher chairs all the meetings. In such meetings teachers get to be involved in decision making to own these same decisions.

They also get informed about new policies from the Ministry of Education and they plan for future programmes such as parents' days, academics days, exams etc. the head should avoid ambushing teachers. Effective communication helps in team working e.g. if they are not informed of parents days the head can find himself and deputy alone. Amusing may lead to go slows, sit-ins, and then you hear negative comments such as 'bora kazi' instead of 'kazi bora' hence poor performance. Effective communication should also be seen in terms of date, time and at least some days in advance except for emergency meetings. Communicate also the agenda in writing. Staff meetings help to build consensus and friendship among teachers hence a good working environment.

Administrative Systems

It is true that leadership styles differ from one individual to another and from one set up to another. But the rule of thumb is that each successful style must be one that is grounded in some responsiveness to the needs of the stake holders, usually a blend of laissez-faire with responsible authoritarianism can yield the desired results when carefully and soberly implemented. This might be difficult for some, but in most cases, consultations with some responsible and mature members of staff can ensure that one makes the correct decisions. This is one score on which many fail; they want to be responsible for every action.

Delegation

This is the other element of administration. How much of the responsibilities do I delegate? For many who have not mastered the art of team playing, delegation might be a very abstract phenomenon. One may not understand when and how much to entrust to your junior members of staff. It should be realized that even though some issues are confidential, involving one or two in making certain decisions also enables the head teacher to understand how members of staff think both about academic or pedagogical issues and about your self and policies.

In delegation the administrator gives responsibility to the right person. In any group, some people are more responsible than others so the head must delegate according to individuals, degree of integrity, interest and ability. Delegation of some duties also ensures that you train members of your staff on decision making and that you prepare them for some positions of responsibility. In the process of delegation there should be flow of communication. Avoid believing you are the best ever within the circumstances of your school, you will be letting your colleagues under study your process and teachers and workers will not be motivated to work.

School image

- What does your school identify with?
- What is it known for?
- Are they virtuous things or some border on notoriety?

The image that school projects out there should be a harbinger of positive perception. It should itself give the children the morale to work hard and maintain, if not improve. Students should be proud of their school and if possible have a pet name that suggests its positive contribution to the promotion of human welfare.

Effective Financial Base

One of the most important current considerations for improved performance is a Sound financial base.

- Are you able to afford every provision that can support academic in your institution?
- How do you raise funds?
- What are some of the challenges you face in your attempts at the realization of the above?
- How do you rate your fees collection strategies?

Adequate finances would save the head from agony and frustration of unrealized dreams which can lead to ulcers and early deaths. The head should design proper schemes to enable him/her raise the required funds to support the academic programmes and give academic programmes first priority in every planning stage. A policy of positive response to every project that supports performance should be the goal.

The school set up

a) The Board of Governors.

The principal or head teacher must work with his Board for the smooth running of the school activities. If there is team pulling towards same direction, then the head will find it easy to have projects that are geared towards the students, passed at the Board without acrimony. But if by some mistrust, there is lack of focus, and then the aspersions created will lead to misguided priorities that will derail the academic focus or result oriented school.

b) The PTA

An effective Parent Teacher Association is one that is creative enough to recognize efforts that promote teaching and learning in a school. The should not be an iota of suspicion between parents and teachers, something which will go towards negatively affecting the teachers in their attempts to improve school standards. The vehicle for improved parents-teachers relationship is the PTA, led by an able chairperson.

c) Staff Establishment

For a reasonable realization of principal's dreams, the school should be adequately staffed with both teaching and non-teaching staff.

The staff should have a sense of belonging created by the head himself. For the teaching staff, the head should balance between the TSC provisions about the minimum load off a teacher and that will enable him to effectively discharge his duties and give them the room the thoroughly refine their students into confident products ready to face their examinations. Teachers should also be motivated enough to go extra mile to sacrifice their time and energy for the students. The staff should enjoy good working relations that can even lead to positive challenge and criticism from themselves first. There should be regular department consultations as equals without undermining or backstabbing one another. This goes along way in creating teamwork. There should be a positive attitude towards the welfare of the students by all and sundry and this attitude is cultivated rather than expected, it is sown rather than reaped.

The head should ask him/her self questions such as:

- How do I relate with your Board?
- How about the PTA?
- How do I interact with the local community?
- How adequate is the staff?
- How motivated are they?
- Is there a general aura of teamwork?
- Are there camps, with the pro-administration and the rebels?

Personal Attributes

The personality of the head teacher affects the systems of administration. How much one works sometimes has got to do with one's level of intelligence or the requirements of the work.

The head teacher should ask the following questions:-

- How quickly do I get annoyed?
- How do I view criticism?
- When I am new in a place as the head, how long does it take me to institute my own way of doing things?
- Am I in touch with the opinions of all members of the school community?
- How do I get these ideas?
- Do I listen to the staff?
- Do I accept criticism?
- Do I sometimes take tea with the teachers? Or sit and chat briefly with them in the staffroom?
- Do I consider some of the teachers impossible?
- How close am I with them?

Answers to the above questions should give one a pointer to how the personality influences how one interact with the staff and students.

Discipline

Discipline goes in hand with academic excellence. In this regard discipline is a positive force. It can be connected with training, not correcting, guiding not punishing, arranging conditions not just restricting. For the teachers and the subordinates, discipline has to do with. The unquestionable recognition of the authority, the respect or ones superiors, readiness to obey instructions and uphold the code of regulations as laid down by the governing authority.

According to Henry Fayol:

“Discipline is in essence obedience, application, energy, behavior and outward marks of respect observed in accordance with the standing agreements between the firm and its employees. Whether these agreements have been freely debated or accepted without prior discussion, whether they be written or implicit, whether they derive from the wish of the parties to them or from rules and customs, it is discipline. Discipline is no essential for the smooth running of business without discipline no enterprise could prosper”

Fayol's description of discipline relates to employees of business organizations but is quite relevant to education as a public enterprise.

Discipline is necessary among teachers and education administrators if the school is to meet its objectives. When standards of discipline fall in most cases, this can be attributed to poor leadership.

Induction of New Members.

The Head of Departments can be delegated this duty of induction of new members. People work better and with confidence when they know what is expected of them in the school

Conclusion

The administrator who is also the manager should apply good management principles such as endeavoring to create high sense of morality for both teachers and students by encouraging teachers to set the best example.

He or she should be committed to duty, be knowledgeable, be positive hence influence both students and teachers, be concerned with students welfare, always be punctual be conscious, dependable, honest, trustworthy and transparent, morally upright, carry out work as stipulated by TSC, led by example, keep the values of the profession and ensure that the profession retains its glory. The work of the administrator is not easy and there are no fixed formulas on how to succeed as the head. An administrator should devise his own practical method of managing his school within the suggested framework.

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