

Standard 9: Resources

*Reflective Essay*

Schools, like businesses or even individual households, must operate within the confines of a financial budget. In order to school leaders to be responsive to the many requests that they get from teachers for materials, support, etc., they must be well versed in the condition of their budget. I believe that skill in this area of leadership depends on professional practice in areas of wisdom, vision, and transparency.

In their book, *The Transparency Edge*, Pagano and Pagano (2003) describe the importance of leaders behaving ethically. This can be extended to how they manage the money of the school. Somewhat similar to managing home finances, administrators must make note of what financial expenses are essential to the operation of the school. A wise leader will employ some vision regarding future expenses, ensuring that there are funds available when needed. I don't want this to sound simplistic. It is difficult to keep track of different funds, how they can be spent, and individual teacher needs.

The reality of public education is an increasingly tight budget. Effective leaders stay alert to other sources of funding or support. Efforts in this area can rely on help from qualified teachers, parents, and community members. Positive working relationships with parents and community members are that much more important when they can be involved in supporting the needs of the school with money and time. Many organizations and companies offer grants to school districts. Learning can be indirectly enhanced when administrators (or some subgroup) successfully tap this resource. Researching current grant offerings, honing clear written communication skills, and staying organized can help secure these funds.

*Related Artifacts*

I have been intentional about familiarizing myself with school finance. Two relevant artifacts result from my course work and/or professional work that relate to school resources. The Rosa Parks Supplemental Budget Presentation involved a school improvement proposal. Based on our evaluation of the school assessment data, our small group made recommendations about intervention strategies that could begin to address support needs. We proposed a series of family literacy trainings where parents and students could come to school to learn more about how to support literacy development at home. We then examined the existing budget and proposed an outline of how it could support the realization of the literacy training for families. Understanding various budget sources as well as thinking creatively about how to make existing resources meet the needs was a good exercise in how to accomplish goals.

My own school improvement process has used a similar approach. The Collaborative School Committee (CSC) spent considerable time reviewing test data, surveying school staff, and discussing how best to address student learning needs. The George Washington High School Improvement Plan documents the goals that we developed. In order to make these goals an actual part of our daily work, we needed to also evaluate the school's financial ability to support the changes. While some of the proposed changes require modifications to our daily teaching behaviors, some changes need money and/or salaries to make them happen. Participating on the CSC has given me unique insight into the process of considering and financing a building level change. We have been able to actively discuss and pursue outside funding sources. I consider these connections as valuable resources for my future as a program administrator.

*References*

Pagano, B., & Pagano, E. (2003). *The Transparency Edge: How Credibility Can Make or Break You in Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.