

The Guardian Principal
Case Narrative Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Background and Experience
 - B. School Setting
 - 1. School Characteristics
 - 2. District Characteristics
 - C. Defining the Guardian Style
 - 1. Guiding the Clientele
 - 2. Guarding the Program
 - 3. Forming a Style
- II. Guiding the Clientele
 - A. Rendering Presence
 - B. Building Community
 - 1. Orienting to Service
 - 2. Empowering People
 - a. Distributing
 - b. Camouflaging
 - 3. Fostering Care and Affiliation
 - 4. Assembling
 - B. Building Consensus
 - 1. Managing Information
 - a. Gathering information
 - b. Sharing information
 - c. Analyzing information
 - (1) Identifying what is important
 - (2) Identifying common ground
 - 2. Managing Feelings
 - a. Separating feelings from facts
 - b. Addressing negative feelings
 - (1) Giving understanding
 - (2) Providing facts
 - (3) Reasoning
 - (4) Willingness to resolve concerns
 - 3. Facilitating Decisions
 - a. Reaching agreement
 - b. Managing disagreement

III. Guarding the Program

- A. Venerating Vision
- B. Maintaining Operations
 - 1. Delegating Authority and Responsibility
 - 2. Directing Tasks and Functions
 - a. Connecting organizational units
 - b. Managing the communication network
 - 3. Upholding Policy and Procedures
 - a. Being knowledgeable
 - b. Being consistent
- C. Safeguarding Resources
 - 1. Securing Property
 - 2. Securing Possessions
 - a. Attending to time
 - b. Attending to money
 - c. Attending to human resources
 - d. Attending to material resources
- D. Troubleshooting
 - 1. Monitoring and Assessing
 - 2. Probing for Content and Meaning
 - 3. Taking Action

IV. Creating Community Welfare

The Guardian Principal
Case Narrative

Introduction

It takes a special kind of courage and self-confidence to assume the principalship of a large, urban high school that is in the throes of chaos and conflict. That, however, is exactly what Dr. Gayle Grant did at the request of her district superintendent. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 110-120](#))

G: This [high] school was in the newspaper and on TV because of upheaval with a lot of teacher grievances The superintendent, I think, believed that I might be able to bring calm to that.

Loyal and committed, Gayle began her career as a high school principal attempting to restore order and rebuild relationships at a large, campus style urban high school.

Background and Experience

Gayle began her career in education about the same time Ethan Allen opened its doors to students. Majoring in English and Psychology, she spent only a few years teaching before she assumed her first counseling position. That position led to her appointment as director of guidance in a middle school. It was in middle school guidance and counseling that Gayle had spent the majority of her educational career before entering the administrative ranks.

Motivated by a strong desire to better serve what she refers to as "her clientele", Gayle enrolled in a doctoral program in educational administration. She focused on law, research, and public relations. After 2 years as a middle school assistant principal, she obtained her first principalship.

Gayle's first assignment was that of principal of John Adams Middle School, one of Ethan Allen's feeder schools. During Gayle's tenure, the U.S. Department of Education recognized John Adams Middle School as one of the country's outstanding middle schools. As part of that recognition, Gayle represented the school at a special ceremony at the White House.

It was because of the successes she experienced as principal of John Adams Middle School that the superintendent assigned her to Ethan Allen. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 68-75](#))

G: I did not apply for the position. I was just transferred to the high school because of the successes. At least, that was what I was told, at the middle school.

Gayle respected the superintendent and was committed to doing a good job once she accepted the position. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 1274-1277](#))

G: So, he knew he had that support. But, he also had a person who did not want to fail; because I didn't want to let him down.

Unlike her predecessor, characterized by the newspapers as being "heavy-handed" and possessing an "autocratic" leadership style, Gayle demonstrated from the outset a responsive style distinguished by cooperation and participation. Her manner was calming and unassuming, despite the complexity of the school organization.

School Setting

The school setting is the environment within which the principal administers. It is composed of school characteristics and district characteristics. ([Appendix D, Page 7](#))

School Characteristics

School characteristics are those attributes associated with the organization within which the principal administers. Ethan Allen High School is an urban, campus-style, comprehensive high school, which sprawls across one hundred acres. There are many buildings on campus including four two-story academic buildings, a large vocational-technical center, a gym, auxiliary gym, field house, a library, auditorium and administrative office complex as well as sports fields. The school is a comprehensive campus, which contains many different types of programs. For example, the governor's school serves Ethan Allen as well as the entire school district.

The school is 34 years old and serves 1600 students in grades nine through twelve. There are over 200 staff serving student needs. One third of the population is black with other minority groups growing while white, middle class Caucasians remain the largest population segment.

A large wall encompasses the school separating it from the surrounding community. A gated parking lot houses school security, which controls entry to the campus. The security officers maintain a safe atmosphere conducive to learning. They are a strong presence on campus actively assisting administrators and teachers with unruly or uncooperative students.

Administrators, security officers, and selected staff members carry walkie-talkies, which provide instant communication. Assistance with unforeseen disturbances is quickly available to all staff and students.

During Gayle's service as a middle school principal, conflict and chaos reigned at Ethan Allen, the high school to which students from Gayle junior high matriculated. Newspaper reports characterized the situation as intense with the majority of conflict existing between the principal and a large segment of the faculty. Communication appeared compromised despite the district's efforts to mediate the situation. ([Appendix D, Page 7; Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 110-120; Appendix H, C2 Doc 4, Lines 670-677](#))

District Characteristics

Ethan Allen High School is one of two high schools in a small, urban school district, surrounded by the Black Hills. The district superintendent is chief executive officer of the school system and oversees school operations for approximately 29 schools, which serve approximately 13,000 students.

The district superintendent directs initiatives for the two high schools and appointed Gayle to the principalship. Since coming to Ethan Allen, Gayle has responded to three district directives involving school-wide reform: creating a positive school climate, establishing site-based management, and restructuring to incorporate block-scheduling.

Now in her fifth year at Ethan Allen, Gayle focuses on promoting the mission of the school. She has opened the channels of communication and strengthened the organizational operations in order to bring people together in productive working relationships. Through a seemingly natural ability to protect and preserve, Gayle administers with a style characterized as "guardian". ([Appendix D, Page 7](#))

Defining the Guardian Style

Gayle's appointment to Ethan Allen provided a context in which her administrative skills could flourish. She embraced her new responsibility with competence and confidence. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 1311-1318](#))

G: I think that is what the superintendent was speaking to me about, is to restore confidence into the climate and [add] positiveness.

And with that charge, I felt I had the skills at that time to do what the mission was.

And, that was to bring order and get rid of the chaos and get people comfortable again and build the trust relationships.

Building on both her administrative and counseling skills, Gayle created an administrative style which is oriented to building community within a safe and orderly school environment for the purpose of serving students' educational needs. Dr. Gayle Grant is the guardian principal: an individual committed to guiding and guarding the welfare of the educational organization including its clientele and programs.

The organizational context within which Gayle administers is particularly suited to her administrative style. Her guardian style blends with and supports the effective functioning of large, bureaucratically organized institutions. Gayle is able to engage people effectively in participation through empowerment and shared decision-making. Through attention to authority and responsibility, she manages property and resources to maintain operations efficiently.

It is, however, her ability to troubleshoot which distinguishes her among principals. Using her keen observational skills and her sharp analytic mind, she can quickly spot trouble in the making. In fact, Gayle sometimes asks when analyzing situations, are there "pieces we need to be on guard against"? This guardian interest represents Gayle's commitment to

protecting and preserving the welfare of the students, as well as the people and operations that support their educational interests.

It is this constellation of skills and abilities that enable Gayle to manage change effectively. As she assumed the principalship at Ethan Allen, she restored communication and reinstated order to the campus. A few years later, she led the school in a change from "principal-centered" leadership to "site-based" leadership primarily characterized by decentralized decision-making processes. Currently, she is facing another challenge, leading Ethan Allen High through restructuring.

Because of her ability to coalesce people around goals that require change and her skill in managing conflict, Gayle is an example of a "turnaround" leader. She is able to guide an organization through change while guarding it from harm. Gayle uses these two primary processes in the execution of her administrative duties: guiding the clientele and guarding the program.

Guiding the Clientele

Guiding the clientele is the first of two processes associated with Gayle's administrative style. It means administering to the members of the school organization. It involves taking care of the interests of students and staff in the school organization by providing direction and support in the daily execution of their duties and responsibilities. It also concerns rendering a calm presence while fostering working relationships. Gayle's primary objectives are to encourage participation and collective agreement around the goals and objectives of the school organization.

Guarding the Program

Guarding the program is the second process associated with Gayle's administrative style. It means protecting the programs of the school. It concerns upholding the framework of the school in order that the organization can function efficiently and effectively. In addition, it concerns maintaining operations and safeguarding resources in order to serve the clientele efficaciously. As threats to that service arise, Gayle activates troubleshooting efforts aimed at minimizing menaces in the making.

Forming a Style

When the highest aspects of occupational commitment come forth as guiding and guarding, the guardian administrative style takes form. A strong sense of responsibility and a keen desire to serve motivate this unique style. Possessing an almost instinctual ability to detect disturbances, the guardian principal concerns herself with watchful concern for the welfare of the school organization. It is through this style that Gayle renders her administrative talents, offering both protection to the clientele and preservation of the organization in advancing the educational mission.

Guiding the Clientele

Guiding the clientele is the first of two primary processes associated with Gayle's guardian administrative style. It means taking care of the interests of the students and staff of the school organization.

Gayle believes managing those interests is a shared responsibility as she engages each of the hall principals to care for the members of the organization, or the "clientele", as Gayle refers to them. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 518-521](#))

G: Each principal has the management of a building and certain clientele, faculty and student clientele.

The clientele is indeed the students and the staff; Gayle directs her efforts to their well being. In meeting with a very concerned parent, Gayle graciously received a complaint that a health teacher had shown an inappropriate film to the class. In expressing her concerns, the parent was fearful about repercussions from the teacher toward her child. Gayle responded to that concern saying, "I will protect the child".

This is a small, but significant, example demonstrating the depth of commitment Gayle feels toward the school community. Gayle feels entrusted with her students' welfare and strives, with faithful devotion, to create a safe and nurturing environment in which they can learn. She is outspoken and passionate in the expression of her beliefs about, as she phrases it, "what is best for kids."

Her loyalty and allegiance to the school staff complement Gayle's dutiful commitment to the students. Oriented to affiliation, Gayle is both personally engaging and, at times, very witty. A strong believer in teamwork, she involves herself at all levels of the organization in order to build esprit de corps.

As a shrewd observer of the environment, and most particularly of people, Gayle is able to collect information about the organization and use it to create security for others. Genuinely interested in protecting the welfare of the clientele, Gayle uses three secondary processes: rendering presence, building community, and building consensus.

Rendering Presence

Rendering presence means demonstrating a dignified sense of self-assurance and composure. It is the first secondary process associated with guiding the clientele. Although not ostentatiously outgoing, Gayle is friendly and engaging. She is open, approachable, and reassuring.

Gayle usually maintains a low profile often standing in the back of assemblies, quietly observing. She does not appear to need the limelight not even when she is deserving of credit, as the following statement demonstrates. (Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 934-938)

G: And, when things happen and happen well, it doesn't make any difference to me who gets the credit, as long as the kids get the services.

However, if called upon, she does not hesitate to rise to meet any situation, which seems to require her attention. Her keen observation skills coupled with her sharp analytic mind enable her to assess quickly how an event or situation is proceeding. She makes mental notes and will intervene immediately or follow-up, whichever appears more prudent.

For example, each of the hall [assistant] principals manages specific assignments and operations by their academic building, called a hall. Gayle rarely interferes directly with matters in a hall, preferring to discuss any concerns she might have later.

Although she possesses superb problem-solving skills, Gayle prefers to use them in a collaborative venue working in a group to resolve concerns. During these sessions, Gayle is highly practical, persistent, and resolute. Because she is a good listener, Gayle can identify common ground, lower resistance, and placate hostile participants.

Possessed of an ardent spirit, Gayle is deeply committed to her role as principal. Extremely responsive to concerns, she maintains an open door policy, which creates an unrelenting pace of interpersonal transactions.

Trustworthy and loyal, Gayle assures people she will take care of situations. She is hardworking and takes her job seriously.

An easy-going nature coupled with the ability to charm people, enables Gayle to engage people. Disarming anger and hostility are part of Gayle's signature because of her ability to focus on the child or children involved in the situation. Gayle says that parents all have a star, which is their child.

Building Community

Building community means promoting a working relationship among a group that fosters consciousness, commitment, cooperation, and consideration of oneself as an individual and as a member of an organization. Consciousness is a heightened sense of awareness, commitment is giving allegiance, cooperation is working together harmoniously, and consideration is warm affection and compassion.

Building community is the second of three secondary processes Gayle uses to protect the clientele at Ethan Allen High School. It is important because of its positive effect on the mission. Students receive increased quality in instructional services when augmented with genuine care.

Perhaps there is no stronger evidence for supporting the magnitude of Gayle's effort at building community than the statement from the faculty handbook that reads as follows:

The teacher shall provide for the humanizing of instruction in the classroom. To accomplish this, the teacher should:

1. know the academic strengths and weaknesses of each student;
2. know the home and community environment of each student;
3. treat each student as an individual in accordance with his needs;
4. understand and appreciate each student as an individual of the group;
5. help each student to recognize his potential, to develop his abilities, and to assume his responsibilities as a member of the group.

Gayle believes that no matter what a person's position at the school, administrator, or coach, that everyone is a teacher first. Therefore, the first responsibility is always to teach and teach with a humanistic attitude, understanding that people are both individuals and members of a community.

Gayle uses four tertiary processes, which work together, to build community at Ethan Allen High School. They are orienting to service, empowering people, fostering care and affiliation, and assembling.

Orienting to Service

Orienting to service means directing effort toward the needs of the school. It is the first of three tertiary processes associated with building community. Gayle views her position as a principal and a leader from a service perspective. This service orientation adds a quality of humility to work relationships by placing the needs of those served above her own.

Gayle believes the orientation to service is similar to customer service.

G: We can look at lots of ways to go about working with any part of our population. Students are our customers, and we are the service agent.

Through her efforts to obtain access, services, and participation for students who are disadvantaged either behaviorally or academically, Gayle exhibits her service orientation. A strong child advocate, Gayle uses her influence to enable kids to receive that which they deserve and that to which they are entitled. For example, Jamie, who is a senior at Ethan Allen this year, is receiving instructional services through an alternative education program because of his poor behavior on campus. Sending word through his mother and his girlfriend, Jamie requested to attend the upcoming prom. Wanting to support Jamie, despite his behavioral problems, Gayle committed to discussing the matter with the district office. She additionally sought support from Jamie's mom and his girlfriend. In order to attend the prom, Jamie must agree not to cause any trouble there.

Gayle puts forth a lot of effort to bring programs and services to Ethan Allen. She works closely with the governor's school, which is located on campus to ensure students there participate fully in the activities offered to students at Ethan Allen. She advocates for the special needs students particularly in the areas of staffing and equipment. She wants them, as well as all the students at Ethan Allen, to have every opportunity to succeed academically.

Another important aspect of service, especially in a large organization, is serving people by representing their interests. In speaking to the student government group (SGA), Gayle speaks about the service aspect of leadership. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 2, Lines 97 - 100](#))

G: As a leader, you may not just decide [on an issue]; you must represent your group. Does that make sense?

Guided by an altruistic spirit, Gayle seeks to build agreement and support among the faculty for her current restructuring effort. In viewing relationships among groups within the school from a service perspective, Gayle sees herself representing the school to the district office and her teachers representing the school to the students. In speaking to one faculty group, Gayle expresses her concern about solidifying their position.

G: We can't do it for kids before [the] staff is behind it; so I need you. Kids are the customer. I need to make sure the company will deliver. Whatever the kids get is only as good as the person giving it.

As principal, Gayle is in a unique position representing dual interests. On the one hand, she represents the district office, which is committed to restructuring; and on the other hand, she represents the school community, which is uncommitted. Gayle finds herself caught in the middle, "serving two masters".

Possessing a strong allegiance to the superintendent who placed her in this position, Gayle wants to support his desire to restructure both high schools in the district. On the other hand, Gayle is extremely loyal and supportive of her faculty and does not want to force any type of change upon them.

In an effort to blend interests and enlist full support from her faculty, Gayle shrewdly brings together everyone's thinking and highlights interests everyone shares. She uses shared interests as a basis upon which to empower the staff, which thereby strengthens their connection to the school organization.

Empowering People

Empowering people is the second tertiary process associated with building community. It means to share power traditionally reserved, in a school organization for the principal. Through empowerment, people possess some measure of influence to accomplish things.

Empowerment is different from delegation. In delegation, people assume possession of limited amounts of power, which they exercise on behalf of the assignor. During empowerment, people receive power to act on their own behalf rather than on behalf of someone else. The spirit and intent, therefore, behind empowerment is not for self-service, but rather for service to another person or group.

Gayle empowers others in the organization in two important ways: by sharing power and by camouflaging her own power. In order for empowerment to be meaningful and effective, Gayle employs two strategies: distributing and camouflaging.

Distributing. Distributing power means to allot or assign the capability to do something. It is the first quaternary process associated with empowering people. Gayle shares power formally through the organizational structure. Based upon a site management model endorsed by the district and chaired by the principal, the school operates upon a shared decisional model. Theoretically, teachers are more autonomous. Gayle distributes different kinds of power to different groups depending upon the type of group and the issues involved.

As dictated by guidelines furnished by the district office, the site-based council is empowered to choose the areas over which it wishes to exercise control. Although its influence exists primarily in the area of instruction, the site-based council involves itself in some budgetary as well as personnel matters.

Assistant principals, called hall principals at Ethan Allen, are a significantly empowered group. They have their own academic building, a faculty, counselors, a secretary, students, facilities, and activities that they supervise. To signify and symbolize their empowerment, Gayle changed their title from vice principals to "hall principals" as she explains below. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 863-868](#))

G: That is why we changed the title to

"hall principal" instead of vice principal because, they have the principalship responsibilities of one of the halls.

Gayle further empowers her hall principals through their assignments.

G: Okay, the first example would be to have them sample almost everything that I touch upon as a principal.

That includes budget and finance. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 797-810](#))

G: For example, budget, no one of us is assigned specifically to do the budget.

But, in the budgetary process I like the involvement. All of us do some phase of the financial piece such as whether they are signing the purchase orders, writing the checks, checking the statement or reconciling the bank statement.

So all of them are doing a piece of it.

And, then after we look at, for example, purchase orders, because that is when you can get into some real trouble if you don't adhere to the financial policies that govern that.

I like to make sure that they all have a sample of that.

Gayle supports her administrators and empowers them to handle affairs related to their assignments that involve teacher evaluation, discipline, and resource management. She will assist if they are absent; however, she prefers to allow them to carry out their own duties independently. She views them as collaborative partners and refers to the group as the "administrative team".

Sharing power is a practice which has been characteristic of Gayle since her first principalship assignment in middle school. A visiting committee formally complimented Gayle on her working relationship with her assistant principal, who was initially apprehensive about her appointment as principal to his school. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 1120 - 1150](#))

G: Then what we did was we looked at skills we had.

Some things I could do better, and some things he could do better.

And when there was just two of us teaming, it was more of a bonding

necessary because we had to have a united front for the faculty.

And he needed to be reassured that the skills he had been very successful with in the past would still be utilized.

Not a great deal would change but that we would just be a different team.

And that was the year, within two years, we had a nationally recognized school.

And that was what the team pointed out; when they came down to do an investigation of the report is that we had done such a good job of meshing the skills, not duplicating the same kinds or do the same things in the building.

Gayle also empowers the teachers. They are, what she refers to as, the "first line" of instructional leadership.

G: Actually, we speak of leadership as the first line of leadership is the instructional leader in the classroom which is the teacher.

And we do empowerment; and we call them our instructional leaders.

But, there is an administrative team, although we get so involved or embedded in the administrative part that some days it might be hard to realize that we are an instructional leader for that faculty.

The department chairpersons and the hall principals follow the teachers.

G: And, the department chairpersons are the next level of instructional leadership for each department, then the administrators are instructional leaders in their buildings; and then we all are for the whole school.

In ways similar to her hall principals, Gayle symbolically empowers her department and team leaders. At one important faculty meeting about restructuring, Gayle called for the department chairpersons and team leaders to come stand in front of her at the front of the auditorium. While they stood together, Gayle spoke about the importance of restructuring and the importance of working together. When she finished,

she said, "I am going to let you instructional leaders sit", signifying their importance and power in leading the school toward educational excellence.

Gayle believes that restructuring will further empower her teachers. Not only will blocks of time give them flexibility with instructional strategies including cooperative and collaborative learning, but it will also allow them to group and assign students to groups as they deem appropriate. She explained it to the teachers as, using her words, a "clump of power".

G: Once you get a clump of power, you decide [how to manage] the change of rooms and [assignment of] teachers. You are totally in charge.

The second way in which Gayle empowers others is by camouflaging her own power.

Camouflaging. Camouflaging means disguising. It is the second quaternary process associated with empowering people. In the following passage, she speaks about empowering others while downplaying her own personal power. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 922-932](#))

G: But, in terms of power, if there is any power about this position, it is probably perceived power by people other than myself.

I don't think of it as being a powerful position.

I have had people say to me that it is, but I like to empower others to get the job done.

Gayle conceals her power in different ways. It might take the form of blending in with the crowd. This occurs as Gayle stands in the back of an assembly among the students. It can also take the form of refraining. In the cafeteria during lunch with the other administrators and teachers, comments and questions will arise about school business. Gayle listens but does not comment. In meetings, she will often not speak until others have spoken or vote until others have voted. When she chooses to participate, it is usually after others have made their contributions.

The significance of this strategy evidences itself in a discussion segment from a meeting with the Special Education department about restructuring. While empowering Janice, one of the hall principals, Gayle simultaneously forgoes displaying her own power.

As the meeting opened, one of the teachers said to Gayle, "We brought our mama." This statement symbolizes the maternal relationship, which exists between the Special Education department and their hall principal, which they appear to trust and admire. Symbolically, "mama" protects and provides for her people.

During the meeting, Gayle and Janice fielded questions about restructuring and addressed teacher concerns. One teacher (T) inquired about grouping the students.

T: You mentioned something about grouping. We have students there by court-order; and we would like to get those students away from those students who want to be there. Now they are lumped together and we need to separate them to work with them effectively. Would that give us leeway to separate them?

As Janice nodded her head, Gayle supported her saying, "Yes, mama is saying yes". What is significant here is that Gayle symbolically empowered Janice by supporting her role as "mama" to the group. She highlighted Janice's power while equalizing her own with the group.

The mutual trust and respect that appears to exist among this group are truly characteristic of a family. It is typical of the climate Gayle seeks to establish throughout the school community, a climate characterized by care and affiliation.

Fostering Care and Affiliation

Borrowing from the model of the family, Gayle fosters care and affiliation as the third tertiary process associated with building community. It means to unite in fellowship with warm and positive regard. This quality seemed to be missing in the school climate as Gayle assumed the principalship at Ethan Allen. She characterizes it as "people-to-people" connecting. (Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 231-247)

G: And, this school needed a people-to-people kind of relationship.

The rapport with the people
Business: people seemed to be an issue.

People did not feel that they had been treated fairly.

Faculty members were pitted against one another.

So, it was the people skills, the communication skills, that helped me survive for the first year as principal at this high school.

Using an analogy from the family, Gayle explains her relationship with her first assistant principal. She likens it to a husband and wife team.

G: My first principalship assignment was with a male who had always worked with a male principal and he had a lot of anxiety.

But within a few days he had the trust relationship to communicate with me that he didn't know how it was going to be having a female boss, as he put it.

And I was just joking with him.

And, I said, well you have a wife,
and it is pretty much like that.

She tells you what to do, kidding
with him.

And it, sort of, opened the air.

In another example, Gayle reveals more about the nature of the maternal role she feels for her school family. As she returns from lunch one afternoon, Gayle meets three girls talking in the school courtyard. She approaches them, complimenting the first girl on her "pretty dress". Then, she turns her attention to the second girl.

G: Are you going to the prom?

S2: [nods]

G: With whom?

S2: Jerome, he is from Washington Carver.

G: Oh, you are bringing an outsider?

S2: [giggles] Yeah.

G: Well, [teasingly] I am not going to be
your mother until three a.m. like last
year.

S2: [giggles]

After this short exchange, Gayle walks arm-in-arm with the girls to the doorway of their next class. This short exchange demonstrates Gayle's feelings of entrustment as she watches over the students at Ethan Allen.

In describing Gayle's administrative style, one of her male hall principals (HP) described it affectionately as "touchy, feely".

HP: Before Dr. Grant, there
was a lot of miscommunication,
infighting, and misunderstanding.

Dr. Grant brought in more of a caring
attitude; it was touchy, feely.

Gayle expects that people will work together, as she does, toward common goals in relationships characterized by care, trust, respect, and open-minded fairness. These are attributes often associated with an effective working community.

Gayle models these qualities often. During teacher appreciation week, Gayle extended herself to ensure that teachers felt important. In addition to arranging refreshments and activities through the halls, during a school-wide faculty meeting, Gayle applauded the faculty's efforts with students. She announced a dedication: "focusing on the value of the teacher".

Gayle believes that building trust relationships discounts fear and negativity. When she came to Ethan Allen, restoring trust was a major priority. In speaking about herself as a female principal, she proclaims the importance of trust. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 1156-1167](#))

G: And, I don't think it makes a difference whether you are male or female.

If there is someone there with a preconceived notion that something will be better and not as good, because of the gender of the leader that through a period of time, if you build that trust relationship that you can discount any of those fears that might be there.

When trust relationships are present, they strengthen the sense of community and open the way for resolving conflict.

G: But, you are constantly, having to . . . deal with the public; all the time dealing with others and sometimes the others are not happy when they come to see you.

And, it is resolving things, again building trust and being fair, and being open.

Respect is another important characteristic associated with fostering care and affiliation. In speaking with the SGA leadership group, Gayle explains to them about the importance of respect: "You are leaders and much goes with that; you must have respect". Gayle believes people must earn that respect. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 2, Lines 183-184](#))

People working together must also demonstrate respect. Gayle reminds the faculty that it is an integral part of professionalism.

G: The one thing that I did require is that they be professional about whatever issue they wanted to talk about; and, they be respectful of one another.

In a rather complex disciplinary action, Gayle demonstrated care and respect for one student, Samuel, who was a likable fellow on the soccer team. Although there was insufficient evidence to convict his friends of an alcohol violation, there was enough to convict Sam. Therefore, Sam received a suspension while his friends went free. Gayle met with Samuel one afternoon with the athletic director to explain what had happened. This disciplinary action was difficult for Samuel to understand.

After the meeting, in a guardian-like manner, Gayle escorted him to an afternoon activity where she arranged for his lunch. In speaking with his mother later, Gayle described the circumstances and the maternal concern she felt for Samuel, "I felt I was his mother in your place." Gayle explained that Samuel was accepting all of this now and requested that she, his mother, "Trust us and understand that this is fair".

Fostering care and affiliation is about bringing people into close association while engendering feelings of compassion and consideration. Bringing people together is the spirit and force behind the fourth tertiary process associated with building community, assembling.

Assembling

Assembling means gathering together for the purpose of conversation. It is the fourth tertiary process associated with building community. There is one important symbol in the school organization that represents assembling. That symbol is a table.

Traditionally, in business, a table represents the place where people gather to work together. In keeping with this tradition, Gayle uses the word, "table", as well as the furniture itself to represent the place where people gather to share information and resolve concerns.

In speaking, Gayle will often use the phrase, "bring it to the table". Her words are an invitation to bring issues and concerns into a forum for discussion. The table symbolically represents the heart of the forum. The purpose of the forum is to problem-solve in a professional manner that attends to people's feelings, as well as their beliefs and opinions. Everyone respects one another at the table.

There are two tables at Ethan Allen High School, which carry enormous significance. The first table is located in the conference room. Around this table, various people assume a seat, including the site council. People meet to discuss and come to consensus about various school issues. The second table is the centerpiece of Gayle's office. It is a coffee table located in the center of the room. Around it is an intimate arrangement of upholstered chairs and a large white sofa. Meetings in Gayle's office take place "around" this small table.

Gayle's large office desk is a part of this intimate grouping, but it is camouflaged by the stack of papers and files it holds, as well as its lack of use during a meeting. Rather than sit behind it, Gayle prefers to sit in a chair off to the side of the desk. If required, Gayle invites additional people to the table, symbolically, by using the telephone that is located on the desk corner facing Gayle's chair in the group.

Everyone's contribution is welcome at the table, whether it is the coffee table in Gayle's office or the large site-based council table in the conference room. The oval shape of these tables suggests equity in both active participation and influence as they hash out concerns.

Assembling, along with fostering care and consideration, empowering people, and orienting to service, are the four critical processes necessary to build community effectively. It is symbolically through the metaphor of a table that Gayle administers in her guardian manner, inviting participation in community and consensus in decision.

Building Consensus

Building consensus is the counterpart process to building community. It means establishing solidarity of opinion. It is the third secondary process Gayle uses to protect the clientele. It is an important process because it allows the members of a community to develop feelings of shared ownership as they participate actively in establishing common goals and resolving concerns.

Gayle uses consensus building extensively, both formally and informally, depending upon the nature of the issue and the extent of its influence on the community. Routine matters are often resolved on a one-to-one or small group basis, while the site council usually decides matters affecting the whole school.

Consensus building is about exchanging information, feelings, and opinions in order to reach agreement. Gayle believes when everyone participates there is better thinking and problem solving. (Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 984-988)

G: But, I believe that the best decisions are made when you have collective kinds of input. When you have team, team-kind of decisions.

Gayle conceived consensus building at Ethan Allen as she assumed her appointment as principal. During that first summer, she called members of the faculty together for an off-campus retreat. The purpose of the retreat was to create a new direction for the upcoming school year. Small group meetings were used to provide an avenue for individual expression about what had occurred in the past, as well as what was envisioned for the future. Through this process, people developed feelings of ownership.

G: Well, I guess they had investment in the plan so pretty much the fact that there was a lot of upheaval going on and then the fact that they had the input: they had ownership.

There are three tertiary processes associated with building consensus: managing information, managing feelings, and facilitating decisions. Although presented sequentially for understanding, Gayle engages these tertiary processes and their supporting quaternary processes, at random, and only as they serve her consensus-building goals.

Managing Information

Managing information means to take charge of knowledge, which includes controlling data and facts. It is the first of three processes Gayle uses to build consensus.

A school organization receives a lot of information, which constituents generate from within and outside of the organization, students, staff, parents, community members, visitors, and guests. Networks of people manage this information, formally, and sometimes informally.

Ever since her work as a counselor, Gayle has been concerned about obtaining sound information. It was important to her to "get people answers based on the best facts". She researches issues through consultation and through examination of printed materials. In fact, books and papers fill her office, evidence of her ardent interest in information.

Controlling information effectively requires keen analytic skills, understanding, and judgment. These qualities support Gayle in managing information effectively through three quaternary processes: gathering information, sharing information, and analyzing it.

Gathering information. The first process associated with managing information is gathering it. Gathering information means collecting data and facts. In other words, it means obtaining whatever knowledge is necessary in order to share it with others to build agreement.

With a strong background and interest in research, Gayle often gathers and provides information to her faculty and staff. She values its contribution to dialogue and decision-making. In preparing for the restructuring dialogue, Gayle collected articles and studies on high school restructuring. She included model schedules, opinions and commentaries from university experts, as well as journal articles that addressed the effects of restructuring on student learning and behavior. She told the faculty that "whatever we do, we do with research."

Gayle met with district personnel, including the new superintendent, to discuss restructuring. She participated in many district meetings to discuss the impact of restructuring on Ethan Allen. In addition, she made site visits to meet with personnel at schools where restructuring was already successfully implemented.

Gayle believes research enriches the debate on issues; it creates a basis for informed discussion. Unexamined research is valueless; it contributes to incomplete and less valuable decisional power.

G: But then you can come back with a proposal or come back with something that has some research to it.

Not just let us sit around the table with no information and try to solve whatever you do.

Plus the time element too.

During the restructuring discussions, Gayle invited representatives from Crown High School to Ethan Allen to share their restructuring experiences with the faculty. Gayle believed it was important, as she phrased it, "to touch the lives of those involved" with restructuring. This type of personal connection adds credibility and believability to intangible claims.

When the Special Education department met with Gayle to discuss restructuring, two members were silent throughout most of the discussion. Instead of assuming the member's silence meant agreement, Gayle elicited their participation in the discussion: "Manny, you and Belinda did not say much" Gayle likes to know where everyone stands on issues.

In addition to gathering information through formal communication channels, Gayle also gathers information informally. She accepts telephone calls readily and meets with people who drop by to see her. She speaks to people as she travels across campus, like the PTSA president whom she often encounters. Gayle may also just listen quietly and observe people as they engage in conversation.

During the restructuring discussions, Rosemary, an African-American history teacher, came by to see Gayle. She wanted to talk about restructuring from a personal standpoint as well as to express a concern that the faculty was feeling "forced" to restructure. Gayle listened quietly and then summarized what she heard Rosemary say.

G: Seems to be mixed communication and I appreciate your communicating with me, and I don't want anything rammed down my throat.

So they [teachers] think central is going to make us. I want to go slow enough to do it well.

Gathering information requires good investigative skills, which are almost second nature to Gayle. However, her natural psychological skills support her most. They facilitate understanding and assessment of people, which, in turn, guides Gayle's information sharing process.

Sharing information. Information dissemination and discussion creates the process of sharing. It is the second quaternary process associated with managing information to build consensus. Its importance lies in its ability to expand knowledge and participation. The more sharing that occurs, the more that information accumulates on a subject; and the more people that share information, the more informed the community becomes.

Gayle involves herself actively in sharing information. She is the primary communication link between the district office and the school. The district communicates information to the principal, who in turn communicates to the administrative team, who in turn communicates to the staff, who in turn communicates to students. Although this is an official information channel; however, there are others.

Gayle meets directly with the team and department chairpersons with whom she shares instructional information. Gayle assembled the packets and gave them directly to department chairpersons. She expected chairpersons to share it with their teachers.

During the information dissemination on restructuring, Gayle met with many different groups. She shared information through team meetings, department meetings, and committees, as well as the site council. Dissemination of information through varied channels like this is very equitable because many members then hear the information in more than one setting.

Gayle often shares information with her administrative team in order that they can communicate information to their respective faculties. During the discussions on restructuring, Gayle kept the team informed about the status of consensus on the issue. They, in turn, shared with Gayle information they had gathered from their faculties.

Gayle uses school-wide faculty meetings for broad-based information sharing. She characterizes sharing as bringing issues to the table.

G: The other thing that there was, on the faculty agenda, we always had a communication piece where people could share.

We called it "sharing," and people basically tried to set the climate so that they would be comfortable to bring about or bring to the table any issues of concern.

For more in-depth sharing, Gayle participates in department meetings. During the restructuring dialogue, Gayle used department meetings to disseminate information, answer questions, and clarify confusion.

In sharing information to build consensus, Gayle is careful to protect and preserve open dialogue. This is essential to engaging people to participate. Gayle preserves dialogue by providing facts and information without forcefully using her own power to persuade. She also asks questions and challenges thinking without condescension.

For example, during the discussions about restructuring, Gayle encountered opposition and hostility from various members of the faculty. Rather than criticize their ignorance, she challenged them to examine the research, analyze the proposed block schedules, and think about what is best for kids. In meeting with the English department, she said, "What is good for kids? Or, are you doing what you have always done? What have you looked at? Time is a resource". (Appendix H, C2 Doc 3, Lines 1037-1039)

The consequences of misunderstanding and dissension are grave in an organization as large as Ethan Allen. Gayle is ever watchful for information that might lead to conflict and upheaval. Therefore, she holds many informal conversations with organization members.

When Rosemary came to her with information about disgruntlement among the faculty, Gayle shared her position on restructuring and solicited Rosemary's help in being a voice of reason.

G: I would appreciate your helping me by being a communicator. We need to look at how to treat time differently.

Ever mindful of the mission, Gayle continues expressing hope for a decision, which will benefit kids.

G: We need an open mind to see what is possible, to see what we like, and what we don't like. I hope they [faculty] will be open to shape the lives of kids.

This example typifies the interconnectedness of the gathering and sharing processes in managing information. As Gayle gathers information from Rosemary, she also shares information about her position and the need to put what is best for kids first. Rosemary can then share this information with others in the school.

Understanding how people are interpreting information and ideas is very important to Gayle. Gayle refers to this process as "taking a reading" on someone or something. It is actually a form of analyzing information.

Analyzing information. Analyzing information means to examine carefully and in detail the essential aspects or elements of acquired knowledge. It is the third quaternary process associated with managing information.

After collection of information from a variety of sources, it is important to look at it carefully and discuss it. During the restructuring meetings, Gayle encouraged her staff to share information, ask questions, and remain creative about inventing solutions that would address the instructional concerns facing the school.

In speaking to the departments, Gayle solicited their help in bringing information to the table (sharing) so it can be, in her words, "looked at", which meant analyzed.

G: And, so we are looking at anything you read or hear, what other professionals are doing in other school systems that you think would be good for our kids.

Please bring those to the table;
and we will look at it.

Another expression Gayle uses to refer to analyzing information is "sort through". In speaking to the SGA leadership group, she said, "As a leader with vision, you must sort through what you hear . . ." Sorting is an important part of analysis. It enables two quinternary processes associated with analyzing, which are identifying what is important and identifying common ground. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 2, Lines 75-77](#))

Identifying what is important. The first quinternary process associated with analyzing information is identifying what is important. It means indicating what is significant. Gayle contends that what is important emerges as information and is analyzed. Analysis can be extended by ranking and ordering so that what emerges is important; this strategy is called prioritizing.

During a collaborative process, it is critical to find out what is important to the people participating. This information is essential to reaching consensus. In bureaucratic organizations such as school systems, what is important may differ according to one's values and work experience. Differences in what is important may vary across groups as well as people.

During the restructuring discussions, Gayle helped teachers identify many things that were important to them. Although everyone agreed that delivering quality instruction was important, not everyone agreed on the methods and procedures to accomplish it.

Almost all of the teachers believed that an unencumbered daily planning period was important to enabling them to deliver quality instruction. Moreover, many teachers were quite satisfied that the seven-period day was appropriate for quality instruction; they questioned the need for restructuring. Some teachers wanted common planning time together. Some departments wanted students grouped in different ways. One department wanted the large Xerox machine on campus available for longer periods each day. The Science department sought physical placement together in one building instead of dissipation into different buildings.

Conflicts around what is important can turn into major obstacles in consensus building. This is particularly true if people cannot identify enough common ground.

Identifying common ground. The second quinternary process associated with analyzing information is identifying common ground. It means determining that upon which everyone agrees. This process requires a thorough understanding of the issues as well as the people affected by them.

Gayle understood both the issues and her community. After turning the school climate around several years ago, she had acquired considerable knowledge and skill at managing people within this organizational context. Because the staff was so large and the school facility so spread out, organizational views, values, and opinions were diverse.

In initiating her efforts to identify common ground within the restructuring dialogue, Gayle astutely focused people's attention on the mission using the same process she uses so well to create community. Everyone agreed that quality instruction within a safe and humanistic environment was the mission. Using a Socratic questioning strategy, she continually challenged people to think about what that meant in practical terms for kids.

Next, Gayle focused attention on accomplishing the mission, in the event that restructuring became a reality. That common ground was a need for strong district support to back the high schools. This support needed to be equivalent to the support given to the middle schools when they restructured a few years earlier. In speaking to the Social Studies department, Gayle articulated her feelings saying, "Middle schools had money for planning. The high schools are tired of being the last one given help." Gayle delineated the support everyone would want were they to decide to restructure the schedule: inservice time, training, recertification points, and stipends. This was a benign rally against the district office to support the high schools.

Gayle extended this rally against the district to include staffing. Ethan Allen needed more staff. In speaking to the Social Studies department, she said, "And, staffing . . . we need teachers". No one could take issue with these demands; the demands are common needs of all teachers.

Gayle's ability to rally is benign because it was used benevolently to coalesce the faculty to support restructuring. With the exception of staffing, the district office had already agreed to the "demands".

Identifying common ground is an effective strategy in analyzing information for the purposes of building agreement. After identifying that common ground through gathering and analyzing, it can be articulated through sharing. This strategy will often support consensus building by muting opposing voices and shepherding ambivalent voices into agreement.

Managing information is the substantive component of dialogue. The other component connected with dialogue is feelings. Gayle must manage these effectively, as well, in order to build consensus.

Managing Feelings

Managing feelings means to address people's sentiments, attitudes, and emotions. It is the second of three tertiary processes Gayle uses to build consensus. With the large flow of information at Ethan Allen, and "misinformation", as Gayle puts it, people generate many feelings. Gayle believes in separating information from feelings, but managing both simultaneously.

Gayle is sensitive to the fact that new proposals generate strong feelings. Skill, understanding, and judgement are required to manage these feelings effectively. She confided one morning to the PTA president that she was "taking on the faculty" regarding restructuring in the afternoon faculty meeting. She was preparing herself to deal with the strong feelings that this dialogue about change would have on many of them.

In managing feelings, Gayle appeals to the faculty's sense of professionalism. She engages them in an examination of alternative approaches to instruction, devoid of strong emotion. In the following passage, she solicits help from the Math department. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 4, Lines 781-786](#))

G: Help me clarify the position of this school. Look at the practical part and know what is possible. Generate your questions and [let's] approach this in a professional and cautious way.

There are two quaternary processes associated with managing feelings. They are separating feelings from facts and addressing fears and concerns.

Separating feelings from facts. The first quaternary process associated with managing feelings is separating feelings from facts. It means to disassociate the sentiments, attitudes and emotion from that which is known to be based in accepted knowledge.

Gayle believes that people present issues with both feelings and facts. In her estimation, it is important to separate the feelings from the facts in order to analyze the issue and identify the most constructive method of resolution. Separating feelings from facts is not only a strategy Gayle uses often, but also many staff members use. The district office trained selected staff members to use this strategy to facilitate communication in the school organization. "Listeners" is the name given to the staff trained in this strategy.

When Gayle assumed the principalship, in order to help alleviate the organizational chaos and conflict, a group of people were trained to hear faculty and student concerns. This could pertain to anything that was going on in the school. People who were disturbed or distressed about organizational issues could talk directly with the "listeners" in the school.

G: It was giving us a skill so that we could gather information without being judgmental about it.

But then to be able to sort through the issues.

When someone is upset, whether it is a student or a faculty member, you have to work through a lot of irrational pieces.

And, in that process, the listeners, that is what they called it, the listeners group, were trained to pick out the issues and sort out the emotion;

so, we could deal reasonably with whatever happened to come to the table.

These "listeners" would bring their issues to Gayle. Together they would work to identify measures to resolve the issues. Negative feelings often accompanied the issues adding an emotional intensity, which also needed attention.

Addressing negative feelings. The second quaternary process associated with managing feelings is addressing negative feelings. It means directing attention to people's apprehensions and anxiety about issues. It is an important aspect of consensus building because it can be the most tenable barrier to resolving issues.

Gayle addresses negative feelings by giving understanding, providing facts, reasoning, and demonstrating a willingness to resolve concerns. These processes build relationships to support the dialogue necessary for resolution.

As Gayle became aware of the negative feelings about restructuring, she began addressing them. Formally, she addressed them through faculty and site council meetings. Informally, she discussed them with faculty and community members, gathering information while promoting the need to broaden everyone's educational perspective.

One area where there seemed to be a repository of negative feelings was the English department. They were quite resistant to block scheduling for many different reasons that surfaced in the department meeting, which Gayle attended. Gayle used four important quaternary processes to manage the negative feelings. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 3, Lines 978-1277](#))

Giving understanding. Giving understanding means listening and addressing concerns empathetically. It is the first quaternary process associated with addressing negative feelings. In responding to one English teacher who said, "I can't stand them in class for 45 minutes", Gayle said, "Listen to what others are doing. These students are hard to teach." Gayle gave understanding about how difficult it is to teach some kids while appealing to the logic of learning from others how to work with two-hour blocks of time.

Providing facts. The process, providing facts, means providing verifiable information. It is the second quaternary process associated with addressing negative feelings. Gayle reminded the English department of the research done on restructuring and asked if they had examined the materials she put together for the departments. She went on to explain that many school districts in the state were restructuring, including several districts around Ethan Allen. People from these districts would be sharing their experiences.

In addition, small pilots were occurring at Ethan Allen. Gayle reminded the group that the Governor's school on campus was using blocks of time quite successfully. Ethan Allen's "academically handicapped" students taught by the I-Team were also using blocks of time, as well as flexible grouping strategies and team teaching.

Reasoning. Reasoning is exchanging explanations or beliefs in order to exert influence. It is the third quaternary process associated with addressing negative feelings. In speaking for the English department, one English teacher said that they didn't have concerns about the academic kids adjusting to restructuring but, "Some kids' attention spans are twenty minutes." She continued, "We need to phase in block scheduling and provide training to manage it. We need to start before mid-May to plan something

like this. We need a pilot group If I were stuck with some groups of kids for two hours, it would kill me."

Gayle's response to this was as follows: "That is the point of our dialogue. We must start somewhere. We need to examine what we have in place. If it is good, then we can buy into it. If not, then we need to examine and re-examine." She reminded them, "Paine High School is committed".

Gayle inquired about how those members of the faculty who had taught summer school handled the extended length of classes. "What about summer school where they [teachers] are working with large chunks of time?" Gayle's point was that many teachers, across different settings, are handling blocks of time. Certainly, the teachers in the schools that have restructured their school day are adapting. All of the English teachers at their sister school, Paine, will be blocking next year; and they are preparing now.

Willingness to resolve concerns. Willingness to resolve concerns means that Gayle actively displays attitudes aimed toward acknowledging and resolving the faculty's negative feelings, especially their fears and apprehensions about restructuring. It is the fourth quaternary process associated with addressing negative feelings.

In working with the English department's concerns about being with "bad kids" for two hours, Gayle explained that staff teams would receive groups of students. Then, the team teachers could determine how to group them appropriately for instruction. The district office planned to make training available to help teachers identify and implement strategies, such as cooperative learning, to use in blocked periods.

When the Science department expressed concern about being "spread out" across campus, Gayle informed them that this is the type of change, which, restructuring might accomplish during renovation. She suggested that they collect information and raise the issue again during renovation discussions.

In closing the meeting with the English department, Gayle indicated her willingness to work with the faculty through this decision process.

G: I have not said that we are moving from anything; and I know you are hearing that from downtown We need your support. And, we are not going to do it unless everyone is committed.

Addressing negative feelings and separating feelings from facts are the two quaternary processes Gayle uses to manage the feelings of the school organization. Managing feelings and managing information are effective processes in establishing trust, understanding, and rapport in communication. However, to build consensus, Gayle employs one other tertiary process, facilitating decisions.

Facilitating Decisions

The third tertiary process associated with building consensus is facilitating decisions. It means to assist in determining or settling upon something, like a course of action. Although Gayle makes many decisions by herself, during consensus building, she manages decision-making by involving others in the process.

In addressing the student government leaders one morning, Gayle taught them "decision by consensus". She explained that at Ethan Allen the site-based council uses this process to make decisions. In order to help them understand the process, she directed them in a consensus-building exercise similar to the process used at Ethan Allen. She asked them to list the "things you would like to keep at Ethan Allen" in order of priority. Following this, Gayle divided the large group into smaller groups by grade level, directing each group to discuss their lists: "Each person may come to the table with information . . . then build consensus and come up with a decision." The group was required to select only one thing they would like to keep.

The objective of consensus building is to allow the decision to evolve from the group. In order to expedite this process, Gayle uses two quaternary processes. They are reaching agreement and managing disagreement.

Reaching agreement. Reaching agreement means coming to a shared decision whereby group members agree to support, or at least not sabotage, a decision. Reaching agreement is the goal or desired outcome of the consensus-building process. Gayle is adept at facilitating both formal and informal decisional procedures.

Gayle employs a formal method of reaching agreement when she works with the site-based council that is composed of representatives from committees and groups in the school. It is the major decision-making body in the school and its decisions often have far-reaching effects.

The voting process is formal and requires that members indicate their level of support through an open voting procedure. When Gayle explained this process to the SGA leadership group, she informed them that council members must balance the various interests of the school as they make decisions. Members vote by indicating a level of support for a decision: "4" means that a person will give full support to the decision and "0" indicates that the person will block the decision. This procedure provides an effective means of identifying where individual members stand on a decision, as well as flushing out opposition. (Appendix H, C2 Doc 2, Lines 88 - 95)

The site council used this decisional method to decide whether to bring a GED day program to campus as part of next year's campus-wide program offerings. The district office had asked Ethan Allen if they would host this district program. In keeping with policy guidelines, Gayle brought the GED program proposal to the site council for decision. Because the guidance director had been involved in district discussions regarding this program proposal, he presented the program plan to the site council for consideration. After some discussion, Gayle posed the question, "What is the feeling about GED? Can we reach consensus?"

Because of her concern for the students who drop out of school, Gayle is particularly supportive of this program. However, it was not until after the discussion that Gayle endorsed the program for at-risk students saying, "Thanks, at last we are providing some type of instruction".

In addition to using formal procedures, Gayle often facilitates consensual decision-making informally through discussion. This involves bringing all parties involved in an issue together for mutual discussion and decision. She uses this process in working with teams and committees in the school, as well as in resolving issues involving students. This process has five basic phases that, while presented sequentially, may occur at times simultaneously or in different sequences.

During the first phase, Gayle takes a leadership role in managing the information and the feelings in order to establish a foundation of trust. She accomplishes this primarily by using questions directed to the individuals participating as well as to the group as a whole. In this first phase of the consensus building process, Gayle tends to minimize the expression of her own beliefs and opinions.

During the second phase, Gayle establishes boundaries around the decision that takes the form of parameters, conditions, or preferences. These must guide the decisional outcome. In the third phase, Gayle summarizes the discussion and solicits decisional preferences from the members. Because Gayle likes to know where everyone stands, Gayle usually addresses silent participants. In the fourth phase, Gayle summarizes and articulates the thinking of the group through consensus. During the fifth phase, Gayle solidifies the decision by speaking to its merits, or in the case of a conflict, speaking to the injured party often for the purposes of preserving self-esteem.

Gayle often uses informal consensus building when working with the administrative team. During one afternoon meeting, the team was planning the year-end awards assembly and had to identify the recipient of the administrative award. After reading the criteria for the administrative award and the names of students who were already receiving other awards, Gayle established an equity boundary around the school awards, saying, "I would like to see them spread out".

As discussion ensued, Gayle managed information and probed for feelings. She posed questions to the team: "Do you know all of the candidates well enough?" "Does anyone want to speak to recognition?" Discussion focused on the only male candidate, Charles. Gayle attempted to pull together the feelings of the group, "Is everyone okay with Charles? He is really a nice kid". Lack of agreement, however, dictated further discussion.

During a lull in the discussion, one of the hall principals attempted to bring the discussion to decision saying, "Do you want us to write or ballot or what?" Hiding her own feelings, Gayle replied, "What do you want to do?"

Discussion began again focusing on two female candidates, Andrea and Nicole. Gayle pointed out that both girls were leaders serving as site-based representatives. Gayle called the vote, but did not participate. A tie resulted, and the hall principals all looked at Gayle urging her to vote. Gayle acknowledged them, saying, "I have not voted. I will go with Nicole. I have watched her during the year. Nicole has campus involvement, where Amy is in the governor's school and city school". Through this last statement, Gayle solidified the decision and spoke to the merits of deciding upon Nicole for the award.

As can be seen from this example, Gayle takes a facilitative role in reaching consensus, often camouflaging her influence by setting decisional limits rather than promoting a particular outcome. Early in the discussion, it appeared as though Charles was her preference for the award; however, her team did not appear to support her choice.

With facility, Gayle drew out their thinking and synthesized it for agreement. As the discussion progressed, it became apparent that the team favored the female candidates. Although a democratic vote decided who would receive the award, consensus determined the method the team used to

decide. Gayle facilitated the decision participating as an "equal" in the process, thus allowing teamwork to prevail.

The two examples above demonstrate the ease with which Gayle facilitates the consensual decisional process when people have good working relationships and are primarily in agreement. What is challenging, however, is managing disagreement.

Managing disagreement. Managing disagreement is the second quaternary process associated with making decisions. It means taking care of and controlling differences of opinion. It requires a lot of patience, which Gayle uses amply.

Although it is often unpleasant to deal with, Gayle welcomes the expression of disagreement. When facilitating decisions, it is essential to her to know everyone's position. She will ask questions to ferret out any hidden factors influencing thinking and probe for areas of agreement. She can listen to comments and criticisms without getting defensive, thus gluing together the consensual process.

In particularly sensitive situations where areas of disagreement are vast, Gayle will use her power and influence to attend to some aspect of the minority position. She may give understanding to feelings like acknowledging a loss or assuaging injured pride. Following this, she will emphasize the areas of agreement by downplaying her positional power, appealing to reason rather than status.

Managing disagreement can become particularly challenging when feelings emerge as an issue. Sometimes disagreement creates negative feelings that can escalate into hostility. This can paralyze consensus building as feelings cloud the acknowledged issues. When Gayle assumed the principalship of Ethan Allen, she established expectations about the expression of feelings, which she continues to uphold.

G: That it was not a time to bash out at each other if they had disagreement;

but that, we could work through it and to try to deal with issues and programs rather than people.

It was, I guess most of all, creating the climate to talk about whatever was on their mind in a professional manner.

The consensus-building dialogue about restructuring was laden with disagreement and negative feelings. At the site council meeting held at the end of the year, Gayle did not feel that there was consensus yet on this issue. In summarizing her position on the issue, she addressed the disagreement.

P: We have not committed to anything, because there is so much information we have not debated to make a decision for this council. We would like to go back to base zero.

I think we need to get everybody on board

with information and access. Until we are informed, we cannot support the pros and cons. If you would please be communicators.

I have talked with Rosemary today and we have faculty members saying that something is not right. If we need another year to discuss this, we will. We would rather commit later as a group.

A strong believer in the importance of public relations, Gayle uses diplomacy to assuage the difficulties associated with managing disagreement in order to reach agreement. Respect can facilitate decision-making by acknowledging people's feelings and opinions as they interact with each other.

Building consensus is a process that requires skill and sensitivity because the objective is, as Gayle phrases it, "to keep people reasonably satisfied or neutral". Despite her goal to institute restructuring, Gayle feels she cannot move forward with it unless, as she phrases it, "everyone is on board".

G: But again, you can only move with those goals and objectives to the extent that you can move your clientele with you.

Consensus building is a natural process for Gayle as she uses her skills to manage information, manage feelings, and facilitate decisions. Through her acceptance of people, Gayle demonstrates sensitivity. She accepts people for who they are, as well as their right and privilege to have a voice in school affairs. Through the process of consensus, she strengthens people individually and as well as a group.

Guiding the students and the staff is a multifaceted process that begins with the establishment of a climate, which fosters community. It is through community that people connect with each other around the mission in caring and meaningful ways. This expands communication and strengthens work relationships, empowering people to contribute their talents and skills to an organization managed by consensus.

In order to safeguard the many processes associated with guiding the clientele, Gayle uses one other primary process. That process is guarding the organizational structure.

Guarding the Program

Guarding the program means to protect and provide for the curriculum and activities within the school. Guarding supports the framework of the school, which enables the organization to function both efficiently and effectively. This is the second primary process associated with the guardian administrative style.

This includes safeguarding the organization from both internal and external threats. Internal threats come from inside the organization. They can result from such things as a breakdown in communications or from any other type of internal dysfunction. External threats come from the environment. They can result from disturbances in the surrounding community, from other schools, or from world events; they most often affect the organization through the media.

Through the preservation process, Gayle guards operations and resources of the school organization. She coordinates internal boundaries that separate members from each other while securing line relationships. She also negotiates external boundaries that partition members of the organization from their environment. These actions serve to ensure the effective execution of work functions, as well as to safeguard the resources necessary to sustain those functions. When threats to the organization manifest, Gayle troubleshoots in order to preserve stability.

Ethan Allen High School is a complex organizational structure, which functions in two modes. One is a hierarchical, bureaucratic mode and the other is a lateral, community-like mode. As principal, Gayle must perform her duties and responsibilities accommodating both systems.

Hierarchically, the principal, who is the chief school officer, heads the school. Under the principal are five hall principals who have line authority delegated by the principal. As the principal is also the instructional leader of the school, all team and department chairpersons report directly to her. In addition, she directly supervises the building manager who is responsible for the physical plant of the school.

Teachers, counselors, secretaries, and other personnel including the cafeteria manager, library/media personnel, and adult education program personnel report to the various hall principals. They report based upon their function and grade level.

In a more lateral arrangement, the school organizes around a site-based council.

G: We have a site-based council which is the organization which our school system has gone to, site-based management.

Site-based management means that a site council assumes some amount of power traditionally associated with the principal. The principal, who still maintains line authority in the school, chairs the site-based council. She empowers the council and engages them in a facilitative manner to manage designated organizational tasks and functions.

Reporting to the council are standing and ad hoc committees that are composed of staff, parents, and students. Standing committees conduct meetings all year. There are seven standing committees: budget and annual school planning; staff development and professional growth; instruction, testing, and passport; discipline and truancy; student recognition and awards; school climate and community relations; and student activities and athletics. Ad hoc committee members participate on an as needed basis. Both types of committees select representatives to participate on the site council.

In addition to the committee representatives, there are other groups represented on site council. There is a representative from each hall as

well as one from the governor's school, located on campus, and the city school. Joining them are administrative team members, as well as representatives from the PTSA.

In the important role of preserver, it is Gayle's responsibility to ensure that both organizational arrangements function productively and harmoniously. The site council must function according to the guidelines established by the district and so must the administrative team in carrying out the line functions of the organization.

There are four secondary processes associated with the primary process, guarding the program. They are uniting in mission, maintaining operations, safeguarding resources, and troubleshooting.

Venerating Vision

Venerating vision means holding a perfect possibility in reverence. It is a vivid conceptualization of how things could be in a perfect world. This process involves using the imagination to create a perceptual focus. Venerating vision is the first secondary process associated with guarding the program.

Gayle considers vision an extremely important component in school reform. As she guides the organization examining the way it delivers instructional services to students, she urges staff to envision a new way of thinking and working together teaching students.

In beginning the reform examination process, Gayle challenged the staff to set aside one day to create individual visions followed by departmental visions. She met with departments to hear about their vision.

G: Thank you for calling this meeting to talk about your vision. The focus will be on the student. I am really here to be a listener.

In encouraging the creation of a new vision, Gayle challenged them to think.

G: What is good for kids? Are you going to do what you have always done? Or, are you going to look at the research and open your minds?

In order to create a sustainable vision, Gayle believes that a leader must see the total picture through gathering and analyzing information. She encouraged her staff to do just that as they discussed restructuring their school day.

Gayle facilitated the creation of a shared vision allowing people, through the process of consensus building, to take ownership of a reformation. In order to allay fears, she spoke about the benefits of empowerment, which was an essential element in the restructuring.

G: Once you get a clump of power, you decide the rooms, the teachers, and the schedule. You are in charge!

Gayle's interest in reform stems from her belief that the process of schooling can benefit from improvement. It needs reexamining in order to

ensure that it serves the needs of a changing school population. It must be practical too and therein lies the importance of the mission.

Closely associated with the vision is the mission. It is important in that it concretizes the vision, making it practical. In the following passage

G: But instruction is our primary focus, assuming everything is safe.

In the preceding passage, Gayle speaks to Ethan Allen's two most important organizational concerns: safety and instruction. Gayle believes safety is important. Without a safe environment, students and staff cannot focus; instruction becomes compromised.

Instruction is the heart of the mission. The Ethan Allen staff handbook under the section titled, "Instructional Responsibilities", states that instruction is clearly the focal point of all work effort.

In keeping with our goal of meeting the needs and interests of the students of our school community, we believe that instruction is the primary reason we are here. Instruction includes curricular and co-curricular activities sponsored by this school. Whether or not we are administrators, or coaches, we must be ever conscious that we are teachers first. Before we can be effective teachers in all we do, we need to answer three basic questions:

1. What do we want our student to be when they leave us?
2. How are we to achieve this task?
3. How do we know when we are making progress toward achieving what we want our students to be?

According to Gayle, other important values connected to the mission lie in the areas of guidance and discipline.

G: Those happen to be the ones that we have issues with: instruction, guidance, and discipline.

Gayle believes that restructuring will positively affect all of these areas. She speaks to this in addressing the Social Studies department about restructuring.

G: I don't want to see us doing the same thing since 1960. And, we want to keep the good things up. But, everyone is restructuring; and we don't want dead kids.

Gayle views the high school restructuring effort as a successful way to accomplish the school mission. It would address the needs of the "whole child" more effectively.

If the staff composed a mission statement based upon Gayle's efforts to build community, it would probably include elements of safety, instruction, and care. It might read something like this: Within a protective and nurturing environment, the mission of Ethan Allen is to direct and support academic achievement by addressing the instructional as well as emotional needs of every child.

Gayle's primary strategy for uniting people in the mission is to direct their attention to it. The restructuring discussions are primary avenues through which this occurs as Gayle provides information to stimulate their thinking, while highlighting what is important.

Another way Gayle rallies people to the mission is by protecting the faculty's time with students. She avoids public announcement interruptions during the day. Staff can convey messages in other ways. She encourages the hall principals to see students when they are in their hall rather than calling them from across campus, which would require an enormous amount of travel time. If Gayle feels she is keeping someone from an instructional or supervision responsibility, she will apologize for interrupting their time with students.

The last strategy Gayle uses to rally people to the mission is to confront them when their behavior does not work in the best interest of students. In talking with the Social Studies department chairperson, Gayle expressed her dismay at the inequities in the judging of academic competitions. Gayle was very disappointed that junior class ranking may have affected the outcome of an inter-school history competition, shortchanging one of Ethan Allen's eleventh grade competitors. Speaking to the chairperson, Gayle explained how she expressed her concern by challenging a superintendent who was a judge in the contest. He had told Gayle that in making awards, the committee "leaned toward seniors" because they were graduating. As Gayle phrases it, she "took him on". She said, "If that is what you are going to do, then don't invite juniors to participate".

One thing that can interfere with successfully implementing the mission is politics. Gayle is watchful and cautious about the "political piece" but she does not let it interfere with her strong values regarding the well being of kids.

G: And, you need to use your energy working for kids and the political piece sometimes will involve you. But, again, you don't have to yield to it.

Through attention to the mission, Gayle gathers, organizes and prompts people of the organization to put children's educational needs first. Gayle often will invite the faculty to review an agenda and ask, "Any changes needed to make a difference for kids?" This distinctly directs the focus of attention where it belongs.

Through attention to the vision and the mission, Gayle directs the organizational focus on students. Once the focus is properly in place, Gayle empowers people through maintaining operations.

Maintaining Operations

Maintaining operations means sustaining organizational performance. It is the second secondary process associated with guarding the program. Its importance lies in its control over organizational tasks and functions.

One of the most significant things Gayle does in maintaining operations is to accommodate the needs and demands of the dualistic organizational structure. Overseeing both types of activity requires not only an in-depth understanding of the nature of their processes, but also an understanding of how, what, when and where matters should be handled by the organization.

There are three tertiary processes associated with maintaining operations. They are delegating authority and responsibility, directing tasks and functions, and upholding policy and procedures.

Delegating Authority and Responsibility

Delegating means to confer from one organizational unit or person to another in order to accomplish a particular assignment. It is the first tertiary process associated with maintaining operations.

Delegating is different from empowering in that it is power conferred on another rather than power shared. Furthermore, the person conferring power remains responsible for checking to see that delegation was accepted and that the requested assignment was performed.

Authority is the official and legal right to command action by others and to enforce compliance. Responsibility is the obligation of an individual to carry out assigned activities to the best of their ability. Delegating authority and responsibility is the first of three processes associated with maintaining operations.

Hierarchically, Gayle's delegates first line authority to her administrative staff who also carries the title of "principal". Delegating administrative assignments is an important function in an organization as large as Ethan Allen is. It is Gayle's intent that their authority and responsibility over their assignments, particularly guidance and discipline, be equivalent to that of a "stand alone building" principal.

G: They each have their building set up as though it were a school within a school.

They have a faculty within their own rights that they are responsible for

This relegates Gayle's role, as chief school officer, to one of appeal. That is, matters not resolved within other settings can be appealed to Gayle.

Each of the five hall principals has standing areas of authority and responsibility collaboratively decided upon at the beginning of each academic year. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 595 - 605](#))

G: And, each year annually we go over the existing needs that we now have, or responsibilities, and look at what things have happened this year that have not been specifically assigned to anyone that we might have to attend to.

If concerns arise around those areas, each hall principal automatically assumes oversight.

New issues arise are apportioned on a voluntary basis. The criteria for assignment are equity and interest. Gayle explains it as "turn taking".

G: We sort of take turns.

If no one volunteers, we go to the first stage of selection process.

We just sort of leave that item and come back to it.

And, then what we do is do a balance.

If one administrator has taken 15 things to do or administer to, and another one has six, the person who didn't volunteer as we were going through the items knows that the things that are left over are what

we are going to have to divide out. But it works pretty well.

And what one person likes to do a lot, another person is indifferent to.

And, there are just some things that are not our favorite thing to do but we know they have to be done.

Gayle assigns responsibility to other personnel when her hall principals are absent or otherwise unable to attend to their duties. There is one administrative assistant position that acts in a support capacity without specific line authority. This position provides school-wide administrative support and "substitutes" for absent hall principals as required.

If the administrative assistant is not available, Gayle assigns responsibility to her core department chairpersons who function in an administrative support capacity in the absence of a hall principal. They teach only one period per day and are, therefore, available for emergency assistance. When this occurs, Gayle works closely with them as needed. Gayle handles matters that arise and require urgent administrative action such as serious discipline matters. However, Gayle defers many matters until the respective hall principal returns.

Although Gayle prefers that all delegated administrative authority remain with her hall principals, she will stand in for them as situations warrant. For example, an issue arose concerning a special education student and his driving permit while the hall principal, Mrs. Ferguson, was out of the building. Although Gayle made time to meet with the parent, she clearly indicated that Mrs. Ferguson would be the one to resolve the matter. She said, "It is important; Mrs. Ferguson will be back tomorrow; and we will see what we can do". In this way, Gayle empowers her hall principal.

In delegation, it is necessary to monitor acceptance and compliance of that which is delegated. Therefore, it is necessary for Gayle, from time to time, to remind employees of priorities especially where multiple responsibilities are concerned. For example, although there is no written rule about administrators leaving campus, it is informally agreed that schedules are shared and notification given when responsibilities take them

away from campus. Gayle takes charge of coordinating the administrative schedules and arranges coverage when required.

However, informality can be cause for concern as Gayle seeks to maintain school operations. She will intervene to alter schedules particularly as her administrators' priorities appear to conflict with the best interests of the students and the school. This happened with one hall principal (HP) as he attempted to be away from campus on Wednesday during school time.

G: Good morning.

HP: Can I see you about my schedule?

G: Can you do it?

HP: Yes, I will.

G: Can you do it all before Friday?

HP: That is the day I need to be out

G: I won't be here so I had better alert William.

G: Do you want to have a seat?

HP: No.

G: Can't stay long?

HP: No, I'm in and out [handing Gayle his schedule].

G: Can you do that [pointing to Wednesday] after two o'clock?

HP: That will be alright.

G: It is early dismissal, and we want you on campus when kids are here.

Administrative coverage on campus is such a safety and security priority that Gayle will be late herself to meetings because she is awaiting the return of one of her hall principals.

In another instance, Gayle intervened as the administrative assistant scheduled himself to accompany the Pride Team on a trip away from campus. When Gayle found out that he was planning to leave campus in the middle of the day, she stepped in and directed him to remain on campus.

Gayle will also remind faculty and staff of their responsibilities. Viewing the organization as a team, she is conscious of her team members' support and participation. During one faculty meeting, Gayle put up a transparency containing the school committees. She reminded the faculty of their responsibilities to the various committees and decisions pending before each one. Highlighting awards and recognition, Gayle said, "Check your commitments!" She continued reminding these committee members to notify parents about the awards. She also reminded them to be sure that correct information appeared in the awards booklet.

In delegating responsibility, site council is probably the most significant group under Gayle's direction. As principal, she chairs this council and is ultimately responsible for the decisions it makes. Composed of representatives from the various groups and committees in the school, it operates according to guidelines furnished by the district. Despite these guidelines, there is still debate about the its respective power, particularly as it concerns organizational issues.

G: And, we are into a lot of issues right now about power.

What do we have the authority and the legal, I guess authority, to delegate or give someone else that power.

And those are issues that we are still debating.

Although on the surface this group appears to function independently, it is a committee devoid of specific line authority. Gayle, as an agent of the school board, maintains power it cannot override.

G: If it is school board policy, we know that the site will not have any decisions that should over-ride that.

Although site council does function as a decision-making body, it's power lies in responsibility rather than authority and extends only as far as allowed by the principal.

Delegating authority and responsibility is one of the most important operations in the school because of its inherent power and influence in directing organizational tasks and functions.

Directing Tasks and Functions

Directing organizational tasks and functions means regulating assignments and responsibilities. It is the second tertiary process associated with maintaining operations.

One of the most significant operations Gayle directs is the work of the site council. The district office allowed the site council, upon its inception, to choose, from a list, the areas in which they would like to be involved.

G: We piloted site council the first year; the first year we did not take on the building management piece of it. We wanted central to continue to do the custodial help and manage that help.

We didn't take on transportation in terms of deciding when buses rolled. We didn't take on the cafeteria.

We took mainly instructional

issues, staff development issues,
and just the general operation of
this school.

Each year the site council evaluates and selects again the areas it oversees. The district office acts as a consultant to the site-based council in this regard.

The site council interfaces with all other organizational units. As Gayle coordinates and directs their work, as well as her own as principal, she engages in two quaternary processes. They are connecting organizational units and managing the communication network.

Connecting organizational units. Connecting organizational units means to link units through association. It is the first quaternary process associated with directing tasks and functions. Gayle connects organizational units together through active participation. If she is unable to participate because of a schedule conflict, she delegates participation to members of her administrative team. They work together to cover all organizational activities which occur on or off campus, including team and department meetings, committee work, and student activities.

G: We just look at the whole campus
in terms of what happens here from
seven in the morning until eleven at
night and had someone who knows something
about everything that happens here.

The administrative team members are linking pins to all other groups and activities operating within the school. They share information regularly and support each other in their administrative duties.

Gayle directs organizational business. As matters pertaining to the organization and its mission arise, Gayle directs those issues to the appropriate unit or group within the organization. Because of privacy concerns, Gayle directs student matters to the appropriate school personnel. For example, the hall principals receive discipline issues, while guidance counselors receive issues such as peer relationship, career planning and academic concerns. The athletic director addresses athletic concerns.

For example, during a faculty meeting, a teacher asked for clarification about where students should be during lunch. Another teacher chimed in, saying students were using lockers in unauthorized hallways. Gayle immediately directed the principal in charge of that hall to investigate the complaints.

Gayle coordinates the work of all committees and groups in the school. This includes which issues officially are presented to which groups. When concerns arise in the school, she will often bring them before the administrative team first to explore the issue. Then she will present them to the appropriate group, for example, site council.

Gayle managed a field trip concern in this manner. One teacher had apparently hedged the field trip guidelines, causing a problem for other faculty members. The informal network was alive with this issue. It came to Gayle's attention, and she discussed it with the administrative team. Site council heard the issue following the administrative team. It was disposed of through the formation of an ad hoc committee.

G: But what I do with the site council, if it is something that needs more than an answer we can come up with there, we would bring it to committee.

When the administrative team met the next day, Gayle reviewed the issue with them again. She asked, "Who of you would like to chair it?" The vocational hall principal volunteered to oversee the work of the field trip committee. Once this committee investigated the issue, members would share recommendations to site council.

Gayle, however, would keep abreast of the committee's ongoing progress through the hall principal assigned to the committee. The vocational principal, in this case, would provide status reports directly to Gayle.

Although it is not readily apparent, Gayle maintains a great deal of control over the course of events at Ethan Allen through connecting the administrative team with all aspects of school operations. Not only does she remain informed through this arrangement, but it also enables her to indirectly control events by intervening in the work of a committee.

Because people are connected in a variety of ways in an organization the size of Ethan Allen, a large communication network exists. Managing this communication network effectively is one of Gayle's largest responsibilities.

Managing the communication network. Managing the communication network means to coordinate and control the flow of information, attending to both the formal and informal channels of communication. It is the second quaternary process associated with directing organizational tasks and functions and is probably Gayle's most challenging organizational task.

Information formally travels through the individuals and groups established as part of the formal organization. The school board and district office issue policy and directives respectively to the school through the principal. Gayle determines how and where to process this information within the organization.

Gayle disperses information through two primary channels. Gayle usually disperses all information directly to the hall principals, who, in turn, may or may not, inform their faculties. Gayle also disperses information to the site council. Lateral dissemination of information occurs through this channel through the council representatives.

Members of the organization may receive information from more than one source. Although hall principals disseminate information, so do site council members as well as instructional leaders, and department chairpersons. This was the case with the restructuring information; several groups received information.

When information is specific and relevant to only one or possibly a few individuals, Gayle works with them directly. For example, the drama teacher failed to follow purchase order guidelines. Gayle contacted the district director for guidance in managing this matter. She then worked only with the drama teacher and the finance secretary in resolving it.

Information comes into the organization from external sources, and Gayle manages it. Such is the case when teachers hear about things that occur at

other schools in their district. For example, the restructuring directive at Paine High was initially received and discussed in the informal communication system; it caused confusion and concern at Ethan Allen.

Gayle refers to the informal channel as the "grapevine". Cultivating a climate of trust where staff will inform the administration of issues on the grapevine is the key to managing those issues.

G: You need to be aware of it because there is a lot of political, a lot of informal networking going on all of the time.

The informal grapevine or communication system probably is more powerful than the formal network that you set up in any system.

And you have got to have people who trust you enough to give clues about what the informal network is carrying out there, too.

In addition to the formal and informal channels of communication, another channel functions in a quasi-formal manner. This channel is composed of communicators who function as listeners to students and staff who have concerns.

G: And those faculty members, which had chosen to be listeners, because they wanted open communication on campus, their symbol was an ear.

So a picture of an ear would be at their door, which meant to the faculty that if you wanted to come in and have someone listen to you, "I am a communicator."

Although listeners are not required to do so, they can and do bring information to Gayle. Together listeners function as a quasi-advisory group to the principal. Another group of listeners share information with the district superintendent directly; they function in an advisory capacity as well.

The communication network is the most powerful force in an organization. Gayle understands this and, therefore, responds to it in a very timely manner. As issues arise through either informal or formal channels, Gayle quickly acts to manage them.

G: If it was something I had total control over, then I could deal with the resolution of it.

If it was something that involved other significant people in the solution, those people were brought into the sharing process.

Again trying to clear up communication.

Gayle believes rumors are one of the most difficult things in communication to manage. They need to be resolved in a timely manner, because they can cause a lot of trouble.

G: Sometimes rumors would get out: information that was not being processed completely that would cause unrest and cause people to be uncomfortable.

And, we would try to put out a fact sheet; or, in some cases, it might have been just one or two people involved with the issue.

And, we would try on a one-to-one basis to resolve it.

Gayle's open door policy signals her availability and involvement with the communication network and her willingness to resolve matters quickly. She believes that the benefits derived from dealing with interruptions immediately far outweigh the trouble that can arise if issues escalate.

G: And, the inconvenience of that far outweighs dealing with what could happen if you don't stifle things when they are happening.

Managing the communication network along with connecting organizational units are the quaternary processes which support directing organizational tasks and functions. Gayle uses one additional tertiary process in maintaining operations, and that is upholding policy and procedures.

Upholding Policy and Procedures

Upholding policy and procedures is the third tertiary process associated with maintaining operations. It means to support the organization's directives prescribed by authority. Policy is a set of practices that along with procedures, or courses of action, provides guidelines for behavior within the organization. Policy and procedures can include district or local school policies, rules and regulations; issues pertaining to the law; or accepted practices.

The purpose of policy and procedures is to provide direction and authority for action. Written and based in authority or in time-honored tradition, it is difficult for members of a school organization to challenge policy. In addition, policy is associated with an organizational entity and not one specific person.

Because of the power inherent in policies, they provide a substantial foundation for maintaining organizational integrity. Arrived at primarily through formal procedures, they carry formal authority. Gayle uses two quaternary processes to uphold policy and procedure in the organization. They are being knowledgeable and being consistent.

Being knowledgeable. Being knowledgeable means being able to understand and apply the rules and regulations. Being knowledgeable is the

first explanatory quaternary process associated with upholding policy and procedures. Knowledge is important to upholding policy effectively as well as interpreting it for others.

Gayle has always made it a priority to be knowledgeable about school and district policies: "I never wanted to not be informed about what the clientele needed". She schooled herself in issues relating to law and policy. This is so important to Gayle that she usually double checks school policies before taking any significant or questionable administrative action.

Gayle often checks on matters relating to school finance. In one conversation with the director of finance, Gayle spoke at length about several financial issues, saying, "I have generated a list of questions." One question related to a video contract. Gayle inquired if there had been "any regulation to change it"; if not, she would sign off on it. She closed her conversation with the director, saying, "I am getting my money's worth today".

Policy was an issue in a disciplinary matter involving Samuel. The hall principal suspended him from participating with his athletic team because he possessed alcohol. As both he and his parents challenged the school regarding his athletic participation, Gayle was quick to work with the coach and the athletic director, as well as district personnel, to determine the consequences for Samuel's behavior. As Gayle spoke with Samuel and his mother, it was important that Gayle be knowledgeable about the policy. She needed to be knowledgeable so she could explain it and justify it. In speaking with Samuel's mother about future athletic participation, Gayle said, "Put aside the athletic code and look at the district policy. It is clear how to get reinstated".

Matters can become complicated and involved particularly when there are questions and concerns about the law.

G: Right. And you have to look into the legality of some of the things that are being challenged.

As Gayle states above, sometimes it is important to have a solid knowledge basis in the law in order to manage school operations. Such was the case regarding community concerns about extending the security wall to encircle the campus. Because matters of law were involved, Gayle enlisted the support of a community member who was also an attorney. Together they obtained site council support as well as school board support to extend the wall. This solidified Gayle's authority in both policy and law.

Gayle encourages others in the school community to be knowledgeable, too. She is particularly concerned that the hall principals be knowledgeable about matters over which they have authority, like personnel evaluations.

G: the supervision or the observation process, the legal documents, in terms of [their] evaluation each year that they have done everything according to the standards.

Gayle will remind them periodically to stay within policy parameters, particularly as regulations relate to time lines. In one administrative

team meeting Gayle said to them, "Just make sure any teacher in trouble or who needs stern feedback" gets it in a timely manner.

Because, technically, there are six "principals" in the organization, Gayle believes that it is not only important to be knowledgeable about policies and procedures, but also consistent in their application. She tries to be consistent within her own areas of authority, as well as facilitating consistency among her administrative team.

Being consistent. Being consistent means constantly adhering and uniformly applying rules and regulations. It is the second quaternary explanatory process associated with upholding policy and procedures. It is important because members of an organization expect to fair and equitable treatment through the consistent application of policy.

Gayle works diligently to maintain consistency in school policy among her hall principals.

G: Well, with the administrative team, the one thing we have to work on is consistency in managing policy and procedures.

But, that is one of the things about the Monday meetings or weekly meetings that we have is that if anyone has handled a particular issue, and it looked like there might have been some inconsistency, from one person to another

We really try to go through those policies and procedures and look to see that we are all doing the same thing to try to keep fairness from one student to another.

She encourages the hall principals to work together to be sure they are consistent in the application of policies when working with their students and staff.

G: And then they [hall principals] have a responsibility to work among themselves to make sure that they administer the things that apply to the teacher level consistently and the students.

If there are inconsistencies, Gayle is responsible for resolving them, "justifying" them if she can.

G: But as a team, I am responsible if one acts in one manner and one handles something in another manner [I try] to try to look at the reason behind it and be able to justify.

She prefers, however, to keep policies "tight".

G: Or if we can't, we talk about what we need to do to tighten the policy so we all try to handle it the same way.

Personnel selection is another area where consistency in following policy is critical because inconsistency can leave the way open for legal problems. In working to replace Col. Klein, the ROTC teacher, Gayle intended to follow the regulations. However, Col. Klein wanted her to circumvent the process and hire a man from Wichita who he knew was willing to begin work immediately.

Gayle reminded Col. Klein that he had to resign his position first, which he had not done yet. Continuing to push, Col. Klein expressed concern for the students. Gayle replied, "I understand what you are saying; but I have to move methodically and legally and we will have to go through the [regular hiring] process to validate". Col. Klein continued proposing alternative courses of action. Gayle finally responded by clearly delineating the school board's policy regarding hiring procedures.

Because these quaternary processes support the preservation of order and prevention of conflict, being consistent and being knowledgeable are extremely important processes associated with upholding policy and procedures. In large organizations, policy upholds operations. In addition, policy upholds appropriated tasks and functions through the delegation of authority and responsibility. These are the significant processes associated with maintaining operations.

Maintaining operations and venerating vision work together with the next process to support the preservation of the organizational structure. That process is safeguarding resources.

Safeguarding Resources

Safeguarding resources is the secondary process that Gayle uses to preserve the program of the organization. It means securing the property and possessions of the school organization. It is the third secondary process associated with guarding the program.

Because resources are not in abundant supply in an organization, Gayle believes in protecting and securing them. This is important in order to make them available to support the organization's mission in a timely and appropriate manner. Gayle assumes ultimate responsibility to ensure that property maintenance is a top priority.

In order to fulfill this responsibility, Gayle attends to two tertiary processes associated with safeguarding resources. They are securing property and securing possessions.

Securing Property

Securing property means maintaining a clean, safe, and orderly environment. It is the first tertiary process associated with safeguarding resources. It is important because a clean, safe, and orderly environment contributes to the general feeling of organizational well being. This can positively affect the quality of staff members' interest and ability to effect the school mission.

Gayle attends to cleanliness in an ongoing manner, especially as she travels around campus. One afternoon Gayle encountered some students who

were standing in an area outside of Mr. Pinafore's classroom, an area formerly known as the smoking court. Gayle spoke to the students saying to them, "Did you notice that someone cleaned this area? Some of your classmates did it? Will you keep it clean for me?"

Gayle had occasion to share this story with one department as she modeled the importance she places on cleanliness. In meeting with the teachers, some of them complained that some students left cigarette butts next to Mr. Pinafore's room. Gayle explained about the cleaning of the area and that she spoke with the students. The teachers nodded in approval.

Gayle encourages everyone to attend to cleanliness because she believes keeping Ethan Allen clean is a responsibility. Hall principals must address it in their buildings. One hall principal is particularly vigilant about preventing graffiti that he says is an ongoing concern. Because it primarily appears in the hall restrooms, he sometimes locks the bathroom door and monitors entry and exit.

As a complement to the defensive measures against an unclean environment, Gayle enlists the aid of the PTSA to beautify it.

G: We have one committee that is interested in the environment, in working with beautification, cleanup. They were working Saturday and Sunday a few weeks ago, cleaning, clipping, and doing things.

Although cleanliness is very important, Gayle's primary institutional issue is safety. Gayle believes the environment has to be safe before instruction can take place.

G: But instruction is our primary focus, assuming everything is safe.

But safety is probably the very first thing, because without a safe environment and, we have had to deal with a lot of issues of violence in the schools.

Ever mindful of external events, Gayle is extremely vigilant in attending to the potential influence these events might have on the school.

G: You know, we pay attention to what is going on nationally; and,

we have had some tough issues to deal with on this campus in terms of safety.

But then issues within the community; and we have had guns that we have had to involve the police with.

Sometimes threats to the safety of the campus come anonymously. Gayle investigates each, and every, threat seriously.

G: Anything that impacts on safety,

you check it out, no matter how
anonymous the tip is.

Another situation, students harassing other students on campus, is an internal matter. One special education parent was very mad at the resource officer of the school because two large boys, who are behavior concerns at the school, were harassing her son, Lenny, and taking his money. Lenny is mentally handicapped and talks with a lisp. Gayle intervened directing the resource officer to take care of the problem. She told him that she wanted "a change in schedule or a change in environment".

The hall principals share in the responsibility of safety and security on campus by maintaining their own buildings, as well as the common buildings.

G: They are responsible for
safety in their own
building as well as campus-
wide.

The teachers also assume responsibility for safety in their buildings. One period a day they monitor hallways. It is their responsibility to monitor student movement and challenge trespassers.

Safety is even the highest priority in the budget.

G: . . . would come in and
prioritize . . . things
that impact on safety would
be the highest priority and
instructional essentials the
next highest priority.

In addition to safety and cleanliness, orderliness is another priority concern. Gayle mentioned it in an afternoon faculty meeting: "Students are getting restless. Keep them in class . . ." She continued explaining that if there are requests during advisement period to leave the classroom, teachers should make sure the notes are legitimate. One teacher speaks out saying she has a student who is just walking out of class. Gayle directs her to work with her hall principal.

One significant measure currently in progress to preserve orderliness is the extension of the security wall that partially encircles the campus. Extending it will complement the gated effort to secure the campus. The primary benefit of the wall is that it keeps the Ethan Allen students on campus and intruders off the grounds.

Gayle has an ongoing priority to maintain a clean, safe, and orderly environment. It is so important that a five-member security force works full time to protect and preserve the organization. One officer patrols the vocational center while the other four officers patrol the campus, providing backup to hall principals and teachers dealing with unruly or truant students. Gated and guarded by the security force, the parking lot is awesome to see. Security officers and administrators monitor and report all movement on and off campus using an elaborate walkie/talkie network.

Inasmuch as the facility requires attention, so too do its possessions. Securing possessions is the complementary tertiary process to securing property.

Securing Possessions

Securing possessions means to look after the satisfactory and purposeful use of the school's labor and materials. It is the second tertiary process associated with safeguarding resources. It is important because organizational resources are limited and, therefore, Gayle must use them efficiently to support the school mission.

There are four quaternary processes associated with securing possessions. They are attending to time, attending to money, attending to human resources, and attending to material resources.

Attending to time. Attending to time means to be concerned about its purposeful and productive use. It is the first of four quaternary processes associated with securing possessions. It is important because time is the structure around which life in a school revolves. Teachers' schedules, characterized as fixed, cannot be easily changed. Nor can their split forty-five minute planning time before and after school. This limits their access time for intra-organizational business.

Gayle values her own time, and she respects the time of her faculty and staff. When she meets with them, she frequently thanks them for their time. She apologizes when she takes up their time, particularly as she takes them away from working with students.

Gayle readily acknowledges that there is never enough time to complete the work that needs doing by a committed educator. Therefore, she promotes using it efficiently particularly where meetings are concerned. That means coming to the table informed. This facilitates discussion and the wise use of time.

Despite the demands on her schedule, time is the gift Gayle gives to students. She regularly talks with students who come to her about their concerns. She actively listens and works with them to resolve whatever is on their mind. After working with one student, Gayle followed up by speaking with his parent. She concluded the conversation with the parent, saying, "We spend a lot of time caring".

Gayle views time as a resource. It seems that there is never enough, always a need for more, just like money.

Attending to money. Attending to money means to look after its purposeful and productive use. It is the second of four quaternary processes associated with securing possessions. The district budget, allocated from city tax monies, determines the amount of money available to a school.

Although the priorities set by the district impact the schools, each school retains some authority over its allocation. At Ethan Allen, the site council, as Gayle puts it, "has input on budget priorities", although a committee actually works out the details. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 1658-1665](#))

G: So it has a category in a way to look at each item and decide if it is highest, high, not so high.

And then we also go through and try to balance to make sure that English gets something, Math gets something, Social Studies.

We don't go English, English,
English, Math, Math, Math and make
it go down.

It is alternating.

And then the council makes the
final approval.

Again it is done more in committee
and brought to the council in terms
of being school-wide instructional
supplies--how we are going to spend
that money.

Gayle monitors allocated monies for adherence to policy and established priorities. For example, in meeting with the Special Education department, Gayle inquires about the balance of their allocated funds. She knows policy states that all monies not spent by a specified date must be absorbed into the district budget. Gayle speaks to the department chairperson (DC), the hall principal (HP), and one teacher (T).

G: Have you spent all of your money for
this year?

DC: Oh yeah . . .

G: I didn't want you to miss anything;
if you don't get it all now-

HP: [interrupting] We have all of it spent.

T: We spent your money wisely.

In another instance, Gayle monitors the plan to use money for a trip. The International Marketing class is planning to travel to Switzerland. Gayle inquires of the teacher, "How are you going to raise money for the trip?" Gayle listens intently as the marketing teacher explains his plan. Quite knowledgeable about school travel, Gayle informs him that school insurance is cheaper than going outside. In addition, she informs him that he can make the travel plans and purchase the tickets himself to save money. Concerned with the frugal use of money, Gayle says, "I am not interested in having an agency do anything we can do cheaper."

Managing money is a very important responsibility in a public organization because its wise use demonstrates service and commitment. Unwise use, like violations in procedures, could have far-reaching and unsettling consequences for the individual. Therefore, attending to the people who manage resources, like money, is critically important. They are the human resources.

Attending to human resources. Attending to human resources means conserving and preserving the labor force needed to support the organization in delivering instructional services. It is the third quaternary process associated with securing possessions. People are the heart of the school organization; without them, there is no organization.

It is, therefore, not surprising that one of the major ways in which Gayle attends to human resources is by her constant attention to staffing. In

order to maintain a safe and instructionally sound environment, it is necessary to have as many teachers and support staff as regulation permits or the school board allows. Therefore, it is Gayle's responsibility, with support from the district office, to identify regular and special staffing needs.

One of the issues associated with staffing is reporting student enrollment. It plays the largest role in determining the number of staff assigned to a school. Gayle meets regularly with the hall principal who works with student scheduling in order to track student enrollment, which determines staff needs. She confides to him that based on the district's enrollment projections, "we are looking at three staff losses". She directs him to see the counselors about student schedules because "If we don't have schedules, it will cause us to lose more teachers".

Another issue associated with staffing is identifying special staffing needs. This is associated with the number and type of special education students the school serves. Staffing for special education students requires scheduling different from that required for regular education students. Often it is desirable to staff their teachers together.

In one department meeting, Gayle assisted the special education teachers in calculating their staffing needs for the next school year. She opened the conversation by saying, "Okay, staffing, we are getting more kids than last year. Are we getting another teacher?" No one appeared sure. In preparation for the upcoming enrollment counts, Gayle cautioned them about having all of their individualized education plans in order so every eligible student could be included in the count. She concluded, saying, "You need to make sure we start out with what we need and not one teacher short."

Gayle further attends to the efficient and effective use of human resources by a process she calls "meshing". Gayle uses this term to describe blending skills in order to avoid duplication of effort. In speaking about setting up the school organization, Gayle explains that she built on what was existing and added to it, "meshing" in positions and duties.

G: I built on what was existing;
and then we looked at other
positions, such as a team leader
position, [and] how to mesh that in.

We looked at responsibilities of a
building such as the drama teacher
and scheduling events to be in the
auditorium.

Gayle pays particular attention to administrative team assignments by dividing responsibilities equitably to use team member's strengths while avoiding duplication of effort. She uses a volunteer system for assignments, reverting to mandatory assignment only as a last resort.

Gayle also attends to human resources by prioritizing staff development opportunities. In preparing for the upcoming college admissions tests, Gayle asked the guidance director who would be administering the test. In deliberating about whom could administer the test, Gayle said, "I would like someone on our staff to do it, to have the chance for the extra money."

One human resource area that Gayle is still attempting to influence is the representation on the PTSA board. The group is composed of mostly white, affluent mothers, despite her efforts through the years to balance the board by gender and ethnicity. (Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 1790 - 1866)

G: Those are the ones who don't have jobs, and they have time to come.

And they definitely are another cross-section of the population.

But you can get, and I have tried to move their meeting every year, even when I was at John Adams, the same thing happened; same type of clientele.

The more affluent mothers are the ones who have the time to come in.

And we tried to move the meeting to after school and the evening;

and the President would come back and say well these people can't serve in the evening, because they have to be home with their children.

And the others say they can't come in the day because they have to work.

So, and then last year, we tried alternating.

We had some meetings in the morning and some in the evening.

And the evening ones were not attended at all.

They do a really good job.

It is just not good representation in terms of the total population.

When it comes to protecting resources, Gayle can be a formidable opponent, particularly when it concerns staffing. Anyone or anything that compromises students' instructional needs gets Gayle's direct attention. She speaks regularly with Donald, the secondary supervisor for the district. In confiding her concerns about him to the guidance director, Gayle said, "I will talk with Donald Parsons, because I have other issues on the table. I will report things like reporting our statistics and how many classes I have greater than 24 to 1."

Sensitive to the need to function as a whole school team, Gayle does not appreciate teachers who keep their future employment plans hidden. It was the case, however, with one physical education teacher (T) who was looking

for another job, but had not informed Gayle. While eating lunch in the school cafeteria one afternoon, Gayle confronted her.

G: Is there something else you are considering, job wise?

T: No, should there be?

G: Swimming coach?

T: [Explains this is a long shot, and it may be temporary; so it is only a consideration at this point. The position has not been sanctioned by the city recreation department yet.]

G: I support staff development for teachers. You need to do what you need to grow. But, here is what I need you to do for me: keep me informed of the status of that job.

T: [Explains she might be going to Europe this summer and will not be in town.]

Attending to human resources is important because it so directly affects the quality of instruction, which affects student learning. Besides human resources, material resources influence instruction as well.

Attending to material resources. Attending to material resources is the fourth quaternary process associated with securing possessions. It means taking care of the supplies of the organization. It is an important process because the faculty and staff use these resources to carry out the educational mission.

Textbooks and instructional supplies usually take priority in the budget. Allocation occurs during the annual budget process. Even if Ethan Allen depletes certain materials, they are obtainable provided Gayle requests them. Gayle secured interim grade report forms in this manner. The school depleted its supply, and Gayle called the assistant superintendent saying, "They [her teachers] need more." Offering an explanation, Gayle said, "I guess they are giving more D's and F's than I thought." He recommended ordering 6000, which seemed like an awful lot to Gayle. Thinking about money and conserving resources, she replied, "If we are going to use the same form [next year], then it is okay to order 6000. We don't always know."

Furniture and equipment are not as easily acquired as instructional and office support supplies. Perhaps this is because of funding differences. Many areas of the school could use more furniture and equipment. Even Gayle needs bookcases in her office to accommodate the books that she has piled on the floor.

One morning, Ethan Allen received a gift of furniture and office supplies donated by a local business, which was closing its doors after operating for ten years in the area. The vocational department of the school was the designated recipient. Gayle planned to distribute it throughout the school based on need. After inspecting the furniture, she directed the vocational hall principal to manage requests from the faculty for donated items. If

any items remained, Gayle directed that they be forwarded to the district office.

In addition to furniture, equipment like computers is difficult to obtain. Therefore, they are in short supply on campus. Three of the five hall principals do not have computers nor does guidance. The guidance director wants computer support to assist in determining class rank. This year there was a problem. After releasing the top three senior averages, staff discovered a computation error that caused a mix-up in ranking second and third place. The guidance director asked Gayle whether she had ever talked to anyone about the fact that "it is not ever going to be correct until we get on the computer".

Because of the instructional and administrative needs on campus, Gayle advocates often for computers. In fact, she brought the issue before the school board recently, requesting computers not only for kids but for teachers. For example, special education teachers need them to prepare individualized education plans.

Because of the limited number of computers for kids, Gayle often finds herself resolving issues of access and equity. One special education parent was very upset about her daughter's individualized education plan. She claimed that her daughter needed computer access every day. Gayle eventually resolved this issue but used it to make a point with the district office. She informed the district office that Ethan Allen desperately needed more computers. As one department chairperson exclaimed after receiving one computer, "We are grateful for the computer, but we need more!"

Attending to material resources along with attending to human resources, money and time are the four quaternary processes associated with the tertiary process, securing possessions for the organization. Securing possessions along with securing property are the two tertiary processes associated with the secondary process, safeguarding resources.

Safeguarding resources, the third secondary process associated with guarding the program, means to support the effective and efficient use of the school plant and its resources. The school plant and its resources are critical to accomplishing the mission. Gayle must assign and apportion them to organizational members in ways that are both fair and consistent.

Safeguarding resources and equitably allocating their use will prevent conflict between and among groups within the school. Lack of attention to this area will threaten the stability of the organization. It is for this reason that Gayle involves herself securing the organization's property and possessions.

Safeguarding resources, maintaining operations, and venerating vision are inadequate to guard the school program effectively. When difficulties arise, Gayle must manage them. She engages in troubleshooting to handle difficulties, which inevitably arise in a large organization like Ethan Allen.

Troubleshooting

Troubleshooting means locating and eliminating trouble, problems, or concerns. It is the fourth secondary process Gayle uses in guarding the program. Its purpose is to detect disturbances within the school organization. Its goal is to manage these disturbances in order to maintain an environment free of conflict and dissension.

Gayle possesses a keen ability to resolve "trouble". Gayle assumed the Ethan Allen principalship because of her skill to handle disturbances. She readily identifies with this important administrative role. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 940 - 947](#))

G: When things become questioned or troubled, then they definitely belong to me.

At that point, I am the one in power at that point to have to resolve the issues and to deal with it.

Gayle uses three tertiary processes to troubleshoot. The processes are monitoring and assessing, probing for content and meaning, and taking action. Although presented sequentially for purposes of understanding, these processes may occur simultaneously or in a different order.

In speaking to the student intervention and assistance team, Gayle reveals a personal belief that directs her troubleshooting efforts: "The key to fixing something is knowing the problem exists". In order to know that a problem exists, the principal, metaphorically speaking, must have her "finger on the pulse of the organization". This requires monitoring and assessing, the first of three processes associated with troubleshooting.

Monitoring and Assessing

Monitoring is the first tertiary process associated with troubleshooting. Monitoring means to watch closely. Assessing occurs almost simultaneously as the information gathered during monitoring undergoes evaluation. Together these make up the first process associated with troubleshooting. They are important to controlling events, particularly as they contribute to the formation of an overall organizational picture.

Monitoring and observing are almost instinctual for Gayle. She uses this process primarily to observe people in order to understand them. This thinking prompted her to choose a retreat experience as a way to acquaint herself with the Ethan Allen faculty. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 186 - 197](#))

G: So, I had a chance to design the workshop where they worked in small groups. They would come together to process things.

But in that process, we could start to see, I could see, the dynamics of group interaction.

And, people had a chance to vent and then rethink how they wanted the year to go.

In the comment above, Gayle reveals the importance of observation as an administrative strategy supporting troubleshooting. She places a high value on understanding how people interact with one another because this information is critical to facilitating good work relationships.

As she watches people, Gayle makes mental notes. She compiles these notes during assessment to form judgments and opinions. These mental notes include personal behavior such as hesitations in speech, as well as professional behavior such as failing to meet a commitment. This information is useful in troubleshooting.

Gayle invests a lot of time walking around the large campus and observing school operations and people's behavior first hand. She participates in all of the events that occur on and off campus resolving conflicts by attending at least a part of each event. Sometimes it is necessary for her to extend herself through delegation; when she does this, she always follows up with the person.

Gayle relies on her administrative team to assist her in monitoring and assessing the activities on campus.

G: A good bit of that exchange happens during the [administrative] team meeting.

The other thing is they, anything that might have someone else make a judgement about it, or anything that might be a sensitive issue, anything that might be challenged, they know immediately to brief me on that, so that I am aware of what is going on in their building.

In addition to the administrative team, Gayle relies on teachers, parents, and community members to alert her to concerns. She says these people usually have the organization's best interests in mind.

G: But, you have got to have people that will come and share.

And those are the people who are vested in the organization; they don't want to see kids get caught in the middle of it.

They want the best for the school, for kids.

Gayle even receives alerts from the central office.

G: But when there is, and I mean probably there has been a phone call, or something from central to alert me to something in almost every building each week; and those teachers become involved.

Gayle is particularly interested in how people are, in her words, "taking a reading" on things. In other words, how other people are forming judgments about Ethan Allen, its people and programs. If there is anything that could be misperceived or potentially controversial, Gayle is present--monitoring and assessing.

Her presence while monitoring is passive and unpretentious as opposed to active and participatory, although she seems to be in a state of readiness

prepared to deal with anything which might come up. However, she prefers not to call attention to herself, thereby remaining more in the background than the foreground.

One morning, students attended an HIV Aids Assembly in the auditorium complex. Gayle was concerned about community reaction to this assembly. In particular, she was concerned about a "grass roots representative from the community" who was coming to view it. He was a pastor in the area.

In preparation for "trouble" which might arise from this program, Gayle did several things. She viewed most of the assembly program herself from the back of the auditorium, standing among the students. She enlisted the district director for Health and Physical Education's support, and he attended the program. She talked with staff members about the program. Through her conversations, she found out that the pastor wanted abstinence discussed. Gayle knew that it was included; unfortunately, it appeared at the end of the program, after the pastor left.

Following the assembly, Gayle made it a point to discuss this with the district director, as well as some other people. Gayle fully prepared herself to respond to this pastor, should he make trouble.

Monitoring and assessing is almost second nature to Gayle as she involves herself in daily school operations. Before taking action to resolve a situation, Gayle probes for information and meaning.

Probing for Content and Meaning

Probing for content and meaning means to search for and examine the purpose or significance of something. It is the second of three tertiary processes Gayle uses to troubleshoot. It is important in verifying initial impressions and in determining a course of action.

During the restructuring meetings, Gayle heard from several departments that kids did not want to restructure; it had even been purported that some of them were planning to transfer their attendance to the adjoining jurisdiction. Each time she heard this, Gayle probed for content and meaning: "What are kids saying they are doing? How do they know?" She was indeed surprised because there had been no official decision about restructuring made.

Gayle easily probes for content and meaning when faculty members bring concerns to her. During these personal conversations, Gayle monitors, assesses, and probes for content and meaning. Teachers trust Gayle to work with them in eliminating "trouble".

G: An example, Mary was dealing with an informal network piece.

She came in and said can you tell me where the number 10 came from.

It had to do with some, actually when I pieced it together, there was some professional jealousy going on among some of the faculty members being promoted by one faculty member.

And, somebody latched onto the

number "10;" but they took it out of context.

And because she came in; she had picked up on it on the informal network, but she brought it to me.

And, again that is having those leaders out there that you trust, that want the best for kids.

And, she was not willing to see teachers upset teachers.

So she came to me to see where the facts were and how they got the misinformation.

I don't know but the fact that we were able; that she could go back and say, this is what is.

The "10!" You're right on, but this is what it hooks to; and then, you start to straighten it out.

In this example, Gayle probed for meaning and content with a teacher who came to her with a negative situation. This situation was under discussion in the informal communication channel. Together, Gayle and the teacher figured out what this meant. Gayle actually enlisted Mary's help in troubleshooting. As Mary returned to the setting to clear up the miscommunication, Gayle was acting on the issue through her.

Taking Action

The process, taking action, means simply doing something. It is the third tertiary process associated with troubleshooting. It is important because it determines the course "trouble" will take, although the goal is to eliminate it.

Because she is so highly skilled in monitoring, assessing, and probing, Gayle usually heads off trouble before it escalates. She takes direct action if she can resolve it personally. If not, she works with and through other staff members. In the case of the number "10," Gayle worked through Mary. In the case of the students concerned about restructuring, Gayle acted on her own behalf, making it known that she would interview students from Crown High School who restructured last year.

G: I will take a videotape and interview the kids [at Crown]. We will go on Monday and who will go are I want students, faculty members, and parents to have input.

Gayle believes that troubleshooting is most effective when there is accountability. That means that there are people associated with issues.

When issues come before the site council, Gayle lists the items on the agenda with a person.

G: But again, put it on the table.
And I usually put it with a person.

And, in the case of the field trip,
it was Nonye;

unencumbered planning period with
Rosemary,

that is right on the bulletin, on
the agenda so they don't think you
are trying to talk them out of
bringing anything to the table.

Gayle believes it is far more effective to work through issues identified
with specific people for three reasons.

G: But, the best pieces are when you
can hook it to a specific
individual and fix that person.

First, the personal connection lends legitimacy to the issue brought forth;
second, that connection may be important to continued troubleshooting
efforts; and, third, feedback comments prevent misunderstandings about
action taken on the issue and presents an opportunity to express gratitude.
Gayle explains using an anonymous call that she received one afternoon.
(Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 1443 - 1453)

G: When a person is anonymous and has
no name, you are really looking
some times for a fix that has no
need.

Because if people don't have to be
responsible for your charges or for
your concerns, it is kind of like
an anonymous person calling up and
saying that the kid had a gun in
his class.

So you may check it out and found
out that the kid had a cologne
bottle that had a handle that was
shaped like a gun or pistol.

But going back to the anonymous
call: because it was anonymous, I
found out the answer but had no way
to get back to the person to say
yes, this is what I found out,
thank you for sharing with me.

In another instance concerning trouble, Gayle acted quickly. About five
minutes before dismissal, Gayle received a telephone call from central
security that a dog in the neighborhood had turned on its neighbor and was
running loose. Gayle felt an urgent need to warn the students traveling
home that afternoon.

In assessing the situation, Gayle was alert to potential problems this
announcement might bring. She was reluctant to make the announcement on

the public address system, fearing misinterpretation. There was a service dog on campus, and Gayle feared the message would come across as though that dog turned on its owner. She remarked to her secretary, "If I made a general announcement, we would have the service dog attacking kids with the way information is going around here today."

After further consideration, Gayle did decide to make the general announcement so it would reach all students, including those walking, driving, or riding the bus. Covering all bases and putting student safety as a first priority, Gayle also boarded the buses that were traveling to the neighborhood where the dog lived.

Gayle clearly feels obliged to every person and program in the school. She takes her responsibility for containing trouble seriously and believes that issues needing resolution ultimately belong to her. ([Appendix H, C2 Doc 1, Lines 554-560](#))

G: It did not take long to find that the principal deals with all of these issues plus any of them that get to controversial points, or at the point of a real challenge, or wanting resolution.

This is particularly true when it comes to resolving matters with parents and students who are upset with the school and believe that they were subjects to injustice. One morning Gayle received Yvonne, her sister, and her father who were all very upset. They reported that an English teacher had ridiculed Yvonne the day before in class. As it turns out, Yvonne's English teacher used her research paper as a class example of poor writing.

In troubleshooting this situation, Gayle assembled all of the concerned parties: the English teacher as well as the department chairperson. After assessing the situation, Gayle gave Yvonne a lot of understanding about her challenges with writing and her disheartening experience in class. She talked about how important Yvonne was as a student at Ethan Allen as well as how important writing was as a skill. Supported by Gayle, the English teacher clarified her intentions, and apologized to Yvonne.

Gayle proceeded to probe for information regarding the struggle Yvonne faced with writing a research paper, saying, "I would like to know the specifics." Then, with the help of the department chairperson, Gayle acted on the matter. She refocused the discussion on measures the school could now take to support the successful completion of Yvonne's research paper.

In troubleshooting situations involving students, Gayle concentrates on two things. First, she emphasizes the importance of the student and his or her feelings. Secondly, she "reconstructs" each child in order to bolster the self-image and restore hope. She said to Yvonne, "We want to do everything we can. We want to restore that spirit."

As is demonstrated through this example, Gayle troubleshoots with clarity and skill using three tertiary processes: monitoring and assessing, probing for content and meaning, and taking action. Because Gayle consistently exhibits these processes, people trust her to resolve disturbances and clear up trouble. They have confidence that she is working vigilantly to preserve the school organization by not only resolving trouble but also by securing the property and maintaining the organizational operations.

Gayle uses troubleshooting, along with three other processes, safeguarding resources, maintaining operations, and venerating vision to guard the Ethan Allen High School program. She believes that when students and staff are safe and secure, opportunities for learning can flourish.

Creating Community Welfare

Gayle's administrative style is guardian in style because of her orientation to protecting and preserving the school organization. She works actively to guide the clientele, the students and staff, while guarding the program, the school facility and the tasks and functions carried out within it.

In guiding the clientele, Gayle feels responsible for the welfare of the members of the school organization. With a strong orientation to service, Gayle attends to the processes, which support the active participation of members in directing the activities that support the school mission. By fostering care and affiliation, Gayle unites the staff in delivering quality instructional services.

As a school principal dedicated to participatory management, Gayle uses consensus building to engage the staff in sharing decisional authority. Working through a site council, Gayle guides the school in making decisions which support effective instruction within a humanistic environment. In this way, organizational members become partners with her in setting school goals and objectives as well as implementing them.

In guarding the program, Gayle attends to the daily operations that support and maintain the organization. She works to preserve organizational relationships by keeping the channels of communication open and coordinating the work of organizational units in accordance with school policy and procedures. In addition, she safeguards the resources by securing the organization's property and possessions as well as its labor and materials.

In addition to building community and maintaining operations, Gayle uses a process called troubleshooting to manage organizational disturbances. A reflective comment by Gayle signifies the pervasive and ongoing nature of this important process, "You fix one thing and two more break". However, Gayle is possessed of keen observation and analytic skills which enable her to investigate and act quickly to circumvent disruptions to school operations whenever possible and tackle them straight on otherwise.

In Gayle's dutiful execution of her responsibilities as a principal, she holds the vision while protecting and preserving the school organization. Dedicated to serving others, Gayle guides the clientele of the school in fulfilling its educational mission, while guarding its programs from harm. By strengthening operations and managing the resources, Gayle solidifies the organizational structure to support the community it shelters. Through these processes, Gayle creates community welfare where educational excellence can flourish.